

Jesus the New Temple in the Thought of Pope Benedict XVI

PABLO T. GADENZ
Seton Hall University
South Orange, NJ

IN THE three volumes of *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI gives us his portrayal of the Jesus of the Gospels,¹ so that we can, as it were, see Jesus through his eyes. “Seeing Jesus” is a concept the Pope had already explored in one of his earlier works, the book *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, where he discusses “the concept of the ‘face of Christ’” in connection with “a central theme of the Old Testament” that involves “seeking the face of God.”² In the Old Testament, he explains, “[t]he face of God is encountered in the Temple,” as we find expressed, for example, in the psalms that “have to do with entering the sanctuary, with the entrance of the Ark of the Covenant into the Temple.”³ One such psalm that the Pope cites here is Psalm 24, which speaks of “those who seek him, those who seek the face of the God of Jacob” (Ps 23:6 LXX), and who do so precisely by going up to the Temple.⁴ The Pope then goes on to explain that in the New Testament, this Old Testament theme about seeking and “seeing the

¹ See Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part One: *From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*, trans. Adrian J. Walker (New York: Doubleday, 2007), xxi–xxii, where he speaks of his “interpretation of the figure of Jesus in the New Testament” and of his “portrayal” of “the Jesus of the Gospels.”

² Joseph Ratzinger, “The Face of Christ in Sacred Scripture: ‘He Who Has Seen Me Has Seen the Father,’” in Ratzinger, *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 13–31, at 16.

³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴ Cf. Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1:93–94, where in commenting on the Old Testament background of the Beatitude “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Mt 5:8), the Pope similarly takes up Psalm 24, describing how it reflects a liturgy of entrance into the gates of the Temple.

face of God” in the Temple finds “a new concreteness” in the face and person of Jesus Christ: “He himself is for us the face of God.”⁵ The Pope here explicitly focuses on the image of the face of Christ, but the image that implicitly underlies the Pope’s thought is that of Jesus as the new Temple: in him the Old Testament longing to go up on pilgrimage to the Temple to see the face of God finds its fulfillment.

It is this image of “Jesus the new Temple” in the thought of Pope Benedict that I wish to explore further in this essay. In the Gospels, the correlation of Jesus and Temple is found explicitly in John 2:21 (“he was speaking about the temple of his body”) and in Matthew 12:6 (“something greater than the temple is here”),⁶ but in more subtle ways, it is also found in many other passages. Drawing on these Gospel passages as well as on passages in Acts and in the letters of Paul, the Pope refers at least twenty-one distinct times to Jesus as the “new Temple” (that is, as the fulfillment of the old Temple) in the three volumes of *Jesus of Nazareth* alone.⁷ Moreover, although commentators on the Pope’s thought have briefly noted his treatment of the image of Jesus the new Temple,⁸ this feature of the Pope’s Christology, to my knowledge, has not yet been studied in systematic detail. Given its frequency and significance, such a study thus seems warranted. It is the goal of this two-part essay to contribute to such a study by sketching some of its broad lines.

In the first part of this essay, I will consider the Pope’s treatment of biblical passages from the Gospels in relation to the image of Jesus the

⁵ Ratzinger, “The Face of Christ in Sacred Scripture,” 27.

⁶ See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), no. 586, which makes reference to John 2:21 and Matthew 12:6 when commenting that Jesus “even identified himself with the Temple by presenting himself as God’s definitive dwelling-place among men.”

⁷ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1:37–38, 108–11, 236–37, 244–47, 258, 306, 316; Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part Two: *Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), 21–23, 35–37, 38–40, 61, 80, 92, 130, 148, 170, 209, 229–35; and Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, trans. Philip J. Whitmore (New York: Image, 2012), 11, 29, 69.

⁸ Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology: Fundamentals of Ecclesiology with Reference to Lumen Gentium*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 272–73, 280, 337–39, 518; Aidan Nichols, *The Thought of Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger*, new ed. (London: Burns & Oates, 2007), 97, 132; Scott W. Hahn, *Covenant and Communion: The Biblical Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2009), 52, 80, 148, 165–66; Thomas P. Rausch, *Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to His Theological Vision* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009), 87, 99, 136, 147; Emery de Gaál, *The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI: The Christocentric Shift* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 67, 283.

new Temple. From an exegetical perspective, such a study is of interest for various reasons. First, as we will see, although the Pope's objective is not an exhaustive, detailed exegesis of the individual biblical passages (as one might find in large commentaries or specialized monographs), his treatment insightfully provides the big picture, as he explains the significance of many different events in Christ's life and weaves them together using the image of Jesus the Temple. Second, the Pope's treatment of the image, found not only in the volumes of *Jesus of Nazareth* but also in earlier writings going back decades, parallels and perhaps even anticipates the renewal of interest in the subject of Jesus and the Temple among many biblical scholars.⁹ Third, the Pope in this way is helping to overcome a bias against the study of the Temple cult that has long dominated historical-critical biblical scholarship, a bias that he critiqued back in his 1988 Erasmus lecture on biblical interpretation when he spoke about "the alleged antagonism of the prophetic against the 'legal' and, thus, in turn against what is cultic."¹⁰ Fourth, the Pope's treatment of the Temple

⁹ See, for example, N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 405, who notes that "[o]ne of the chief gains of the last twenty years of Jesus-research is that the question of Jesus and the Temple is back where it belongs, at the centre of the agenda." He also addresses the issue of Jesus as Temple: "I think that Jesus saw himself, and perhaps his followers with him, as the new Temple" (426; cf. 432–37). See also E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 61–76. More recent biblical works that deal with the image of Jesus as Temple include: Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001); Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series 220 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006); Timothy C. Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Its Narrative Role*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2.242 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010); Brant Pitre, "Jesus, the New Temple, and the New Priesthood," *Letter & Spirit* 4 (2008): 47–83; Dan Liroy, *Axis of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Temple Motif in Scripture*, Studies in Biblical Literature 138 (New York: Peter Lang, 2010); Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010).

