

## Adam, Eve, and the Three Wise Men

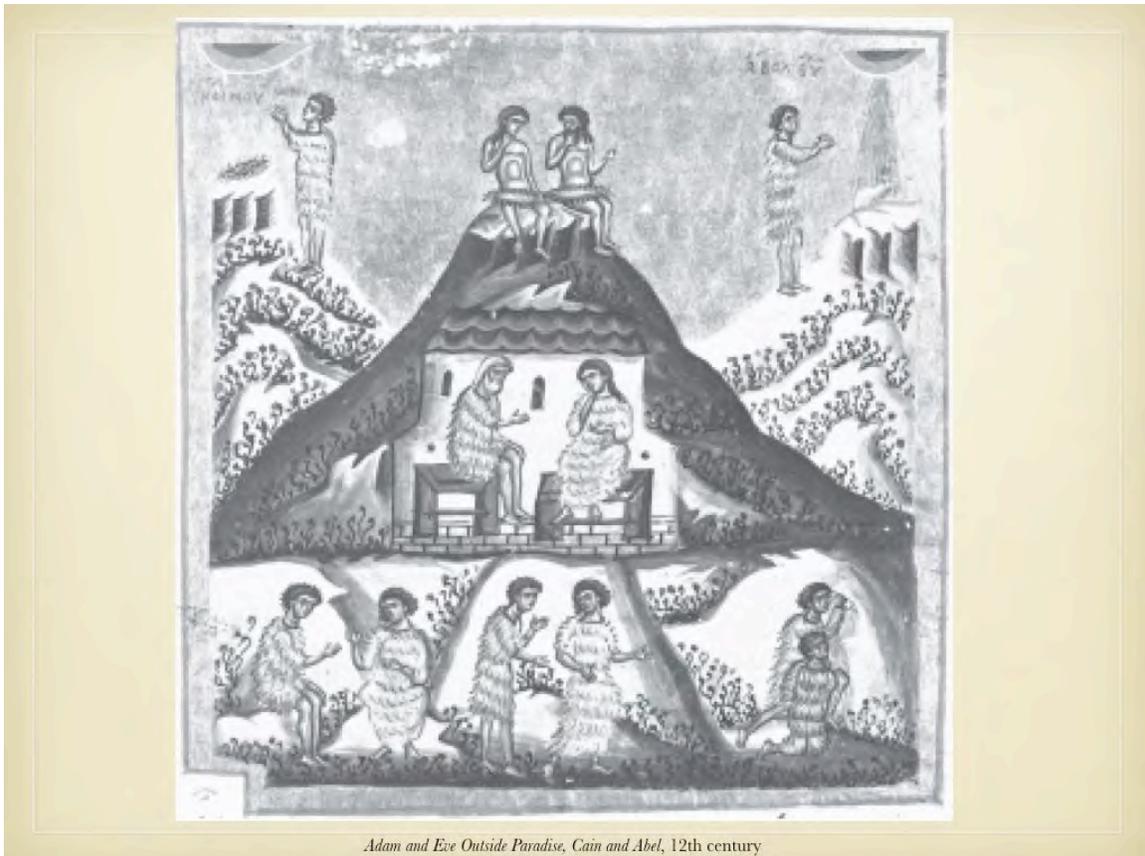
For many years, I was mystified by the seventeenth-century French Christmas carol “Quelle est cette odeur agréable?”<sup>1</sup> When the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra performs Mack Wilberg’s ethereal arrangement<sup>2</sup> that begins with the words:

Whence is that goodly fragrance flowing stealing our senses all away?  
Never the like did come a-blowing, shepherds, in the flow’ry fields of May,

have you ever wondered, as I have, why a particular smell should be taken as a sign of Christ’s birth? The qualifier “goodly” tells us that the odor has nothing to do with the shepherds’ flocks, nor with the cattle in the manger. Moreover, the original French text confirms that it was not the fragrance of the springtime flowers, but something completely new—overpowering and rapturous.<sup>3</sup>

To comprehend these word pictures, we have to know something of how early Christians linked traditions about the life of Adam and Eve to the story of the Nativity of Christ.

### Adam and Eve’s “Cave of Treasures”



Some ancient traditions record that Adam and Eve lived on a sacred mountain. Similar pictures of sacred mountains also appear in conjunction with other biblical figures. In each case, the mountain is divided into three vertical sections recalling, in simple terms, the three major divisions of ancient temples. The lower regions, roughly corresponding to

the outer courtyard of the temple, can be seen as the place of sinners, who are exhorted to seek penitence. The middle section of the mountain, corresponding to the Holy Place, can be seen as the dwelling of the people of the covenant. The top of the mountain can be seen as a Holy of Holies, the presence of God Himself.

