



Latter-day Saint Temples and Freemasonry

This outline contains links to a few books that have helped me understand the context and content of the scriptures. As an Amazon Affiliate, I do earn a small commission from qualifying purchases (at no extra cost to you). [Click here to see all of my favorite books on Amazon.](#)

Defining Terms

1. What are temple ordinances?
2. What is the Endowment?
3. What is Freemasonry?
4. Where did Freemasonry originate?
5. Is there a connection between Freemasonry and Latter-day Saint temple worship?

Temple Ordinances

Temple ordinances lead to the greatest blessings available through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Everything in the Church—the meetings and activities, the missionary efforts, the lessons taught, and the hymns—**all lead to the work done in holy temples.**

Source:

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/temples?lang=eng>



Temple Ordinances

- Baptism for the Dead and Confirmation
- Priesthood Ordination
- Initiatory Ordinances (Washing and Anointing)
- The Endowment
- Temple Sealing
- The Fulness of the Priesthood





The Endowment

One ordinance received in the temple is called the endowment. The word endowment means “gift,” and the temple endowment truly is a gift from God. The ordinance consists of a series of instructions and includes covenants to live righteously and follow the requirements of the gospel. The endowment focuses on the Savior, His role in Heavenly Father’s plan, and the personal commitment of each member to follow Him.

Source: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/temples?lang=eng>

The Endowment

The Endowment rite or ceremony includes teachings about the **creation** of the world, the **purpose of mortal life**, and **the path** to return to back to Heavenly Father's presence. Participants make covenants to follow Jesus Christ, keep God's commandments, live a life of service, and remain morally pure. This ceremony involves prayer, learning through presentation and ritual, and receiving blessings of protection and enlightenment for our journey back to God.

The **Endowment is also preparatory** for receiving further ordinances, including being sealed in marriage for time and eternity. Latter-day Saints believe receiving the Endowment is an essential ordinance, a step on the path toward eternal life with God.

The Endowment

- All the promised blessings of the endowment are in force both in this life and for eternity. The fulfillment of these blessings depends on faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **The endowment is received in two parts.** In the first part, a person receives preliminary ordinances called the **initiatory**. The initiatory comprises three ordinances: washing, anointing, and clothing (see Exodus 29:4–9). It includes special blessings related to the person’s divine heritage and potential. [General Handbook 27.2](#)

The Endowment

- During the initiatory, the member is instructed to wear the temple garment. **The garment is a sacred symbol of Jesus Christ. It is also a reminder of temple covenants.** When members keep their covenants, including the sacred privilege to wear the garment as instructed, they will have greater access to the Savior's mercy, protection, strength, and power.
- In the second part of the endowment, the plan of salvation is taught, including the Creation, the Fall of Adam and Eve, and the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Members also receive instruction on how to return to the Lord's presence. [General Handbook 27.2](#)

The Covenants made in the Endowment

In the endowment, members are invited to make sacred covenants as follows:

1. Live the **law of obedience** and strive to keep Heavenly Father's commandments.
- Obey the **law of sacrifice**, which means sacrificing to support the Lord's work and repenting with a broken heart and contrite spirit.

[General Handbook 27.2](#)

The Covenants made in the Endowment

3. Obey the **law of the gospel** of Jesus Christ, which means:

Exercising faith in Jesus Christ.

Repenting daily.

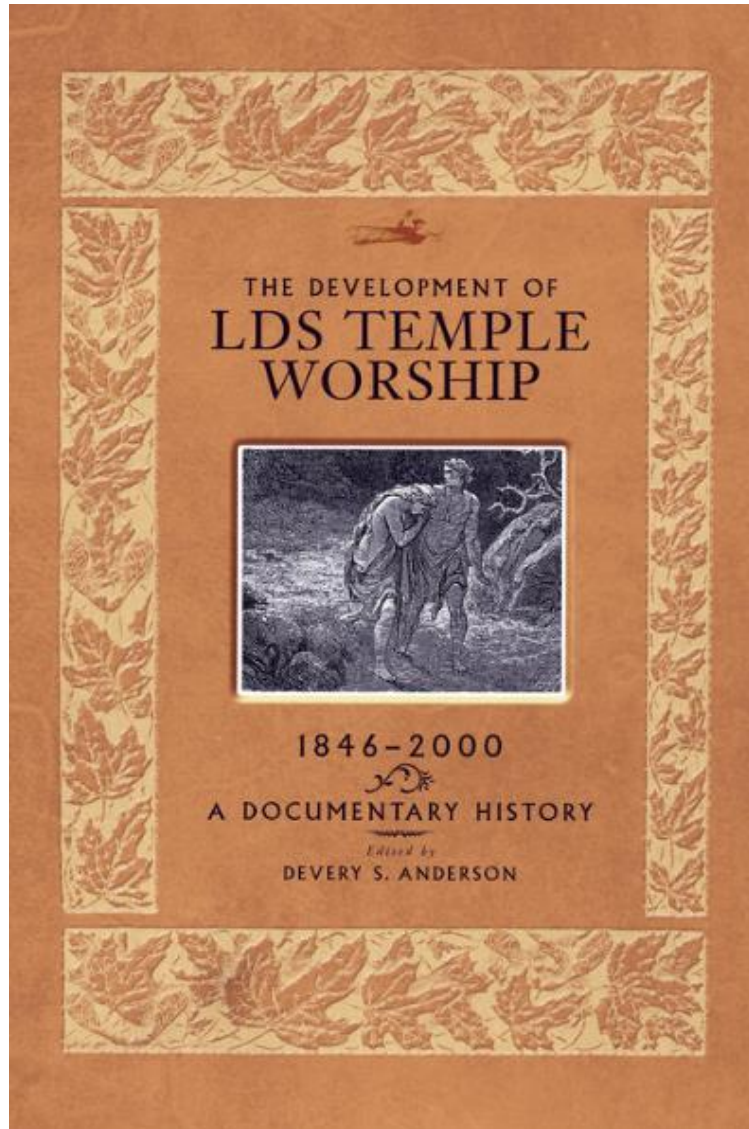
Making covenants with God by receiving the ordinances of salvation and exaltation.

Enduring to the end by keeping covenants.

Striving to live the two great commandments. These are to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” and to “love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:37, 39).

4. Keep the **law of chastity**, which means abstaining from sexual relations outside of a legal marriage between a man and a woman, which is according to God’s law.

5. Keep the **law of consecration**, which means that members dedicate their time, talents, and everything with which the Lord has blessed them to building up Jesus Christ’s Church on the earth. [General Handbook 27.2](#)



Refinements have been made since 1842

The temple ceremonies have changed since their inception in Nauvoo in the 1840s. The liturgy was originally conveyed as a memorized oral tradition, then in 1877 the leadership committed it to writing to guarantee consistency among several temples and facilitate changes they wanted to make at that time.

Pres. Nelson related that **the Brethren have made adjustments to the Endowment** in his address "The Temple and Your Spiritual Foundation," Oct. 2021 General Conference.

Sacred Vestments

Today, ***religious and ceremonial clothing is still used to demonstrate one's dedication to God.*** From the nun's habit and the priest's cassock to the Jewish prayer shawl and the Muslim skullcap, religious vestments are common. In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, adult Church members—both men and women—wear a special undergarment that reminds them of covenants they have made with God. These underclothes may not be on public display, but they still hold special significance to members of the Church.

Source: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/tools/what-is-the-temple-garment?lang=eng>

Enduo (ἐνδύω) – Put on vestments

The Greek verb ἐνδύω (*enduo*) appears several times in the New Testament and generally means "to put on" or "to clothe." In certain contexts, it can have the connotation of putting on figurative or spiritual clothing, and it sometimes carries a deeper meaning, like adopting a new identity or spiritual state. The Greek word *enduo* as it is used in the New Testament is often used to refer to "putting on" spiritual qualities or the metaphorical "clothing" of a new self in Christ.

Enduo (ἐνδύω) – Put on vestments

In the Old Testament, the special clothing worn in temple rituals was an essential part of the sacred rites that **marked the journey** from the profane to the holy. This process involved several key steps: first, the individual would remove the profane, be ritually washed, anointed, and then **clothed in special garments**. They would offer sacrifices, be ordained as their "hands are filled" with priestly responsibilities, and offer incense at the altar before passing through the veil.

In the Christian context, putting on clothing often symbolizes a deeper spiritual transformation—specifically, "putting on Christ." The apostle Paul reflects this symbolism using the Greek word *enduo*, which means "to clothe" or "to put on." Interestingly, in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), ***enduo* is frequently used when referring to donning sacred vestments**, linking this concept to the temple practices of ancient Israel. For Paul, *enduo* captures the transformation that takes place when one embraces Christ, symbolically clothing oneself in His attributes and holiness. See: Ex. 28-29; Ex. 39; Lev. 8; Lev. 16.

