

FREEMASONRY AND THE ORIGINS OF MODERN TEMPLE ORDINANCES

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Abstract: Joseph Smith taught that the origins of modern temple ordinances go back beyond the foundation of the world.¹ Even for believers, the claim that rites known anciently have been restored through revelation raises complex questions because we know that revelation almost never occurs in a vacuum. Rather, it comes most often through reflection on the impressions of immediate experience, confirmed and elaborated through subsequent study and prayer.² Because Joseph Smith became a Mason not long before he began to introduce others to the Nauvoo endowment, some suppose that Masonry must have been the starting point for his inspiration on temple matters. The real story, however, is not so simple. Though the introduction of Freemasonry in Nauvoo helped prepare the Saints for the endowment — both familiarizing them with elements they would later encounter in the Nauvoo temple and providing a blessing to them in its own right — an analysis of the historical record provides evidence that significant components of priesthood and temple doctrines, authority, and ordinances were revealed to the Prophet during the course of his early ministry, long before he got to Nauvoo. Further, many aspects of Latter-day Saint temple worship are well attested in the Bible and elsewhere in antiquity. In the minds of early Mormons, what seems to have distinguished authentic temple worship from the many scattered remnants that could be found elsewhere was the divine authority of the priesthood through which these ordinances had been restored and could now be administered in their fulness. Coupled with the restoration of the ordinances themselves is the rich flow of modern revelation that clothes them with glorious meanings. Of course, temple ordinances — like all divine communication — must be adapted to different times, cultures, and practical circumstances. Happily, since the time of Joseph Smith, necessary alterations of the ordinances have been directed by the same authority that first restored them in our day.

Joseph Smith's Encounters with Freemasonry

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that emphasizes the use of formal ritual to teach what has been termed “a beautiful system of

morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.”³ While the historic roots of the movement go back to at least the late 1300s within professional brotherhoods for Christian stonemasons in Scotland and England (operative Masons), the institutions and practices of modern Freemasonry are usually traced to the early eighteenth century — after the organization had opened its doors to others who had become interested in its ideas (speculative Masons).⁴ Despite Freemasonry’s relatively late origins, many of its teachings and ritual components draw on ideas from the Bible, early Christianity, and other ancient sources. As it evolved, the movement was also influenced by the ideals of enlightenment philosophy. In America, Freemasonry enjoyed rapid growth, especially in some periods of the nineteenth century, attracting a large number of citizens from all walks of life.⁵

Joseph Smith’s first encounters with Freemasonry occurred long before he came to Nauvoo. Indeed, it may be said that the Prophet, like many Americans of his era, “grew up around Masonry. His older brother Hyrum ... was a Mason in the 1820s, as were many of the Smiths’ neighbors ... To not be at least dimly aware of Masonry in western New York in the middle-to late-1820s was impossible.”⁶

That said, exactly what Joseph Smith knew about the specifics of the *rituals* of Freemasonry and when he came to know these details is a debated question. A ready source of information about Masonry for the young Prophet would have been the exposés of the anti-Masonic movement, whose epicenter was not far from the Smith home. He must have discussed Masonic ideas and controversies with his contemporaries. Though evidence of Masonic language and ideas in the Book of Mormon and the book of Moses is generally unconvincing, descriptions of some practices from the Kirtland School of the Prophets seem to recall Masonic ritual patterns (e.g., D&C 88:128ff.).⁷

Apart from whatever attraction the Prophet may have had to the rituals of Freemasonry, it seems from current evidence that he took little personal interest in Masonry as an *institution* until the Illinois period.⁸ Joseph Smith’s efforts to establish a Masonic Lodge in Nauvoo seem to have begun in November 1839,⁹ when he became personally acquainted with Judge James Adams. The judge was a prominent citizen of Springfield, Worshipful Master of the Springfield Lodge when it was founded in October 1839, and Right Worshipful Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois when it was established — not coincidentally — on April 6, 1840.¹⁰ By at least the fall of 1840, he had been baptized a member of the Church.¹¹ Adams was one of the select group of Mormon Masons who received the endowment when it was first introduced on May 4, 1842.¹²

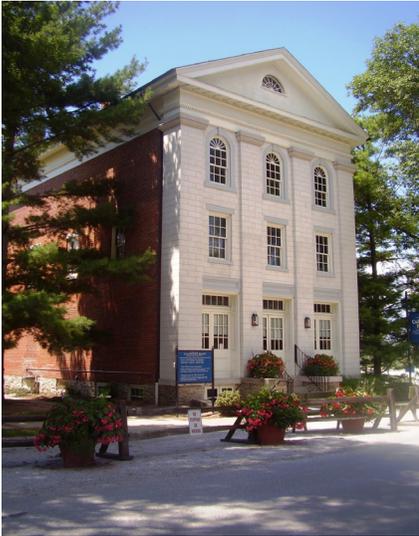


Figure 1. Rebuilt Nauvoo Masonic Hall. The top floor was reserved specifically for Masonic activities, while the remainder of the building was used for a variety of other community events and gatherings. (Photograph courtesy of Sandi Christensen)

Glen M. Leonard¹³ observes that, through his Masonic friends and family, Joseph Smith “would have understood that Freemasonry held values cherished by religious persons of every faith.” However, this is only part of the picture. Statements by Joseph Smith and early Saints provide evidence of their belief “that the endowment and Freemasonry in part emanated from the same ancient spring” and that at least some similarities could be thought of “as remnants from an ancient original.”¹⁴ Benjamin Johnson, an intimate of the Prophet, said that he was told by him that “Freemasonry, as at present, was the apostate endowments, as sectarian religion was the apostate religion”¹⁵ — and thus, as Terry Givens sees it, “not to be discarded wholesale.”¹⁶ According to a later statement by Elder Franklin

D. Richards, Joseph Smith “was aware that there were some things about Masonry which had come down from the beginning, and *he desired to know what they were*, hence the lodge” was established in Nauvoo.¹⁷

The Masonic Lodge in Nauvoo

Evidence suggests that Joseph Smith encouraged Nauvoo Masonry at least in part to help those who would later receive temple ordinances. For instance, Joseph Fielding, an endowed member of the Church who joined Freemasonry in Nauvoo, said: “Many have joined the Masonic institution. This seems to have been a stepping stone or preparation for something else, the true origin of Masonry” — i.e., in ancient priesthood ordinances.¹⁸

One aspect of this preparation apparently had to do with the general idea of respecting covenants of confidentiality. For example, Joseph Smith once told the Saints that “the reason we do not have the secrets of the Lord revealed unto us is because we do not keep them.”¹⁹ But as he later observed, “The secret of Masonry is to keep a secret.”²⁰ Joseph may have seen the secret-keeping of Masonry as a tool to prepare the Saints to respect their temple covenants.



Figure 2. Nauvoo Temple. (Photograph courtesy of Val Brinkerhoff)

In addition, the rituals of the Lodge enabled Mormon Masons to become familiar with symbols and forms they would later encounter in the Nauvoo temple. These included specific ritual terms, language, handclasps, and gestures as well as larger patterns such as those involving repetition and the use of questions and answers as an aid to teaching. Joseph Smith's own exposure to Masonry no doubt led him to seek further revelation as he prepared to introduce the divine ordinances of Nauvoo temple worship.

Finally, although Freemasonry is not a religion and, in contrast to Latter-day Saint temple ordinances, does not claim saving power for its rites,²¹ threads relating to biblical themes of exaltation are evident in some Masonic rituals. For example, in the ceremonies of the Royal Arch degree of the York rite, candidates pass through a series of veils and eventually enter into the divine presence.²² In addition, Christian interpretations, like Salem Town's decription of the "eighth degree," tell of how the righteous will "be admitted within the veil of God's presence, where they will become kings and priests before the throne of his glory for ever and ever."²³ Such language echoes New Testament teachings.²⁴ Thus, apart from specific ritual language, forms, and symbols, a more general form of resemblance between Mormon temple ritual and certain Masonic degrees might be seen in the views they share about the ultimate potential of humankind.²⁵

That said, none of the many contemporary Mormon Masons who remained faithful to the Prophet following their temple endowment expressed a concern that Joseph Smith had been untrue to his Masonic oaths by incorporating some Masonic elements into the endowment ceremony.²⁶ Moreover, it appears that the oaths made in the Lodge were taken seriously by faithful Mormons, both before and after their endowment.²⁷ Richard L. Bushman observes: "If Joseph thought of Freemasonry as degenerate priesthood, he did nothing to suppress his rival."²⁸ In support of Bushman's claim, it should be noted that interest

in Masonry did not suddenly disappear after the temple endowment was introduced. Rather, it continued in Nauvoo until the departure of the Saints in 1846.²⁹

Significantly, Andrew F. Ehat notes how the contents of a letter from longtime Mason Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt on 17 June 1842 testify of:³⁰

the Prophet's ease in pointing out the relationship of the endowment to Freemasonry in what might otherwise have been considered a blatant adaptation of Freemasonry[. This] demonstrates the awe and respect Heber Kimball and the others had for what has been a troublesome point to informed ... Latter-day Saints [in more recent times]. These Freemasons who received these blessings in May 1842 completely accepted Joseph Smith's self-characterization as expressed in an 1844 discourse: "Did I build upon another man's foundation, but my own? I have got all the truth [offered by the world] and an independent revelation in the bargain."³¹

Endowed members saw the Nauvoo temple ordinances as something more than what they had experienced as part of Masonic ritual. Hyrum Smith, a longtime Mason, expressed the typical view of the Saints about the superlative nature of the temple blessings when he said: "I cannot make a comparison between the house of God and anything now in existence. Great things are to grow out of that house; there is a great and mighty power to grow out of it; there is an endowment; knowledge is power, we want knowledge."³²

In summary, Freemasonry in Nauvoo was both a stepping-stone to the endowment and a blessing to the Saints in its own right. Its philosophies were preached from the pulpit and helped to promote ideals based on the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man that were dear to Joseph Smith. Its influence could be felt in diverse areas ranging from art and architecture to social and institutional practices. Importantly, Joseph Smith's exposure to Masonic ritual was no doubt a spur to further revelation as the Nauvoo temple ordinances took shape under his prophetic authority. But whatever suggestions may have come to Joseph Smith through his experience with Masonry, what he did with those suggestions through his prophetic gifts was seen by the Saints as transformative, not merely derivative.

Ancient Precedents for Modern Temple Rituals

A notable witness of the transformative nature of temple ordinances in our day was Hugh W. Nibley, a Brigham Young University professor and internationally respected scholar of ancient cultures. Speaking of his own endowment in 1927, he remembered: “I was very serious about it ... And the words of the initiatory [part of the endowment] — I thought those were the most magnificent words I have ever heard spoken.”³³ Admitting that his first visit to the temple had left him “in something of a daze,” his return to the temple after his mission was an overwhelming experience: “At that time I knew it was the real thing. Oh, boy, did I!”³⁴

Nibley’s delight in knowing that the ordinances he received were the “real thing” was not only because he felt and understood the power of the temple personally but also because he recognized that many of the teachings and forms used in modern ordinances resonated with what he already knew about ancient temple worship. Nibley remained a devoted participant and student of the temple throughout his life. His writings drew on his extensive knowledge of the ancient world and illuminated many aspects of restored temple ordinances. Other Latter-day Saint scholars have also made notable contributions to temple studies.³⁵

General Withdrawal of the Higher Priesthood

As mentioned before, Joseph Smith taught that temple ordinances had been available in their fulness to select individuals and families since the time of Adam and Eve.³⁶ However, they often have been administered only in a partial form due to the unreadiness of the covenant people to receive more.³⁷ In times of apostasy, the temple ordinances associated with the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood were almost totally withdrawn from the earth. Intriguingly, Jewish sources allude to things pertaining to Solomon’s Temple that were no longer present in the Second Temple.³⁸

The revelations and translations of Joseph Smith are clear in their witness that earlier forms of such loss also occurred in Moses’ day. At first, the Lord expressed His intent to make the higher ordinances of the holy priesthood available to all of Israel.³⁹ However, because of their rebellion, the higher priesthood, and its associated laws and ordinances, were instead generally withheld from the people.⁴⁰

Some prophets and kings, however, did continue to receive the highest ordinances of the Melchizedek priesthood in later Old Testament times.⁴¹ The overall structure and many of the details of kingship rites in Israel can be found in the Bible, and analogous rituals were practiced

elsewhere in the ancient Near East and in Egyptian tradition.⁴² Portions were imperfectly preserved in the teachings and rituals of some strands of second temple Judaism, in the practices of Copts and of Christians with Gnostic leanings, and in the liturgies of Christian Churches.⁴³ Later, Christians with antiquarian interests incorporated and further developed selected aspects of ancient rituals as early Freemasonry took shape.

Although the concept of a “royal priesthood”⁴⁴ expressed in a temple ordinance that confers the fulness of the priesthood might seem strange to many Christians today, the idea is perfectly consistent with ancient religious practices.⁴⁵ For example, Nicolas Wyatt summarizes a wide range of evidence indicating “a broad continuity of culture”⁴⁶ throughout the ancient Near East wherein the candidate for kingship underwent a ritual journey intended to confer a divine status as a son of God⁴⁷ and allowing him “*ex officio*, direct access to the gods. All other priests were strictly deputies”⁴⁸ to the divinely sanctioned priesthood office held by the king.

An Early Example of the Rites of Kingship

One remarkable example of kingship rites comes from the city of Mari in about 1800 BCE.⁴⁹ Among the foremost treasures of Mari is a painting on the palace walls that has come to be known as the “Investiture Panel,” which most scholars take to be a pictorial representation of the ritual in which kingship was renewed. Despite the fact that this ritual took place in Old Babylon, none of its primary themes will be unfamiliar to temple-going Latter-day Saints — nor to careful students of the Bible. Such resemblances may prove interesting for their bearing on the idea that corrupted versions of temple rites sometimes may have derived from authentic originals that predated the Old Testament as we now have it.

Though differing in some details, scholars of Mari are in general agreement that the areas in the ritual complex of the palace have been laid out so as to accommodate a ceremonial progression of the king and his entourage toward its innermost chambers. The sequence of movement from the more public to the most private portions of the palace complex would correspond to a stepwise movement from the outer edges of the Investiture Panel toward its center. Among the depictions of the Panel are what André Parrot called “undeniable biblical affinities” that he says “should neither be disregarded nor minimized.”⁵⁰ Likewise, J. R. Porter, among others, has highlighted several features of the scenes that “strikingly recall details of the Genesis description of the Garden of Eden.”⁵¹

Creation. Although we know little directly about the details of Old Babylonian kingship rituals, it is certain that the later Babylonian New Year *akītu* festival always included a rehearsal of the creation story, *Enuma Elish* (“When on high...”), a story whose theological roots reach back long before the painting of the Mari Investiture Panel. In its broad outlines, this ritual text is an account of how Marduk achieved preeminence among the gods of the heavenly council through his victorious battles against the goddess Ti’amat and her allies, and the subsequent creation of the earth and of mankind as a prelude to the building of Marduk’s temple in Babylon. The epic ends with the conferral upon Marduk of fifty sacred titles, including the higher god Ea’s own name, accompanied with the declaration: “He is indeed even as I.” Seen in this light, one scholar has proposed a better title for *Enuma Elish*: “The Exaltation of Marduk.”