¹⁰ Joseph Ratzinger, "Biblical Interpretation in Conflict: The Question of the Basic Principles and Path of Exegesis Today," in Ratzinger, *God's Word: Scripture, Tradition, Office*, ed. Peter Hünermann and Thomas Söding, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 91–126, at 108. Similarly, Perrin, *Jesus the Temple*, 2, speaks of the "misguided decision to abstract the historical Jesus from his Jewish context. This move is in part explained by the prejudices and philosophical mood of the day, for the anti-Semitic sentiments of the nineteenth and early

image integrates modern biblical scholarship with a retrieval of patristic and medieval emphases on spiritual exegesis (e.g., the four senses of Scripture), and is therefore a good example of the two-level biblical hermeneutic the Pope has insistently called for, such as in his 2010 Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*.¹¹

In the second part of the essay, I will more briefly consider various theological implications of the Pope's treatment of the image of Jesus as Temple. Certainly, the Pope's treatment contributes to his Christology, and it parallels an interest also seen in other recent works on Christology.¹² In particular, the image relates to other cultic images for Jesus, such as Priest and Lamb of sacrifice. Moreover, the Pope's treatment also extends (as the various spiritual senses of Scripture are unfolded) to other treatises of theology, such as ecclesiology, Mariology, theological anthropology, and eschatology. Brief comments will be made on these areas as well, drawing once again on the Pope's body of writings.

The Mysteries of the Life of Jesus, the New Temple

In the Foreword of *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part Two, Pope Benedict indicates that what he is attempting to do can be compared to some degree "with

twentieth centuries could only serve to extend the tradition of reinventing Jesus as one who stood opposed to Judaism and its allegedly legalistic trammels." See also Jonathan Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice and the Temple: Symbolism and Supersessionism in the Study of Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11, who speaks of "the dominant antisacrificial bias."

¹¹ Pope Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010), nos. 34–41. On the Pope's synthesis of patristic and modern biblical interpretation in *Jesus of Nazareth*, see William M. Wright IV, "Patristic Biblical Hermeneutics in Joseph Ratzinger's *Jesus of Nazareth*," *Letter & Spirit* 7 (2011): 191–207.

¹² Recall the section on "Jesus and the Temple" in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 583–586. A brief, related treatment of the Temple is found in Christoph Schönborn, *God Sent His Son: A Contemporary Christology*, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 249–50. See also Edward T. Oakes, *Infinity Dwindled to Infancy: A Catholic and Evangelical Christology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 33–35, who briefly deals with Jesus' claim to be the Temple in a section discussing Jesus as High Priest. A study of Aquinas's interpretation of Christ as the fulfillment of the Temple can be found in Matthew Levering, *Christ's Fulfillment of Torah and Temple: Salvation according to Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), esp. 83–107. A classic treatment of Jesus and the Temple is the work of Yves M.-J. Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple*, trans. Reginald F. Trevett (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1962), 112–50. Congar's work undoubtedly contributed to the Pope's thought on the subject; see, e.g., Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 109, n. 23.

the theological treatise on the mysteries of the life of Jesus.”¹³ Indeed, such is also the approach of the section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* dedicated to the “The Mysteries of Christ’s Life,”¹⁴ which, as Ratzinger has elsewhere noted, “has restored a long-lost main component of narrative Christology.”¹⁵ The first part of this essay will thus be an exercise in narrative Christology, as we investigate the Gospel texts related to the theme of Jesus the Temple, from his birth through his public ministry to his passion, death, and resurrection, as presented in Ratzinger’s writings.

Before we embark on this exercise, however, a word needs to be said about two issues. First, it is important to recall the significance of the Temple for the Jewish people, so as to provide the foundation for understanding Jesus as the fulfillment of the Temple. Two interrelated aspects of the religious significance of the Temple are especially relevant for our study.¹⁶ On the one hand, the Temple in Jerusalem was the “house of God,” the site of God’s presence among his people and the dwelling place of his name (2:17, 91).¹⁷ The Jewish people would therefore go up to Jerusalem on pilgrimage to appear before the Lord, to see his face. On the other hand, the Temple with its sacrificial system provided the Jewish people with the means of atonement (2:32, 46). The Temple sacrifices enabled the people to receive forgiveness of sins and cleansing from certain ritual impurities. Accordingly, as we will see below, the image of Jesus the new Temple indicates that Jesus is now the dwelling place of God and the means of atonement; he is both presence and sacrifice.

The second issue regards the typological interpretation of the Old Testament.¹⁸ The image of Jesus as the new Temple is a classic example of typology, in which the Temple in Jerusalem is understood to be a type that prefigured Jesus.¹⁹ Not infrequently, however, the objection of

¹³ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:xvi. The Pope notes the “classic form” of this treatise presented by St. Thomas Aquinas (*ST* III, qq. 27–59).

¹⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 512–70.

¹⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism: Sidelights on the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 70, n. 30.

¹⁶ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 406–12; Timothy Wardle, *The Jerusalem Temple and Early Christian Identity*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 2.291 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 14–30, esp. 15–20 on the Temple’s religious significance.

¹⁷ As shown, parenthetical in-text citations will be used, where appropriate, throughout the remainder of this essay to give the Part and page numbers for references to *Jesus of Nazareth*.

¹⁸ On typology, see Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 41; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 128–30.

