

“Come Near Before the Lord”  
*HaShekhinah* in Israelite and Christian Worship

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## Introduction

*HaShekhinah*, which Rabbinic scholars identify as the abiding manifestation of God, is a fundamental concept in both Judaism and Christianity. God's divine presence is viewed in spatio-temporal terms, particularly in a worldly context—sanctifying a place, an object, or a whole people through the revelation of the holy in the midst of the profane.<sup>1</sup> The talmudic and midrashic usage of *HaShekhinah* most prominently references the divine manifestation, particularly indicating God's presence in a given place. This is not meant to imply a limitation of God's omnipresence, rather it is meant to illustrate the omnipresence of God within the biblical narrative. "Even those special places and objects which God imbues with an extra holiness by His presence—such as the thorn bush in which He revealed Himself to Moses, or Mount Sinai, or the Tabernacle in the wilderness—in connection with the term *HaShekhinah* is most often used, teach us that no place is devoid of His presence."<sup>2</sup> The word *HaShekhinah*, while not explicitly present in the Bible, nevertheless connotes "to dwell" or "abide upon." Though the presence of God is everywhere, *HaShekhinah* rests supremely on Israel. Since the early church saw itself as the fulfillment of Biblical Israel, it was only natural that Christians would develop their own understanding of the *HaShekhinah*. In this paper, I will present the manner in which the Orthodox Church, as the inheritor of this early Christian fulfillment theology, integrated the Judaic understanding of the presence of God into their liturgical worship.

Toward this end, I will focus on the manner in which Judaism influenced the Christian understanding of invoking God's name in sacred spaces, the transformative action of invoking the divine presence of God, and the unifying aspect of gathering in His name. I will examine the Old

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<sup>1</sup> Encyclopaedia Judaica, p. 440.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 441.

Testament understanding of God's presence in the Tabernacle and Temple vis-à-vis the New Testament understanding of God's presence in the Church. When the worshipper calls upon the name of God, both in a liturgical or non-liturgical setting, there is a transformative action that occurs whether he or she invokes the name of God during the Epiclesis or in prayer in general. I will then examine the unifying feature of *HaShekhinah* within the Jewish and Christian tradition. In both religious traditions, there is an undeniable emphasis put on the importance of gathering for prayer and the sacrificial offering. This prayer was no individualistic act, but rather a communal act to approach God and abide in His divine presence. As Moses told his brother Aaron when the God of Israel appeared in a cloud, "Say to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, 'Come near before the Lord'" (Ex 16:9-10).

### **Jewish Influence on Early Forms of Christian Worship**

Rabbinic scholars understood *HaShekhinah* as a feminine aspect of the eternal God. One of the central elements of Jewish prayer was to effect the union of God's presence (or indwelling) in order to restore the divine perfection that was damaged by sin. Calling the Divine Name over places and persons is a conception rooted in Judaism. In Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity there was a sense of secrecy associated with the sacred:

The secret of the Divine Name was kept from those who knew it not already. It was the power inherent in the Name that occasioned this caution ... a parallel is found to it in the anxiety which some early Church writers display that the sacred elements of the Eucharist should be jealously guarded.<sup>3</sup>

In both communities, only fully initiated or baptized members were allowed to be present for the entirety of the service. The invocation of God's divine name requires proper preparation and

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<sup>3</sup> Oesterley, D.D. *Jewish Background of Liturgy*, p. 220.

purification in order to receive the sanctification that comes from God's indwelling. This sense of sanctity had great influence on the development of Christian liturgical and personal prayer.<sup>4</sup>

The liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts contains various verses from the Psalms that refer to God's place of indwelling. Psalm 131 [132] recalls God choosing Zion to be His dwelling place. "For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation: 'This is my resting place forever, here I will dwell, for I have desired it.'"<sup>5</sup> Ps 131 has striking correspondence to Ps 68:17, which speaks of Mount Zion as, "the mountain that God desired for his dwelling, where Yahweh surely will dwell forever." In both passages, there seems to be no kind of limitation with regard to the nature of the presence of God in the place which he chose to inhabit. Early Christian authors, such as the Apostle Paul, associated Christians with the Israel of scripture, emphasizing that God's promise to Israel was fulfilled with the coming of Christ.<sup>6</sup> Thus, citing passages of God's dwelling place in Zion within a Eucharistic service shows a common theme of dwelling and the continuing activity of God's gracious will for his people to forgive, protect, and deliver them so that in the final fulfillment of His purpose the faithful can gather as the elect into his kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