Garden with a Central Tree. Following the king’s ordeal and a recital of the events of the creation, it appears that the royal party would advance through a gardenlike open space. Babylonian gardens in palaces and temples typically featured fragrant trees with edible fruit that represented their concept of Paradise. A tree, either real or artificial, typically took the central position in such gardens, recalling the biblical account of the tree “in the midst” (literally “in the center”) of the Garden of Eden.

Sacrifice, Guardians, and the “Hand” Ceremony. A scene painted on the walls of the garden courtyard has been interpreted as representing the king leading a sacrificial procession into the next room of the ritual complex. Texts from Mari also tell us that the queen furnished sacrifices for the “Lady of the Palace,” presumably meaning Ishtar, the local divinity. As they continued their ritual progression, it appears that the party passed by guardians at the entrance to each of the private chambers. Scholars have noted interesting resemblances between the figures placed at meaningful locations in the Mari investiture panel, the cherubim in the Garden of Eden, and similar representations in the later Israelite tabernacle. They also conclude that at one or more points in the ceremony, the king would have touched or grasped the hand of a statue of Ishtar. The statue itself was not seen as a god, but rather as a physical representation that the god might inhabit during propitious times.

A Second Kind of Tree Supporting a Woven Partition. A second type of tree is depicted in the mural. It appears to have symbolized a doorpost. From archaeological evidence, it seems that a pair of such treelike posts might have provided supporting infrastructure for a partition made of ornamented woven material that screened off the most

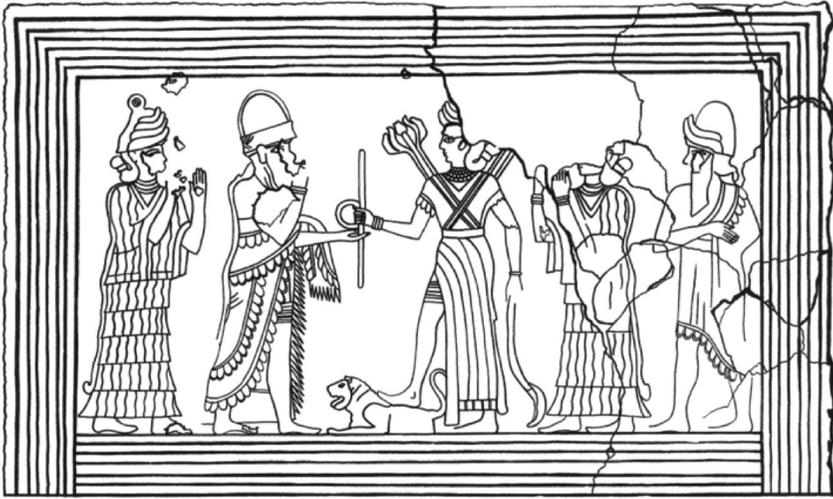


Figure 3. *Culminating Rites of Royal Investiture*. Line drawing of a detail from the upper central portion of the Mari Investiture Panel, Tel Hariri, Syria, ca. 1800-1760 BCE (Image courtesy of Oxford University Press)

sacred chamber of the complex. The suggestion of such a screen recalls the *kikkisu*, a woven reed partition ritually used in temples, perhaps similar to the one through which the Mesopotamian flood hero received divine instruction. Ultimately, as one might infer from accounts such as *Enuma Elish*, the king would have passed by the guardians of this final gate and received the god's own name and identity. By way of analogy to the function of the second type of tree in the Mari ritual, one might compare Egyptian, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions alluding to the Tree of Knowledge as a symbol for the veil of the temple sanctuary and the related themes of death and rebirth.

Culminating Rites. In the depiction of the culminating rites shown in Figure 3, the king, accompanied by a guardian with arms raised in the traditional attitude of prayer and worship, comes into the most sacred space of the palace where he would have received royal insignia from the hand of a representation of Ishtar, in the presence of other gods and divinized ancestors. The king's hand is extended to receive these insignia while his arm is raised in a gesture of oath making. As also seen in biblical practice, the solemn nature of the oath was confirmed by touching the throat. Note that the Mesopotamian royal insignia of the rod and the coil as they were depicted here in 1800 BCE, had a basic function of measurement similar to the square and compass in later times.

Summarizing the significance of ancient Babylonian temple ritual for Jews and Christians, John Walton observes, “[A]s much continuity as Christian theologians have developed between the religious ideas of preexilic Israel and those of Christianity, there is probably not as much common ground between them as there is between the religious ideas of Israel and the religious ideas of Babylon.”⁵² In particular, “the ideology of the temple is not noticeably different in Israel than it is in the ancient Near East. The difference is in the god, not in the way the temple functions in relation to the god.”⁵³

Note that in Israelite practice, as witnessed in the examples of David and Solomon, the moment where the individual was actually made a king would not necessarily have been the time of his first anointing.⁵⁴ The culminating anointing of the king corresponding to his definite investiture was, at least sometimes, preceded by a prior princely anointing. LeGrand Baker and Stephen Ricks describe “several incidents in the Old Testament where a prince was first anointed to become king, and later, after he had proven himself, was anointed again — this time as actual king.”⁵⁵ Modern Latter-day Saints can compare this idea to the conditional promises they receive in association with ordinances and blessings, which are to be realized only through their continued faithfulness.

Were Such Rites Ever Intended for Others Besides the King?

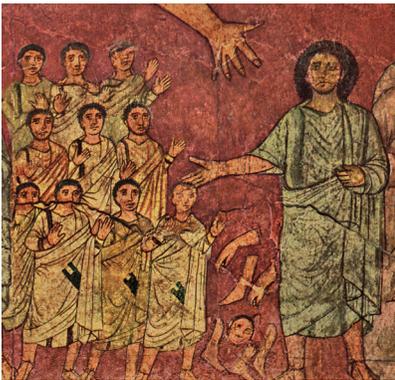


Figure 4. *The Exaltation of Resurrected Israel*, Dura Europos Synagogue, ca. 250. (Image courtesy of Yale University Press)

Although there is little indication in the Old Testament that Israelite kingship rituals were given to anyone besides the monarch, there is significant non-scriptural evidence from later times that analogous rites were made available to others. For example, findings at Qumran and Dura Europos suggest that, in at least some strands of Jewish tradition, priesthood rituals were seen as enabling members of the community, not just its ruler, to participate in a form of worship that brought them into the presence of God ritually.⁵⁶ A hint of this tradition is evident in the account of

God’s promise to Israel that, if they kept His covenant, not just a select few but all of them would have the privilege of becoming part of “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”⁵⁷

Going back to the first book of the Bible, some scholars have concluded that the statement that Adam and Eve were created in the “image of God”⁵⁸ means that “each person bears the stamp of royalty.”⁵⁹ Significantly, the promises implied in scripture (like the blessings of modern Latter-day Saint temples) are meant for Adam and Eve alike.⁶⁰ In the New Testament, similar blessings, echoing temple themes and intended for the whole community of the faithful, are given in the book of Revelation.⁶¹ In the most pointed of these statements, the Savior declares: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”⁶²

A Temple Tutorial in the Early Ministry of Joseph Smith

It appears that the Prophet learned much about temple ordinances through personal experiences with heavenly beings and revelations associated with his inspired translation of scripture. His revelations contain many unmistakable references to significant components of priesthood and temple doctrines, authority, and ordinances. Many of these date to the early 1830s, a decade or more before the Prophet began bestowing temple blessings on the Saints in Nauvoo. And given Joseph Smith’s reluctance to share the details of the most sacred events and doctrines publicly,⁶³ it is certainly possible he received specific knowledge about some temple matters even earlier than can be now documented. These matters include: 1) the narrative backbone, clothing, and covenants of the modern temple endowment; 2) the sequence of blessings of the oath and covenant of the priesthood; and 3) priesthood keys and symbols expressed in keywords, names, signs, and tokens.

1. Endowment Narrative, Clothing, and Covenants

Scripture teaches that the greatest blessing one can receive is to enter the presence of God, knowing Him, receiving all that He has, and becoming His son or daughter in the fullest sense of the word.⁶⁴ Note that individuals can enter the presence of God in one of two ways:

1. *in actuality*, through a heavenly ascent or other divine encounter. In such an experience, individuals may be transfigured temporarily in order to receive a vision of eternity, take part in heavenly worship, participate in divine ordinances, or have conferred upon them specific blessings that are made sure by the voice of God Himself.⁶⁵ In addition, followers of Christ look forward to an ultimate

consummation of their aspirations by coming into the presence of the Father after death, there receiving the blessing of a permanent, glorious resurrection;

2. *ritually*, through the ordinances of the Melchizedek priesthood found in the temple. For example, the LDS temple endowment depicts a figurative journey that brings the worshipper step-by-step into the presence of God.⁶⁶

Significantly, the sequence of events described in accounts of heavenly ascent often resembles the same general pattern symbolized in temple ritual, so that reading scriptural accounts of heavenly ascent can help us make sense of temple ritual, and experiencing temple ritual can help us understand how to prepare for an eventual entrance into the presence of God.⁶⁷ No doubt the allusions to priesthood ordinances often found within scriptural accounts of heavenly ascent are meant to serve a teaching purpose for attentive scripture readers. In brief, heavenly ascent can be understood as the “completion or fulfillment” of the “types and images” of earthly temple ritual.⁶⁸

By 1830, Joseph Smith would have been familiar with many accounts of those who had actually encountered God face to face. Indeed, in his First Vision, he had experienced a visit of the Father and the Son while still a boy.⁶⁹ In translating the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith learned the stories of other prophets who had seen the Lord, including the detailed account of how the heavenly veil was removed for the brother of Jared so that he could personally come to know the premortal Jesus Christ.⁷⁰

From the point of view of temple ritual, in contrast to heavenly ascent, the most significant early tutoring that Joseph Smith received came in 1830 and 1831 with his translation of the early chapters of Genesis, canonized in LDS scripture as the book of Moses. The book of Moses makes significant additions to the Bible account that shed additional light on priesthood as well as on temple doctrines and ordinances. Significantly, these additions, mainly dealing with events that occurred after the Fall, also illustrate the same covenants introduced to the Saints more than a decade later in the Nauvoo temple endowment.⁷¹ Following a prologue in chapter 1 that describes a heavenly ascent by Moses, the remainder of the book of Moses provided the central narrative backbone and covenants of the Nauvoo temple endowment — an outline of the way in which the Saints could come into the presence of God ritually.

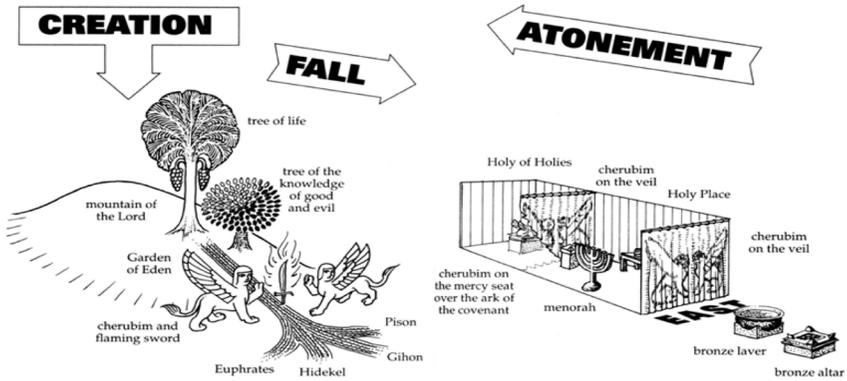


Figure 5. Sacred Topography of Eden and the Israelite Temple. (Illustration courtesy of Michael B. Lyon)

Parallels in the layout of the Garden of Eden and Israelite temples.

Unlike the Masonic rituals that Joseph Smith would come to know,⁷² temple rites in the ancient Near East nearly always featured an explicit recital of the events of Creation.⁷³ So it is with the Latter-day Saint temple endowment, which begins with the Creation story.⁷⁴ The endowment continues with an account of the Fall of Adam and Eve⁷⁵ and concludes with the story of their upward journey back to the presence of the Father.⁷⁶

To appreciate how the stories told in the book of Moses relate to the temple, one must first understand how the layout of the Garden of Eden parallels that of Israelite temples. Each major feature of the Garden (e.g., the river, the cherubim, the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of Life) corresponds to a similar symbol in the Israelite temple (e.g., the bronze laver, the cherubim, the veil,⁷⁷ the menorah⁷⁸).

Moreover, the course taken by the Israelite high priest through the temple can be seen as symbolizing the journey of the Fall of Adam and Eve in reverse (Figure 5). In other words, just as the route of Adam and Eve's departure from Eden led them *eastward* past the cherubim with the flaming swords and out of the sacred garden into the mortal world, so in ancient times the high priest would return *westward* from the mortal world, past the consuming fire, the cleansing water, and the woven images of cherubim on the temple veils — and, finally, back into the presence of God. Likewise, in both the book of Moses and the modern temple endowment, the posterity of Adam and Eve trace the footsteps of their first parents — first as they are sent away from Eden, and later in their subsequent journey of return and reunion.