Enduo (ἐνδύω) – Put on vestments

Paul frequently writes of putting on light, the armor of God, immortality, Christ and the "new man."

"Let us put on (ἐνδυσώμεθα) the armor of light" – Rom. 13.12.

"This mortal body must put on (ἐνδύσασθαι) immortality" – 1 Cor. 15.53.

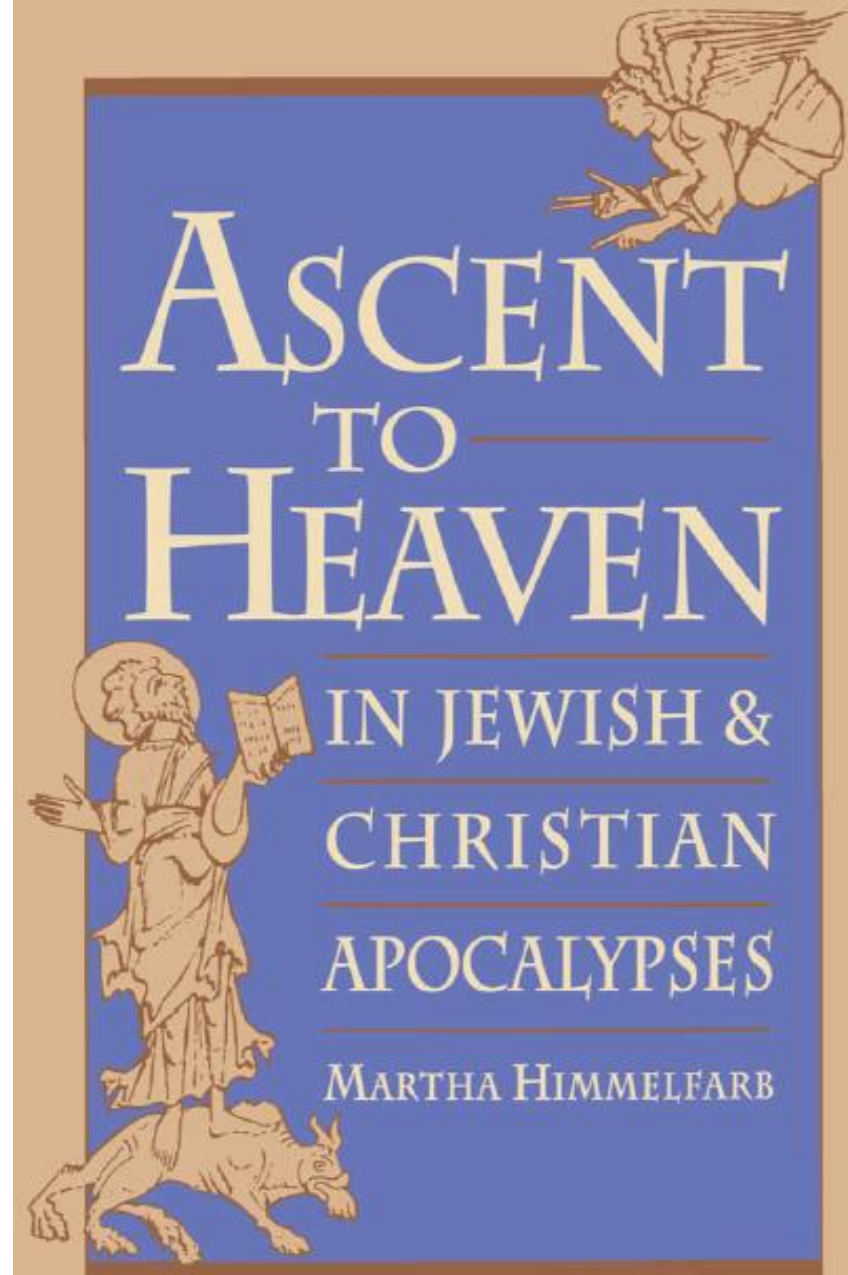
"As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on (ἐνεδύσασθε) Christ" – Gal. 3.27.

See also: Ephesians 4.24, 6.11, 6.14; Colossians 3.10-12; 1 Thes. 5.8.

Enoch and his investiture

After Michael lifts Enoch from his second prostration, God commands him, “Take Enoch, and take off his earthly garments, and **anoint him with good oil**, and clothe him in glorious garments...” Michael does as he is commanded, the wondrous nature of the oil is described in some detail, and then Enoch reports, “***I looked at myself, and I was like one of the glorious ones, and there was no apparent difference.***” Enoch has become an angel.

Martha Himmelfarb, [*Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*](#), Oxford University Press, 1993, p.40. See also: H.F.D. Sparks, [*The Apocryphal Old Testament*](#), Oxford, 1984, p. 337-338.



Enoch and his investiture

The combination of clothing and anointing suggests that the process by which Enoch becomes an angel is a heavenly version of priestly investiture. The idea that there are special garments for the righteous after death is widespread in this period... **When Paul speaks of a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:42-50) for the righteous after death, he seems to have in mind something similar to these heavenly garments.** What is distinctive about the glorious garments of 2 Enoch is their association with anointing and the ceremony of priestly consecration invoked...

It is striking that in 2 Enoch, as in the Testament of Levi and Aramaic Levi, anointing precedes dressing in priestly garments, in opposition to the instructions for the consecration of Aaron as high priest in Exodus 29.

See: <https://www.ldsscriptureteachings.org/2021/06/dc-76-quotes-and-notes/>

See also: Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 37.

Sacred Vestments

Many cultures and religious traditions across the world have used sacred vestments or special clothing as part of their worship and religious rituals. These vestments often symbolize purity, authority, or divine connection.

Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Shinto all don sacred vestments, to name a few.

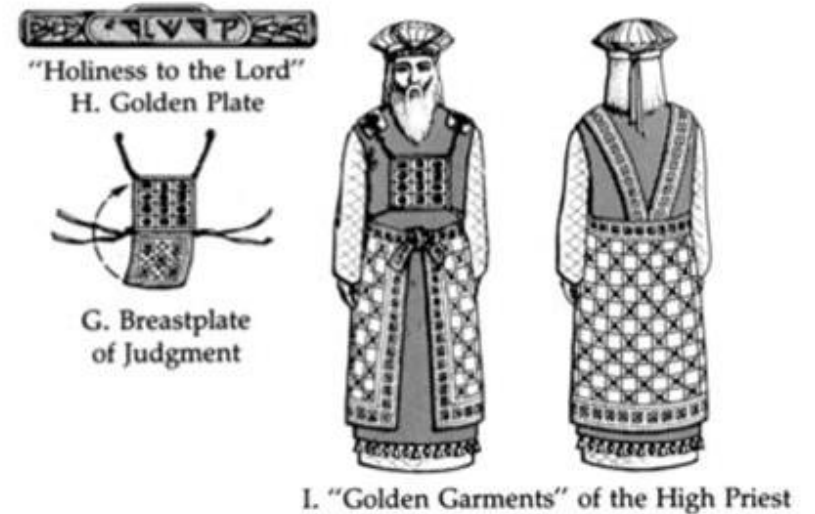
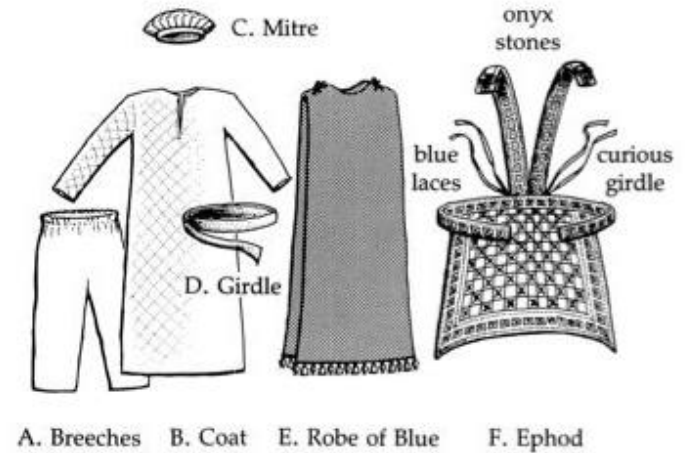
Right: Initiation ceremony (*navjote*) showing the adoption of the white undervest (*sudreh*) and the chord (*kusti*) which all Zoroastrians are enjoined to wear. The vest symbolises the 'good mind' and is not taken off except to wash; the chord represents direction and is tied and untied with appropriate prayers five times a day. Mistree, *The Zoroastrian Flame*, 2018.