In the prayer of the Catechumens, proclaimed before the entrance of the Presanctified Gifts, the celebrant invokes the name of God and asks that those who are not fully initiated members of the Church be illumined in both soul and body. The liminal nature of the catechumens' access to the sacred services and sacred space, imply that they were not fully ready

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<sup>4</sup> "The forms of Christian prayer and praise were likewise derived from Judaism ... The oldest and best examples are the prayers of the Didache and the First Epistle of Clement, and the psalms and hymns provided in the prologue of Luke's Gospel, the Book of Revelation, and the Ode of Solomon. The structure of these forms originates in the Jewish "Benedictions," which consists of ascriptions of praise to God in his manifold attributes of creating and redeeming activity, with anamneses or recitals of his memorable works." *Worship in Scripture and Tradition*, p. 146.

<sup>5</sup> Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. *The Presanctified Liturgy*. St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church Tampa, FL, n.d.

<sup>6</sup> Tonia, "Fulfillment in Continuity: The Orthodox Christian Theology of Biblical Israel," p. 217.

<sup>7</sup> Shepherd, *Worship In Scripture And Tradition*, p. 146-147.

to participate in the divine presence. After the departure of the catechumens the priest states, “For He said, ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in Me and I in Him.’ Having Your Word indwelling and moving within us, we may thus become the temple of Your all-holy and worshipful Spirit.” Holy illumination occurs when the faithful partake of the Divine Gifts which affects the minds and hearts of the congregants. The priest, during the Holy Communion prayers, asks God to sanctify and enlighten the souls and bodies of all who partake of the Eucharist. Having the Word dwell within them, a type of transformation occurs. Just as the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Christ during the Epiclesis (see below). When the worshippers partake of the holy gifts, they enter into unity with Him.

### **Dwelling in Sacred Locations**

The conception of the divine *HaShekhinah* in its technical sense is first found in Ex 40:34ff, which states that, “the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” The Rabbinic exegetes equated the “glory of the Lord” with the divine presence. Thus, the ideas of God’s “glory” and “indwelling” were closely associated. Although God is omnipresent, He has chosen to manifest His presence in certain locations and at certain times within history. Deuteronomists employed so-called “Name Theology” to express Yahweh’s presence and their goal of centralized worship. There are powerful ramifications of centralizing Name Theology for the way Deuteronomists answer the question of how and under what circumstances God dwells on Earth. God’s dwelling among humans was prescribed for one place only (*HaMakom*), where God chose to establish His Name.<sup>8</sup> That place is unique and singular; and God’s Name must be designated there. Ex 19-24

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSupp 15 (Sheffield, Eng: University of Sheffield, 1981), Diss-defense, p. 30.

depicts God's revelation of Himself to Moses during the presentation of the first covenant on Mount Sinai. "Then Moses entered the cloud as he went up on the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights" (Ex 24:18). While the J (Jawhistic) source emphasizes Moses as a mediator between Yahweh and the people, the E (Elohistic) source separates Moses from all others, but emphasizes that all the Israelite nation accept the terms of the covenant in blood.<sup>9</sup> Biblical scholars have traditionally paired the pillar of cloud with the manifestation of the Divine Presence.<sup>10</sup> Gennadius of Constantinople (d. 471 CE) articulated how the pillar of cloud, reveals the protective power of God's Spirit:

The cloud was a figure standing for the grace of the Spirit. For just as the cloud covered the Israelites and protected them from the Egyptians [Ex 14:19], so the Spirit's grace shields us from the wiles of the devil. Likewise, just as the crossing of the sea protected them from their enemies and gave them real freedom, so baptism protects us from our enemies. That was how the Israelites came to live under the Law of Moses. This is how we, in baptism, are clothed with the Spirit of adoption and inherit the covenants and confessions made in accordance with the commands of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

The stages of ascent in Ex 19:24 and Ex 24:1-2 reflect the liminal access the Israelites had in relationship to the presence of God. This liminal access is conveyed in the construction of the Tabernacle and the Church as well as one's spiritual journey toward theosis. God's self-revelation to Moses foreshadowed the Eucharistic ascent that begins at catechism and culminates in the encounter of the Christian communicant with God at the chalice. "By the grace of the Spirit, the Christian progresses along an upward path, a process of becoming which leads to deification and is eucharistic in character."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament An Introduction*, p. 52.