The story of Adam and Eve's departure from and return to the sacred precincts of Paradise parallels a common three-part pattern in ancient Near Eastern writings: trouble at home, exile abroad, and happy homecoming.⁷⁹ The pattern is as old as the Egyptian story of Sinuhe from 1800 BCE⁸⁰ and can be seen again in scriptural accounts of Israel's apostasy and return⁸¹ as well as in the lives of biblical characters like Jacob.⁸² It can also be found in the Savior's masterful parable of the Prodigal Son.⁸³

This outline appears in modern literature as often as it did in those times.⁸⁴ However, to the ancients it was more than a mere storytelling convention, since it reflected a sequence of events common in widespread ritual practices for priests and kings.⁸⁵ More generally, it is the story of the plan of salvation in miniature as seen from the personal perspective. The life of Jesus Christ Himself also followed a similar pattern, though, unlike any ordinary mortal, He was without sin: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father."⁸⁶

Temple clothing. As he translated the Bible in 1830–1833, Joseph Smith would have come across descriptions of temple clothing.⁸⁷ For instance, he would have been familiar with the story of the fig-leaf apron and the coats of skins in the story of Adam and Eve⁸⁸ and the clothing of the temple priests in Exodus 28, which represented the clothing of heavenly beings. It was reported in a late retrospection of an 1833 incident that the Prophet had seen Michael, the Archangel "several times," "clothed in white from head to foot," with a "peculiar cap, ... a white robe, underclothing, and moccasins."⁸⁹ According to Hugh Nibley, the white undergarment represents "the proper preexistent glory of the wearer, while the [outer garment of the high priest] is the priesthood later added to it."⁹⁰ In Israelite temples, the high priest changed his clothing as he moved to areas of the temple that reflected differing degrees of sacredness. These changes in clothing mirror details of the nakedness and clothing worn by Adam and Eve in different parts of their garden sanctuary.⁹¹

Temple covenants. The temple journey of return and reunion is made possible through obedience to covenants, coupled with the enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. As an Apostle, Elder Ezra Taft Benson outlined these covenants to a general audience as including "the law of obedience and sacrifice, the law of the gospel, the law of chastity, and the law of consecration."⁹²

Some LDS scholars have conjectured that an ancient book somewhat like the book of Moses may have been used as a foundation for temple narrative in former times.⁹³ For instance, in the book of Moses, the story

The Way of Life	The Way of Death
Obedience (Moses 5:1-6)	Defiance (Moses 5:13-14)
Sacrifice (Moses 5:4-8, 20)	Perversion of Sacrifice (Moses 5:18-19, 21)
The Gospel (Moses 5:58-59; 8:19)	Works of Darkness (Moses 5:29-31, 47-57; 8:26)
Chastity (Moses 6:5-23; 8:13)	Licentiousness (Moses 6:15; 8:14-21)
Consecration (Moses 7:18)	Violence and Corruption (Moses 5:31-33, 50; 6:15; 8:28)
Endless Life (Moses 7:23, 69; 8:27)	Untimely Death (Moses 8:30)

Figure 6. *The Two Ways of Covenant-Keeping and Covenant-Breaking*

pauses from time to time and weaves in ritual acts like sacrifice; ordinances like baptism, washings, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and themes relating to covenants like chastity and consecration. Mark Johnson has suggested that if an account of Enoch and his city of Zion was read in an ancient temple context, it would have been natural for members of an attending

congregation to have covenanted to keep all things in common, with all they possess affirmed as belonging to the Lord.⁹⁴

The illustrations of covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking provided in the book of Moses in 1830–1831 correspond to the sequence of covenants that was introduced in the Nauvoo temple more than a decade later, as shown in Figure 6. Significantly, John W. Welch found a similar pattern in his analysis of the Sermon on the Mount, in which the commandments “are not only the same as the main commandments always issued at the temple, but they appear largely in the same order.”⁹⁵

What seems to be deliberate structuring of biblical accounts to highlight a sequence of covenants can also be found in the Hebrew Bible. For example, the eminent Bible scholar David Noel Freedman called attention to a specific pattern of covenant-breaking in the “Primary History” of the Old Testament. He concluded that this section of the biblical record was deliberately structured to reveal a sequence where each of the commandments was broken in specific order one by one.⁹⁶

In summary, Joseph Smith’s translation of the book of Moses, in conjunction with his translation of other portions of the Bible, would have provided an extensive tutorial for the Prophet on temple-relevant stories, clothing, and covenants, long before the Nauvoo era.

2. The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

The temple endowment was only one part of the extended sequence of ordinances of exaltation that were revealed over time to the Prophet. Thus, comparisons of ancient or modern rituals that focus solely on the endowment miss a significant part of the overall picture.

	22-23 January 1832 (D&C 84:33-48)	19 January 1841 (D&C 124:39)	4 May 1842 (Documentary History 5:2)
Initiatory	"sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies"	"your anointings and your washings"*	"washings, anointings"
Endowment**	"the sons of Moses and of Aaron"	"your memorials for your sacrifices by the sons of Levi, and for your oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations"	"endowments, and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days," i.e., Adam
Marriage Sealing	"the seed of Abraham"		
Fulness of the Priesthood	"the church and kingdom"	"your statutes and judgments"	i.e., "the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood"
Election Made Sure; More Sure Word of Prophecy	"the elect of God"		"secure the fulness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the Firstborn"
Second Comforter	"the Father teacheth him"		(a blessing of "the Church of the Firstborn" — D&C 88:3-5)
Receive the Kingdom	"all that my Father hath shall be given unto him"		"abide in the presence of the Elohim in the eternal worlds"
* "and your baptisms for the dead, and your solemn assemblies" immediately follows these words. ** As used in modern LDS terminology. By way of contrast, Joseph Smith seems to have used the word "endowment" to refer to the entire sequence of ordinances and blessings.			

Figure 7. Sequence of Blessings of the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood

As Joseph Smith continued his translation of the Old Testament beyond the chapters contained in the book of Moses, he learned of righteous individuals whose experiences provided a further tutorial about temple ordinances and the priesthood as they existed anciently. For example, between December 1830 and June 1831 Joseph Smith translated Old Testament chapters that described the plural marriages of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the New Testament account of the Sadducees' question about marriage in the resurrection.⁹⁷ By at least 1835, Joseph Smith had begun teaching the principle of eternal marriage to others such as William W. Phelps, who was told that he and his wife were "certain to be one in the Lord throughout eternity" if they continued "faithful to the end."⁹⁸

Additional revelations and teachings of Joseph Smith, in conjunction with the ongoing work of Bible translation, elaborated on the stories and significance of righteous individuals such as Melchizedek and Elijah, explaining how the priesthood authority they held related to additional ordinances and blessings that could be given in the temple after one had already received the endowment and been sealed in eternal marriage covenants.⁹⁹ For example, the blessings of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood belong to one who is made a "king and a priest unto God, bearing rule, authority, and dominion under the Father."¹⁰⁰

Correspondingly, worthy women may receive the blessings of becoming queens and priestesses.¹⁰¹ It is fitting for these blessings to be associated with the name of Melchizedek, because he was the great “king of Salem” and “the priest of the most high God,”¹⁰² who gave the priesthood to Abraham.¹⁰³ Later kings of Israel, as well as Jesus Christ Himself, were declared to be part of the “order of Melchizedek,”¹⁰⁴ which was originally called “the Order of the Son of God.”¹⁰⁵ Additional revelatory insights of the Prophet relating to ordinances received after the endowment and marriage sealing are especially evident in the changes he made in his translation of the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹⁰⁶

In summary, a search through the translations, revelations, and teachings of Joseph Smith reveals that an outline of ordinances and blessings, including those to be received following the temple endowment, was given to the Prophet early in his ministry. Indeed, by no later than 1835 the Lord had revealed to Joseph Smith doctrines and principles relating to what we now call the ordinances of the initiatory, endowment, eternal marriage, the fulness of the priesthood, and exaltation in the presence of the Father. An examination of the second and third columns of the table shown in Figure 7 reveals that the orderly sequence of these ordinances and blessings was summarized in D&C 124:39 on January 19, 1841, and again in a firsthand description of the events of May 4, 1842,¹⁰⁷ the day the Prophet Joseph Smith began to administer these ordinances in the upper story of the Red Brick Store. Significantly, however, the most complete list of these ordinances and blessings, shown in the leftmost column, was given by revelation in 1832, a decade earlier.¹⁰⁸

3. Priesthood Keys and Symbols¹⁰⁹

When D&C 124 was revealed to the Prophet in 1841, he was told that “the keys of the holy priesthood” had been “kept hid from before the foundation of the world” and that they were soon to be revealed in the “ordinances” of the Nauvoo temple.¹¹⁰ However, at least some of these keys had been introduced to the Prophet long before. For instance, in December 1830, using language that resembled the later 1841 revelation, the Lord could say already to Joseph Smith that He had “given unto him the keys of the mystery of those things which have been sealed, even things which were from the foundation of the world.”¹¹¹ This is temple language.¹¹²

Moreover, D&C 132:19 revealed that as a requirement for entering into “exaltation and glory” within the heavenly temple, the candidate for

eternal life must be able to “pass by the angels, and the gods.” Elaborating details of this requirement, Brigham Young taught that in order to do so the Saints must be “able to give them the *key words, the signs and tokens*, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood.”¹¹³

Keywords and Names. “Keywords” have been associated with temples since very early times. In a temple context, the meaning of the term can be taken literally: the use of the appropriate keyword or words by a qualified worshipper, “unlocks” the gate for access to specific, secured areas of the sacred space.¹¹⁴

That said, whether or not the saving ordinances we perform in this life become effective in eternity depends as much on what we eventually *become* as on what we *know*. This is consistent with Old Testament examples of figures like Abraham, Sarah, and Jacob who received new names only after the Lord had tested their integrity.¹¹⁵ This also explains why names are so closely associated with keywords. Indeed, Joseph Smith taught that “The new name *is* the key word.”¹¹⁶

The importance of qualifying through worthiness and experience to take upon ourselves a sacred name is taught in ordinances like the sacrament, where we learn that we must “always remember” and be “willing to take upon [ourselves] the name of Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁷ Ultimately, however, we must not only be *willing* to take on the name of Jesus Christ but also become fully ready to do so if we are to receive every blessing outlined in the ordinances.¹¹⁸ To take upon oneself the name of Jesus Christ in actuality is to identify with Him to such a degree that we become one with Him in every aspect of saving knowledge and personal character.¹¹⁹

In 1829, Joseph Smith would have encountered this principle as he translated the words of King Benjamin, who understood why those who did not take upon themselves “the name of Christ” through obedience to the end their lives “must be called by some other name.”¹²⁰ The theme of God’s sharing His own name with those who approach the final gate to enter His presence can also be found in the explanations of Facsimile 2 from the book of Abraham that date to sometime between 1835 and 1841.¹²¹ In Figure 7 of that facsimile, God is pictured as “sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood.” This concept is also found in Revelation 14:1, where we are told about those who would have the “Father’s name written in their foreheads.”

Signs and Tokens. The use of “signs” and “tokens” as symbols connected with covenants made in temples and used as aids in sacred teaching is

an ancient practice. For example, the raised hand is a long-recognized sign of oath-taking,¹²² and the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle contained various tangible “tokens of the covenant”¹²³ relating to the priesthood, including the golden pot that had manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the law.¹²⁴

By way of analogy to a possible function of the items within the Ark of the Covenant — items that related to the higher priesthood¹²⁵ — consider the Greek Eleusinian Mysteries,¹²⁶ which endured over a period of nearly two thousand years. These rites were said to consist of *legomena* (= things recited), *deiknymena* (= things shown), and *dromena* (= things performed). A sacred casket contained the tokens of the god, which were used to teach initiates about the meaning of the rites. At the culmination of the process, the initiate was examined about his knowledge of these tokens. “Having passed the tests of the tokens and their passwords, ... the initiate would have been admitted to the presence of the god.”¹²⁷

In addition to a physical representation within sacred containers like the Ark of the Covenant, tokens could be expressed in the form of a handclasp, a symbol for unique individuality and joined unity that can be used both in tests of knowledge and identity as well as in acts of recognition and reunion.

Besides their use in tests of knowledge, clasped hands have been a prominent symbol of the marriage relationship since ancient times. This was also a symbol used by the Prophet Joseph Smith by at least 1835. For example, on November 24, 1835, Joseph Smith performed a marriage ceremony “by the authority of the everlasting priesthood.” He requested the bride and groom to “join hands” and then they entered into a “covenant” while the Prophet pronounced “the blessings that the Lord conferred upon Adam and Eve.”¹²⁸

Sacred handclasps were also used in early Christian prayer circles. For example, according to the pseudepigraphal *Acts of John*,¹²⁹ Jesus concluded His final instructions to the apostles with a choral prayer in which “he told [them] to form a circle, holding one another’s hands, and himself stood in the middle.”

The classical priestly posture of prayer with uplifted hands was known in the Old Testament¹³⁰ and continued as a feature of Christian prayer in Joseph Smith’s day. Zebedee Coltrin recorded that at the Kirtland School of the Prophets on January 23, 1833, the participants were to “wash themselves,” “put on clean clothing” — in likeness of the Israelites at Mount Sinai¹³¹ — and then engage “in silent prayer, kneeling, with our hands uplifted each one praying in silence.”¹³² In this instance,

the prayer with uplifted hands was followed by an appearance of the Father and the Son.

The Sacred Embrace. In ancient temple ritual, the gesture of the embrace could be seen as a stronger form of the symbolism represented in the handclasp. Whereas a handclasp can be used as a symbol of an unbreakable bond between two individuals, an embrace is an even more powerful symbol that can signify absolute unity and oneness between them.¹³³

Notably, both the handclasp and the embrace can be used to represent not only mutual love and trust, but also a transfer of life and power from one individual to another. In what Willard Richards called “the sweetest sermon from Joseph he ever heard in his life,”¹³⁴ the Prophet described a vision of the resurrection that included a handclasp and an embrace:¹³⁵

So plain was the vision. I actually saw men, before they had ascended from the tomb, as though they were getting up slowly. They *took each other by the hand*, and it was, “My father and my son, my mother and my daughter, my brother and my sister.” When the voice calls for the dead to arise, suppose I am laid by the side of my father, what would be the first joy of my heart? Where is my father, my mother, my sister? They are by my side. *I embrace them*, and they me.

Joseph Smith’s words about the gesture of embrace in the resurrection recall similar symbolism in the stories of Elijah and Elisha, who each employed a similar ritual gesture as they raised a dead child back to life.¹³⁶ The more detailed account of Elisha reads as follows:¹³⁷

And he [Elisha] went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

Seeing anticipatory symbolism in this story, the *Seder Eliyahu Rabbah* specifically adds that the Messiah will be the very “Son of the Widow” whom Elijah raised from the dead. The threefold repetition of the act in the story of Elijah points to a ritual context, perhaps corresponding to a similar Mesopotamian procedure where the healer superimposed his body over that of the patient, head to head, hand to hand, foot to foot.¹³⁸

Those familiar with the Bible will also recall relevant temple symbolism in the story of Jacob. Speaking of Jacob’s dream of the heavenly ladder in Genesis 28, Elder Marion G. Romney said: “Jacob



Figure 8. Jacob Wrestling with the Angel. Chapter House, Salisbury Cathedral, England, 19th-century restoration of a 13th-century original (Photograph courtesy of Matthew B. Brown)

realized that the covenants he made with the Lord were the rungs on the ladder that he himself would have to climb in order to obtain the promised blessings — blessings that would entitle him to enter heaven and associate with the Lord.”¹³⁹ Thus, in what may be a deliberate play on similar teachings in Freemasonry, the Prophet Joseph Smith correlated the “three principal rounds of Jacob’s ladder” with “the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms.”¹⁴⁰ Later Jacob wrestled (or embraced, as this may also be understood¹⁴¹) an angel who, after a series of questions and answers in a place that Jacob named Peniel (Hebrew “face of God”), gave him a new name.¹⁴²

Detecting True and False Heavenly Messengers. Of course, the keywords, names, signs, and tokens would be of no importance as symbols of authentication unless deception were a real possibility. In addition to their ancient use in sacred forms of prayer and as part of ritual and actual heavenly ascent, a knowledge of

these things was important in detecting evil spirits.