Sacred Vestments - Israel

While all priests wore the basic garments (A, B, C) of white linen, the "broidered coat" (B) being of a curiously woven plaid or checker pattern, the high priest wore all the vestments (A-H). The names of the twelve tribes are inscribed on the two onyx stones of the shoulder bands of the ephod (F) as well as on the twelve stones of the breastplate (G); thus the high priest " bears" all Israel when he stands before the Lord. The Urim and Thummim are kept in the pouch formed by folding up the embroidered panel behind the breastplate stones.

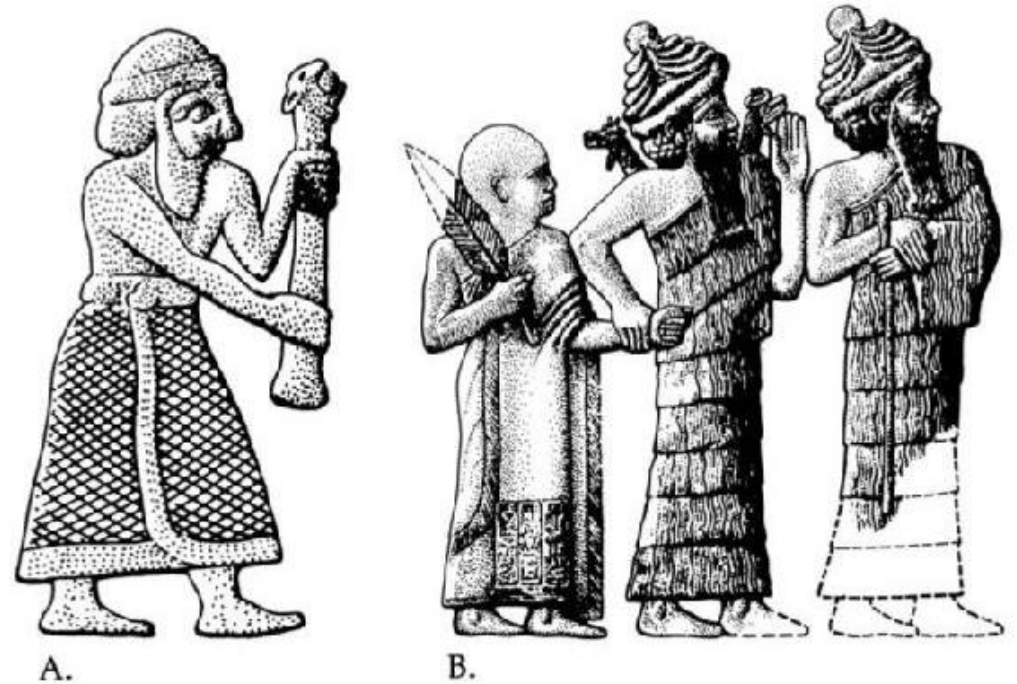
Hugh Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, 92/489 epub version.



3000 – 2000 BC – Sumerian Religious Iconography

This Sumerian priest (A), c. 3000 BC, wears a checkered apron, either a woven plaid or a stylized sheepskin. On this Neo-Sumerian limestone stele (B), c. 2200 B.C., the crowned gods wear the sacred fleece garment, the *kaunakēs*, over their shoulders; Ningizzida holds Gudea by the wrist and leads him into the presence of the gods.

Nibley, [Temple and Cosmos](#), p. 97/489.



Gamma patterns

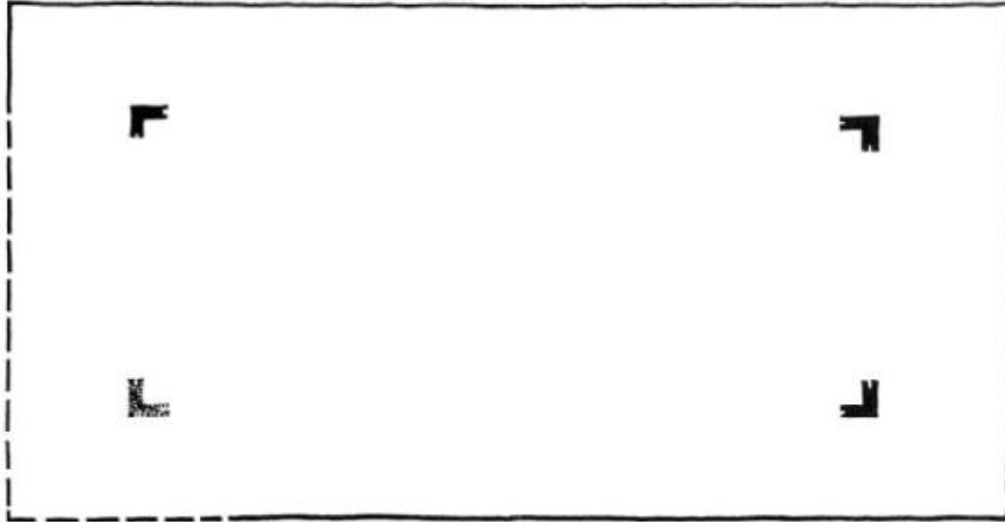


Figure 23. The largest surviving example, 1.4 x 2.7 m, of a fine woolen *tallit* or mantle with purple *gammadia* woven in the corners, c. A.D. 130, was found in the Cave of the Letters. Roman-style tunics with *clavi* (d. fig. 26A, p. 110) worn by these Jewish survivors were also found.

In 1966, in the Bar Kokhba Cave, on the Dead Sea, was found a cave of scrolls, and also many old garments, remarkably well preserved. Some of them bore the **gamma patterns**. Here is one of them with the gamma pattern (fig. 23). This is evidence that these patterns stay around and are interpreted in various ways. These date from the time of Bar Kokhba, the early part of the second century.

Christian Art

The discoverer of these garments, Professor Yadin, writes about them: "An amusing development in early Christian art can now be better explained: in many of the famous mosaics in Rome, Ravenna, and Naples, especially from the fifth century A.D. and later [but earlier also], one can see that all the mantles of the biblical figures are depicted with a single pattern similar to the Greek letter gamma" — a little more like a right angle — a square. **The most famous examples come from the fifth century, from Ravenna.** The pattern is on the edges of the robe, but it is quite common (fig. 24). There are many examples of it in the earliest Christian representations, but not later, because by then they had been transferred to the altar cloth (fig. 25). Originally they belonged to the veil of the temple.

Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, 97/489.

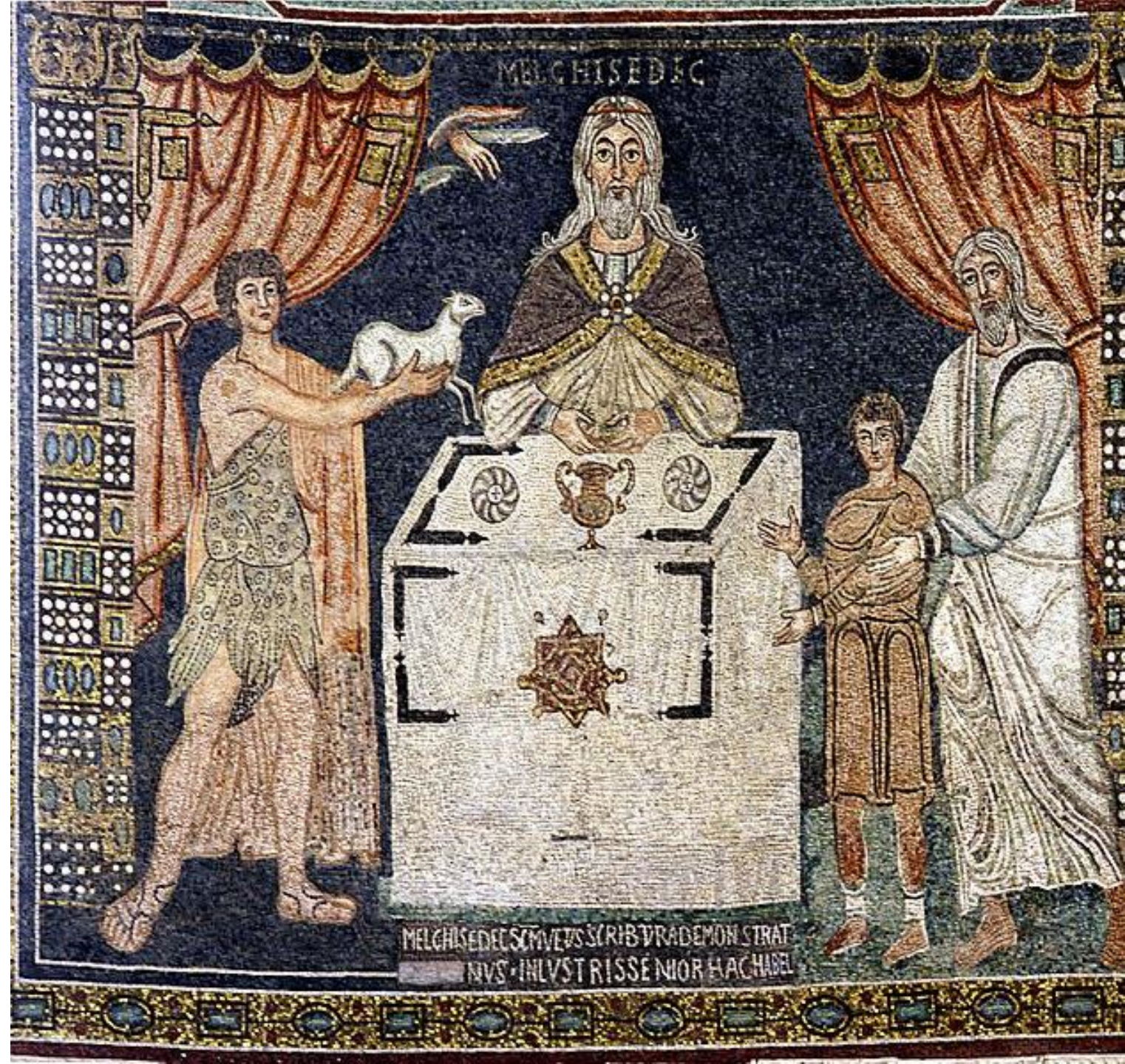
Right (fig. 24, mosaic, Church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna, Italy).