¹⁹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:61, employs the patristic phrase “*sacramentum futuri*” in explaining that the Jewish purity laws and Temple sacrifices were types

supersessionism is raised against such typological readings.²⁰ Without entering here into a general discussion of these complex issues, it is helpful to mention, specifically with regard to the Temple, that Jews and Christians were both confronted with the task of re-interpreting the Scriptures following the Temple's destruction by the Romans in the year 70. Christians responded with the christological reading using typology, and Jews with the rabbinical reading.²¹ Moreover, even before the destruction of the Temple, the idea of a new temple replacing the existing one is found in Jewish sources (e.g., *1 Enoch* 90:28–29); therefore, there was a context for situating the claim that Jesus replaces the Temple.²² Such considerations may help us better understand the typological presentation of Jesus as the new Temple.

Turning now to the Gospel texts, we consider first the birth of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, a Gospel which demonstrates a keen interest in the Temple. In two Christmas meditations from several decades ago, Cardinal Ratzinger suggests a calendric association between the date of Christmas, December 25, and the date of Hanukkah, which begins on the 25th day of the month of Kislev and marks the dedication of the new altar in the Temple by the Maccabees (cf. *1 Mc* 4:36–59). Referring in both meditations to an article by the biblical scholar Bo Reicke,²³ Ratzinger explains the rationale for

pointing toward future fulfillment in Jesus. The phrase recalls the title of a book on typology by Jean Daniélou, *Sacramentum futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1950), to which Ratzinger makes reference in his *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, trans. Mary Frances McCarthy (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 151, n. 99.

²⁰ See Adele Reinhartz, "The Gospel According to Benedict: *Jesus of Nazareth* on Jews and Judaism," in *The Pope and Jesus of Nazareth: Christ, Scripture, and the Church*, ed. Adrian Pabst and Angus Paddison (London: SCM Press, 2009), 233–46, esp. 243–44, where Reinhartz explicitly mentions the theme of Jesus the new Temple as an example of supersessionism in *Jesus of Nazareth*.

²¹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:33. Along these lines, Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 4, 104–5, 203–11, 247, speaks of both Christian and Jewish supersessionism with regard to the Temple.

²² David Flusser, "Jerusalem in Second Temple Literature," in Flusser, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*, Volume 2: *The Jewish Sages and Their Literature*, trans. Azzan Yadin (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 44–75, at 47; Klawans, *Purity, Sacrifice, and the Temple*, 128–29.

²³ Bo Reicke, "Jahresfeier und Zeitenwende im Judentum und Christentum der Antike," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 150 (1970): 321–34, esp. 329–31. (Note that in the English edition of both of Ratzinger's meditations, the journal name and the page numbering of Reicke's article are slightly incorrect.) With the reference to Hanukkah, Reicke presents a more sophisticated argument concerning the establishment of the date of Christmas than the common view that simply associates it with the Roman feast of the *Sol invictus*.

the connection: “In his infancy narrative, Luke unfolds a chronology with a profound symbolic meaning, dating it in such a way that the birth of Jesus occurs during the feast of Hanukkah, on the night of lights.”²⁴ “Hence, the date of Jesus’ birth would also symbolize the fact that when he appeared as God’s light in the winter night, the true dedication of the Temple—the arrival of God in the heart of this earth—took place.”²⁵

Pope Benedict returns to this idea in his General Audience of 23 December 2009:

To understand better the meaning of the Lord’s Birth I would like to make a brief allusion to the historical origins of this Solemnity. . . . Hippolytus of Rome, in his commentary on the Book of the Prophet Daniel, written in about A.D. 204, was the first person to say clearly that Jesus was born on 25 December. Moreover, some exegetes note that the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem, instituted by Judas Machabee in 164 B.C., was celebrated on that day. The coincidence of dates would consequently mean that with Jesus, who appeared as God’s Light in the darkness, the consecration of the Temple, the Advent of God to this earth, was truly brought about.²⁶

Forty days after the birth of Jesus, there is his first visit to the Jerusalem Temple at the Presentation (Lk 2:22–38). The Pope considers this passage in relation to the image of Jesus the Temple in his 2011 homily for the Feast of the Presentation.

This Gospel scene reveals the mystery of the Son of the Virgin, the consecrated One of the Father who came into the world to do his will faithfully (cf. Heb 10:5–7). Simeon identifies him as ‘a light for revelation to the Gentiles’ (Lk 2:32) and announces with prophetic words his supreme offering to God and his final victory (cf. Lk 2:32–35). This is

²⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, “The Light Shines in the Darkness,” in Ratzinger, *The Blessing of Christmas*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 99–116, at 108.

²⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, “Ox and Ass at the Crib,” in Ratzinger, *The Blessing of Christmas*, 63–85, at 66–67 (emphasis added).

²⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience (December 23, 2009), in *L’Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English (January 6, 2010), 6. Moreover, in a Christmas Midnight Mass homily in 2008, the Pope compares the newborn Jesus to the Temple, without however focusing on the date of the celebration: “God is in the stable. In the Old Testament the Temple was considered almost as God’s footstool; the sacred ark was the place in which he was mysteriously present in the midst of men and women. Above the temple, hidden, stood the cloud of God’s glory. Now it stands above the stable”: Pope Benedict XVI, Homily (December 25, 2008), in *L’Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English (January 7, 2009), 3.

the meeting point of the two Testaments, Old and New. *Jesus enters the ancient temple; he who is the new Temple of God.*²⁷

Thus, the birth of Jesus, as the new Temple, emphasizes the aspect of God's presence among his people, while Jesus' presentation in the Temple highlights the sacrificial aspect. The Pope briefly echoes these insights regarding the birth and presentation of Jesus in *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*. On the one hand, regarding Jesus' birth, he notes the new mode of God's presence, since "the manger has in some sense become the Ark of the Covenant, in which God is mysteriously hidden among men."²⁸ On the other, in his discussion of Luke's account of the presentation in the Temple, he observes that "[t]he language of sacrificial offering and priesthood is evoked."²⁹