When did Joseph Smith first learn about the keys by which he could distinguish true messengers from false ones? Arguably, on May 15, 1829 when John the Baptist restored the “keys of the ministering of angels” to him and Oliver Cowdery.¹⁴³ During this experience “on the banks of the Susquehanna,” it seems that Satan appeared to deceive the Prophet and thwart the restoration of priesthood authority.¹⁴⁴ As the Prophet later recorded, Michael (or Adam) then came to his aid, “detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light!”¹⁴⁵ “Thus,” according to Joseph Fielding McConkie and Craig Ostler, “the right to receive the ministrations of angels and the ability to discern true messengers of God from counterfeits came before the Church was organized.”¹⁴⁶ Significantly, an account of how Moses recognized and successfully commanded Satan to depart by invoking the name of “the Only Begotten” was translated by Joseph Smith about one year after this experience.¹⁴⁷

Bounded Flexibility in Adaptations of Temple Ritual

While, as Joseph Smith taught, the “order of the house of God”¹⁴⁸ must remain unchanged, the Lord has permitted authorized Church leaders to make adaptations of the ordinances to meet the needs of different times, cultures, and practical circumstances. Latter-day Saints understand that the primary intent of temple ordinances is to teach and bless the participants, not to provide precise matches to texts, symbols, and modes of presentation from other times. Because this is so, we would expect to find Joseph Smith’s restored ritual deviating at times from the wording and symbolism of ancient ordinances in the interest of clarity and relevance to modern disciples. Similarly, we would expect various adaptations in the presentation of the ordinances to mirror changes in culture and practical circumstances.

Adaptations in the Wording and Symbolism of Ordinances

D&C 1:24 explicitly recognizes the need for bounded flexibility in adapting divine communication to accommodate mortal limitations, asserting that God always speaks to humans “in their weakness,” choosing a language of revelation that is “after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding.” In this regard, Richard L. Bushman reminds us that:¹⁴⁹

all sorts of cultural baggage of worldly culture, human culture, is loaded into the communications that we’re receiving from God. And there’s always going to be a filter, a screen, that’s going to obscure what God truly is and what He wants to communicate to us, because He’s dependent — He *has* to use the language we can understand....

[Thus,] the vocabulary that the Lord uses to communicate through His prophets is not just “pure” or “biblical” or “religious” vocabulary, but whatever best serves His purpose, including Masonic terminology. [However,] what we must remember is that even though these languages are borrowed and bring cultural baggage with them, we revise that language, we make it our own.¹⁵⁰ It soon assumes a Mormon, or we would say, perhaps, a more godly form because it is used in the context of other revelations and of all the practices that Mormons use. And that is particularly true ... with the temple.

With respect to the temple, Samuel M. Brown¹⁵¹ has argued that Joseph Smith appropriated and “translated” selected elements of Freemasonry into the temple teachings and practices he introduced to the Saints.¹⁵² However, sometimes it may be more accurate to see the process by which revelation came to the Prophet in an inverse fashion. In other words, we might see the revelatory process, at least in some cases, not primarily as a “translation” of elements of Masonic ritual into Mormon temple ordinances, but rather as a “translation” of revealed truths — components of temple ordinances that Joseph Smith had previously encountered in his translation of the Bible and through his personal revelatory experiences — into words and actions that the Saints in Nauvoo could readily understand because their intuitions had already been primed by their exposure to the Bible and to Freemasonry.¹⁵³

It should be no more a surprise to Latter-day Saints if some phrasing of the rites of Freemasonry parallel selected aspects of restored temple ordinances than the idea that wording similar to that of the King James Version was adopted in the English translation of scriptural passages from the Old Testament included on the Book of Mormon plates.¹⁵⁴ In both cases, the use of elements already familiar to the early Saints would have served a pragmatic purpose, favoring their acceptance and understanding of specific aspects of the ancient teachings better than if a whole new and foreign textual or ritual vocabulary had been introduced.

As an instructive instance of change and continuity within the ordinances, note that the current English wording of the baptismal prayer differs from the examples given in the English translation of the Book of Mormon, without compromising its essential elements.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, the specific wordings of LDS ordinances in their non-English translations have been updated periodically when better translations were found — with no loss of efficacy.

Going further, Elder Bruce R. McConkie noted that three different ordinances — baptism, the sacrament, and animal sacrifice — were instituted at different times, using different tangible symbols, and in different types of settings, but all in association with one and the same covenant.¹⁵⁶ Though these three ordinances vary significantly in their expressions of relevant symbolism, each of them “is performed in similitude of the atoning sacrifice by which salvation comes.”¹⁵⁷ What is important in all ordinances, including temple ordinances, is that any adaptations to different times, cultures, and practical circumstances be done under prophetic authority in order to minimize the possibility of changes that alter them in crucial ways.

Adaptations in the Presentation of the Ordinances

With respect to the constrained circumstances under which temple ordinances often have been performed, recall that in the time of the patriarchs and early prophets, they were enacted in open air on the “mountain top”¹⁵⁸ or perhaps at times in a tent dedicated to that purpose.¹⁵⁹ Long after the exodus, when Israel was settled in the land and dwelt in peace, King David grieved that he lived in a palace of cedar while the ark of God humbly languished, as it had since the wanderings of his people in the wilderness, within the curtains of a portable Tabernacle.¹⁶⁰ It was not until the days of Solomon that a permanent and gloriously fitting House of the Lord was finally dedicated¹⁶¹ — only to be destroyed a few centuries later by the Babylonians.

The conditions under which temple work was performed among the early Saints in our day have also varied due to changing circumstances. When the Nauvoo Temple was still under construction, Joseph Smith was prompted to hasten¹⁶² the introduction of the temple ordinances “in an improvised and makeshift way”¹⁶³ to a select few in the attic story of the Red Brick Store. In one account, he is remembered as lamenting: “Brother Brigham, this is not arranged right. But we have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed.”¹⁶⁴ After the death of Joseph Smith, the Saints continued their labors to bring the Nauvoo Temple into a form suitable for the administration of the higher ordinances. However, after only brief use in its hastily completed state, the body of the Church was compelled to leave for the West. Shortly thereafter, the Nauvoo Temple was destroyed by fire and wind. Because the Salt Lake Temple would not be finished for forty years, the Saints in the West began to receive the temple ordinances in a variety of temporary settings, including the top of Ensign Peak, Brigham Young’s office, the Council House, and the Endowment House.¹⁶⁵ Finally, decades after their arrival in Salt Lake City, temples began to dot the landscape in Utah. At last, modern temple ordinances could be carried out in surroundings that equalled their majesty.

The most significant adaptation of the presentation of temple ordinances after that time was the cinematic version of the endowment produced for the Swiss Temple. This development allowed the endowment to be presented “in a single ordinance room and in more than one language with far fewer than the usual number of temple workers.”¹⁶⁶ In retrospect, this adaptation of the endowment to different languages was no more consequential than the gradual accommodation of the film to the sensibilities of today’s Church members, who are accustomed to the techniques and high-quality production values of commercial filmmaking.

In contrast to the bare recitals and repeated conventions of ancient ritual,¹⁶⁷ in which, for example, the creation drama could only be “conveyed by dialogue offstage,”¹⁶⁸ Hugh Nibley has described how the lush visuals, the heightened dramatic portrayals by actors, and the powerful emotional impact of a continuous musical score have enhanced the presentation of the endowment for participants:¹⁶⁹

Today the various steps of creation are made vivid to us by superb cinematographic and sound recordings, showing the astral, geological, and biological wonders described by the actors and the vast reaches of time that the gods called days before time was measured unto man. Along with that, we are regaled by haunting background music that touches the feelings without intruding on the attention of the audience.

Though recognizing the value of these advances, Nibley worried that overuse of sophisticated theatrical components aimed at enriching the sensory and emotional experience sometimes might distract temple-goers from a focus on the rich meaning conveyed in the words and forms that have functioned traditionally as centerpieces of authentic temple ritual. He observed: “The most impressive temple sessions I have attended have been at Manti where [the live performances of] elderly farm people put on a far more intelligent display than the slick professionals”¹⁷⁰ in the films. Note that the live presentation of the endowment continues in both the Manti and Salt Lake Temples.

The advantage of the variety of interpretations experienced in live presentations of the endowment is preserved by the rotation of multiple films in most temples today. For example, in 2014 *The Deseret News* reported that three different films for LDS temple instruction had been released within the previous year. According to the news article: “The script in each of the films is the same. The films are shown in a rotation to provide variety to temple instruction.”¹⁷¹ The similarities and differences between films help temple-goers distinguish essential instruction from cinematic artistry, thus encouraging them to generalize concrete film details to universal application and minimizing the possibility that incidental particulars may be magnified unintentionally into significant doctrinal imperatives. For instance, without some variety in the different film presentations, a given rendition in a specific film of a few measures of moving music at a strategic story juncture or a powerful and highly nuanced expression of emotion — a tear, a glance, a pause, a gesture, or a smile — might overshadow essential verbal clues pointing to the meaning of the temple narrative.

Earthly Ordinances As Reflections of Heavenly Ordinances

Hugh Nibley has described how the instructional approach of the temple endowment provides needed flexibility while affording remarkable stability:¹⁷²

The Mormon endowment ... is frankly a model, a presentation in figurative terms. As such it is flexible and adjustable; for example, it may be presented in more languages than one and in more than one medium of communication. But since it does not attempt to be a picture of reality but only a model or analog to show us how things work, setting forth a pattern of man's life on earth with its fundamental whys and wherefores, it does not need to be changed or adapted greatly through the years; it is a remarkably stable model.

Moreover, consistent with the idea that the temple is a model or analog rather than a picture of reality, is the distinction that Elder John A. Widtsoe made between earthly and heavenly ordinances:¹⁷³

Great eternal truths make up the Gospel plan. All regulations for man's earthly guidance have their eternal spiritual counterparts. The earthly ordinances of the Gospel are themselves only reflections of heavenly ordinances. For instance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and temple work are merely earthly symbols of realities that prevail throughout the universe; but they are symbols of truths that must be recognized if the Great Plan is to be fulfilled. The acceptance of these earthly symbols is part and parcel of correct earth life, but being earthly symbols they are distinctly of the earth and cannot be accepted elsewhere than on earth. In order that absolute fairness may prevail and eternal justice may be satisfied, all men, to attain the fulness of their joy, must accept these earthly ordinances. There is no water baptism in the next estate nor any conferring of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of earthly hands. The equivalents of these ordinances prevail no doubt in every estate, but only as they are given on this earth can they be made to aid, in their onward progress, those who have dwelt on earth.

The Restoration of Temple Ordinances

Jesus' parable of the householder finds application in the process by which modern temple ordinances came forth. As an "expert scribe"¹⁷⁴ and a "good householder who makes suitable and varied provision for his household,"¹⁷⁵ Joseph Smith restored ancient temple worship by bringing "out of his treasure things new and old"¹⁷⁶ — perhaps better translated as "things that are new and yet old."¹⁷⁷ In other words, as one New Testament scholar observed, the "secrets themselves are not really 'new'; they are 'things hidden since the foundation of the world,'¹⁷⁸ and it is only their revelation which is new."¹⁷⁹

Moreover, the Nauvoo temple ordinances should not be regarded as a new and surprising development so much as the full-fledged blossoming of ideas and priesthood authority that had already budded in Kirtland — or even, arguably, when Joseph Smith experienced his First Vision.¹⁸⁰ As Don Bradley perceptively observes:¹⁸¹

The faith [Joseph Smith] preached at the close of his career undeniably differed from the faith he preached at its opening. Yet eminent Yale literary critic Harold Bloom has asserted that Smith's "religion-making imagination" was of the "unfolding" rather than the *evolving* type, that his religious system did not transform so much by the incorporation of others' ideas but by the progressive outworking of his original vision.

To members of the Church who know and love the temple the results of the progressive unfolding of that original vision are palpable. Indeed it might be said that the temple ordinances revealed by the Prophet, like the scripture that came through him, "gave his believing [followers] a sense of what was experientially real, not merely philosophically true."¹⁸² Unlike the allegories of Masonic ritual, which contain beautiful truths while eschewing salvific claims, modern temple ordinances purport a power in the priesthood that imparts sanctity to their simple forms, making earthly symbols holy by connecting them with the living God. In an 1832 revelation, Joseph Smith was told:¹⁸³

And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For

without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.

These verses make it clear that for the Prophet, like John the Apostle, “the specific gift of the power of knowing God is ultimately equated with eternal life itself.”¹⁸⁴ However, as Hugh Nibley reminds us, “You comprehend others only to the degree you are like them.”¹⁸⁵ This is the whole purpose of the temple: Through the divine influence that flows into all those who learn and live the truths that are made available through participating in temple ordinances and keeping the associated covenants,¹⁸⁶ the priesthood becomes a channel of personal revelation¹⁸⁷ and a power that enables one to become like God, experiencing “the power of godliness.”

It is my personal witness that the LDS temple ordinances are, as Elder John A. Widtsoe affirmed, “earthly symbols of realities that prevail throughout the universe.”¹⁸⁸ They point to heavenly meanings beyond themselves — meanings that can be revealed through our “minding true things by what their mock’ries be.”¹⁸⁹ The ordinances perform an essential earthly function, providing “the means both of receiving instruction and demonstrating obedience,”¹⁹⁰ helping make us ready, someday, to “behold the face of God,”¹⁹¹ as did Moses. In brief, those who participate in the ordinances of the temple are shown a pattern in ritual of what Moses and others throughout ancient and modern history have experienced in actuality.

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This article is dedicated to Robert W. Peterson, my father-in-law, who left this life on January 19, 2015. Among other callings, he served a mission in the Stockholm Sweden temple with his wife, Lori. Like Heber C. Kimball, he was true to his Masonic brethren and to his brethren in the Church.

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Endnotes

1. For example in 1835, as the Saints prepared to receive the ordinances that would be available to them in the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet stated (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 12 November 1835, p. 91):

The order of the house of God has been, and ever will be, the same, even after Christ comes; and after the termination of the thousand years it will be the same; and we shall finally enter into the celestial kingdom of God, and enjoy it forever.

Compare this statement from 1834: “We all admit that the Gospel has ordinances, and if so, had it not always ordinances, and were not its ordinances always the same?” (ibid., 22 January 1834, pp. 59-60).