<sup>10</sup> Penttiuc, *The Old Testament In Eastern Orthodox Tradition*, p. 254-255

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Loudovikos, *Eucharistic Ontology*, p. 32.

In Ex 24:1-2, God revealed to Moses, Aaron and his two eldest sons, as well as the seventy elders this same type of spiritual ascent in the tripartite division of the Tabernacle. This translation of the Sinai event, in which Moses encountered the divine presence, to the Israelite worship space reaches its culmination in the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem. The vertical orientation of Sinai is made horizontal in the three-fold division of the *olam* (lit. “world,” used to signify the common worship place), *heykal* (holies ), *debik* (holy of holies). As Moses alone could reach the summit of Sinai, so only the High Priest could enter into the Holy of Holies where the Ark of the Covenant resided.

Similarly, the Church is divided into three parts. The narthex symbolizes the connection between the Church and the outside world. The nave is the main body of the church, which is traditionally reserved for the baptized members of the Church. The third part of the church, recognized as the altar or sanctuary, is the place where the offerings are prepared and only accessible by the clergy.

The Tabernacle, constructed during the wilderness period, solved the problem of a holy God dwelling in the midst of a sinful people. Additionally, it also served the function as a place of sacrifice so that the sins of the Israelites could be atoned. While the Tabernacle was not a permanent solution,<sup>13</sup> it did facilitate a type of dialogue or communion between God and His people. The Tabernacle was the first sacred space in which God dwelt with His people, Israel. “The Tabernacle, and the ark that it housed, was the sacred object at the center of worship. The

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<sup>13</sup> The Tabernacle was the location wherein the glory of the Lord dwelt. The verb in the Hebrew Bible used to denote the presence of God in the Tabernacle implies “to dwell” or “to reside.” However, when interpreted specifically in relation to the Tabernacle, scholars have often coupled it with a notion of mobile impermanence—hence a sublimation of God’s presence is constricted to a sort of visitation, rather than a true dwelling place on the Earth. For Deuteronomistic theology, God could dwell both in heaven and on Earth; but the method of God’s dwelling on Earth was highly prescribed and restricted, by God’s own choice (Vanderhooft, “Dwelling Beneath the Sacred Place,” in *Journal Of Biblical Literature* 118:4 (1999) 625-633.

ark was the divine throne, and thus the Tabernacle was the place where the deity presented himself: ‘I will meet with the Israelites there, and it shall be sanctified by my glory’” (Ex 29:43).

<sup>14</sup> While the ark may well have symbolized the presence of Yahweh with the people, at the same time, there was also the tradition of the tent within which Moses went to meet God who would appear in His cloud of glory.<sup>15</sup>

Philo of Alexandria and Origen examined the importance of the dimensions and construction of the tabernacle. Philo was greatly influenced by Platonic and Stoic philosophy. Like most early Christian writers accustomed to Stoicism, Philo wedded Stoic ideology to classical virtues as a means to reach deification. This included the idea that, “the only sacrifice worthy of God as being that of a pure mind and soul offering itself to God.”<sup>16</sup> Philo portrayed the Tabernacle as a representation of the universe. The tent that housed the Ark of the Covenant signified the spiritual world, while the Tent of Meeting where Moses and the priestly court consulted the deity represented the material. Origen’s ninth Homily on Exodus references Philo’s approach but goes in a Christological direction. Origen saw the Tabernacle as pointing to the mysteries of Christ and His Church. His moral correlations in terms of the virtues of Christian life compared faith to gold, the preached word to silver, and patience to bronze.<sup>17</sup>

The heart of the idea of a Temple is the abiding presence of God. Deuteronomistic theology centralizes God’s earthly presence to the Temple in a totalizing manner. “The sealing of the Temple with the divine Name established it as a precious place for the charismatic presence of

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<sup>14</sup> Coogan, *The Old Testament A Historical and Literary Introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*, p. 130.