We move now to an event near the beginning of the public ministry, the temptation of Jesus. One of the temptations involves the Temple; specifically, the devil tells Jesus to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, if he is the Son of God (Mt 4:5–6; Lk 4:9). In Part One of *Jesus of Nazareth*, the Pope briefly mentions the relationship between this temptation and the Cross: "From this scene on the pinnacle of the Temple . . . we can look out and see the Cross" (1:37). He returns to this temptation when considering in *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part Two, the mocking of Jesus on the Cross:

Three groups of mockers are mentioned in the Gospel. The first are the passers-by. They remind the Lord of his words about the destruction of the Temple: "Aha, you who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" (Mk 15:29–30). By taunting the Lord in this way, . . . they try to lead him into temptation, as the devil himself had done: "Save yourself!" Exercise your power! They do not realize that at this very moment the destruction of the Temple is being accomplished and that the new Temple is rising up before them. . . . Just as he refused to be induced by the devil to throw himself down from the parapet of the Temple (Mt 4:5–7; Lk 4:9–13), so now he refuses to yield to a similar temptation. (2:208–10)

The Pope's insightful comments draw attention to a subtle, thematic connection only fully developed in Matthew's Gospel (compare Mt 4:5–6 and 27:40), in which both the temptation and the crucifixion scenes mention the Temple, the title "Son of God," and the act of coming down from a high place. The juxtaposition suggests, as the Pope indicates, that

²⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, Homily (February 2, 2011), in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English (February 9, 2011), 4 (emphasis added).

²⁸ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, 69.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 82.

Jesus lifted up on the Cross is the new Temple. Even though biblical scholars typically note a connection between the two Matthean passages, they often fail to reach as far as the Pope's conclusion that the temptation regarding the Temple prepares for the presentation of Jesus as the new Temple on the Cross.³⁰

Another Temple-related event, which occurs during the public ministry of Jesus in Galilee, is the dispute that arises with the Pharisees when the disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath. All three Synoptic Gospels record this event, but the Matthean version develops the Temple motif more than the others. In it, not only does Jesus speak of "something greater than the temple" (Mt 12:6), but he also likens the disciples' activity in his presence to that of the priests in the Temple on the Sabbath (Mt 12:5). In *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part One, this Matthean passage is among those discussed in the Pope's conversation with Rabbi Jacob Neusner. The Pope cites Neusner's comments that Jesus and his disciples "may do on the Sabbath what they do because they stand in the place of the priests in the Temple: the holy place has shifted, now being formed by the circle made up of the master and his disciples."³¹ Agreeing with this assessment, the Pope refers a little later to "Jesus' claim to be Temple and Torah in person" (1:111). By contrast, some biblical scholars fail to see this connection, arguing instead that the "something greater than the temple" is mercy (cf. Mt 12:7 citing Hos 6:6), so that Jesus is replacing, as a means of atonement, the sacrifices in the Temple with deeds of mercy, much as rabbinic Judaism did following the fall of the Second Temple.³² However, by taking into account other factors such as the Matthean typology that also describes Jesus as "something greater" than "Jonah" (Mt 12:41) and "Solomon" (Mt 12:42), other scholars draw a conclusion similar to that of the Pope, recognizing in this passage the theme of Jesus the new Temple.³³

³⁰ Instead, the focus tends to be on the use of the same phrase "if you are the Son of God" in both the first (4:3) and second (4:6) temptations, and also at the crucifixion (27:40), without reference to Jesus as the new Temple; see, e.g., Raymond E. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:984, n. 1; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1070.

³¹ Jacob Neusner, *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus*, rev. ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University, 2000), 83; cf. Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1:108.

³² Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 181–83. See the discussion of this position in Leroy A. Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 284–85.

³³ Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 285–86. Huizenga correlates the theme of Jesus the new Temple with other cultic images: Jesus is the "ultimate sacrifice" (261) and

Turning to the Gospel of John, we find that a major part of Jesus' public ministry takes place in the Temple area, during his pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the Jewish feast days. The Pope lists these feast days, considering Passover first: "Right at the beginning of Jesus' activity we read of the 'Passover of the Jews,' which suggests the motif of the true Temple, and thus of the Cross and Resurrection (cf. Jn 2:13–25)" (1:236–37). Indeed, the explicit reference in this pericope to "the temple of his body" (Jn 2:21) sets the stage for considering the other Temple feasts mentioned later in John's Gospel in light of their fulfillment in Jesus (1:247). For example, there is the long section that takes place at the Feast of Tabernacles (Jn 7:1–10:21). At this feast, Jesus announces that "rivers of living water" (Jn 7:38) will flow from him, in fulfillment of Scripture. The Pope, after recalling a ritual of that feast in which water was drawn "from the spring at Siloam in order to offer a water libation in the Temple" (1:244), comments that there is "good reason to hear a reference to the new Temple echoing through Jesus' words about the streams of living waters."³⁴ He also mentions (1:246) Ezekiel's "vision of the new Temple" (Ezek 47:1–12) as one Scripture text that stands behind these words. Moreover, he notes that Jesus' words look ahead to the blood and water that flow from his body on the Cross (cf. Jn 19:34); this river of life "shows the body of Jesus to be the real Temple," as it "signifies *the living indwelling of God in the world*" (1:247 [emphasis added]).

Whereas the Pope's comments regarding Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles thus focus on the aspect of God's indwelling presence, his treatment of Jesus' high-priestly prayer (Jn 17) highlights the sacrificial aspect of the Temple theme, as he associates this prayer with "the theological content of the Feast of the Atonement" (1:237). Developing this idea further in *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part Two,³⁵ the Pope again employs the image of Jesus the new Temple.