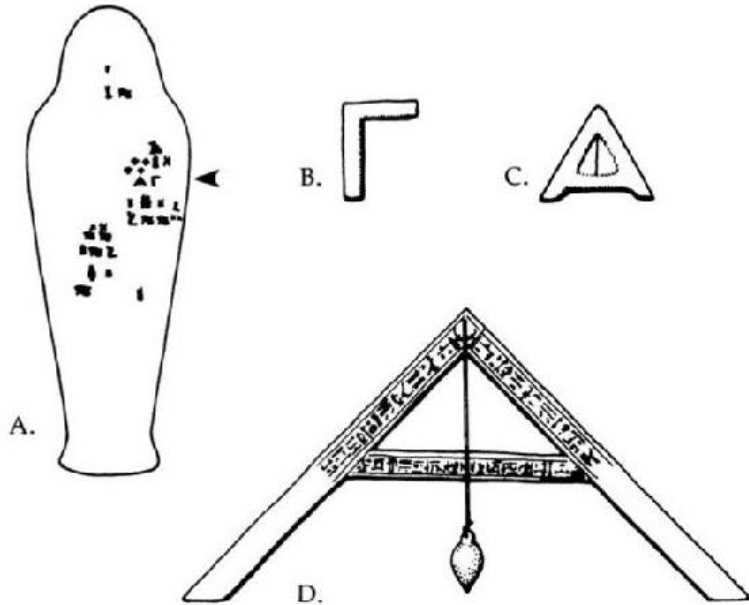
Christian Art

The gamma transferred to the altar cloth.

Right: Sacrifices of Abel, Mechizedek, and Abraham.

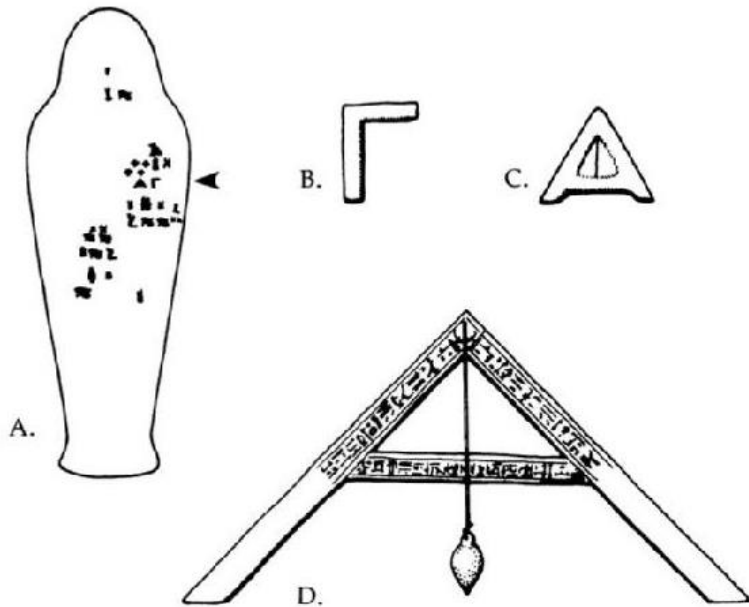


Egyptian gammadia markings



In the 1800s in Egypt, Petrie excavated numerous mummies with amulets arranged in the wrappings. Figure 27A shows, as Petrie describes it, the compass-like level and the square on the breast. He was able to generalize that the square probably means "rectitude," uprightness, and that the other tool (which is hung in that position, they assume, because it has a mark on the top of it) means "making equilibrium, . . . evenly balanced mind," or measure in all things.

Egyptian gammadia markings



Schäfer discovered some among other amulets, and here are pictures of what they were like (fig. 27B, C - left). Thus the Egyptians also used gammadia marks, sometimes located on either breast. Some garments bearing gammadia have been found in graves in Palestine. Are all instances of gammadia of Egyptian origin? Not necessarily. ***These things do get around. They become lost; they become simply designs; nobody understands what they are; nobody understands any more the meaning of the words.*** Thus we speculate as we try to reconstruct them.

Central Asia

Most challenging are the veils from Taoist-Buddhist tombs at Astana, in Central Asia, originally Nestorian (Christian) country, discovered by Sir Aurel Stein in 1925 (fig. 28, right). We see the king and queen embracing at their wedding, the **king holding the square** on high, the **queen a compass**. As it is explained, the instruments are taking the measurements of the universe, at the founding of a new world and a new age.

Above the couple's head is the sun surrounded by twelve disks, meaning the circle of the year or the navel of the universe. Among the stars depicted, Stein and his assistant identified the Big Dipper alone as clearly discernable. As noted above, the garment draped over the coffin and the veil hung on the wall had the same marks; they were placed on the garment as reminders of personal commitment, while on the veil they represent man's place in the cosmos.

Nibley, [*Temple and Cosmos*](#), 100-102/489.



Christian literature – sacred vestments

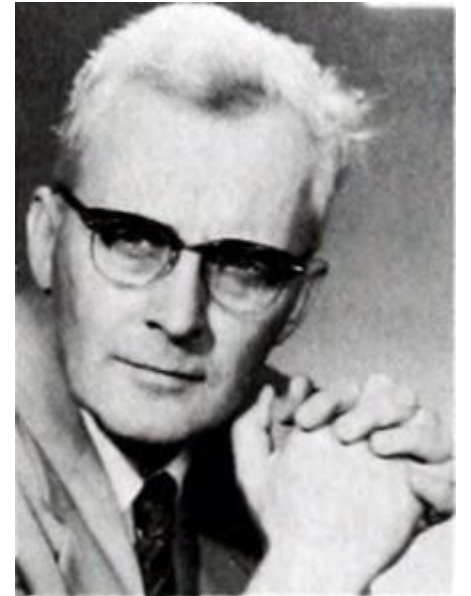
The garment motif is almost an obsession in the literature of Christ's forty-day ministry after the resurrection. Christ, sitting with the apostles, says, "Do not touch me. I am not in the right garments yet." He had left his garment in the tomb. The disciples had found an angel sitting at the foot of the couch on which Christ had been lying, on which the garment lay neatly folded. He was gone, and he had put on another garment, the one he was wearing when Mary met him. (According to a very old account, he told her not to touch him: "I'm going to my father and receive the garment that is waiting for me." He talked to the apostles a lot saying, "When I have finished my work here, and have had my last meeting with you, then I will put on that other garment. I cannot until I am finished with my earthly mission here." Then he will go back and put on his garment, returning to his robes of glory, as each of us will.)

Nibley, [*Temple and Cosmos*](#), 104/489.