<sup>15</sup> Boadt, p. 154.

<sup>16</sup> Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship*, p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> Childs, *Misc. Sacrorum I*, 1712 p. 394f., *The Book of Exodus*, p. 538.



the Spirit of the Lord: ‘And the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord’ (2 Chr. 7:1, cf. 1 Kgs. 8:11).<sup>18</sup> In this light, God’s dwelling in the Church takes on new meaning. “In the New Testament, all things were made new and incomparably more tangible. God no longer dwells in temples made with hands (cf. Mark 14:58, 2 Cor 5:1), but His Body is the temple, in which dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”<sup>19</sup> The Divine presence of God is now visibly in our midst through the Eucharist, with *HaShekhinah* now being Christ and the Holy Spirit. Germanus of Constantinople states, “The church is the temple of God ... the church is an earthly heaven in which the super-celestial God dwells and walks about. It represents the crucifixion, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ: it is glorified more than the tabernacle of the witness of Moses, in which are the mercy-seat and the Holy of Holies.”<sup>20</sup> Germanus is careful not to minimize the Church’s function as a physical dwelling place for God, but rather means to emphasize the new dimension of this indwelling brought by the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The ability for the faithful to receive the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist enhances this indwelling within the Christian believers and is why the Church is meant to be glorified more than the Tabernacle.

At the same time, there are a variety of typological associations of the Church to the Jerusalem Temple. Eastern Orthodox worship is replete with Old Testament scriptural material.<sup>21</sup> The Holy Table was prefigured by the table of the Old Law upon which the manna, which corresponds to Christ, descended from heaven. The ciborium has its cognate in the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord in which, it is written, is His Holy of Holies and His holy place. Robert F.

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<sup>18</sup> Archimandrite Zacharius, “On the Jesus Prayer,” p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 140.

<sup>20</sup> Germanus of Constantinople, “On the Divine Liturgy”

<sup>21</sup> The experience of the Orthodox Church is best reflected in liturgical symbolical acts and texts

Taft underscores the power of metaphors used by the Byzantine liturgists: "The genius of metaphorical language is to hold in dynamic tension several levels of meaning simultaneously. In this sense, one and the same eucharistic table must be at once the Holy of Holies."<sup>22</sup> The Gospel, as a revelation of Christ's incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection, corresponds to a fulfillment of God's revelation to Moses on Sinai in the form of the Torah. The Gospel readings present a physical manifestation of God in the activity of Jesus Christ. "God is no longer speaking to us through a cloud and indistinctly, as He did to Moses through thunder and lighting and trumpets, by a voice, by darkness and fire on the mountain. Nor does He appear through dreams as to the prophets, but He appeared visibly as a true man."<sup>23</sup> All these associations reveal continuity of the Old Law with the New Law and affirm the Christian's identity as a people who have always had a relationship with God. This relationship was established through the invocation of the Divine Name which resulted in God dwelling with His people.

### **Christian Understanding of *HaShekhinah* in the Epiclesis**

The Epiclesis (to call upon) is the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine during the Eucharistic prayer. This invocation of the Holy Spirit completes the consecration that transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Within the first three centuries of the early Church, the Epiclesis did not always call upon the descent of the Third Person of the Trinity to sanctify the gifts. Despite this ambiguity, the prayers of the primitive Church consistently maintained, in practice and thought, the understanding that the primary

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<sup>22</sup> Pentiuć, p. 260.