"priest" (285, n. 67). As we will see, the Pope similarly associates the image of Jesus the Temple with the images of Jesus the Priest and Lamb of sacrifice. He considers these cultic images to be an integral part of the Christology of the Gospels, complementing the image of Jesus as king. Likewise, on the interpretation of Jesus as Temple and Priest in the Markan parallel to Matthew 12:1–8 (Mk 2:23–28), see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 5 (2007): 57–79, at 75–77.

³⁴ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1:247. Cf. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us*, 125–33; Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple*, 160–70.

³⁵ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:76–102, drawing on the work of André Feuillet, *The Priesthood of Christ and His Ministers*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975).

In the words addressed by Jesus to the Father, the ritual of the Day of Atonement is transformed into prayer. Here we find a concrete example of that cultic renewal toward which the cleansing of the Temple and Jesus' interpretation of it were pointing. Sacrificial animals are a thing of the past. In their place are what the Greek Fathers called *thysía logikē*—spiritual sacrifices [literally: sacrifices after the manner of the word]—and what Paul described in similar terms as *logikē latreía*, that is, worship shaped by the word, structured on reason (Rom 12:1). (2:80)

In his discussion of Jesus' high-priestly prayer and the Day of Atonement, the Pope also recalls the Temple's significance as the locus of God's presence, and specifically as the dwelling place of God's name (2:91). In the ritual on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would pronounce the divine name (2:77–78), but now in his high-priestly prayer, Jesus says "I made known to them your name" (Jn 17:26; cf. 17:6) (2:90). The Pope explains that Jesus' "revelation of the name is a new mode of God's presence among men, a radically new way in which God makes his home with them. In Jesus, God gives himself entirely into the world of mankind. . . . As the Risen One, he comes once more, in order to make all people into his body, *the new Temple*" (2:91–92 [emphasis added]).

With regard to the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, which are separated in the Jewish calendar by five days, the Pope also intriguingly associates two temporally related events from the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mt 17:1 and Mk 9:2: "after six days"), namely, Peter's confession and the Transfiguration (1:237, 305–18), once again both related to the image of Jesus as Temple. Drawing on an article by van Cangh and van Esbroeck,³⁶ the Pope comments as follows regarding Peter's confession:

Peter's confession fell on the great Day of Atonement and should be interpreted theologically against the backdrop of this feast, on which, for the one time in the year, the high priest solemnly pronounced the name YHWH in the Temple's Holy of Holies. This context would give added depth to Peter's confession of Jesus as the Son of the living God. (1:306)

In the analogy, the Pope suggests that Peter is the true high priest (*Cephas* rather than *Caiaphas*, as van Cangh and van Esbroeck note),³⁷ who on the Day of Atonement confesses the equivalent of the divine name in the presence of the new Temple, Jesus.

Because of the temporal link between the two events, the Transfiguration would then correspond to the Feast of Tabernacles. Now, besides the water

³⁶ Jean-Marie van Cangh and Michel van Esbroeck, "La primauté de Pierre (Mt 16:16–19) et son contexte judaïque," *Revue théologique de Louvain* 11 (1980): 310–24.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 315.

libation ritual mentioned above, another characteristic of the Feast of Tabernacles was its celebration as a festival of light in the Temple. In the Gospel of John, it was at this feast that Jesus announced: “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12; 9:5). The Synoptic Gospels record instead the Transfiguration, at which Jesus is clothed with light (Mt 17:2); in this way, “Jesus’ being in the light of God” is revealed, “his own being-light as Son” (1:310). Pursuing the comparison, Peter’s proposal of making three tents (Mt 17:4) would accordingly correspond to the tents (*sukkoth*) built for the feast,³⁸ while the “bright cloud” (Mt 17:5) would represent “the *shekinah* . . . the sign of the presence of God himself. The cloud hovering over the Tent of Meeting indicated that God was present. *Jesus is the holy tent* above whom the cloud of God’s presence now stands.”³⁹ With this image of Jesus as the new Tent of Meeting/Temple, the Pope here also comments on the prologue to John’s Gospel: “‘And the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us’ (Jn 1:14). Indeed, the Lord has pitched the tent of his body among us and has thus inaugurated the messianic age.”⁴⁰ Summarizing the Pope’s discussion of the Jewish Temple feasts, we could say that Jesus as the new Temple fulfills the Temple feasts in the three dimensions of their significance: creation, salvation history, and eschatological hope (1:237–38, 307, 314–15).

According to the Synoptic Gospels, after Jesus’ solemn entrance into Jerusalem there is a key event for our consideration: the cleansing of the Temple. As already noted, in the parallel passage in John’s Gospel we find Jesus’ explicit statement regarding the new Temple of his body (Jn 2:19–21). Although he does comment briefly on the cleansing of the Temple in *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part One (1:231–32, 236–37, 247), the Pope treats the event at greater length in Part Two. In his exegesis, he notes that Jesus’ Temple saying in John reappears in Matthew and Mark in a slightly distorted form on the lips of the false witnesses at his trial: “I will destroy this temple made by hand, and in three days I will build another, not made by hand” (Mk 14:58).⁴¹ His explanation of these sayings interprets

³⁸ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1:313–16. The Pope draws here on the treatment of the Feast of Tabernacles in Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1956), 333–47.

³⁹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1:316 (emphasis added). Cf. Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, 29.

⁴⁰ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1:315. In Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, the Pope again comments on this text from the prologue to John’s Gospel: “Jesus is, so to speak, the tent of meeting—he is the reality for which the tent and the later Temple could only serve as signs” (11).