Here, at the bottom of this mountain, Cain has words with Abel, leads him out to the field, and then executes his murder. On the peak, symbolizing the heavenly domain, we see Adam and Eve clad only in their fig-leaf aprons. Tongues of flame adorn the upper parts of the hill,<sup>4</sup> suggesting the glory of the Divine Presence.

In the heart of the mountain, an aged Adam and Eve, clad in robes of animal skins, confer within what early Christian texts sometimes called the Cave of Treasures.<sup>5</sup> Whether or not there was literally a cave just outside of Eden is not of concern here. The accounts are clearly figurative, and what is of interest are the echoes of temple teachings in their rich symbolism.<sup>6</sup> According to these sources, the specially-prepared cave became a safeguard for gold, frankincense, and myrrh, retrieved by three angelic messengers<sup>7</sup> from the Garden of Eden as a help to Adam and Eve in their new condition.<sup>8</sup>

In Old Testament times, gold was the symbol of kingship, frankincense the offering of priests, and the oil of myrrh—“known as the ‘dew of resurrection’<sup>9</sup>—had anointed the royal high priests after the order of Melchizedek and transformed them into sons of God.”<sup>10</sup> These and other details make it clear that the Cave of Treasures was imagined as a sort of temple, a figurative replacement for the temple-like Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve had formerly lived.<sup>11</sup> Though dark and dreary compared to their former surroundings, the cave is presented as a place of instruction, affording the couple protection from the world in their state of vulnerability, and providing privacy and security for the treasures that were kept therein.<sup>12</sup>

But it was not meant to be mankind’s final home. “Through the atonement of Christ” and “by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel,”<sup>13</sup> God had prepared a way for Adam and Eve to move forward. According to an Armenian text, once their period of preparation was over, “the Lord took pity on them, and he sent his angel to take them out of the darkness, and he guided and brought them into this bright world.”<sup>14</sup> There, in answer to prayer, they continued to receive the additional light and knowledge they would need as they readied themselves and their children for a permanent return to God’s presence.<sup>15</sup>

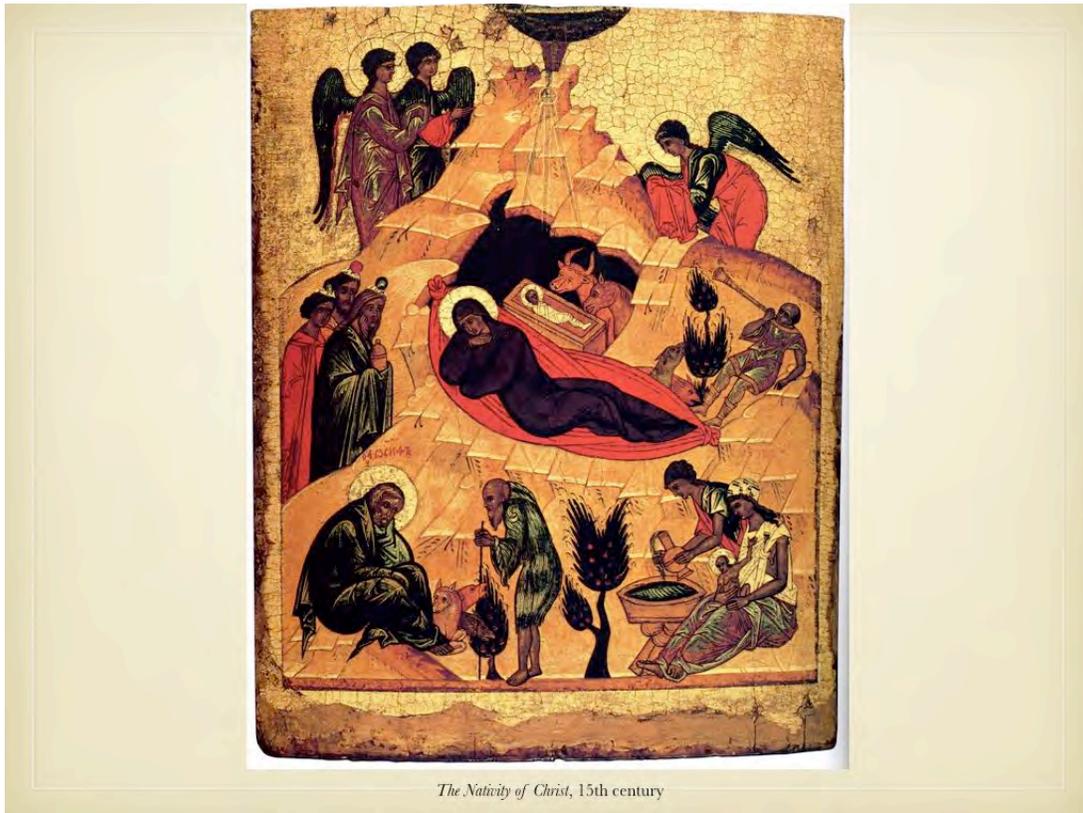
## Moses Administering Covenants at Sinai