<sup>23</sup> Germanus, "On the Divine Liturgy"

function of the Epiclesis was to call down the divine presence upon the assembled congregants during their most solemn act of worship.<sup>24</sup>

In the second century, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus are the first to articulate that which occurs when the divine presence is invoked. These early Church Fathers were less concerned with the Trinitarian character of the divine presence, than they were with the spiritual benefits that were transmitted to the believers through the reception of holy communion. For Justin, the Epiclesis was a prayer on behalf of the worshippers.<sup>25</sup> “Justin Martyr is witness to the early formulation of this liturgical type; and the oldest complete liturgy that is maintained in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, is in the form of a Jewish “giving thanks” with a recital of the *kerugma* of redemption in Christ interwoven with biblical and philosophical phrases.”<sup>26</sup> Likewise, Irenaeus did not use the term in its later technical sense, but rather focused on the blessings that were imparted to those who received the invocation of God. Irenaeus spoke of the bread, after which it is “no more common bread, but Eucharist...further acknowledging the benefits imparted to man through the Eucharist.”<sup>27</sup> In Irenaeus’s *The Eucharist, Pledge of Our Resurrection*, the Bishop of Lyons spoke of the Holy Eucharist as a pledge of the resurrection of the body:

Then how can they say that the flesh, which is nourished with the Body of the Lord and with His Blood, goes to corruption and does not partake of life? Let them, therefore, either alter their opinion, or cease from offering the things just mentioned. But our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion. For we offer to Him His own, announcing consistently the fellowship and union of the flesh and Spirit. For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly, so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Osterley, p. 219.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 216.

<sup>26</sup> Shepherd, p. 147.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 215.

<sup>28</sup> Aquilina, *The Fathers of the Church An Introduction to the First Christian Teachers*, p. 88.

While the primitive Church did not possess a concrete understanding of which persons of the Trinity they invoked, their conception was one in which they simply offered an “invocation of God.” Nevertheless, they still discerned that this invocation of the divine name propagated a transformative act on the gifts as well as within the faithful.

Ignatius of Antioch was one of the Apostolic Fathers who articulated Jesus’s real presence in the Eucharist. Ignatius’ used Romans 7:3 to convey this true presence, “I have no taste for corruptible food or for the pleasures of this life. I desire the Bread of God, *which is the flesh of Jesus Christ*, who was of the seed of David; and for drink *I desire his blood*, which is love incorruptible.”<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Ignatius’s *Epistle to the Ephesians* ch 20, employs imagery of the Eucharistic elements having medicinal benefits. Ignatius believed that these benefits derived from “breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, the antidote that we should not die, but live forever in Jesus Christ.” This passage recalls Irenaeus’s teaching about the bread which has received the “invocation of God” and the associated benefits given to the recipients.<sup>30</sup>

During the third century, Cyprian of Carthage spoke of the bread and wine which Christ offered to God the Father as “His Body and Blood,” yet nowhere does he explicitly refer to a prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the worshippers. However, in one passage Cyprian demonstrates that the sanctification of the communicants was on his mind when he spoke of the mixed cup of wine and water, and understood it to be a symbol for the union of Christ with His people.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Seeley, “Fathers of the Church on the Eucharist,” <http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/father/fathers.htm>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 217.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 213.

The “Eucharistia” of Hippolytus of Rome is the oldest text of a Mass formulary to come down to us. While it is not the oldest extant text of such a prayer, it gives deep insight to Eucharistic thought at the start of the third century and a record of the theological thinking of the pre-Constantinian Church.<sup>32</sup> Hippolytus’ Epiclesis in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, produced in the later part of the fourth century, has two distinct elements: prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the worshippers for their sanctification and for His descent upon the bread and wine. Most noticeable in this Eucharistic prayer is the conception of the effect of the Spirit’s descent upon the Eucharistic gifts is less pronounced than in the case of the fully developed liturgies.<sup>33</sup> Unlike previous ambiguities concerning which persons of the Trinity the prayers addressed, by the fourth century there is a petition that God send down the Holy Spirit upon His Church, so that the faithful may all receive the gifts and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **Evolution of Liturgical Formulas**

The Synoptic Gospels and epistolary corpus of the New Testament contain various instructions about prayer. The focus on prayer instruction possesses a Trinitarian character. This Trinitarian understanding of Christian prayer is linked to a theology of the Cross. Part of the reason there was variability in the early Church concerning to which persons of the Trinity the prayers referred was that Christological disputes largely took place within the first four centuries CE. The councils of 325, 381, and 431 each had a different view on the person, nature, and role of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>32</sup> Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, p. 60.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 73.