Sacred Vestments

Hugh Nibley wrote:

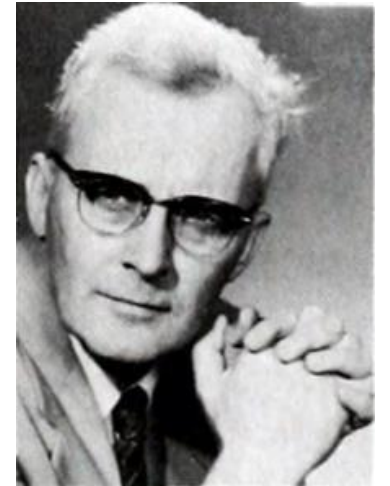
There are **certain marks on the garment, certain marks of recognition for the initiated**, and the marks themselves always have **cosmic symbolism**. The ***Pistis Sophia*** makes a great many references to these. For example: "I found an ordinance inscribed upon my garment (*enduma*)," says the hero, "written in five words. . . . It is the garment which belonged to you in the pre-existence, from the beginning, and when your time is come on the earth, you will put it on and return home to us."



Hugh Nibley, "Sacred Vestments," *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, Deseret Book, 1992. See also: G.R.S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, p. 462.

Sacred Vestments

"In this garment, it has the **five marks**," which he calls *charagme*, meaning "**cuts**" or "marks." The second garment has the marks and all the glory of the name; the third garment has all the mysteries of the ordinances. This is the doctrine of the three garments of Jesus, and of the five *charagme*. In the Manichaean *Kephalaia* (written in Coptic), there are **five mysteries**; the strings — which later become the *tzitzit* — were considered the fifth sign or mark, because they were special. **These five mysteries, the five tokens, first originated among the Godhead.** The mysteries were brought to this world, being preached by an apostle. Men learned them and established them in their midst. These five tokens are the marks of the church. The first is the greeting of peace, by which one becomes a son of peace. The second is the grasp of the right hand, by which he is brought into the church. The third is the embrace, by which he becomes "a son."



Hugh Nibley, "Sacred Vestments," [Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present](#), Deseret Book, 1992.

Pearl of Great Price – sacred vestments

The theme is clearly reflected, incidentally, in the book of Moses in the expression "**clothed upon with glory**" (Moses 7:3). ***Why the insistence on that particular word?*** Enoch says, "I was clothed upon with glory. Therefore I could stand in the presence of God" (cf. Moses 1:2, 31). Otherwise he could not. It is the garment that gives confidence in the presence of God; one does not feel too exposed (2 Nephi 9:14). That garment is the garment that awaits us above, the official garment of heaven, the garment of divinity. So as Enoch says, "**I was clothed upon with glory, and I saw the Lord**" (Moses 7:3-4), just as Moses saw Him "face to face, . . . and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence" (Moses 1:2). Nibley, [*Temple and Cosmos*](#), 104/489.

2 Enoch

In 2 Enoch, discovered in 1892, we read, "The Lord spoke to me with his own mouth: . . . 'Take Enoch and remove his earthly garments and anoint him with holy oil and clothe him in his garment of glory.' . . . **And I looked at myself, and I looked like one of the glorious ones.**" Being no different from him in appearance, he is qualified now, in the manner of initiation. He can go back and join them because he has received a particular garment of glory.

Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, 104/489.



Adam and Eve's garment

וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתָנֹת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם

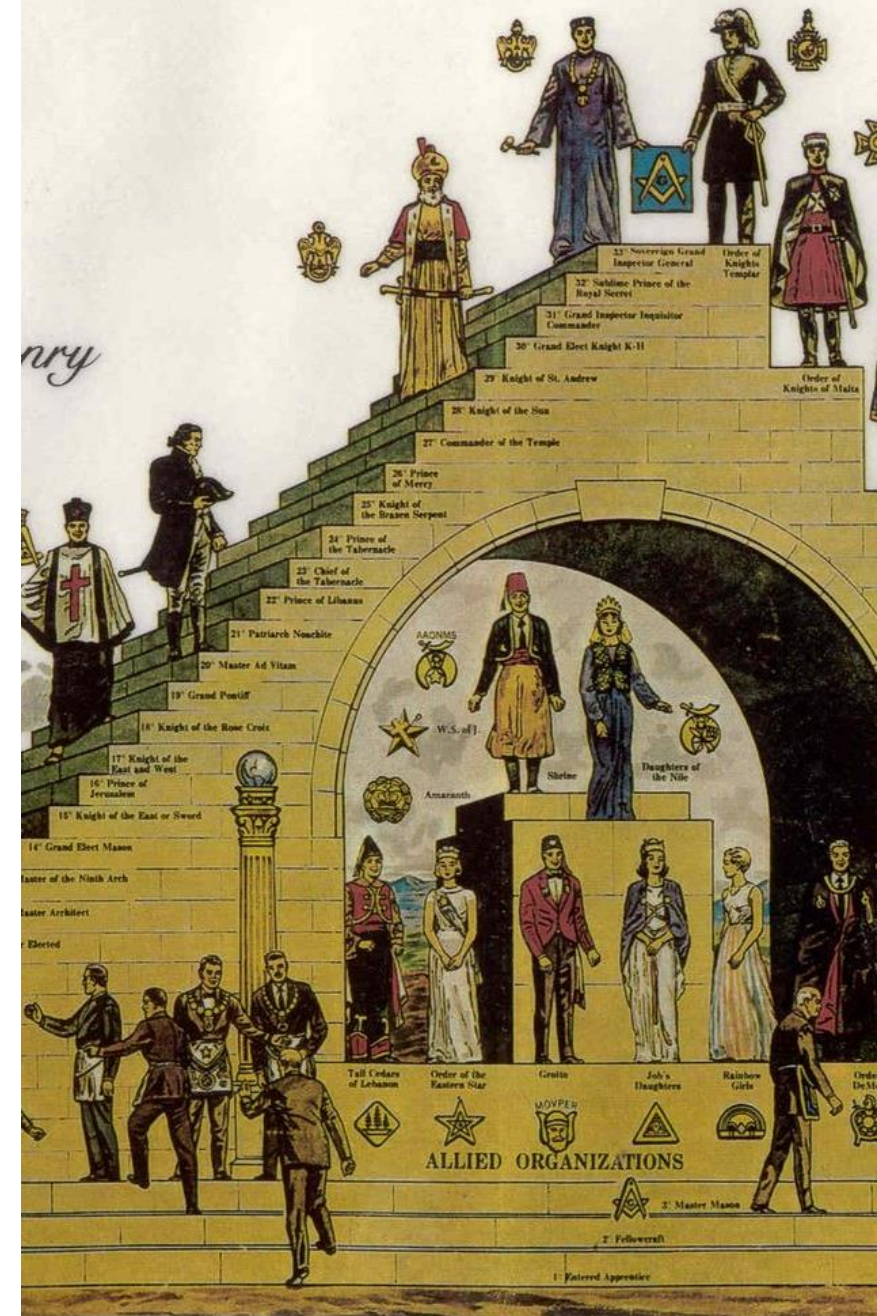
"And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife **coats of skins**, and he clothed them." (Gen. 3.21)

The fate of the garment of the priesthood — the garment of Adam — is quite an epic. Adam, when he came to earth, had a garment. He received a garment of light, when, in the Garden of Eden, he was gloriously clothed in 'ur (he changed it for ^cor). The fact that ^cor and 'ur are so similar has led to a great deal of controversy. 'Ur is "light" (אור); ^cor is "skin" (עור). **So Adam lost his garment of light at the Fall and had to clothe himself in a garment of skin, a reversal of the process.** Nibley, [Temple and Cosmos](#), 109/489.



What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry is a fraternal organization that traces its origins to the medieval stonemason guilds. It is centered on moral and ethical teachings, personal development, and charitable works. Members advance through a series of symbolic rituals and degrees, which use allegory and symbolism drawn from architecture, particularly the tools and practices of stonemasons, to convey lessons about virtue, self-improvement, and brotherhood. Freemasonry emphasizes values such as integrity, friendship, and service to others while promoting religious tolerance and mutual respect among its members.



What is Freemasonry?

The United Grand Lodge of England defines Freemasonry as a “secular” fraternal organization and emphasizes that it is **not a religion** or a substitute for religion and does not allow discussions about religion to take place during its meetings.

United Grand Lodge of England website, path: all about Masonry, What is Freemasonry? Introduction and Freemasonry and Religion, accessed Sept. 2010. See also: <https://www.ugle.org.uk/discover-freemasonry/what-is-freemasonry>

What do Freemasons do?



Freemasons work to **build a better community and world**. They contribute financially to make the world a better place and give an estimated **5 million hours every year of voluntary service in the UK**.