The same three divisions of a sacred mountain appear in an illustration from an early Bible manuscript. Recall that when God appeared to Moses on the top of Mount Sinai, Aaron and the priests ascended only part way, while the rest of the children of Israel stayed at the very foot, unwilling and unprepared to begin the climb required to meet Jehovah face to face.<sup>16</sup>

In this illustration, Moses, in the top register, “accompanied by Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, approaches the Lord, whose head appears in a cloud at the top of Mount Sinai.”<sup>17</sup> Within the cave in the middle scene, is a gathering of Christians who, in the pattern of ancient Israel, make covenants under the direction of Moses.<sup>18</sup> At the bottom, is a Christianized version of the Tabernacle.<sup>19</sup> Here, the ancient leaders of Israel part the outer veil, earnestly inviting all those outside the covenant to enter in and begin their ascent.

## Imagery of the Sacred Mountain in the Nativity



An icon of the Nativity from the Orthodox tradition also features a mountain divided into three parts.<sup>20</sup> At the top, the heavenly angels sing praises to God, and in the middle, near the cave,<sup>21</sup> Mary rests outside while the baby Jesus slumbers within. At the bottom left, Joseph is tempted by the Devil to disbelieve Mary’s story about the baby’s conception, while at right similarly doubting midwives wash the baby Jesus.<sup>22</sup>

Though the visit of the Magi is generally portrayed as having taken place at a later time when Mary and Joseph were living in a house, the Magi in this image and in the apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James*<sup>23</sup> “come to pay homage at the Bethlehem cave—an interesting mixture of Matthew and Luke,”<sup>24</sup> and a motif that harmonizes with themes in the story of Adam and Eve’s Cave of Treasures.

Early Christian texts depict the “treasures” that had once been given to comfort and instruct Adam and Eve as reappearing symbolically in the later gifts of the Wise Men to the Christ child. In this case, the birth cave had itself become a literal Holy of Holies, since the Son of God lay within. The three gifts of the Magi symbolized God’s promise of an eventual recovery of what mankind had lost when they were first shut out from Paradise,<sup>25</sup>—including the restoration by Christ of the higher priesthood and its distinctive ordinances. Describing how early Christians connected the birth of Christ with the royal coronation psalm of Melchizedek, C. S. Lewis writes:<sup>26</sup>

We find in our Prayer Books that Psalm 110 is one of those appointed for Christmas Day. We may at first be surprised by this. There is nothing in it about peace and

goodwill, nothing remotely suggestive of the stable at Bethlehem. It seems to have been originally either a coronation ode for a new king, promising conquest and empire, or a poem addressed to some king on the eve of a war, promising victory... The note is not "Peace and goodwill" but "Beware. He's coming." Two things attach it to Christ with an authority far beyond that of the Prayer book. The first of course ... is that He Himself did so; He is the "lord" whom "David" calls "my Lord."<sup>27</sup> The second is the reference to Melchizedek... For He, like Melchizedek claims to be Priest, though not really of the priestly tribe, and also King. Melchizedek really does point to Him; and so of course does the hero of Psalm 110 who is a king but also has the same sort of priesthood.

Summarizing the significance of the return of the gifts originally given to Adam to the Christ child, the Methodist Old Testament scholar Margaret Barker writes:<sup>28</sup>

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh were symbolic of the temple... Jesus was the new Adam, the new creation, opening the way back to Eden and restoring the true temple.