Constantine convened the Council of Nicea in 325 to deal with the issue of Arianism. Arius taught that Jesus was merely a mediator and did not believe it was possible to have a hierarchy of divine beings.<sup>34</sup> Arius, in response to Alexander, insisted on the unity of the Godhead and declared that, “if the Father had begotten the Son, then the Son began to exist; therefore there was a period in which He did not exist.”<sup>35</sup> Alexander refuted Arius’ views stating, “The Word is co-eternal with the Father, for the Father must always have been Father.”<sup>36</sup> The sonship of the Word is, for Alexander, natural, not adoptive. The Word is eternally generated from the Father and is the Father’s express image and likeness, not subject to change.”<sup>37</sup> Anathemas against Arius stressed the equality of the Son with the Father, directly attacked the Arian position that there was a time when the Son was not, and supported the Son and Father being of the same substance.<sup>38</sup>

The Second Council in 381 declared the Trinitarian doctrine of the equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. Macedonius came under attack for his teachings that the Holy Spirit was not a person (“hypostasis”) but rather a power (“dynamic”) of God. Therefore, the Spirit was inferior to the Father and Son. The council defined the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in which there was one God in three persons (“hypostases”): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.<sup>39</sup>

The Council of Ephesus in 431 dealt with the teachings of Nestorius who rejected the idea that both the human and divine natures existed in the single person of Christ. Nestorius negated

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<sup>34</sup> “Christ our Lord is with us and is leading us to the throne of God. Hence, in liturgical prayer mention must be made also of Christ through whom we have access to the Father” (Eph 2:18). *The Early Liturgy*, p. 18. However, this is not to diminish Christ’s divine nature of being fully God and fully man.

<sup>35</sup> Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787) Their History and Theology*, p. 53.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 53-54.

<sup>38</sup> The idea of reciprocal indwelling is further supported in John 4:15, “Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God” as well as John 14:10, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words which I speak to you I do not speak of myself, but the Father remaining in me does his deeds.”

<sup>39</sup> Davis, p. 117.

the hypostatic union and the wholly reciprocal relationship demonstrated throughout the Gospel of John. Cyril of Alexandria, argued against Nestorius' formula "in two natures" due to the assumption that this involved separation. "If we reject this personal union we fall into the error of making two sons."<sup>40</sup> The humanity and divinity in Christ are different in essence yet cannot be divided into two distinct persons. The High Priestly Prayer in John 17 explicitly refers to the union of Father and Son when Jesus prays for His disciples so they become one as the Father and Son are one. Augustine of Hippo, in accordance with the teachings of Cyril of Alexandria, affirmed that this unity not only refers to unity of nature between Himself and His disciples but to uniformity between the Son and the Father.<sup>41</sup>

Understanding the relationship of the Trinity is fundamental to our own understanding of indwelling. Jesus' sonship to God evokes the address of "Father."<sup>42</sup> However, Christ's sonship does not mean they are of different hypostases. The Word, mediating between the Father and creation is co-eternal with the Father and is of the same substance. The flaw in the early Christological heresies was that the reciprocal indwelling relationship between Father and Son was either misinterpreted, diminished, or overlooked.

### **Shekhinah and Sacraments**

"All the sacraments in the Orthodox Church are affected by the invocation of the Divine Names, first and foremost of the Holy Trinity (i.e., the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit)."<sup>43</sup> When Christians invoke or pronounce the Divine Names it is a true confession of faith, and it is

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.150.

<sup>41</sup> Rettig, *The Fathers of The Church St. Augustine Tractates on the Gospel of John*, p. 72.

<sup>42</sup> "The Old Testament 'people of God' moves into another kind of imagery, one already anticipated in the Old Testament itself where the arental imagery for deity is to be found" (Patrick Miller, *The Further Witness of the New Testament*, 315)

<sup>43</sup> Constans, *St. John Chrysostom And The Jesus Prayer*, p.134.

through this invocation that the sacraments have an ontologically transformative and unitive quality.