Of course, the Nauvoo temple ordinances had not been given to the Saints at the time these statements were made, so it is evident that the Prophet is making a broad claim about the antiquity of saving ordinances here, including the general “order of the house of God,” and not making an assertion about their completeness and exactness in every detail. After the Nauvoo endowment was administered on 4 May 1842, Elder Willard Richards wrote: “In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days” (ibid., 4 May 1842, p. 237) — asserting both the antiquity of the ordinance and the fact that this order was new to the select group to whom it had been given.

Though the Prophet had revealed “all those plans and principles by which anyone is able to secure the fulness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the Firstborn” (ibid., 4 May 1842, p. 237), none of those who were part of the select group who received temple ordinances on 4 May 1842 had actually received the fulness of the priesthood, for which they would need to be made kings and priests rather than mere candidates (see J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 304 n. 21; J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 53–58). Note that even to be “ordained Kings and Priests” is limited in the sense that it is “all that can be given on earth” (Brigham Young, quoted in Heber C. Kimball Journal, kept by William Clayton, 26 December 1845, Church Archives, as cited in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 304 n. 21) — further blessings must be obtained as part of heavenly ordinances (J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 53–58).

Further emphasizing the eternal nature of the ordinances and the importance of maintaining their integrity, Joseph Smith said (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 11 June 1843, p. 308; cf. ibid., 1 September 1842, p. 264; ibid., 5 October 1840, pp. 168–173; JST Genesis 14:27–29; D&C 128:5, 18):

Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles. ... If a man gets a fulness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the

commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of God.

Earlier that same year, the Prophet stated (*Teachings*, 22 January 1843, pp. 271–272):

Some say that the kingdom of God was not set up on the earth until the day of Pentecost ... but, I say in the name of the Lord, that the kingdom of God was set up on the earth from the days of Adam to the present time. Whenever there has been a righteous man on earth unto whom God revealed His word and gave power and authority to administer in His name, and where there is a priest of God — a minister who has power and authority from God to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel and officiate in the priesthood of God, there is the kingdom of God. ... Where there is a prophet, a priest, or a righteous man unto whom God gives His oracles, there is the kingdom of God; and where the oracles of God are not, there the kingdom of God is not.

2. R. G. Scott, *To Acquire*; R. G. Scott, *How To Obtain*.
3. *What Is Freemasonry?*
4. For comprehensive and up-to-date accounts of the history of Freemasonry worldwide, see H. Bogdan et al., *Handbook of Freemasonry*.
5. For a well-crafted account of the history and appeal of Freemasonry in early America, see D. G. Hackett, *That Religion*.
6. S. M. Brown, *In Heaven*, p. 174. Currently published evidence bearing on the question of whether Joseph Smith, Sr. was a Mason is equivocal. However, Greg Kearney (15 May 2015) has seen new evidence that seems to make this a likely possibility.
7. For a brief summary of the literature on this topic, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Keys and Symbols*, in preparation.
8. S. M. Brown, *In Heaven*, p. 178.
9. See K. L. Walgren, *James Adams*, p. 127.
10. S. E. Black, *James Adams*, p. 39; K. L. Walgren, *James Adams*, p. 125–127. After 1841, Adams' participation in Masonic lodges apparently came to an end. "He had thrown his lot with the Mormons and was at [the time of the Grand Lodge meeting in October 1841] attending the Mormon General Conference in Nauvoo" (*ibid.*, p. 127).

11. K. L. Walgren, James Adams, p. 127 writes: “There is some evidence that he may have been baptized as early as December 4, 1836; more likely the rite was performed in the fall of 1840.”
12. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
13. G. M. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, pp. 314–315. In one early Masonic self-characterization, the institution was described as being “that Religion in which all men Agree” (J. Anderson, *Constitutions*, p. 48).
14. K. W. Godfrey, *Freemasonry and the Temple*, p. 529. Cf. M. Introvigne, *Freemasonry and New Religious Movements*, p. 312. “The oldest documents, which are usually associated with Freemasonry, are the so-called ... ‘Old Charges.’ ... The contents of these documents are explicitly Christian” (J. A. M. Snoek et al., *History of Freemasonry*, pp. 14, 15). The history of Masonry as an institution is not currently documented before the late 1300s (A. Prescott, *Old Charges*; J. A. M. Snoek et al., *History of Freemasonry*, p. 14) and (notwithstanding the fantastic claims of best-sellers) the first suggestion of a link between chivalry and Freemasonry does not occur until 1723 (P. Mollier, *Freemasonry and Templarism*, pp. 83–84).

That said, few scholars would disagree that many of Freemasonry’s ideas and ritual components drew on ideas from ancient sources, especially early Christianity (see, e.g., M. B. Brown, *Exploring*, pp. 45–55). Indeed in 1766, in one of the earliest exposés of Masonry, Bérage, *Les Plus Secrets Mystères*, p. ix went so far as to say: “the mysteries of Masonry ... are nothing more than those of the Christian religion.”

Though Old Testament themes are pervasive in Masonic ritual, it seems clear that they come by way of Christian tradition. As R. J. Van Pelt, *Freemasonry and Judaism*, pp. 189-190 observes: “There is no evidence that the most important Old Testament stories, themes and symbols that found their way into Freemasonry were directly derived from the Tanakh [= the Hebrew Bible]. ... In fact, they are clearly derived from the King James translation of the Bible. Therefore these are all examples of a Christian legacy.”

As a result of several factors, Masonry later moved away to a degree from its explicitly Christian roots and welcomed all believers in a higher power. However, in Joseph Smith’s time its rituals remained highly Christian in their character.

15. B. F. Johnson, *My Life’s Review*, p. 85. Despite the characterization of Johnson of Masonic ritual as an “apostate endowment,” it is clear that the early Saints did not see a conflict between participation in

Masonry and participation in temple ordinances. Masonry does not conflict with LDS religious obligations because, strictly speaking, it is not a religion and does not claim salvific power for its rituals.

16. T. L. Givens, *Wrestling the Angel*, p. 39.
17. S. Larson, *Ministry of Meetings*, p. 42, cited in M. B. Brown, *Exploring*, p. 156; M. B. Brown, *Gate*, pp. 307–308 with emphasis added. See *ibid.*, p. 316 for additional comments relating to Richards’ reference to lost Masonic knowledge. See D. Bradley, ‘Grand Fundamental Principles,’ pp. 33–34 for the suggestion that Joseph Smith used his knowledge of Freemasonry — and his belief that Masons had some of the temple ritual — to help him “study ... out in [his] mind” (D&C 9:8) the details of the endowment.
18. Cited in A. F. Ehat, *They Might Have Known*, p. 145. Heber C. Kimball summarized his views as a longtime Mason on the similarities between Masonic and Mormon ritual as follows (Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, 17 June 1842, Heber C. Kimball Papers, LDS Church History Library, cited in S. B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball*, p. 85, spelling, grammar, and punctuation standardized):

We have received some precious things through the Prophet on the priesthood that would cause your soul to rejoice. I cannot give them to you on paper, for they are not to be written. So you must come and get them for yourself. We have organized a lodge here of Masons since we obtained a charter. That was in March. Since that [time] there have been nearly two hundred made Masons. Br. Joseph and Sidney [Rigdon] were the first that were received into the Lodge. All of the twelve apostles have become members except Orson Pratt. He hangs back. He will wake up soon. There is a similarity of priesthood [ordinances] in Masonry. Bro. Joseph says Masonry was taken from priesthood but has become degenerated. But many things are perfect.

19. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 19 December 1841, p. 195.
20. *Ibid.*, 15 October 1843, p. 329. Cf. “Letter to Emma,” 31 March 1842.
21. Cf. H. Nibley, *What*, p. 369. Although the rites of Freemasonry are not seen as salvific, the religious element of agreements entered into within Masonry is underscored by the fact that the traditional oath of an Entered Apprentice is made while placing the hand under the Bible (or, when desired, another suitable work of scripture), and with

- the explicit acknowledgement that this is done “in the presence of Almighty God” (see A. de Hoyos et al., *Light on Masonry*, pp. 19–20).
22. It must be observed that the degrees conferred by various Masonic organizations like the York Rite (or American Rite) are not, strictly speaking, part of basic Masonry, the Blue Lodge. They require prior Masonic affiliation in order to qualify for membership and build on the base the Blue Lodge establishes, with further instruction on moral principles. Joseph Smith was not initiated into Royal Arch Masonry, though some of his close associates were.
 23. S. Town, *System of Speculative Masonry*, p. 81.
 24. For example, see Hebrews 6:18–20; Revelation 1:6, 3:21, 5:10.
 25. This confluence of ultimate purpose is consistent with the traditional prayer of lodge opening which concludes with the petition: “when the trials of our probationary state are over, [may we] be admitted into the temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (A. de Hoyos et al., *Light on Masonry*, 16 (236)).
 26. S. B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball*, p. 91 n. 14 argues the same point even with respect to contemporary accounts by non-Mormons and apostates: “[D]uring the Nauvoo period neither apostates, like John C. Bennett and Increase Van Deusen (who were Mormons, Masons, and anti-Mormon writers) nor anti-Mormon Masonic officials ever accused Joseph Smith of stealing Masonic secrets and incorporating them into the endowment ceremony.” In an article in the *Quincy Whig* published on July 16, 1842, Bennett does describe the Nauvoo temple ceremony as “a new degree of masonry, called ‘Order Lodge’” (A. F. Smith, *Saintly Scoundrel*, p. 103) and in his *History of the Saints* claimed that Joseph Smith pretended to have had “revealed to him the *real Master’s word*” (J. C. Bennett, *History of the Saints*, pp. 276), though it will be obvious to students of Mormonism that the brief summaries of temple ritual appearing in Bennett’s publications (which he had never witnessed personally) are full of inaccuracies and outright fictions. In a retrospective account, Ebenezer Robinson, a Mormon Mason in Nauvoo who eventually rejected the Prophet’s temple teachings, describes the introduction of Masonry in Nauvoo (E. Robinson, Items No. 14, p. 287), but does not associate this development with his descriptions of the Nauvoo temple nor with the giving of “the keys of the Priesthood, and the endowments with the signs, grips, tokens and garments, such as were given in the Holy Order in Joseph Smith’s life time” (E. Robinson, Items No. 15, p. 301). Neither Van Deusen, George W. Harris, nor any other

Nauvoo apostates of which I am aware make explicit mention of any connection between the temple ordinances and Freemasonry. All this is not to say there were not some common or similar elements between their rituals as previously discussed, but rather to highlight the fact that such resemblances were not seen as problematic by contemporary Nauvoo participants and observers.

27. See e.g., M. B. Brown, *Exploring*, p. 157. Cf. a retrospective statement made in Utah by Heber C. Kimball, a counselor to Brigham Young in the First Presidency: “I have been true to my country, to my Masonic brethren, and also to my brethren in this Church” (H. C. Kimball, 7 July 1861, p. 182). He also wrote: “I have been as true as an angel from the heavens to the covenants I made in the lodge at Victor” (cited in J. B. Holzapfel et al., *Woman’s View*, p. 80; cf. Helen Mar Whitney, *Scenes in Nauvoo*, p. 26. S. B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball*, p. 91 n. 7 gives the reference for this passage as the Heber C. Kimball, *Journal* 94b, part 2, 5).
28. R. L. Bushman, *Rough Stone*, p. 450.
29. This continuation of Masonic activity was all the more striking in light of the fact that the Grand Lodge censured and withdrew its sanction of the two Mormon Lodges that had been created in Illinois. Note that the Masonic Hall in Nauvoo was dedicated *after* the Grand Lodge took these actions.

In nineteenth-century Utah, Masonry became an essentially non-Mormon institution. Indeed, in 1925, the Grand Lodge of Utah formally prohibited Latter-day Saints from joining, although members of the Church were free to join other lodges outside of Utah. In 1984, the ban was dropped. In 2008, Glen A. Cook, an LDS Mason and a graduate of BYU Law School, became the first Mormon Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Utah (see Most Worshipful Brother).

30. A. F. Ehat, *Ordinances.*, pp. 44–45.
31. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 16 June 1844, p. 382, abbreviations expanded.
32. This statement was made at the General Conference of the Church in April 1844 and later printed in the Church periodical *Times and Seasons*, 5:14, 1 August 1844, p. 596. Cf. H. Nibley, *What*, p. 369: “Among the first to engage in the Latter-day temple work were many members of the Masons ... whose rites present unmistakable parallels to those of the temple. Yet ... those men experienced only an expansion of understanding.”
33. B. J. Petersen, *Nibley*, p. 352.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 352.
35. Besides the many scattered articles found elsewhere, a quick sampling of titles of monographs and collections of scholarship dedicated to the topic might include, among others: G. N. Anderson, *Mormonism and the Temple*; L. L. Baker et al., *Who Shall Ascend*; D. L. Belnap, *By Our Rites*; J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes* (2014); J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*; J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Keys and Symbols*; M. B. Brown, *Gate*; M. B. Brown et al., *Throne*; M. B. Brown et al., *Ancient Temple Worship*; M. B. Brown et al., *Symbols*; A. L. Gaskill, *Lost*; A. L. Gaskill, *Sacred Symbols*; W. J. Hamblin et al., *Temple*; W. J. Hamblin et al., *Temple Insights*; G. E. Hansen, Jr. et al., *Sacred Walls*; J. M. Lundquist, *Meeting Place*; J. M. Lundquist, *Temple of Jerusalem*; T. G. Madsen, *Temple: Where Heaven*; H. W. Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*; H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*; D. W. Parry, *Temples*; D. W. Parry et al., *Time and Eternity*; J. W. Welch, *Sermon*; J. W. Welch, *Light*; D. R. Seely et al., *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord*; J. A. Widtsoe, *Temple Worship*; J. E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*; B. K. Packer, *Holy Temple*; A. F. Ehat, *Ordinances*. A massive temple studies bibliography is also being assembled by contributors from the Academy for Temple Studies (D. W. Bachman et al., *Temple Studies Bibliography*).
36. Joseph Fielding Smith, as an Apostle, taught that “there has never been a moment from the beginning that there were not men on the earth holding the Holy [i.e., Melchizedek] Priesthood” (J. F. Smith, Jr., *Answers*, 2:45).
37. For a brief historical overview of the loss and restoration of the fulness of priesthood ordinances, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 97–107.
38. See, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 658–660.
39. See, e.g., D&C 84:23.
40. See, e.g., JST Exodus 34:1–2; JST Deuteronomy 10:1–2; D&C 84:24–27; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 5 January 1841, pp. 180–181. See also note by A. F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, pp. 143–144 n. 5. President Brigham Young stated (B. Young, 29 November 1857, p. 100):

If they had been sanctified and holy, the children of Israel would not have traveled one year with Moses before they would have received their endowments and the Melchizedek Priesthood. But they could not receive them, and never did ... The Lord told Moses that he would show

Himself to the people, but they begged Moses to plead with the Lord not to do so.