### **Traditions About a Sacred Grotto on the Mount of Olives**



Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, 1956-: *Funerary Chamber Adjoining the Grotto of the Teachings at Eleona*

Within an underground grotto on the Mount of Olives, "a stone's throw from the place of His Ascension,"<sup>29</sup> and from where, in the sight of the Temple, He foretold the ruin of Jerusalem and the end of the world,"<sup>30</sup> early traditions record that Jesus found a place "where He could teach His disciples those things that were beyond the understanding of

His usual hearers.”<sup>31</sup> More specifically, the fourth-century bishop Eusebius passed on “a true report... that in that cave the Savior of the Universe initiated the members of his guild in the ineffable mysteries.”<sup>32</sup> An instance of such an initiation may have occurred on the very night Jesus was arrested,<sup>33</sup> He having perhaps repaired to such a place to give His final instructions to His apostles<sup>34</sup> before going down to Gethsemane.<sup>35</sup> The Gnostic *Acts of John* recounts that on that night a prayer circle was formed by the apostles, with Jesus at the center: “So he told us to form a circle, holding one another’s hands, and himself stood in the middle.”<sup>36</sup>

### **The Symbolism of the “Goodly Fragrance”**

Circling back to where this essay started, I was pleased to find recently that the memory and significance of the visit of the Magi had been preserved in the 15th-century French Christmas carol *Noël Nouvelet*.<sup>37</sup> In the carol, the smell of the manger is revealed to be the fragrance of Paradise, emanating from the gifts originally procured in the primeval Garden. The three “kings” bring their gifts to the Christ child, tokens of the restoration of divine blessings once given to Adam and Eve, while the birthplace in Bethlehem—here portrayed as a small garden—is transformed into an earthly Eden:

Gold the first did carry; myrrh the next did bring.  
And the third bore incense, *the garden perfuming*,  
So that in *paradise* I seemed to dwell.

In our day, such traditions—those traditions that connect Christ’s birthplace to the Garden of Eden and that recognize the myrrh as the symbol of Christ’s anointing as the Son of God—seem have been almost completely forgotten.<sup>38</sup> For example, note the words of the familiar nineteenth-century carol “We Three Kings of Orient Are.”<sup>39</sup> Here the myrrh is merely a burial ointment, a preparation for Christ’s death and entombment:

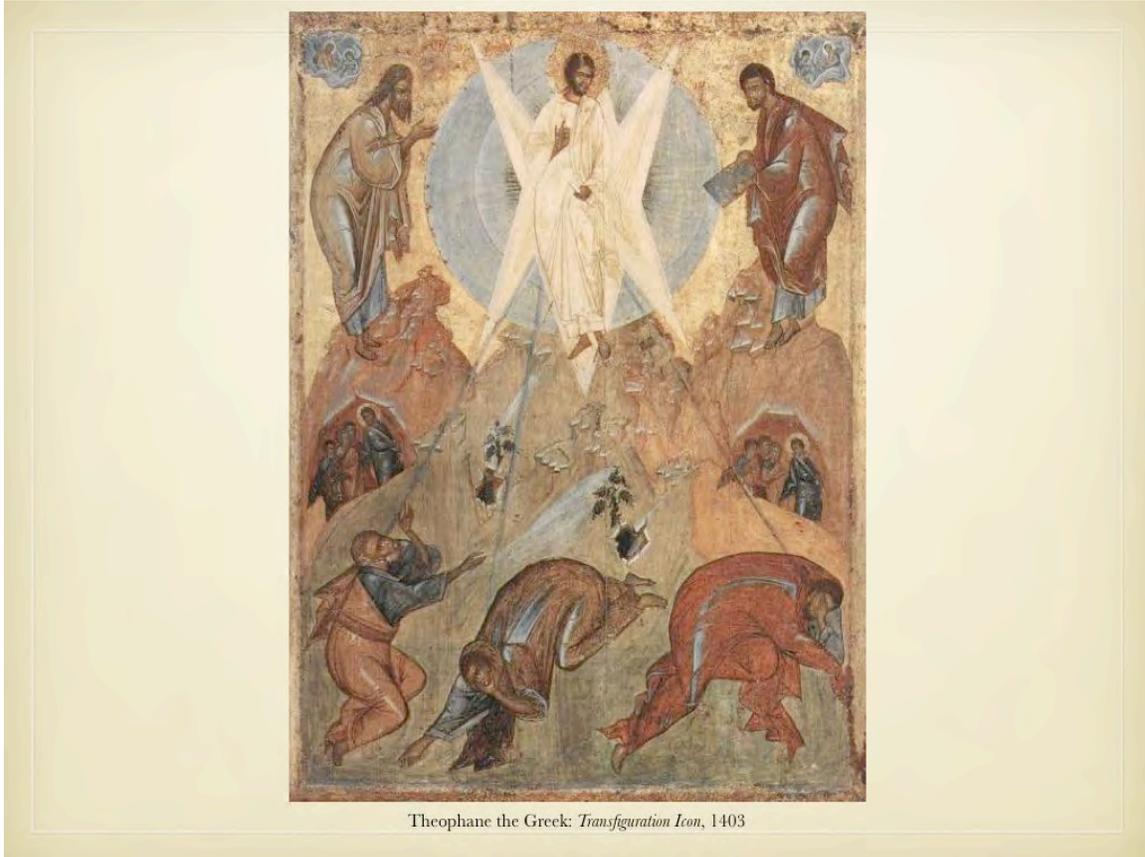
Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