⁴¹ For further commentary on Mark 14:58, and indeed many passages in Mark 11–15, in relation to the image of Jesus as Temple, see Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark*.

the event of the cleansing of the Temple in light of the image of Jesus the new Temple:

The rejection and crucifixion of Jesus means at the same time the end of this Temple. The era of the Temple is over. A new worship is being introduced, in a Temple not built by human hands. This Temple is his body, the Risen One, who gathers the peoples and unites them in the sacrament of his body and blood. He himself is the new Temple of humanity.⁴²

Then, after discussing the two brief episodes in Matthew's Gospel which conclude the narrative of the cleansing of the Temple (the healing of the blind and the lame, and the exclamation of the children; Mt 21:14–15), the Pope summarizes by once again referring to the new Temple image: "These two brief episodes, then, announce the coming of the new Temple, the Temple that Jesus came on earth to build."⁴³ Now, it is interesting to note that the interpretation of the cleansing of the Temple is disputed by biblical scholars, with a variety of proposed interpretations.⁴⁴ Among these scholarly interpretations, the line of interpretation highlighted by the Pope is compelling, as it forms part of a larger picture that integrates many texts, acquiring a cumulative force on account of its greater explanatory power.

⁴² Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:21–22; cf. 148. See also Jacob Neusner, "Money-Changeers in the Temple: The Mishnah's Explanation," *New Testament Studies* 35 (1989): 287–90, at 290.

⁴³ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:23. In a Palm Sunday homily in 2008, the Pope explained the event of the cleansing of the Temple in some detail, concluding in the same way: "The time of the temple built of stone, the time of animal sacrifices, is now passed: the fact that the Lord now expels the merchants does not only prevent an abuse but points to God's new way of acting. *The new Temple is formed: Jesus Christ himself*, in whom God's love descends upon human beings. *He, by his life, is the new and living Temple*. He who passed through the Cross and was raised is the living space of spirit and life in which the correct form of worship is made. Thus, the purification of the temple, as the culmination of Jesus' solemn entry into Jerusalem, is at the same time the sign of the impending ruin of the edifice and *the promise of the new Temple*": Homily (March 16, 2008), in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English (March 19, 2008), 3, 8, at 3 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ See the recent, detailed study by Klyne R. Snodgrass, "The Temple Incident," in *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence*, ed. Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 247 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 429–80. Despite the length of his article (and largely because of his methodology and objectives), Snodgrass does not consider in detail whether the cleansing incident is meant to show Jesus as the new Temple; he merely asks: "Does this incident relate to any thought of a new temple embodied in the relation of Jesus and his followers, as is evident in other expressions of a spiritualized temple?" (475).

The prophetic sign of the cleansing of the Temple is followed by Jesus' prophetic discourse, his eschatological discourse (Mk 13 and parallels), in which he foretells the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple within one generation. The Pope continues the same line of interpretation, explaining that Jesus "knew that the age of this Temple was over and that something new was to come, linked to his death and Resurrection" (2:35). He finds added testimony for Jesus' prediction about the demise of the Temple in the accusation against Stephen (Acts 6:14) and Stephen's own discourse (cf. Acts 7:49–50), which reveal that Stephen understood that "the new and entirely different Temple" (2:37) was established by Jesus.

Turning to the events of the Last Supper, the Pope considers first the washing of feet, understanding by this ritual that Jesus has brought about a "shift in meaning of the notion of purity," which further illustrates the message about "the end of the animal sacrifices, about worship and the new Temple" (2:61). In his treatment of Jesus' high-priestly prayer, to which reference was already made above, he also considers the institution of the Eucharist, again in conjunction with the Temple theme: "With the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus transforms his cruel death into 'word', into the radical expression of his love, his self-giving to the point of death. So he himself becomes the 'Temple'" (2:80). Later, regarding the institution narrative itself, the Pope explains that "the essence of the new worship [is] established by Christ through the Last Supper, Cross, and Resurrection . . . : here the old Temple worship is abolished and at the same time brought to its fulfillment" (2:130; cf. 141).

Regarding the crucifixion, the Pope points out the irony, as already noted above, that those who mock Jesus regarding his words about the destruction of the Temple (cf. Mk 14:58; 15:29) "do not realize that at this very moment the destruction of the Temple is being accomplished and that the new Temple is rising up before them" (2:209). Indeed, at his death, the Temple veil is torn in two, indicating that "the era of the old Temple and its sacrifices is over" and that through Jesus "the pathway to God is now open."⁴⁵ Moreover, blood and water flow from his side, fulfilling Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple (Jn 19:34; cf. Jn 7:38; Ezek 47:1–12) (1:247). To interpret the event of the crucifixion, the Pope also looks to Paul, who explains the significance of the Cross by analogy with the sacrificial function of the Temple (Rom 3:23–25). The Pope concludes that "at the very heart of Paul's teaching" is "the belief that all

⁴⁵ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:209. Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, "Preparation for Priestly Ministry," in Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today*, trans. Martha M. Matesich (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1997), 161–76, at 168.

sacrifices are fulfilled in the Cross of Jesus Christ, . . . that Jesus in this way has taken the place of the Temple, that he himself is the new Temple.”⁴⁶

In his chapter on the Resurrection, the Pope does not explicitly return to the image of Jesus the new Temple, but elsewhere he does discuss the Resurrection in connection with this image. For example, in *Jesus of Nazareth*, Part One, he notes that it was after and on account of the Resurrection that the disciples remembered and understood Jesus’ saying about the temple of his body (Jn 2:21–22) (1:231–32). The Pope also associates the Resurrection and the new Temple in his comments on the parable of the wicked tenants (Mk 12:1–12 and parallels), in which Jesus “foretells his Cross and Resurrection and prophesies that upon him, when he has been killed and has risen, God will erect a new building, a new Temple in the world” (1:258). He makes a similar comment in Part Two in his discussion of Jesus’ trial: “The hour of the new worship in ‘spirit and truth’ has come. The Temple of stone must be destroyed, so that the new one, the New Covenant with its new style of worship, can come. Yet at the same time, this means that Jesus himself must endure crucifixion, so that, after his Resurrection, he may become the new Temple” (2:170).