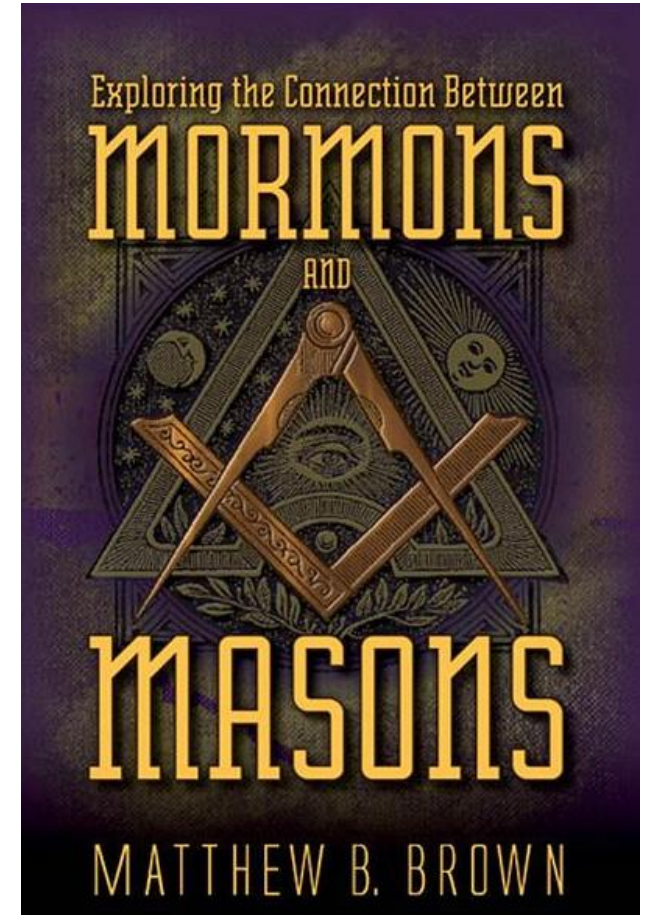
The United Grand Lodge of England states that precepts are taught to initiates of Freemasonry “**by a series of ritual dramas**, which follow ancient forms, and use stonemasons’ customs and tools as allegorical guides.”

United Grand Lodge of England, “What is Freemasonry?” See also: Matt Brown, [Exploring the Connection between Masons and Mormons](#), p. 14.

What is the purpose of Freemasonry?

A widely promoted catchphrase of Freemasonry says that the organization exists to "**make good men better.**" The overall goal of the Masonic ceremonies (which is emphasized through symbolic costume and action) is to bring a person from a state of figurative darkness to one of light. There is an expectation in many (but not all) forms of Freemasonry that the application of Masonic initiation principles to one's life will result in being allowed, after death, to go to the Grand Lodge Above and be in the presence of the Grand Architect of the Universe.

Matt Brown, [Exploring the Connection Between Mormons and Masons](#), Covenant Communications, 2009, p. 15. Albert G. Mackey, *The Symbolism of Freemasonry*, Clark and Maynard, 1869, p. 147-158.



Where did the Freemasons originate?

Theories:

1. They originated with the pyramid builders of Egypt.
2. The Rosicrucian connection. The Rosicrucians were a secretive mystical group from the early 17th century that claimed to possess esoteric knowledge blending alchemy, Hermeticism, and Christian mysticism, aimed at spiritual enlightenment and societal reform.
3. Masonry came out of the Knights Templar, a monastic order that was established in 1118 AD to create a safe passage between the Holy Land and Europe for Christian pilgrims. Piers Read, [*The Templars*](#), Da Capo Press, 1999.

Origins

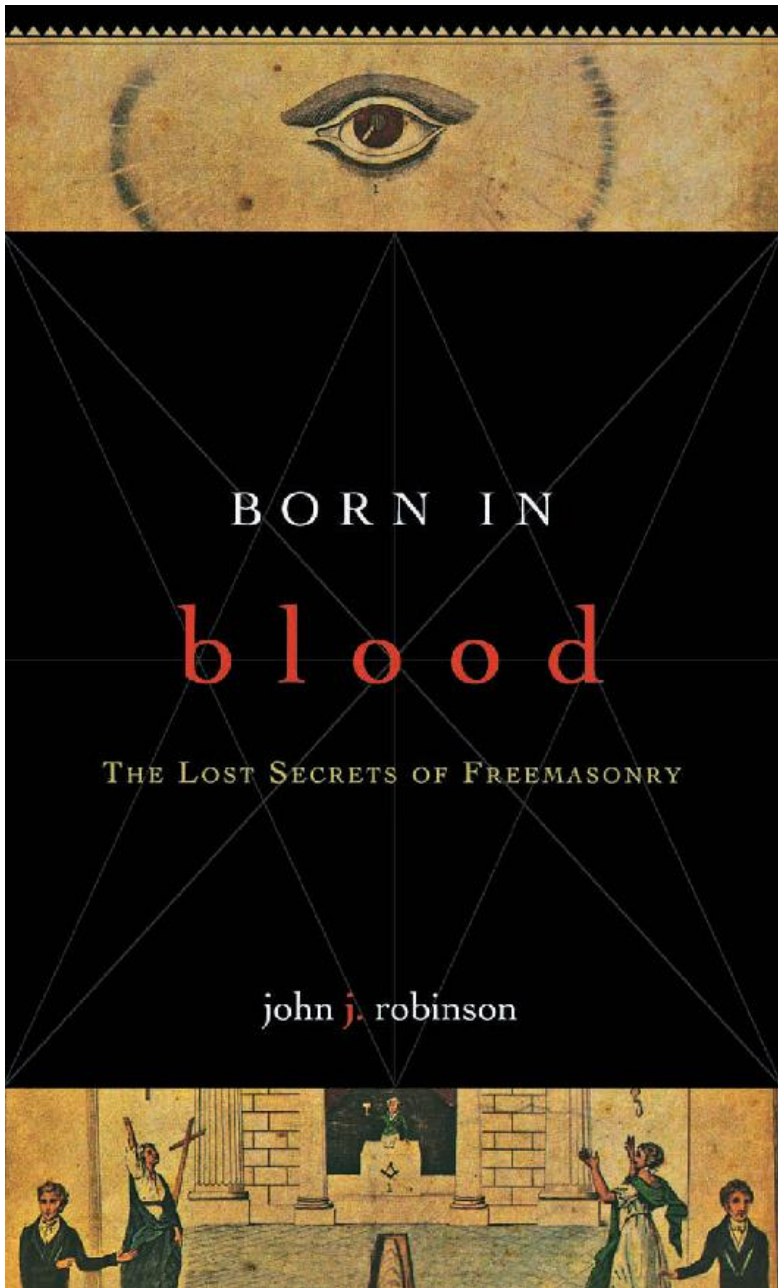
Freemasonry first emerged in its modern form in early 18th-century Britain, with the establishment of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 in London. This marked the transition from "operative" stonemasons' guilds, who were skilled builders, to "speculative" Freemasonry, which used the tools and symbols of masonry as allegories for moral and philosophical teachings. However, earlier forms of Freemasonry are believed to have existed in Scotland and England during the late medieval period, with records of Masonic lodges dating back to the 14th and 15th centuries.

Where did the Freemasons originate?

We are uncertain.

"There seems to be **no solid consensus** on where the Masonic organization and its rituals came from." Brown, [*Exploring the Connections Between Mormons and Masons*](#), p. 29.

"How, when, and why Freemasonry arose are still questions to which **we have no final answers.**" Hamill and Gilbert, eds., [*Freemasonry: A Celebration of the Craft*](#), p. 25.



A Mutual Protection Society

"Freemasonry admits any believer in a monotheistic God. Their ritual makes no mention of Jesus Christ... Taken all together, what had been learned about Freemasonry indicated that it was essentially **a mutual protection society** of men at odds with the church or state, or both, and not a building society."

John Robinson, [Born in Blood](#), p. 198.

Freemasonry a result of the Knights Templar persecution?

"That geographic isolation of Freemasonry over many generations was in itself a Masonic mystery supportive of the hypothesis of Templar origins because the Templars in Britain alone had been given the advantage of three months warning of their impending arrests, and Britain, with its unique attitudes toward the Church of Rome, had never permitted the Inquisition to set up shop on its side of the Channel."

Robinson, *Born in Blood*, p. 268.



Who were the Knights Templar?

Benedict of Nicosia establishes a monastery at Monte Cassino – 530 AD

He creates an order of monks that make vows of: poverty, chastity, and obedience. – p. 68-69

From this group of men arise the order of the Templars. These individuals **developed a system** whereby great wealth could cross thousands of miles in safety, for a fee. Over the centuries, the Templars' wealth would grow tremendously.

Robinson, *Born in Blood*, p. 70-75.



Seal of the Templars

The Freemasons come out of hiding -1717

John Robinson sees the "coming out" of hiding of Freemasons and its date to be significant. In chapter 23 of his book *Born in Blood*, he asserts that once those in England were assured a Catholic would never again reach the throne (right around 1715), Freemasons were no longer in need of being a secret organization.