There's an essential link between the Divine Names and the Person of Jesus. "In the eucharistic mystery, He who alone is beyond nature and speech becomes precisely the essence of all existential movements which can be assumed into the body of the Word."<sup>44</sup> The energy of the Divinity is transmitted to the body and soul of the believer when they partake in communion due to this ontological connection between the Name of Jesus Christ with the Person of the Lord Jesus Himself.<sup>45</sup> The name of Jesus Christ seals the believer and fashions him into a temple of divinity, a place for the charismatic presence of the Holy Spirit. "When we pronounce the Name of Christ, calling upon Him to communion with us, then He, all-fulfilling, hears us, and we enter into contact with Him. As the pre-eternal Logos of the Father He dwells in undivided unity with Him, and God-the-Father through His Word enters into communion with us."<sup>46</sup> However, when one neglects or denies the ontological character of the Divine Names the sacraments lose their abiding reality.<sup>47</sup>

This principle of relationship holds together the unity in communion and correlation between the sensible and the intelligible, heaven and earth, intellect and sense. It is part of the innate human condition to desire union of all things, and this universal communion and relationship has an eschatological character which reflects the very inner unity-in-communion of God in Trinity.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Loudovikos, *Eucharistic Ontology*, p.34.

<sup>45</sup> Archimandrite Zacharius, "On the Jesus Prayer," p. 141.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.138.

<sup>47</sup> Constans, p. 135.

<sup>48</sup> Loudovikos, p. 126.



[The result is] that the soul becomes to the body what God is to the soul, and the one Creator of all is shown to enter into all things, proportionately [to each], through humanity, and the many things that differ from one another by nature come into one, inclining together around the one nature of man. And God Himself becomes all things in all, encompassing all things and giving them real existence in Himself, because none of the things that exist any longer has a random movement devoid of His presence. It is by virtue of that presence that we are called gods, and children and the body and members and a particle of God and the like, in reference to the ultimate end of the divine purpose.<sup>49</sup>

Gathering as a form of unity and way to invoke God is a conception rooted in ancient Judaism. The Jewish tradition encouraged communal prayer as a way to effect the union with *HaShekhinah* in order to restore the divine perfection that was damaged by sin. Rabbi Chananiah ben Teradyon preserved a saying from the Mishnah, *Aboth* iii. 3 in the later part of the first and early second century to this effect: “Where two sit together and are occupied with the word of the Torah, there is the *Shekhinah* among them.”<sup>50</sup> Similarly, the Gospel of Matthew affirms an identical message, “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am with them” (Matt. 18:20). The conception that God’s presence is especially immanent in the Temple is seen throughout the Bible and Jewish Prayer Book. This conception of *HaShekhinah*, one to which the Jews were accustomed, was also understood by early Christians to express the importance of the activity of the divine presence among those gathered in the name of God for worship.<sup>51</sup>

There is an eschatological character associated with the invocation of the Divine Name. “The invocation of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and communion in His Body and Blood have become two fundamental paths of life, effecting the salvation of the new people of God, who were brought by His ‘suffering of death’” (Heb 2:9).<sup>52</sup> The new elect are brought in by identifying with the struggle of “bearing his name” (Acts 9:14-15). “Likewise, just as the Lord had said that

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Osterley, p. 224.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 225.

<sup>52</sup> Archimandrite Zacharius, “On the Jesus Prayer,” p. 148.

we cannot live forever except we eat of the Flesh of the Son of man and drink His Blood (cf. John 6:51-54), so also do the witnesses of His resurrection confirm that there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).<sup>53</sup> A corollary to the eschatological invocation of the Divine Name is that one becomes restored to unity with God. The believer becomes part of the Church body through the Eucharist: “Jesus Christ Himself becomes each person’s own Lamb as each is capable of accommodating Him and eating Him; He becomes the personal Lamb of Paul the great preacher of truth, and in the same way the personal Lamb of every one of the saints according to the measure of faith of each and the grace given to each by the Spirit. In different ways in different people, He is wholly present in the whole person and becomes all things for all.”<sup>54</sup>

Early liturgical development surrounding the celebration of Christ’s Baptism focused on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus. This is analogous to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Eucharistic elements that we find in the final form of the Epiclesis.<sup>55</sup> “The sacrament of Holy Baptism imparts to us the gift of putting on the divinity of the Lord (cf. Gal 3:27), and becoming ourselves the ‘temple of God,’ so that the Spirit of the Lord dwells in us (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16, 2 Cor. 6:16).”<sup>56</sup>

The Gospel of the Nazarenes (2nd c.) reflects how Jewish Christians conceived the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Christ at Baptism.<sup>57</sup> “It came to pass, when the Lord had come up

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 148.