41. J. F. Smith, Jr., *Answers*, 1:117–118, 2:45. Joseph Smith taught: “All the prophets had the Melchizedek Priesthood and were ordained by God Himself” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 5 January 1841, p. 181).
42. See M. B. Brown et al., *Throne*.
43. G. M. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, p. 315. That said, Hugh Nibley asks (H. W. Nibley, *What*, p. 383):

Did Joseph Smith reinvent the temple by putting all the fragments — Jewish, Orthodox, Masonic, Gnostic, Hindu, Egyptian, and so forth — together again? No, that is not how it is done. Very few of the fragments were available in his day, and the job of putting them together was begun ... only in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Even when they are available, those poor fragments do not come together of themselves to make a whole; to this day the scholars who collect them do not know what to make of them. The temple is not to be derived from them, but the other way around. If the temple, as the Latter-day Saints know it, had been introduced at any date later than it was, or at some great center of learning, it could well have been suspect as a human contrivance; but that anything of such fulness, consistency, ingenuity, and perfection could have been brought forth at a single time and place — overnight, as it were — is quite adequate proof of a special dispensation.

44. 1 Peter 2:9.
45. See, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw et al., *Investiture Panel*; D. J. Larsen, *Two high priesthoods?*; M. B. Brown, *Israelite Temple*.
46. N. Wyatt, *Degrees*, p. 192.
47. N. Wyatt, *Hollow Crown*, p. 32.
48. N. Wyatt, *Degrees*, p. 220.
49. For a detailed discussion, see J. M. Bradshaw et al., *Investiture Panel*. For an approachable description of Sumerian temples, which “in their most developed phase, showed structural similarities to later Israelite temples,” see E. J. Wilson, *Inside*. For a discussion of ritual creation accounts in Babylonia and elsewhere in the ancient Near East, see S. D. Ricks, *Liturgy* and E. Jan Wilson, *Inside*, pp. 314–316. For a discussion of the bestowal of the god’s blessing on

the Mesopotamian king, see S. D. Ricks and M. A. Carter, *Temple-Building Motifs*, pp. 170–171 or, more generally, S. D. Ricks and J. J. Sroka, *King*. For a discussion of names, signs, seals, and the ritual enactment of curses signifying the serious nature of covenant violation, see, e.g., H. W. Nibley, *Sacred*, pp. 554–562.

See H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005) for a detailed description of what he called “an Egyptian endowment,” along with summaries of six Jewish and early Christian texts that describe ritual journeys of a similar nature.

50. A. Parrot, *Mari Fabuleuse*, p. 121.
51. J. R. Porter, *Guide*, p. 28.
52. J. H. Walton, *Ancient*, p. 24. Walton continues (*ibid.*, p. 24): “When we think of Old Testament religious concepts such as ritual sacrifice, sanctuaries/sacred space, priests and their role, creation, the nature of sin, communication with deity, and many other areas, we realize that the Babylonians would have found Israelite practice much more comprehensible than we do.”
53. *Ibid.*, p. 129. See also S. D. Ricks and J. J. Sroka, *King*, pp. 244–246.
54. Regarding David, see, e.g., 1 Samuel 16:13 and 2 Samuel 5:3. Regarding Solomon, see, e.g., 1 Kings 1:39 and 1 Chronicles 29:22.
55. L. L. Baker et al., *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 353; and additional discussion on pp. 354–358. Compare J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 519–523.
56. See C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Glory*, pp. 56, 212–13, 476. See also C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Religious Experience*, pp. 132–133; J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 663–675. Regarding the possibility of such forms of worship at Dura Europos, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*.
57. Exodus 19:6. Explains Kugel (J. L. Kugel, *How to Read*, p. 242):

To understand the second half of this promise [i.e., Exodus 19:6], it is essential to know that throughout the ancient Near East, the priests of any given people were the ones who were uniquely privileged to be in touch with their gods. The priests’ job consisted of caring for the god’s house (that is, his temple), offering sacrifices in front of his image, and in general serving him in the place where he was deemed to reside. By saying that Israel would become a kingdom of priests, God seemed to be bypassing this common arrangement. He was saying, in effect: You will *all* be My intimates—just keep the simple rules that make up My covenant with you.

58. Genesis 1:26–27.

59. Sarna's full explanation reads as follows (N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 12. See also R. E. Friedman, *Commentary*, p. 30; N. M. Sarna, *Mists*, p. 51):

The words used here to convey these ideas can be better understood in the light of a phenomenon registered in both Mesopotamia and Egypt where the ruling monarch is described as "the image" or "the likeness" of a god... Without doubt, the terminology employed in Genesis 1:26 is derived from regal vocabulary, which serves to elevate the king above the ordinary run of men. In the Bible this idea has become democratized. All human beings are created "in the image of God"; each person bears the stamp of royalty.

60. Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught that "what we say for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob we say also for Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, the wives ... who with them were true and faithful in all things" (B. R. McConkie, *Mothers*, p. 37). President Joseph Fielding Smith taught that "the Lord offers to his daughters every spiritual gift and blessing that can be obtained by his sons" (J. F. Smith, Jr., *Magnifying*, p. 66).
61. See Revelation 2:7, 10–11, 17, 26–28; 3:5, 12, 20–21.
62. Revelation 3:21.
63. See, e.g., R. O. Barney, *Joseph Smith's Visions*; R. Nicholson, *Cowdery Conundrum*. As a specific illustration of the sacred regard in which the Prophet held the temple ordinances, Andrew Ehat reminds us that none of the nine participants who were present when the Nauvoo endowment was first bestowed on 4 May 1842 recorded the events of that day in their personal diaries. In explanation of this fact, Ehat observes (A. F. Ehat, *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 49):

The Prophet Joseph Smith had asked each participant not to record the specifics of what they had heard and seen that day. Six weeks later, in a letter to his fellow apostle Parley P. Pratt, Heber C. Kimball wrote that these favored few had received "some precious things through the Prophet on the priesthood that would cause your soul to rejoice." However, he added, "I cannot give them to you on paper for they are not to be written" (Heber C. Kimball to Parley P. Pratt, 17 June 1842, Heber C. Kimball Papers, LDS Church History Library). They were just too sacred.

64. See, e.g., Psalm 2:7; John 17:3; 1 John 3:1–3; D&C 76:24; 84:19–23, 38; 93:1; 132:24.
65. For more on this topic, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 59–65.
66. J. E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, pp. 159–161. Cf. the words of Oliver Cowdery (but attributed to Joseph Smith (see A. F. Ehat, *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 62 n. 11)) in J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 22 January 1834, p. 51. President David O. McKay made the following statement (cited in T. G. Madsen, *House*, p. 282):

I believe there are few, even temple workers, who comprehend the full meaning and power of the temple endowment. Seen for what it is, it is the step-by-step ascent into the Eternal Presence. If our young people could but glimpse it, it would be the most powerful spiritual motivation of their lives.

About the difference between coming into the presence of God through heavenly ascent and through ritual, Andrew F. Ehat writes (A. F. Ehat, *Who Shall Ascend*, pp. 53–54):

As Moses' case demonstrates [see Moses 1], the actual endowment is not a mere representation but is the reality of coming into a heavenly presence and of being instructed in the things of eternity. In temples, we have a staged representation of the step-by-step ascent into the presence of the Eternal while we are yet alive. It is never suggested that we have died when we participate in these blessings. Rather, when we enter the celestial room, we pause to await the promptings and premonitions of the Comforter. And after a period of time, mostly of our own accord, we descend the stairs, and resume the clothing and walk of our earthly existence. But there should have been a change in us as there certainly was with Moses when he was caught up to celestial realms and saw and heard things unlawful to utter.

Evidence from other ancient religions traditions for an analogous relationship between ritual practice on earth and ultimate fulfillment of these symbols after death was noted by Hugh Nibley. In explanation of a handclasp that was used in Manichaeism ritual, believers were told that it symbolized the fact that “the right hand was used for bidding farewell to our

heavenly parents upon leaving our primeval home and [was] the greeting with which we shall be received when we return to it” (H. W. Nibley, *Sacred*, p. 557. Cf. J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 884–885). Likewise, the Mandaeans, whose history may intersect with disciples of John the Baptist (S. Zinner, *Vines of Joy*), still continue a ritual practice in which the *kushta*, a ceremonial handclasp, is given three times, each one of which, according to Elizabeth Drower, “seems to mark the completion ... of a stage in a ceremony” (E. S. Drower, *Water*, p. 106). At the moment of glorious resurrection, Mandaean scripture records that a final *kushta* will also take place, albeit in the form of an embrace — what the *Ginza* calls the “key of the *kushta* of both arms” (M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, LG 1:1, p. 429):

Sitil [= Seth], the son of Adam... was brought to the Watchhouse [where] Silmais, the treasurer, holds the nails of glory in the hand, and carries the key of the *kushta* of both arms. They opened the gate of the treasure house for him, lifted the great veil of safety upward before him, introduced him, and showed him that Vine [i.e., the Tree of Life], its inner glory ... Sitil, son of Adam, spoke: “On this [same] way, the Path and Ascent which I have climbed, truthful, believing, faithful and perfect men should also ascend and come, when they leave their bodies [i.e., at death].”

67. See, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes* (2014), pp. 26–50; J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2*, pp. 82–85.
68. H. W. Nibley, *Apocryphal*, p. 312; cf. pp. 310–311. See also W. W. Isenberg, *Philip*, 85:14–16, p. 159.
69. Joseph Smith — *History* 1:14–20.
70. *Ether* 3:6–28. For a detailed analysis, see M. C. Thomas, *Brother of Jared*.
71. See J. M. Bradshaw, *LDS Book of Enoch*.
72. Brief references to the Creation may be found in the basic rituals of Masonry, but not a full recital of events like as was common in the ancient Near East and is found today in the LDS temple endowment.
73. See, e.g., J. H. Walton, *Ancient*, pp. 123–127; H. W. Nibley, *Meanings and Functions*, pp. 1460–1461; S. D. Ricks, *Liturgy*. For more on the structure and function of the story of Creation found in Genesis 1 and arguably used in Israelite temple liturgy, see J. H. Walton, *Lost*

World; M. S. Smith, *Priestly Vision*. W. P. Brown, *Seven Pillars* provides perspectives on other biblical accounts of creation. See J. H. Walton, *Genesis 1*, pp. 17–22 for a useful table that highlights similarities and differences among creation accounts in the ancient Near East. Cf. W. P. Brown, *Seven Pillars*, pp. 21–32.

74. J. E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, p. 83.
75. Though repositories of Masonic legend sometimes sketch a history of Masonry that goes back to Adam, there are significant limits to the parallels that can be drawn between specific rituals of Masonry and LDS temple ordinances. As Michael Homer rightly asserts, French adoption rituals did include a dramatic portrayal of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (M. W. Homer, *Joseph's Temples*, p. 22, 61, 251–252), a setting that figures in the book of Moses and the LDS temple endowment. However, despite Homer's suggestion of the Prophet's "possible use of adoptive rituals as a model for the endowment" (*ibid.*, p. 252), a cursory reading of the text of the French rites is sufficient evidence to show that the thrust of the ritual is very different from the narrative presented in the LDS temple endowment (see, e.g., the analysis found in J. A. M. Snoek, *Initiating Women*; J. A. M. Snoek, *Freemasonry and Women*). Even if a significant similarity between adoptive rituals and the LDS endowment could be argued, Homer presents no evidence beyond conjecture to support the idea that Joseph Smith or his associates encountered descriptions of the French rituals or English exposés of their equivalents (as given in, e.g., A. de Hoyos et al., *Light on Masonry*, pp. 167–197). A much more plausible source of inspiration for the Prophet is his work on the translation of what later became the book of Moses.
76. J. E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord*, pp. 83–84. For description of the parallels between the journey of Adam and Eve and the journal of the high priest through the temple, see D. W. Parry, *Garden*, pp. 135.
77. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Tree of Knowledge* for an explanation of how the symbolism of the Tree of Knowledge relates to that of the temple veil.
78. In most depictions of Jewish temple architecture, the menorah is shown as being *outside* the veil — in contrast to the Tree of Life, which is at the holiest place in the Garden of Eden. However, Margaret Barker cites evidence that, in the first temple, a Tree of Life was symbolized *within* the Holy of Holies (e.g., M. Barker, *Hidden*, pp. 6–7; M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 85–86, 140; J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 366–367). Barker concludes that the Menorah (or perhaps a second, different, representation in arboreal form?) was both removed from

- the temple and diminished in stature in later Jewish literature as the result of a “very ancient feud” concerning its significance (M. Barker, *Older*, p. 221; see pp. 221–232). Mandaean scripture describes a Tree of Life within the *heavenly* sanctuary as follows: “They... lifted the great veil of safety upward before him, introduced him, and showed him that Vine,” meaning the Tree of Life (M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, GL 1:1, p. 429:3–20; cf. E. S. Drower, *Prayerbook*, 49, pp. 45–46).
79. A. Gileadi, *Literary*, p. 12.
 80. J. B. Pritchard, *ANET*, pp. 18–22; W. W. Hallo et al., *Context*, 1:77–82.
 81. J. E. Coleson, *Life Cycle*; A. Gileadi, *Decoded*; S. D. Ricks, *Prophetic*.
 82. Genesis, chapters 27–33.
 83. Luke 15:11–32.
 84. N. Frye, *Secular Scripture*.
 85. See e.g., D. E. Callender, *Adam*, pp. 211–218. From a ritual perspective, these three parts correspond to van Gennep’s classic stages of separation (*préliminaire*), transition (*liminaire*), and reintegration (*postliminaire*) (A. van Gennep, *Rites*, pp. 11).
 86. John 16:28.
 87. For official Church descriptions and photographs of modern LDS temple clothing, see *Sacred Temple Clothing*. For detailed studies of ancient temple clothing, see, e.g., H. W. Nibley, *Vestments*; D. W. Parry, *Ancient Sacred Vestments*; B. T. Ostler, *Clothed*; J. A. Tvedtnes, *Clothing*; S. D. Ricks, *Garment*; M. B. Brown, *Gate*, *passim*.
 88. Genesis 3:7, 21; Moses 4:13, 27.
 89. H. L. Andrus et al., *They Knew* (2004), p. 48. Tyler stated:

A short time prior to his arrival at my father’s house, my mother, Elizabeth Comins Tyler had a remarkable vision. Lest it might be attributed to the evil one, she related it to no person, except my father, Andrew Tyler, until the Prophet arrived, on his way to Canada, I think. She saw a man sitting upon a white cloud, clothed in white from head to foot. He had a peculiar cap, different from any she had ever seen, with a white robe, underclothing, and moccasins. It was revealed to her that this person was Michael, the Archangel.