What a bleak picture this uninspired verse paints when compared to the triumphal symbolism of anointing with myrrh in the ancient Israelite temple as the seal of eternal Sonship, and the original meaning of Jesus’ title as the Christ. Explains Harvey:<sup>40</sup>

The Hebrew term [for “Messiah”], meaning “the Anointed One,” was translated into Greek as *Christos*, and gave Jesus the name by which he was to become universally known. It was an old title, originally used of the first kings of Israel. But in the time of Jesus it was reserved for a divinely-appointed... figure whom (it was widely believed) God would soon send into the world to inaugurate a new and blessed age for the benefit of his chosen people (or of the elect among them).

This same symbolism of anointing, of course, applies to all Christians, who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ and who have received the promise that they “may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him.”<sup>41</sup> An

anticipatory fulfillment of this promise was experienced by Peter, James, and John, when they were themselves “transfigured”<sup>42</sup> in likeness of Christ, and received the “more sure word of prophecy” to which all Christians are admonished to “take heed... until the day dawn, and the day star arise in [their own] hearts.”<sup>43</sup> In recounting a vision of the given at that time to the three apostles, the second-century *Apocalypse of Peter* not only describes the visual beauty of the transfigured earth, but also the unmistakable divine fragrance that “was borne from there to where [they] were.”<sup>44</sup>



Theophane the Greek: *Transfiguration Icon*, 1403

### “Good Tidings of Great Joy”

Tradition records that Adam, after recounting the story of the Fall to his posterity at the gathering before his death, asked Eve and Seth to retrieve oil from the Tree of Life so he could receive an ordinance of anointing.<sup>45</sup> Hugh Nibley summarizes:

[W]hen at the end of his life Adam felt the accumulating effect of these mortal blows upon him and sensed the approach of death, he implored Eve, “Go with my son Seth near to Paradise... and pray God to... send his angel to Paradise, and give me of the tree out of which the oil floweth, and bring it me, and I shall anoint myself and shall have rest from my complaint.”<sup>46</sup> He was asking for the “oil of mercy,” which alone could reverse the seven “blows of death” inflicted as a result of the Fall.<sup>47</sup> For the ultimate healing of the oil of mercy was not to be given to men until the coming of the Messiah, as Eve and Seth were informed by an angel who met them on the way back to the Garden to fetch the oil for Adam.<sup>48</sup> When the Messiah did come,

according to the *Clementine Recognitions*,<sup>49</sup> he provided that all who come to His kingdom should be anointed with the oil of the Tree of Life, the very oil with which the Father had anointed Him to be the *initium omnium*.<sup>50</sup> The final culmination of the whole plan of salvation, according to a very old Judeo-Christian writing, will be when Michael opens the gates and bestows the healing oil on the righteous as “the hundred-fold reward of those who have worked and toiled diligently.”<sup>51</sup>

Thus, it seems that the three priceless and eternal gifts, first given to Adam and Eve by three heavenly messengers and whose restoration in the meridian of time was symbolized by the visit of the Magi to the Christ child, may also become our own, through the Atonement of Christ coupled with our “diligence and obedience.”<sup>52</sup> The story of Jesus’ birth is indeed “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. Keyte *et al.*, *The New Oxford Book of Carols*, 191, pp. 624-626.

<sup>2</sup> Found on the album "The Wonder of Christmas" (ASIN: B00015X7V6).

<sup>3</sup> The fragrance is described as having seized hold of every sense ("qui ravit tous nos sens"), nothing like it having ever been breathed forth by the sweet spring flowers ("S'exhale-t-il rien de semblable au milieu des fleurs du printemps?").