He writes, "The Jacobite cause, the struggle to return Britain to the Roman church, was effectively broken—just two years before four Masonic lodges in London decided to reveal themselves to the world. Now, indeed, Freemasons had **no more need for secrecy**, no reason to hide from the establishment, or to plot against the establishment. Freemasonry had *become* the establishment."

Robinson, [*Born in Blood*](#), p. 304.

Timeline – One Theory

1000 BC – Solomon builds the First Temple

640-630 BC – Josiah's reforms

586 BC – The First Temple is destroyed

538-536 BC – Second Temple under construction

70 AD – Romans destroy the Jerusalem Temple

1118 AD – Knights Templar given quarter on Temple Mount by King Baldwin II

1307 AD - King Philip IV of France arrests many Templars

1312 AD - Pope Clement V disbands the Templars

1314 – Jacques DeMolay burned at the stake. He curses King Philip IV & Pope Clement V, who both die within the year.

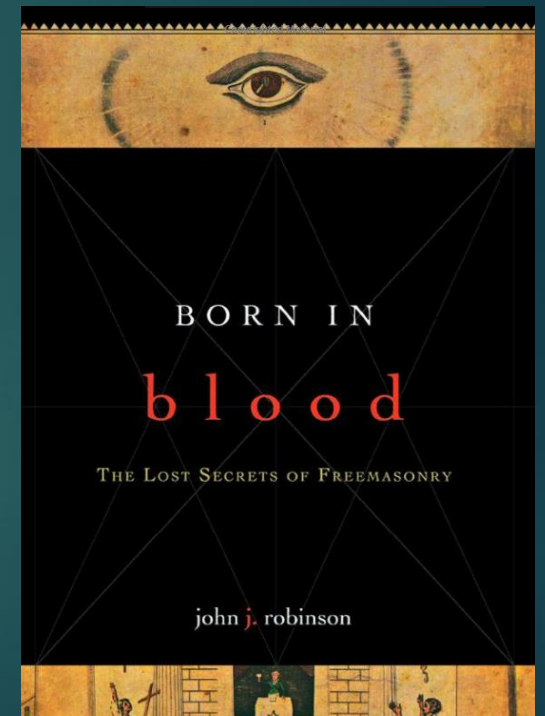
1312-1717 AD- Templars infiltrate Scotland masonic guilds, and Freemasons become public in 1717.

In 1307, King Philip IV of France and Pope Clement V combined to take down the Knights Templar, arresting the grand master, **Jacques de Molay, on charges of heresy**, sacrilege and Satanism. Under torture, Molay and other leading Templars confessed and were eventually **burned at the stake**. De Molay curses both king and pope whilst in flames, that they'd die within the year. It came true! –chapter 9

After almost 200 pages of laying out the history, Robinson writes, “**All this is speculative**, no matter how much evidence of the existence of a secret society specifically based on the fugitive Templars... all of the foregoing could be the first logical explanation of the very heart of Freemasonry... to ask us to believe that (the central theme of belief in God) could have evolved from a medieval guild is too much.” – p. 168-169.

Finding “safe lodging” – chapter 11

An underground network – p. 163

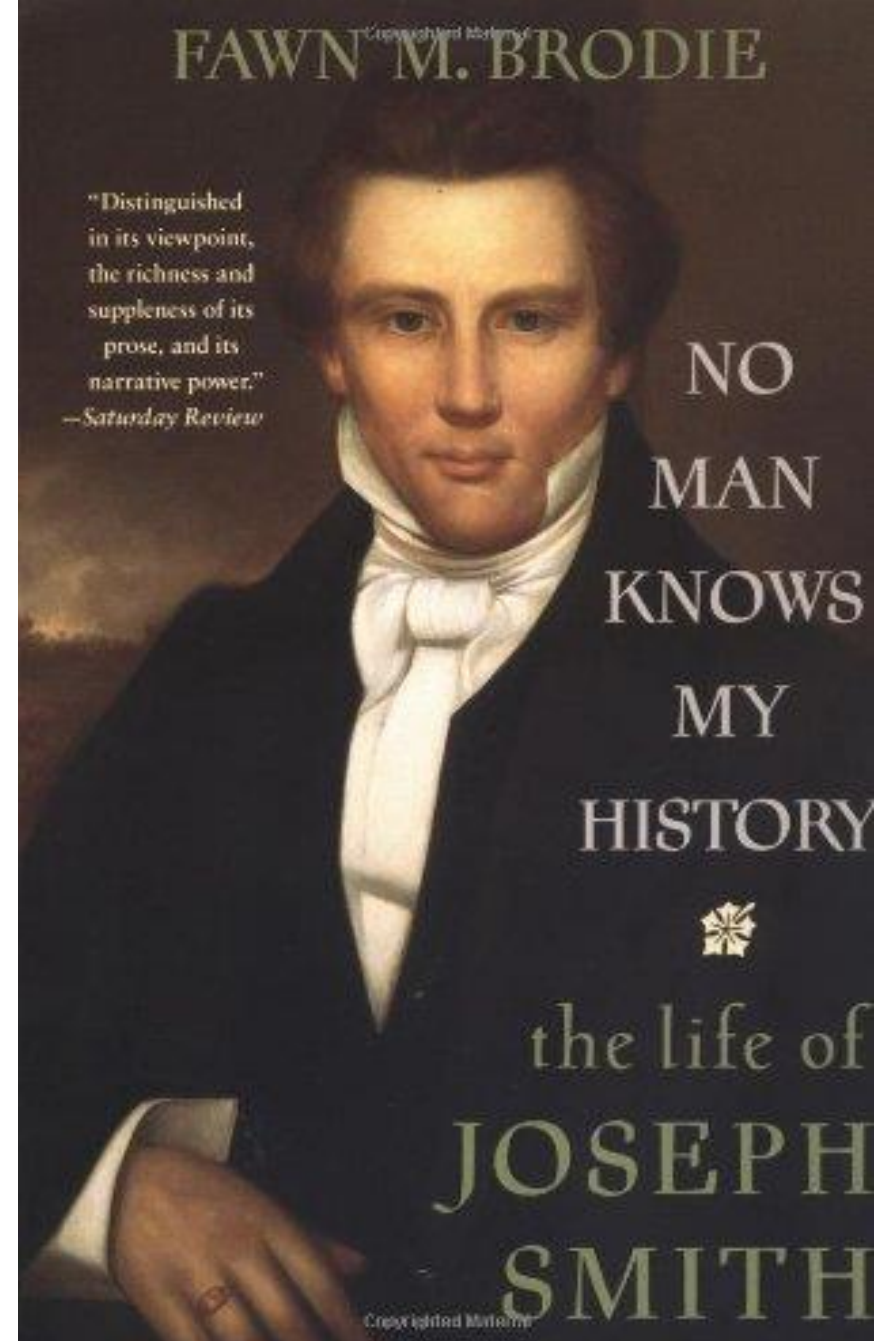


The Argument

Joseph Smith ripped off Freemasonry to create temple ordinances, specifically the endowment.

"A good deal of the ceremony performed after the rituals of washing and anointing was **borrowed from the Freemasons**. From his earliest youth in Palmyra **Joseph had known the old Masonic legend that Masonry dated back to the time of Solomon's temple**. Although he had peppered the Book of Mormon with anti-Masonic strictures stemming from the Morgan hysteria, he had long since lost his hostility to the craft. Masonry was now as respectable as before 1827, and when Judge James Adams, Deputy Grand Master of the Illinois Masonic Order, urged him to set up a lodge in Nauvoo, he complied at once."

Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, p. 279-280.





The Argument

Historian Fawn Brodie (niece of David O. McKay, and critic of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) wrote:

"The lodge was formally installed on March 15, 1842, with headquarters in the big room over Joseph's store. John C. Bennett was secretary. **Joseph became a first-degree Mason on the night of the installation, and the next night rose to the sublime degree.** His interest in Masonry became so infectious that many Mormon elders hastened to follow his lead, and within six months the lodge had 286 candidates..."

The Argument

There is no doubt that Joseph's primary interest in Masonry lay in its ritual. Like Solomon he was a temple-builder. Whatever had come down through the ages that was of value he meant to incorporate into his church. Six weeks after the installation of the lodge he called seven of his leading men — Masonic Grand Master James Adams among them — and instructed them "in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys." In this council, he said, "was instituted the ancient order of things for the first time in these last days." This order was an elaborate ritual designed for performance in the Nauvoo Temple. The ceremony, which for a time was kept completely secret, was reserved for the faithful, who believed it to be the summation of all spiritual blessings."