<sup>54</sup> Loudovikos, p. 36.

<sup>55</sup> The Gospel of the Nazarenes (2nd c.) reflects how Jewish Christians conceived of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Christ at His Baptism. Additionally, Jerome’s commentary on Isa. iv. 156, also illustrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Son. “It came to pass, when the Lord had come up from the water, that the entire fountain of the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon Him, and said to Him, My Son, in all the prophets I was looking for Thee; for Thou art my rest; Thou art my firstborn Son that reignest for ever.”

<sup>56</sup> Archimandrite Zacharius, “On the Jesus Prayer,” p.140.

<sup>57</sup> Osterley, p.222.

from the water, that the entire fountain of the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon Him, and said to Him, My Son, in all the prophets I was looking for Thee; for Thou art my rest; Thou art my firstborn Son that reignest forever.”<sup>58</sup> This strong Old Testament influence reflects a deep connection between Israel and the ecclesia, to which God had given His divine promise. Central to this understanding is the idea that Jesus was the Messiah in whom the ancient prophecies were fulfilled.<sup>59</sup> It is possible that this focus on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Baptism of Christ that we find in the Gospel of Nazarenes contributed something towards the idea of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Eucharistic elements.<sup>60</sup>

### **Conclusion**

God has always yearned for a relationship with His people. The conception of the divine *HaShekhinah* is the way God chose to manifest His presence in certain locations throughout the biblical narrative. While the places in which He dwelled has changed, the concept of “Name Theology” was employed to articulate God’s presence and the supplicant’s goal of centralized worship. There are powerful implications associated with God’s dwelling on Earth. First and foremost, the place in which He chose to establish His Name was deemed holy. Reflected in the design of the Temple and the Church, the place in which the offerings are prepared, deemed the “holy of holies,” is the most zealously guarded and reflects the glory revealed to Moses on Sinai. God’s first appearance to Moses (Ex 24:1) marks the catalyst for establishing a type of dialogue or communion between God and His people. As a religion continuously striving for union with God, the importance of establishing a designated place of worship in which the Lord dwells,

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<sup>58</sup> Jerome, *Comm. in Isa.* iv. 156

<sup>59</sup> Osterley, p. 222.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 222.

forever changed the cultic practices of the Israelite people. Furthermore, the early Church's understanding that they were the fulfillment of Biblical Israel established a sense of continuity with Israelite liturgical antecedents. Thus, the Orthodox Church, as the inheritor of this early Christian fulfillment theology, integrated the Judaic understanding of the presence of God into its liturgical worship.

In addition to the importance of designated locations of worship, the epistolary literature and Synoptic Gospels contain various instructions about prayer that possess striking similarities to the prayers and offerings of the various types of *Korbanot* (sacrifices or offerings). The Trinitarian character of prayer, that developed over time, naturally influenced the current Orthodox Christian understanding of indwelling. All the sacraments in the Orthodox Church are affected by the invocation of the Divine Names of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Most important is the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine recited during the Eucharist prayer that consecrates and transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Indeed, all of the major sacramental rites of the Orthodox Church involve a similar invocation (e.g, Great Blessing of the Waters, Holy Unction, etc.). The divine presence of God in the Eucharist fulfills our innate desire to participate in the unity-in-communion of God in Trinity. The objective of calling down the Divine Name during the Epiclesis prayer is eschatological in character. With the intention that a believer may be restored to unity with God, and thus become part of the Body of Christ, through the reception of the Eucharistic elements.

All these associations reveal continuity of the Old Law to the New Law and affirm our identity as a people who have always had a relationship with God—a relationship established through the invocation of the Divine Name in specific prayers and in designated locations.

Moreover, the use of Name Theology and the understanding that believers could access God's presence in a holy and sacred space—whether it be Sinai, the Tabernacle, the Temple, or the Church—reflects a desire on the part of both Jews and Christians to commune with God and to “come near before the Lord.”

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