In summary, Pope Benedict’s description of Jesus as the new Temple spans a variety of biblical texts from Jesus’ birth to his death and Resurrection, showing how Jesus fulfills the various aspects of the religious significance of the Jerusalem Temple. As a result, the Pope has drawn attention to a biblical image whose explanatory power is demonstrated in its ability to weave together so many events from Christ’s life, producing a strong cumulative effect. Also, as I have mentioned, his insights are consistent with those of recent scholarship and indeed anticipate one of the directions of further biblical research. For example, N. T. Wright, writing about the future direction of Historical Jesus studies, makes the following comment: “The study of the Gospels in the light of all we now know about first-century Judaism positively cries out for exploration of big, new subjects: *Jesus and the temple*, Jesus and priesthood. . . .”⁴⁷ Pope Benedict’s in-depth treatment of the image of Jesus the new Temple is thus, in a sense, on the proverbial “cutting edge” of research. Moreover,

⁴⁶ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:38. A little later, he comments that “Paul has already completely absorbed the Temple and its sacrificial theology into his Christology” (2:40; cf. 230–32). See also Pope Benedict XVI, “Spiritual Worship” (General Audience, January 7, 2009), in Benedict XVI, *St. Paul* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 103–10, at 104–5.

⁴⁷ N. T. Wright, “Whence and Whither Historical Jesus Studies in the Life of the Church?” in *Jesus, Paul and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N. T. Wright*, ed. Nicholas Perrin and Richard B. Hays (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 115–58, at 150 (emphasis added).

the Pope's overall treatment of the image of Jesus the new Temple illustrates a biblical hermeneutic that integrates historical-literary study with spiritual-theological interpretation.⁴⁸ Regarding this second spiritual-theological level, the Pope has frequently made reference to the three criteria found in *Dei Verbum*: the exegete should pay attention to the content and unity of all of Scripture (canonical exegesis), the living tradition of the Church, and the analogy of faith.⁴⁹ One notes, first, how the image of Jesus the new Temple is explicitly associated with a canonical reading of Scripture, in which Old Testament and New Testament meet, as the various meanings of the Temple find their fulfillment in Jesus. Second, his interpretation stands within the living tradition of the Church, as seen, for example, in his frequent recourse to the liturgy and to patristic writers. Third, the Pope's interpretation takes into account the analogy of faith, that is, he takes into consideration the *nexus mysteriorum*,⁵⁰ noting how the "mysteries" of the life of Jesus the new Temple are lived in the Church and in individual Christians' lives, as indeed we will now see in the second part of this essay.

Our Communion in the Mysteries of the Life of Jesus the New Temple

We began the first part of the essay by recalling the approach of the "mysteries" of the life of Jesus. Now, at the beginning of this briefer, second part, we recall that Christians share in these "mysteries" of the life of Jesus, since Christ lived them for us, presenting himself as our model, and enabling us to live them in him.⁵¹ From a consideration of Christology, therefore, I will move to a brief consideration of other treatises of

⁴⁸ See Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:xiv: "If scholarly exegesis is not to exhaust itself in constantly new hypotheses, becoming theologically irrelevant, it must take a methodological step forward and see itself once again as a theological discipline, without abandoning its historical character."

⁴⁹ *Dei Verbum*, no. 12; see also the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 112–14. The Pope has frequently referred to these three criteria: e.g., Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Synod of Bishops (October 14, 2008), in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English (October 22, 2008), 13; Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (April 23, 2009), in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English (April 29, 2009), 3, 5, at 3; Address to Academics of the Pontifical Biblical Institute on the Occasion of the Hundredth Anniversary of its Foundation (October 26, 2009), in *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition in English (November 4, 2009), 4. See also Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 1:xviii; Pope Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, no. 34.

⁵⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 90, n. 51.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, nos. 519–21. For a classic treatment, see Columba Marmion, *Christ in His Mysteries*, trans. M. St. Thomas (St. Louis: Herder, 1939), 10–16.

theology—ecclesiology, Mariology, theological anthropology, and eschatology—showing how Ratzinger extends to these treatises his use of the Temple image.

Regarding Christology, the image of Jesus the new Temple correlates with other cultic images, such as Jesus the new Priest and Jesus the new Lamb of sacrifice. Indeed, many interconnected Old Testament institutions all have their fulfillment in him. Extrapolating from a verse in the Letter to the Hebrews, which says that “when there is a change of the priesthood, there is also of necessity a change of law” (Heb 7:12), we might observe that, according to the Pope, we have in Jesus a new Temple, a new priesthood, a new sacrifice, a new worship-liturgy, and a new covenant.⁵²

Regarding ecclesiology, already back in his doctoral dissertation in the 1950s, Ratzinger explored the image of the Church as Temple.⁵³ The Church is a Temple because the Church is the Body of Christ the Temple, as Ratzinger explains:

Just as the old Israel once revered the temple as its center and the guarantee of its unity, [. . .] in like manner this new meal [the Eucharist] is now the bond uniting a new people of God. There is no longer any need for a center localized in an outward temple. . . . The Body of the Lord, which is the center of the Lord’s Supper, is the one new temple that joins Christians together into a much more real unity than a temple made of stone could ever do.⁵⁴

Or again, in a homily on Acts 2:42 (“They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread

⁵² See, e.g., Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 2:81, 88, 108, 112, 130, 141, 170, 187. See also Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, rev. ed., trans. J. R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 286, where he comments on the text of Hebrews 9:11–15: “Christ . . . was—so the text says—the one true priest in the world. His death . . . was in reality *the one and only liturgy* of the world, a cosmic liturgy, in which Jesus stepped, not in the limited arena of the liturgical performance, the Temple, but publicly, before the eyes of the world, into *the real temple*, that is, before the face of God himself, in order to offer, not things, the blood of animals, or anything like that, but himself” (emphasis added). Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 48–49.