The Prophet informed her that she had had a true vision. He had seen the same angel several times. It was Michael, the Archangel.

Other sources verify the circumstances of the reported incident, providing evidence that Daniel Tyler first met Joseph Smith when the Prophet stopped at his father's house in West Springfield, Erie County, Pennsylvania on October 6–8, 1833 — see J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 1:416–418.

90. H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, pp. 489–490.
91. On the changes of clothing by the high priest, see G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, p. 122. On the changes of clothing by Adam and Eve as they moved to different areas of the Garden of Eden, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 234–240.
92. E. T. Benson, Vision.
93. E.g., J. M. Bradshaw, LDS Book of Enoch; D. Calabro, Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis; M. J. Johnson, Lost Prologue.
94. M. J. Johnson, Lost Prologue, pp. 23–24.
95. J. W. Welch, *Sermon*, p. 373.
96. D. N. Freedman, *Nine (2000)*, p. 1.
97. Matthew 22:23–33. See S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, pp. 57–58. The preface to the 1981 LDS edition of D&C 132 states that relevant “doctrines and principles . . . had been known by the Prophet since 1831.” For detailed studies, see D. W. Bachman, *New Light*; D. W. Bachman, *Authorship*. Vestiges of the Prophet's early encounters with these marriage passages in Genesis and Matthew 22 seem to be reflected in some portions of D&C 132:1–40 though, as with many of the other revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, the final form of the revelation clearly reflects continued development of these doctrines over succeeding years.
98. W. W. Phelps to Sally Phelps, May 26, 1835, cited in B. A. Van Orden, *Writing to Zion*, p. 550. Also in 1835, William W. Phelps mentioned new light he had received from the Prophet on the subject of exaltation and eternal marriage, where those who would become “the sons of God” would dwell in “a kingdom of glory . . . where the man is neither without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord” (W. W. Phelps, Letter 8, p. 130. See 1 Corinthians 11:11. For more on this statement by Phelps, see D. W. Bachman, *New Light*, pp. 28–29. Thanks to Jacob Rennaker for pointing out this reference.

Matthew B. Brown (*Gate*, p. 308), notes that sometime between 2 February and 2 July 1833, Joseph Smith would have translated JST Exodus 34:1–2, which was modified to read as follows (modifications shown in italics): “Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read the names written therein; No one of these shall fail; none shall want

- [i.e., lack] *their* mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and *my* spirit it hath gathered them.”
99. See, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 45–58. References to the fact that Elijah was going to “reveal ... the Priesthood” and the implication that this would involve “the promises made to the fathers” were made by Moroni in his visit to Joseph Smith earlier on 21 September 1823 (D&C 2:1–2).
100. O. Hyde, *Diagram*, p. 23. See also D&C 76:56–59. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 27 August 1843, p. 322: “Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings. In fact, that Priesthood is a perfect law of theocracy, and stands as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam.” See also J. F. Smith, Jr., *Way 1945*, p. 208.

Because of the sacred nature of the ordinance that confers the fulness of the priesthood, it is generally described only in very general terms (see, e.g., B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 315). Summarizing the exacting requirements expected of those who receive this final ordinance of the temple, Joseph Smith taught (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 20 January 1844, p. 331):

The question is frequently asked, “Can we not be saved without going through all those ordinances?” I would answer: “No, not the fulness of salvation.” Jesus said, “There are many mansions in my Father’s house, and I will go and prepare a place for you” (see John 14:2). “House” here named should have been translated “kingdom”; and any person who is exalted to the highest mansion has to abide a celestial law, and the whole law, too.

Although other temple ordinances had been administered to selected saints in Nauvoo beginning in 1842, the ordinance conferring the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood was not administered by the Prophet until the final months of 1843. On 6 August 1843, Brigham Young said that “if any in the Church had the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, he did not know it” (B. Young, 6 August 1843, in J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 5:527). However, on 22 November 1843, he finally received this much-awaited ordinance (R. K. Esplin, *Succession*, p. 315. See also G. M. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, pp. 260–261). In later instructions at the temple, President Young said (Heber C. Kimball Journal, kept by William Clayton, 26 December

1845, Church History Library, brackets added, cited in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 304 n. 21):

Those who ... come in here [i.e., the Nauvoo Temple] and have received their washing and anointing will [later, if faithful,] be ordained Kings and Priests, and will then have received the fulness of the Priesthood, all that can be given on earth. For Brother Joseph said he had given us all that could be given to man on the earth.

In contrast to the priesthood ordinances discussed previously which are available to all faithful members of the Church in this life, this crowning ordinance of the temple is now almost always reserved as a blessing for the hereafter. Indeed, even if the ordinance could be performed in this life, the realization of the blessings it portends could not be made fully effective in mortality. Emphasizing the anticipatory nature of this ordinance, Brigham Young explained that “a person may be anointed king and priest long before he receives his kingdom” (cited in J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 6 August 1843, 5:527).

101. G. M. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, pp. 260-261; J. Smith, Jr., *Record*, 28 September 1843, p. 416. See also R. K. Esplin, *Succession*, pp. 314-315; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 27 August 1843, pp. 244-247, 303-307 nn.; W. W. Phelps, cited in S. M. Brown, *Paracletes*, pp. 80-81.
102. Genesis 14:18. See also Hebrews 7:1-10, Alma 13:15-19, and JST Genesis 14:25-40.
103. D&C 84:14.
104. Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6-10, 6:20, 7:1-28, and Alma 13:1-19.
105. See D&C 107:2-4.
106. As with all covenants and ordinances, the Savior set the example for His disciples. The Prophet said (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 11 June 1843, p. 308):

If a man gets a fulness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.

On changes made to the Gospel of John see, generally, JST John 1:16, 18: “And as many believe on his name shall receive of his fulness. And of his fulness have all we received, even immortality and eternal life through his grace. ... For the law was after a carnal commandment, to the administration of death; but the gospel was

after the power of an endless life, through Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father” (S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, NT 2, p. 443, spelling and punctuation standardized). See also, generally, M. Barker, *King of the Jews*.

A specific example of changes made by Joseph Smith that relate to temple ordinances received subsequent to the endowment and marriage sealing is in the account of the anointing of Jesus in Bethany (JST John 12:7: “Then said Jesus, Let her alone; for she hath preserved this ointment until now, that she might anoint me in token of my burial” (S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, NT 2, p. 463, spelling and punctuation standardized). See also JST Mark 14:8 (ibid., p. 351). See M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, pp. 341-343; J. M. Smith, *She Hath Wrought; Journal of Wilford Woodruff*, July 22, 1883, in W. Woodruff, *Waiting*, pp. 360-361).

Another example of changes Joseph Smith made to clarify the nature of a particular ordinance has to do with the washing of the feet of Jesus’ apostles (JST John 13:10: “Jesus saith to him, He that has washed his hands and his head, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all. Now this was the custom of the Jews under the law; wherefore, Jesus did this that the law might be fulfilled” (S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, NT 2, p. 465. See M. Barker, *King of the Jews*, pp. 376-381; B. R. McConkie, *NT Commentary*, 1:707-711; B. R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 4:36-41; J. E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, pp. 552-553, 574). Elder Talmage (cf. Elder McConkie) specifically term Jesus’ act an “ordinance of the holy priesthood,” saying that it “was more than mere service for personal comfort, and more than an object-lesson of humility” (J. E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 553; cf. B. R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 4:36). Specifically, Elder McConkie characterized the Savior’s intent in performing this ordinance for the apostles as being “to seal his friends up unto eternal life in his Father’s kingdom” (B. R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 4:48).

Consider also the revelations and teachings of Joseph Smith relating to the two Comforters mentioned in John 14 (D&C 130:3; Joseph Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 27 July 1839, pp. 149-151. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 73-79, 93-94; B. R. McConkie, *NT Commentary*, pp. 734-741; B. R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 4:74-78). It is not unlikely that the Prophet’s understanding of these verses, as with John 12-13, came to him in the course of his Bible translation efforts that occurred sometime between January

and July 1832 (S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, p. 69). Note, however, that the change made to John 12:7 was made on a small piece of paper pinned to the JST manuscript that contained “changes made after the original writing that were to be inserted in the text on the pages to which they were attached” (ibid., p. 73).

See also the significant changes in JST Hebrews 6:1-9, 7:3, 18-22, 26-27 relating to Melchizedek (ibid., pp. 539-541), also made sometime between January and July 1832. Additionally, in the NT 2 manuscript for Hebrews chapter 5, it was noted that “the seventh and eighth verses of this chapter are a parenthesis alluding to Melchizedek and not to Christ” (ibid., p. 537, spelling standardized).

107. See J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 4 May 1842, p. 237 and J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 4 May 1842, 5:1-2. The account given in these sources is a later expansion by Elder Willard Richards of an entry he made in the daily record he had been assigned to keep for Joseph Smith (J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1841-1843*, pp. 53-54, spelling, grammar, and punctuation standardized):

4 May 1842, Wednesday

... In council in the President’s and General Offices with Judge [James] Adams, Hyrum Smith, Newell K. Whitney, William Marks, William Law, George Miller, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards. [illegible] and giving certain instructions concerning the priesthood. [illegible], etc. on the Aaronic Priesthood to the first [illegible] continuing through the day.

Additional background for this entry is given by the editors in a footnote (J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1841-1843*, p. 54 n. 198, with my standardization of spelling, grammar, and punctuation of Richards’ statements):

[Willard] Richards, who participated in the events of 4 May 1842, made the brief summary of Joseph Smith’s daylong temple instruction in this journal entry and also prepared the following description of the new endowment, which later became part of the Joseph Smith multivolume manuscript history: Joseph Smith instructed those present “in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order

of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which anyone is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds. In this council was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days.” According to Richards, Joseph Smith’s instructions “were of things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritually minded: and there was nothing made known to these men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them, even to the weakest of the Saints; therefore let the Saints be diligent in building the Temple, and all houses which they have been, or shall hereafter be, commanded of God to build, and wait their time with patience, in all meekness, faith, and perseverance unto the end, knowing assuredly that all these things referred to in this council are always governed by the principles of revelation.”

Andrew Ehat further explains (A. F. Ehat, *Who Shall Ascend*, pp. 50–51):

As with many other diary entries that [Elder Richards] so seamlessly included in the *History of the Church*, he humbly wrote the record as if it contained the words of the Prophet Joseph Smith. When he could find a diary containing information relating to the Prophet Joseph that was found nowhere else, he benignly revised and inserted into the *History* the words of others as if they were the Prophet’s own. He knew Joseph did not have the time to record these things for himself (see D. C. Jessee, *JS History*, pp. 440, 470, 472–473). In fact, Elder Richards kept the personal diary of the Prophet for the last year-and-a-half of his life. But in the case of the endowment, Elder Richards had been an eyewitness of the events. So the words he would choose for this entry would reflect as much the impact of the events on himself as well as the enlarged understanding of the endowment he had

personally gained in the ensuing three years ... [Thus,] Willard Richards' draft for the Prophet's "History" entry for 4 May 1842 is ... actually the most comprehensive statement made by an original participant, providing us Joseph Smith's explanation of the meaning of the endowment.

The journal entry for the next day, 5 May 1842, reads: "Judge [James] Adams left for Springfield. The others continued in Council as the day previous, and Joseph and Hyrum were [illegible]" (J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1841–1843*, p. 54, spelling, grammar, and punctuation standardized). Elder Richards' expansion of this entry published in J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 5:2–3 makes it apparent that "Joseph and Hyrum Smith received their endowment from those who had received it from the Prophet the previous day" (J. Smith, Jr., *Papers 1989–1992*, 2:380 n. 2. Cf. J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1841–1843*, p. 54 n. 199). Ehat explains (A. F. Ehat, *Who Shall Ascend*, p. 61 n. 2.):

Only when new priesthood ordinances and powers were being bestowed would the persons who previously bestowed blessings, in turn, receive them back from them to whom they first administered the blessings. This was in accordance with the pattern established when John the Baptist commanded Joseph Smith to first baptize Oliver Cowdery, and then Oliver Cowdery to baptize Joseph Smith after they had been ordained by this heavenly messenger, 15 May 1829 (see Joseph Smith — History 1:70–72)

108. See D&C 84:33–48. For a detailed study of these verses, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*.
109. For a more detailed discussion of this topic, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Keys and Symbols*.
110. D&C 134:34, 40, 41.
111. D&C 35:18.
112. See M. L. Bowen, *Founded Upon a Rock*, pp. 22–24.
113. B. Young, *Discourses*, p. 416, emphasis added.
114. See, e.g., S. Mowinckel, *Psalms*, 1:180, 1:181 n. 191; J. H. Eaton, *Psalms Commentary*, 118:19–22, p. 405; J. Gee, *Keeper*; J. M. Bradshaw et al., *Investiture Panel*.
115. Genesis 17:5, 15; 32:28.