<sup>4</sup> S. Nes, *Uncreated Light*, p. 90. The frontispiece of an Armenian translation of Bartholomew of Maragha's *Treatise on the Work of the Six Days of Creation* shows Adam and Eve within a cavelike structure, surrounded by a perimeter of angels, at the top of a beautiful illustration of the layout of Eden (A. Vernay-Nouri, *Livres*, p. 44).

<sup>5</sup> G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, 30(5):3, p. 34E; cf. M. Barker, *Christmas*, p. 119; E. A. W. Budge, *Cave*; S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*; S. Nes, *Uncreated Light*, p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* states that "neither biblical records nor secular history and archaeological research" are likely to ever "identify the dimensions or the location of the Garden [of Eden] in terms of the present-day surface of the earth" (G. W. Doxey, *Eden*, p. 534). Although Joseph Smith's identification of Adam-ondi-Ahman sheds light on the place where Adam and Eve lived *after* the Fall, the major purpose of the early Christian Adam traditions was surely not geographical description. Indeed, one might speculate that stories about the Cave of Treasures may have been elaborated in earlier forms as teaching devices to those who were capable of understanding the "mysteries of the kingdom," by analogy to the way stories about

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Adam and Eve are used in LDS temple teachings in our day. Unfortunately, we presently have access to Cave of Treasures stories only in late texts, so there is very little we can say with any certainty about such things.

7 For more on biblical teachings and traditions of visits of three messengers to ancient prophets, see J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, pp. 338-340.

8 For a Jewish account of Seth's cave, containing a "vault of gold" that held a book of knowledge and "precious spices," see S. Savedow, *Rezial*, p. 4. See also A. S.-M. Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne*, pp. 178-179.

9 Compare Psalm 110:3.

10 M. Barker, *Christmas*, p. 120; cf. pp. 138-139.

11 See E. A. W. Budge, *Cave*, p. 35; A. S.-M. Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne*, p. 179.

12 D. Wilson, *Conflict*, pp. 50-51. See also J. M. Lundquist, *Fundamentals*, pp. 655-659; cf. Moses 1:23, 42; 4:32.

13 Articles of Faith 1:3.

14 W. L. Lipscomb, *Creation*, 46-47, p. 126; cf. W. L. Lipscomb, *Creation*, 50-51, pp. 265-266; S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, 1:14-16, pp. 5-18.

15 E.g., Moses 5:4-8.

16 See J. E. Seaich, *Ancient Texts 1995*, pp. 568-577, 660-661, 807-809; R. Wagner, *Gnosis*, p. 23.

17 D. H. Verkerk, *Pentateuch*, p. 90. See Exodus 24:9-18.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 90. See Exodus 24:4-8. This eucharistic scene takes place in the presence of presbyters [elders], deacons, "the canonical widows, and subdeacons and deaconesses and readers [and] those who have gifts" (J. Cooper *et al.*, *Testament*, 1:23, p. 70; cf. D. H. Verkerk, *Pentateuch*, pp. 90-97).

19 D. H. Verkerk, *Pentateuch*, p. 98.

20 Though the basic three-level pattern seems incontrovertible in these three illustrations, the later one proceeds in Orthodox tradition, the more that additional subtle doctrinal elaborations become important in icon design. Throughout the centuries, however, the theme of human deification (theosis), in its various forms, has remained a constant. As Ouspensky writes: "the icon is not a representation of the Deity, but an indication of the participation of a given person in Divine life. It is a testimony of the concrete, practical knowledge of the sanctification of the human body" (L. Ouspensky, *Meaning and Language*, p. 36). In his interpretations of the three major vertical regions of two depictions of the transfiguration, Nes reads, from top to bottom, "the mystical, the liturgical, and the dogmatic" or, in the other case, "the eschatological, the sacramental, and the hierarchical" (S. Nes, *Uncreated Light*, pp. 122-123).

21 R. E. Brown, *Birth*, pp. 166, 197, 401; E. A. W. Budge, *Cave*, pp. 35, 208; Eusebius, *Constantine* (1890), 3:41-43, pp. 137-138; Justin Martyr, *Trypho*, 78, p. 237; J. E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 100 n. 2.

22 Alternatively, Ouspensky sees in the image of the two midwives and Jesus a "scene from everyday life [showing] clearly that the Child is like any other newborn babe and is subject to the natural requirements of human nature" (L. Ouspensky *et al.*, *Icons*, p. 160).