⁵³ Joseph Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche*, Münchener Theologische Studien 2.7 (1954; repr. Munich: St. Ottilien, 1992), 36–38, 71–73, 240–47.

⁵⁴ Joseph Ratzinger, “The Origin and Essence of the Church,” in Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996) 13–45, at 27 (citing his own earlier work *Das neue Volk Gottes*).

and to the prayers”), Ratzinger notes that “[t]his passage is telling us that the Church subsists as *Liturgy* and in Liturgy. She is the living temple that . . . is growing up on the foundation stone of Christ.”⁵⁵

Relating Mariology to the image of Jesus the new Temple, Ratzinger comments on how Mary becomes a living Temple at her Annunciation (cf. Lk 1:35):

The other image in this text—the “overshadowing by the power of the Most High”—points to the Temple of Israel and to the holy tent in the wilderness where God’s presence was indicated in the cloud. . . . Just as Mary was depicted earlier as the new Israel, the true “daughter of Zion”, so now she appears as the temple upon which descends the cloud in which God walks into the midst of history.⁵⁶

Our discussion of the application of the image of Jesus as new Temple to his mother Mary is a step toward considering all Christians, who are members of the body of Christ, as a temple. Here we move to the realm of the second spiritual sense: the moral or tropological sense. An example of this movement from a consideration of the life of Christ to a consideration of the life of the Christian is found in the first part of *Jesus of Nazareth*, when the Pope discusses the image of the living water that flows from the Temple (Jn 7:37–38; cf. Ezek 47:1–12): “The application of this passage primarily to Christ . . . does not have to exclude a secondary interpretation referring to the believer” (1:248). Of course, St. Paul speaks several times of individual Christians as a temple (1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21). In one of his General Audiences during the Year of St. Paul, the Pope comments on the moral implications of this temple-status of believers: “in following St. Paul, we should gain a new awareness of the fact that precisely because we are justified in Christ, we no longer belong to ourselves but have become a temple of the Spirit and hence are called to glorify God in our body with the whole of our existence (cf. 1 Cor 6:19).”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Joseph Ratzinger, “The Church Subsists as Liturgy and in the Liturgy: A Homily on Acts 2:42,” in Ratzinger, *God Is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 121–29, at 122.

⁵⁶ Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 272–73. See also the essay by Joseph Ratzinger, “Et Incarnatus Est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine” in Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Ratzinger, *Mary: The Church at the Source*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 81–95, at 87–88; and Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*, 29.

⁵⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, “The Doctrine of Justification: The Apostle’s Teaching on Faith and Works” (General Audience, November 26, 2008), in Benedict XVI, *St. Paul*, 84–88, at 87.

Finally, moving to the third and last of the spiritual senses (and the fourth sense overall), one considers the image of Temple on the anagogical or eschatological level. Several times in his textbook on eschatology, Ratzinger refers to Christ the Temple. For example, he explains how the eschatological hope of Christians who await the Parousia of the Lord is manifested in the liturgy by the orientation of prayer to the East:

When the ancient Israelite prayed, he turned towards the Jerusalem temple. In this way, he linked his prayer to the salvation history which united God with Israel and was focused and made present in the temple. . . . By contrast, early Christians as they prayed turned towards the East, the rising sun, which is the symbol of the risen Christ who rose from death's night into the glory of the Father and now reigns over all. At the same time, the rising sun is also the sign of the returning Christ. . . . The fusing together of these two kinds of symbolism in the image of the rising sun suggests how intimately related faith in the resurrection and hope for the parousia really are. The two are one in the figure of the Lord who has already returned as the risen One, continues to return in the Eucharist, and so remains he who is to come, the hope of the world. . . . By turning to the east, the community declares the temple to be superseded by Christ who is the true temple, the world's future in the world's present.⁵⁸

Ratzinger concludes his book on eschatology with a consideration of the Christological nature of heaven: "heaven, as our becoming one with Christ, takes on the nature of adoration. All cult prefigures it, and in it comes to completion. Christ is the temple of the final age; he is heaven, the new Jerusalem; he is the cultic space for God."⁵⁹

Conclusion

As I hope I have shown, the image of Jesus the new Temple plays a significant role in Pope Benedict's Christology, and indeed, other areas of his theology. The Pope shows how the various meanings that the Jerusalem Temple had for the Jewish people are fulfilled in Jesus. The Pope's treatment also serves to illustrate the renewed biblical hermeneutic advocated by the Pope. Seeing Jesus through the eyes of Pope Benedict involves seeing Jesus as the new Temple, and thus as the new Priest and the new

⁵⁸ Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, trans. Michael Waldstein and Aidan Nichols (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 6–7. Regarding the liturgical orientation of prayer in connection with the image of Christ the new and true Temple, as Jewish synagogue prayer was oriented toward the Jerusalem Temple, see also Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 83–84.

⁵⁹ Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 234.

Lamb of sacrifice. It involves looking “on him whom they have pierced” (Jn 19:37; cf. Rv 1:7; Zec 12:10), the Lamb once slain (Rv 5:6),⁶⁰ here now in this life, as we journey on pilgrimage toward the life to come, longing to see in Jesus the face of God. **N·V**

⁶⁰ Cf. Joseph Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 50, 117–20.