116. D&C 130:11, emphasis added. For an excellent discussion of the varied usages of the terms “key” and “keyword” by Joseph Smith and his contemporaries, see J. H. Lindquist, *Keywords*.
117. D&C 20:77.
118. See D&C 109:22, 26, 79. See also D. H. Oaks, *Taking Upon Us*; D. A. Bednar, *Name*, p. 98.
119. See, e.g., D. A. Bednar, *Power to Become*, pp. 9–10.
120. Mosiah 5:8, 10, 12.
121. The substance of many of the explanations of this Facsimile can be dated to 1835–1836 (see B. M. Hauglid, *Textual History*, pp. 225–231), although we currently have no specific mention of comments relating to the explanations of Figures 3 and 7 until May 5, 1841 (Report of William I. Appleby in *ibid.*, p. 219). The explanations of Facsimile 2 were first published in the *Times and Seasons* 3/10 (15 March 1842), p. 724 (*ibid.*, p. 222). For translations and commentary on these Figures, see R. D. Draper et al., *Commentary*, pp. 291–292; M. D. Rhodes, *Hypocephalus Translation*; M. D. Rhodes, *Twenty Years*.
122. D. R. Seely, *Raised Hand*; D. Calabro, *Stretch Forth*; D. Calabro, *When You Spread*; D. Calabro, *Understanding*; D. Calabro, *Divine Handclasp*.
123. H. W. Attridge et al., *Hebrews*, p. 236.
124. Hebrews 9:4. Cf. Exodus 25:16.
125. For more about the symbolism of these and other ancient temple objects as they related to the higher priesthood, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 658–660, 679–681.
126. For more on the Eleusinian Mysteries, see *ibid.*, pp. 675–679.
127. T. M. Compton, *Token*. For a shorter version of this study, see T. M. Compton, *Handclasp*.
128. J. Smith, Jr. et al., *Journals, 1832–1839*, 24 November 1835, pp. 109–110. Two months later, he pronounced upon a couple “the blessings of Abraham Isaac and Jacob and such other blessings as the Lord put into my heart” (20 January 1836, p. 165; cf. 14 January 1836, p. 153).
129. E Hennecke et al., *Acts of John*, 94.
130. See, for example, Psalm 24:3–4; Job 11:13; Isaiah 1:15–16; Lamentations 3:41.
131. See Exodus 19.
132. M. H. Graffam, *Salt Lake School*, p. 38.
133. See, e.g., T. M. Compton, *Handclasp*; S. D. Ricks, *Sacred Embrace*; J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 464–470 H. W. Nibley, *Message*

- 2005, pp. 445–452; H. W. Nibley, *Atonement*, pp. 567–568.
134. *Rhoda Richards Diary*, 16 April 1843, cited in J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, p. 199.
135. *Joseph Smith Diary by Willard Richards*, 16 April 1843, in *ibid.*, pp. 195–196, spelling and punctuation modernized, emphasis added.
136. 1 Kings 17:21–22; 2 Kings 4:34–35.
137. 2 Kings 4:34–35.
138. On the practice of Mesopotamian healers, see A. Berlin et al., *Jewish*, p. 713 n. 21. On the statement from the Seder Eliyahu Rabbah, see G. Kittel et al., *Dictionary*, 9:527, cited in J. E. Seach, *Freemasonry*.
139. M. G. Romney, *Temples*, pp. 239–240.
140. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 21 May 1843, p. 305.
141. For an insightful comparison of the “wrestles” of Jacob and Enos, see M. L. Bowen, *And There Wrestled*.
142. Genesis 32:24–30.
143. Joseph Smith—History, 1:69; D&C 13:1.
144. D&C 128:20.
145. Compare 2 Corinthians 11:14; 2 Nephi 9:9; D&C 129:8; Moses 1:2, 9, 11–25.
146. J. F. McConkie *et al.*, *Revelations*, p. 1040. Considering the similarity of language used in 2 Nephi 9:9 to describe Satan’s efforts to deceive of Adam and Eve, these same authors conjecture that Adam “came to aid the Prophet . . . on this occasion” “by virtue of his own experience in such things” (*ibid.*, p. 1035).
- As with most other sacred incidents of his early ministry, the Prophet was at first reticent to speak openly about these keys. The earliest record of Joseph Smith’s specific teachings on how to detect true and false messengers comes from notes of a private discourse given to the Twelve Apostles on July 2, 1839 (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 2 July 1839, p. 162). See also J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Wilford Woodruff Diary, 27 June 1839, p. 6; *ibid.*, p. 44; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 28 April 1842, p. 226; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 1 May 1842, pp. 119–120; J. Smith, Jr., *Record*, p. 300; D&C 129.
147. See Moses 1. For a detailed commentary on this chapter, including a comparison with the pseudepigraphal *Apocalypse of Abraham*, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, pp. 23–50. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 32–81, especially pp. 53–58.
148. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 12 November 1835, p. 91.
149. R. L. Bushman, *Response*, 35:59–40:11, cited with permission.
150. For example, this is consistent with Jason Lindquist’s arguments

about how the idea of “keys” developed in the teachings of Joseph Smith (J. H. Lindquist, *Keywords*, p. 37):

The meaning of a term that would have been familiar to the Mormon prophet and his audience was gradually transformed by a series of recorded revelations and public addresses, with the result that an old word slowly came to express a dense constellation of doctrines original to Mormonism.

151. S. M. Brown, *In Heaven*, pp. 179, 185, 187–188. Compare R. L. Bushman, *Rough Stone*, pp. 449–450.

152. Brown further concludes that after Joseph Smith’s formal induction into Masonry in Nauvoo his “ideas had not changed much, but [in certain instances] the *language* used to describe them had” (S. M. Brown, *In Heaven*, p. 177).

153. As Lindquist puts it (J. H. Lindquist, *Keywords*, p. 36):

[Joseph] Smith regularly found ways to make productive and pedagogic use of the Saints’ “traditions” by harnessing words and concepts already available to his listeners and then gradually modifying them in an effort to better explain complex and original — even radical — doctrines. If the Prophet was correct in the Saints’ tendency to “fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes tht is contrary to their traditions” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 20 January 1844, p. 331), then introducing the endowment ceremony in wholly unfamiliar terms would have been extremely difficult. [For example, t]he deployment of “key” [in discussing] the temple was one strategy that allowed the Saints to understand the endowment as both an extrapolation of already familiar doctrines and the expression of new truths in a new way.

154. See, e.g., B. A. Gardner, *Gift and Power*, pp. 215–225.

155. Compare Mosiah 18:13; 3 Nephi 11:25; D&C 20:73.

156. See B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, pp. 294–295.

157. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

158. Joseph Smith taught: “The rich can only get [the keys given in the endowment] in the Temple, the poor may get them on the mountain top as did Moses” (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 1 May 1842, pp. 119–120, spelling, grammar, and punctuation standardized).

159. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Ark and Tent*. For a detailed study of biblical

allusions to temple themes and practices before the Tabernacle was constructed, see L. M. Morales, *Tabernacle Pre-Figured*.

160. 2 Samuel 7:2.

161. See 2 Chronicles, chapter 6.

162. In 1884, President John Taylor related (J. Taylor, 18 May 1884, p. 183):

Joseph Smith, before his death, was much exercised about the completion of the Temple in Nauvoo, and the administering of ordinances therein. In his anxiety and for fear he should not live to see the Temple completed, he prepared a place over what was known as the brick store . . . where to a chosen few he administered those ordinances that we now have today associated with endowments, so that if anything should happen to him — which he evidently contemplated — he would feel that he had then fulfilled his mission, that he had conferred upon others all the keys given to him by the manifestations of the power of God.

163. T. G. Madsen, *Joseph Smith*, p. 97.

164. See the journal of L. John Nuttall, vol. 1, 7 February 1877, pp. 18–19, Special Collections, BYU Library, cited in *ibid.*, p. 98. The Prophet continued: “I wish you to take this matter in hand and organize and systematize all these ceremonies.” Then, according to Brigham, “I did so. And each time I got something more [meaning that each time he worked on systematizing he had not only his memory and the records kept by Wilford Woodruff and others but also the light of revelation], so that when we went through the temple at Nauvoo [and without Joseph] I understood and knew how to place them there. We had our ceremonies pretty correct” (*ibid.*).

165. Richard Cowan writes (R. O. Cowan, *Design*, p. 50. Cf. R. O. Cowan, *Dot*, pp. 63–64):

Because the great temple would not be completed for forty years, temporary facilities needed to be provided where the Saints could receive temple blessings. During the pioneers’ early years in the Salt Lake Valley, these blessings had been given in various places, including the top of Ensign Peak and Brigham Young’s office. By 1852, endowments were being given in the Council House, located on the southwest corner of what are now South Temple and

Main Streets. This facility also accommodated a variety of other ecclesiastical and civic functions, so a separate place was needed where the sacred temple ordinances could be given. The Endowment House, a two-story adobe structure dedicated in 1855, was located in the northwest corner of Temple Square. It continued to bless the Saints until it was torn down in 1889 after other temples were finished in the region and as the Salt Lake Temple itself neared completion.

166. R. O. Cowan, *Dot*, p. 159. On the history of this new development, see *ibid.*, pp. 159–160; R. O. Cowan, *Latter-day Houses of the Lord*, pp. 212–213; R. O. Cowan, *Pivotal Swiss Temple*, pp. 133–135; S. L. Dew, *Hinckley*, pp. 176–184.
167. E.g., “It was long debated among Egyptologists whether the Pyramid Texts were recited by a priest or acted out, following instructions held in the hand or written on the walls. (H. W. Nibley, *Drama*, p. 17).
168. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
169. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
170. H. W. Nibley, *House of Glory*, p. 334.
171. T. Walch, *LDS Church Begins*.
172. H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. xxix.
173. J. A. Widtsoe, *Work*, p. 33. Shedding further light on Hugh Nibley’s statement that the endowment “does not attempt to be a picture of reality but only a model or analog to show us how things work” (H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. xxix) and Elder Widtsoe’s distinction between earthly and heavenly ordinances is a story Nibley relates that seems to imply that LDS temple ordinances, as essential as they are in this life, must be performed again in a more perfect and final form as part of ordinances available in the next life (H. W. Nibley, *Abraham’s Creation Drama*, from 26:19–27:18; compare with the published version, H. W. Nibley, *Drama*, p. 12):

I readily accept the margin allowed by taste and practicability [in the design of temples and the performance of the work done therein]. While the thing is still building, it’s in the planning stage where alterations are possible. Our temple work, the whole work is still in its planning stage. My grandfather told me when he went through the temple once with Brother Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church — they were very close friends,

they traveled together in the islands and that sort of thing — and President Smith told him, he said, “Charlie, all this work will have to be done again.” You see, this is just a dry run. It’s not working right at all. That didn’t keep me from going to the temple!

Well, this is not the final, real temple, the ideal future temple of the Temple Scroll. Here we do not receive crowns of glory, but only the promise that if we are true and faithful, later, we may be qualified, we may be eligible. But not here. This is a training center, a school for precepts and a showplace for examples (see D&C 109).

174. S. Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, p. 230 n. 52 translates the first part of the KJV Matthew 13:52 phrase “every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven” as “every scribe who is expert” (cf. the late Hebrew *baqi* and compare JST Matthew 13:52: “Every scribe well instructed in the things of the kingdom of heaven” (S. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, NT 1, pp. 193-194)). Lachs compares this phrase to parallels such as “expert in the inner teachings of the Torah, expert in the mysteries of Torah, expert in medicine, and expert in *halakhah*.”

R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 546 discusses the relevance of this saying to the role of the “apocalyptic scribe,” “because it was a special role of such scribes to understand and interpret dark sayings; parables were their stock-in-trade.” Elder Bruce R. McConkie relates this phrase to the idea that “the Twelve, all the disciples, both male and female ... knew the meanings of the parables, the deep, hidden, glorious meanings of these gems” (B. R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 2:268).

175. R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 546.

176. Matthew 13:52.

177. W. D. Davies et al., *Gospel According to Matthew*, 2:447 n. 63. The translation recalls a similar paradox in the name and idea of the “New and Everlasting Covenant” (*Gospel Principles 2009*, p. 85). According to Joseph Smith, the origins of this covenant were prior to creation (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 16 May 1841, p. 190). The designation of this covenant as “new” is usually explained in terms of it having been revealed “anew” in each dispensation.

178. Matthew 13:35.

179. R. T. France, *Gospel of Matthew*, p. 546. Fittingly, as applications of this saying, Joseph Smith gave “the Book of Mormon,” “the covenants

given to the Latter-day Saints,” and “the translation of the Bible — thus bringing forth out of the heart things new and old” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, December 1835, p. 102).

180. Don Bradley has argued that the First Vision was Joseph Smith’s initiation as a seer and constituted a kind of heavenly endowment (D. Bradley, Unpublished Manuscript).

Acknowledging that the earliest extant account of the First Vision does not appear to modern readers to be anything like an endowment experience, Bradley writes:

Smith’s vision looks like a typical conversion vision of Jesus (insofar as a Christophany can be typical — that is, it shares a common pattern) when the account from his most “Protestant” phase is used and is set only in the context of revivalism. Yet there is no reason to limit analysis only to that account and that context. All accounts, and not only the earliest, provide evidence for the character of the original experience. Indeed, literary scholars Neal Lambert and Richard Cracroft (*Literary Form*) have argued from their comparison of the respectively constrained and free-flowing styles of the 1832 and 1838 accounts that the former attempts to contain the new wine of Smith’s theophany in an old wineskin of narrative convention. While the 1838 telling, in which the experience is both a conversion and a prophetic calling, is straightforward and natural, the 1832 account seems formal and forced, as if young Smith’s experience was ready to burst the old wineskin or had been shoehorned into a revivalistic conversion narrative five sizes too small.

Noting that “latter-day revelation gives us the fuller account and meaning of what actually took place on the Mount” where Moses came into the presence of the Lord (Moses 1), Elder Alvin R. Dyer saw a similarity between the heavenly ascent of Moses and that of Joseph Smith in the First Vision (A. R. Dyer, *Meaning*, p. 12). For a detailed description of allusions to ordinances in the first chapter of the book of Moses, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes* (2014), pp. 26–50.

181. D. Bradley, Unpublished Manuscript.
 182. K. Flake, *Translating Time*, p. 525. Of course, this does not mean that other kinds of knowledge gained in the temple are not just as vital. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 1–5, 11–18.

183. D&C 84:19–22.

184. S. E. Robinson et al., *D&C Commentary*, 3:31–32. See John 17:3.

185. H. W. Nibley, *Unrolling*, p. 165. Cf. 1 John 3:2. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, p. 35.

186. Elder D. Todd Christofferson, in L. T. Perry et al., *Gospel Answers*.

187. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, October 1840, p. 167.

188. J. A. Widtsoe, *Work*, p. 33.

189. W. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 4:Prologue:53, p. 955. In other words, “representing to yourself the truth of what we imitate so badly” (*ibid.*, p. 955 n. 53). Nibley often used this line from Shakespeare to describe the limitations of our mortal efforts to represent the sublime scenes and themes of temple drama (e.g., H. W. Nibley, *Drama*, p. 11) — especially in light of his view that the earthly temple ordinances are not “a picture of reality but only a model or analog to show us how things work” (H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. xxix).

In the context of the play, Shakespeare’s narrator implores the audience to forgive his feeble efforts to represent the glories of the battle of Agincourt “with four or five most vile and ragged foils ... in brawl ridiculous” (W. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 4:Prologue:50–51, p. 955), reminding them of the impossibility of cramming the “vasty fields of France” (W. Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Prologue:12, p. 935) into the confines of their small stage.

190. H. W. Nibley, *Treasures*, p. 178. With respect to the purpose of the ordinances as a means of demonstrating obedience, President Brigham Young explained (B. Young, 23 October 1853, pp. 3, 4):

Will the bread administered in this ordinance [of the sacrament] add life to you? Will the wine add life to you? Yes; if you are hungry and faint, it will sustain the natural strength of the body. But suppose you have just eaten and drunk till you are full, so as not to require another particle of food to sustain the natural body ... In what consists [then] the benefit we derive from this ordinance? It is in obeying the commands of the Lord. When we obey the commandments of our Heavenly Father, if we have a correct understanding of the ordinances of the House of God, we receive all the promises attached to the obedience rendered to His commandments. ...

It is the same in this as it is in the ordinance of baptism for the remission of sins. Has water, in itself, any virtue

to wash away sin? Certainly not, ... but keeping the commandments of God will cleanse away the stain of sin.

191. D&C 84:23.