23 E. Hennecke *et al.*, *Protoevangelium*, 18:1, 21:1-4, pp. 383, 386.

24 R. E. Brown, *Birth*, p. 197; cf. E. A. W. Budge, *Cave*, pp. 35, 211. Brown's mention of the mixture of Matthew and Luke is related to his argument that "the motif of a cave may have come from the mention of a *phatne*, which is a stall or manger for animals, and from the reference to shepherds for whose animals the cave might have served as a shelter or a feed storeroom" (R. E. Brown, *Birth*, p. 401).

25 E. A. W. Budge, *Cave*, Introduction, p. 16; cf. p. 69. See also M. Barker, *Hidden*, p. 25; D. Wilson, *Conflict*, pp. 46-49. The treasures are sometimes characterized as a revelation to Adam or Seth containing "hidden mysteries" (A. S.-M. Ri, *Commentaire de la Caverne*, pp. 84, 182-183).

26 C. S. Lewis, *Psalms*, pp. 122-123.

27 Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44.

28 M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 118-119; cf. pp. 2-3, 89-90.

29 Acts 1:12.

30 O. Englebert, *Grotto*, p. 1. See Matthew 24:1-26:2; cf. Egeria, *Travels*, 33:2, p. 152; Eusebius, *Constantine* (1890), p. 294 n. 43-3; E. Hennecke *et al.*, *Apocalypse of Peter*.

31 O. Englebert, *Grotto*, p. 1; cf. A. Storme, *Mont des Oliviers*, pp. 24-27. Though early traditions associate the location of the "Grotto of the Teachings" with the events summarized here, there is no definite evidence that it was the actual place where these things are purported to have occurred.

32 Eusebius, *Constantine* (1890), 3:43:3, p. 138.

33 W. J. Hamblin, *Initiation*, p. 207; M. Smith, *Secret Gospel*, pp. 15-16.

34 John 15-17.

35 O. Englebert, *Grotto*, p. 1.

36 E. Hennecke *et al.*, *Acts of John*, 94, p. 227.

37 L'un portait l'or, et l'autre myrrhe aussi, / Et l'autre encens, qui faisait bon senti: / Le paradis semblait le jardinier (H. Keyte *et al.*, *The New Oxford Book of Carols*, 188, pp. 614-618, spelling modernized).

38 Comparing ancient use of the motifs of the Magi and the shepherds, Brown observes: "In the Roman catacombs the Magi made their pictorial debut a good two centuries before the shepherds, who belatedly appear in the fourth

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century in Sts. Peter and Marcellinus as subsidiary to the Magi. If interest in relics is taken as a gauge, there is simply no context between the Magi and the shepherds.” He then argues that “the influence of anti-symbolic feelings aroused by the Protestant Reform” had something to do with the increasing tendency for the “the shepherds... to take the place of the Magi, particularly as the mainstay of Christmas carols” (R. E. Brown, *Birth*, p. 197). Moreover, the strong association of the latter figures with the trappings of “royalty” is something that is not an attraction to the modern mind, so linked is the theme with corrupt political leadership. Humble shepherds are a much more appealing motif in our day, though even the survival of these hardy figures is threatened by the increasing dominance of inferior Christmas texts and tunes, whether secular or of a purely sentimentally religious nature. Nor is this trend likely to reverse itself, even in churches, given that “it requires a certain effort to tune oneself to the moral atmosphere implied by a fine melody; and it is far easier to dwell in the miasma of the languishing and sentimental hymn tunes which so often disfigure our services” (Ralph Vaughan Williams in P. Dearmer *et al.*, *Hymnal*, p. xi).

<sup>39</sup> H. Keyte *et al.*, *The New Oxford Book of Carols*, 99, pp. 356-358.

<sup>40</sup> A. E. Harvey, *Companion* 2004, p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Moroni 7:48; cf. 1 John 3:2. The transfiguration icon of Theophane the Greek can be viewed as a symbol of mankind’s possibility to become glorified as Christ was glorified. Joseph Smith explained: “The Savior, Moses, and Elias, gave the keys of the priesthood to Peter, James, and John, on the mount, when they were transfigured before Him” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 29 September 1839, p. 158; cf. D&C 7:7; S. Nes, *Uncreated Light*, p. 128). Not only does the icon display the same three divisions of the mountain as in the previous examples in this article, but there is also a conceptual tie to Peter’s statement about building three tabernacles (Matthew 17:4; Mark 9:5), which Nes takes as representing “three stages of development” in the life of a disciple (S. Nes, *Uncreated Light*, p. 116).

Describing the icon itself, Nes writes: “The icon shows a landscape with four caves and three mountain tops... On the central mountain there stands [the transfigured Jesus Christ] inside a white six-pointed star... He holds a small cylindrical item in His left hand while the right is lifted up to his chest. His robes are decorated with gold stripes in the highlights. The man and the star, which almost merge because of their color value, come forth out of a circular mandorla of variegated blue. Thin gold lines radiate from the circle’s center.”

“Two men in three-quarter profile stand on their respective mountain tops... [Elijah, the] man on the left... gives his attention to the central man by a gesture of his right hand. [Moses, the] somewhat younger man to the right... holds a rectangular item [representing the Law] with both hands.” In the upper corners of the icon, angels are shown bringing Moses and Elijah to the scene.

As beams of light strike the Apostles at the base of the mountain, Peter looks up, while John and James turn downward. To the left of the middle section, Jesus and the apostles are “in the process of ascending the mountain,” while on the right they are “descending and leaving the scene. In the area between these... groups we find two dark caves in the mountain whose entrances are marked by a tree” (S. Nes, *Uncreated Light*, pp. 32-33). Nes takes these caves to be an analogue for “hermit cells,” places “for material renunciation and spiritual growth” (S. Nes, *Uncreated Light*, pp. 89-90).

What Peter seems to have misunderstood in his statement about building three tabernacles is the idea that this glorious appearance of Christ was not the ushering in of the millennial kingdom, but only a foreshadowing thereof: “The bright cloud recalls temple worship and the cloud that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, the visible sign of God being extraordinarily present. Peter sees this as a sign that the Kingdom has come. Knowing that the Feast of the Tabernacles is the feast of the coming Kingdom, he asks to build booths (Matthew 17:4), as was done at that feast, to serve as symbols of God’s dwelling among the just in the Kingdom” (J. N. Sparks *et al.*, *Orthodox Study Bible, The Transfiguration*, p. 1301).

Though the day of redemption had not yet arrived for the world as a whole, it had come for the chosen three, who then beheld, according to the *Apocalypse of Peter*, the Heavenly Temple. The apocryphal account purports to give the Lord’s reply to Peter: “Satan makes war against you, and has veiled your understanding; and the good things of the world prevail against you. Your eyes therefore must be opened and your ears unstopped that you may see a tabernacle, not made with men’s hands, which my Heavenly Father has made for me and the elect.” Then, says Peter, “we beheld it and were full of gladness” (J. K. Elliott, *Apocalypse of Peter*, Ethiopic, 16, p. 611). Thus, Nes observes that while the “synoptic Gospels tell of the transfiguration of Jesus as a passing episode in this life, ... the vision of Paradise in the Revelation of Peter describes a lasting state in the next life.” The transfiguration icon shows “how the Incarnation is a prerequisite for the Transfiguration and how the event of God descending and being made man is the starting point for man’s ascent and deification” (S. Nes, *Uncreated Light*, p. 81).

<sup>42</sup> J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 29 September 1839, p. 158.

<sup>43</sup> 2 Peter 1:16-19.

<sup>44</sup> J. K. Elliott, *Apocalypse of Peter*, Akhmim, 16, p. 611. D&C 63:20-21 also speaks of a vision of the transfigured earth that “was shown unto mine apostles upon the mount; of which account the fulness ye have not yet received.”

<sup>45</sup> G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, pp. 34E-45E. For Islamic versions of this story, see M. i. A. A. al-Kisa’i, *Tales*, pp. 78, 82-83; A. I. A. I. M. I. I. al-Tha’labi, *Lives*, pp. 60-62.

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- <sup>46</sup> See G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, Greek 9:3-4, pp. 39E-40E.  
<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, Greek 40:1, p. 44E.  
<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, Greek 40:1-43:3, pp. 44E-46E.  
<sup>49</sup> Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions*, 1:45:5, p. 89.  
<sup>50</sup> I.e., the first of all. See *ibid.*  
<sup>51</sup> H. W. Nibley, *Message* 2005, p. 174 and H. E. Gaylord, Jr., 3 *Baruch*, 15:1-2, p. 676.  
<sup>52</sup> D&C 130:19.  
<sup>53</sup> Luke 2:10.