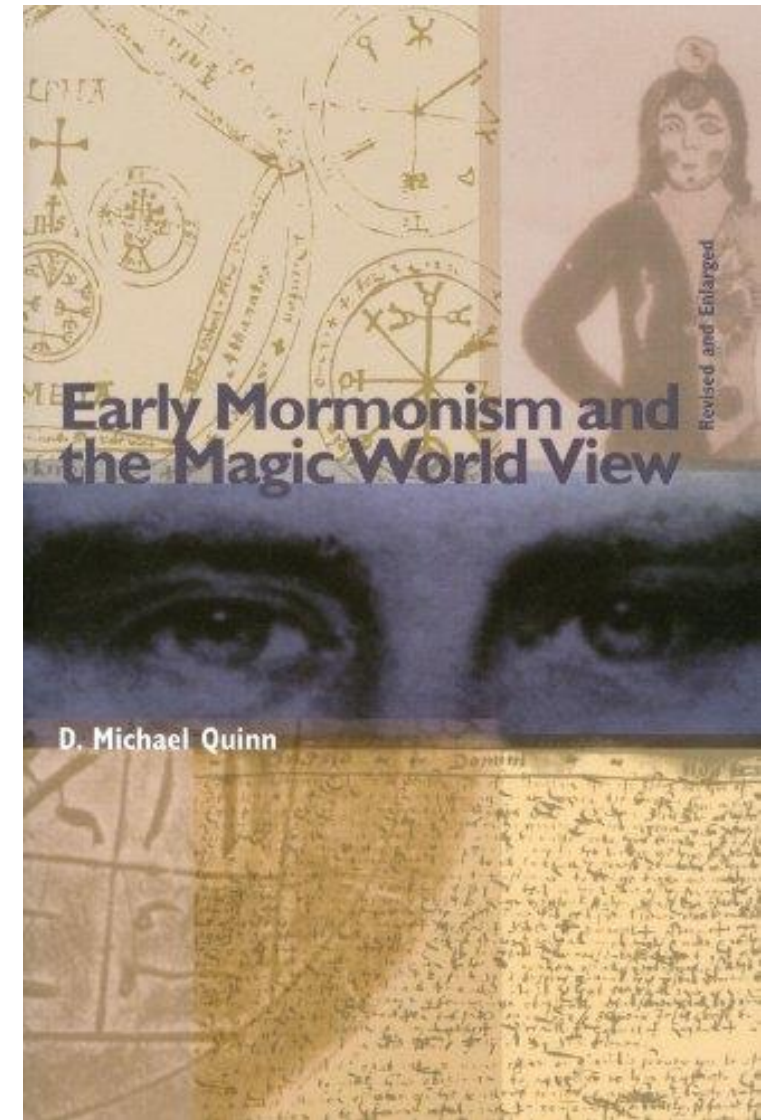
The Argument

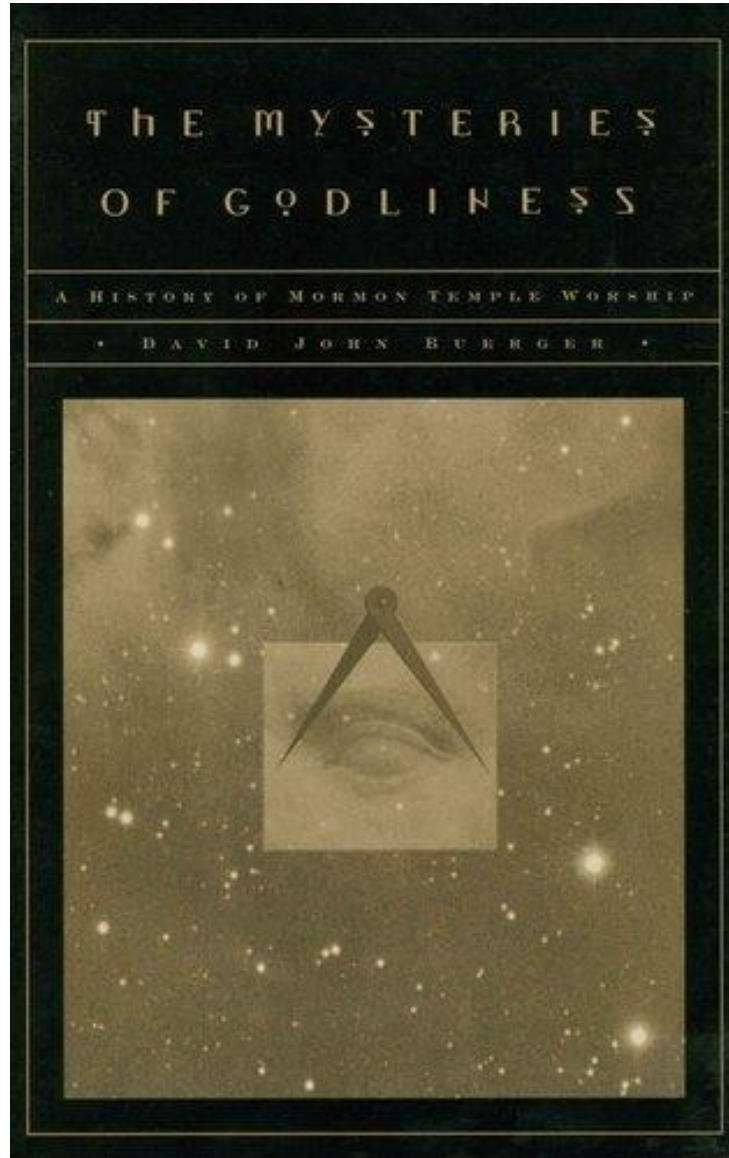
Some argue that Joseph Smith borrowed Freemasonry to create temple ordinances, specifically the endowment.

Historian Michael Quinn responds:

"Some interpreters, both non-Mormons and Mormons, have described the endowment as borrowed directly from contemporary Freemasonry. Although there are superficial similarities of symbol and rite between Masonic rituals and the Mormon endowment, **I believe that the underlying philosophy and purpose of the two were fundamentally different.** Mormon revelation, in fact, proclaimed that the LDS endowment directly restored what Masonry acknowledged it had only some connection with—the occult mysteries of the ancient world."

D. Michael Quinn, [Mormonism and the Magic World View](#), p. 226-227.





The Argument

"This pattern of resemblances indicates that **Smith drew on Masonic rites in shaping the temple endowment** and specifically borrowed tokens, signs, and penalties, as well as possibly the Creation narrative and ritual anointings. ***Still, the temple ceremony cannot be explained as wholesale borrowing, neither can it be dismissed as completely unrelated.***"

David J. Buerger, [The Mysteries of Godliness](#), p. 56, emphasis added.

Reed Durham's observations

In 1974 Institute director Reed C. Durham delivered an address on the connections between the temple and Freemasonry. His address was entitled, "Is There No Help for the Widow's Son?" About the Endowment and its relationship to Freemasonry, he said:

"There is absolutely no question in my mind that the Mormon ceremony which came to be known as the Endowment, introduced by Joseph Smith to Mormon Masons initially, just a little over one month after he became a Mason, had an **immediate inspiration from Masonry**. This is not to suggest that no other source of inspiration could have been involved, **but the similarities between the two ceremonies are so apparent and overwhelming that some dependent relationship cannot be denied.**"

(Jeffers, [*Freemasons: A History and Exploration*](#), p. 173.)

The Counter Argument (s)

1. There is no similarity. (To me this is untenable)
2. There are *some* similarities, but these are not evidence that Joseph repackaged Freemasonry's rituals.
3. The similarities exist because Freemasonry contains ancient motifs and symbols that were part of the ancient tradition.
4. The elements in Freemasonry were used by Joseph creatively to teach truths to the Saints in Nauvoo. Joseph recontextualized these ideas to communicate divine truths to the Saints.
5. Some combination of 3 & 4

The Problem

Latter-day Saints covenant to not discuss certain elements of the Endowment. Because of this, we must tread lightly when discussing certain elements of the Endowment ceremony.

Buerger discusses the similarities in his work. He lays out the similarities between the rites in the Nauvoo ceremony and rites of the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. He quotes Quinn regarding prayer circles, as they existed in American Protestant revivals as well as in Masonic ceremonies. He writes, "The **clearest evidence** of Masonic influence on the Nauvoo temple ceremony **is a comparison of texts.** Three elements of the Nauvoo endowment and its contemporary Masonic ritual resemble each other so closely that they are sometimes identical."

Early LDS view of Freemasonry

Joseph Fielding, friend of the Prophet, wrote in 1844:

"Many have joined the Masonic institution. This seems to have been a stepping-stone or preparation for something else, **the true origin of Masonry**. This I have also seen and rejoice in it.... I have evidence enough that Joseph is not fallen. I have seen him after giving, as I before said, the origin of Masonry."

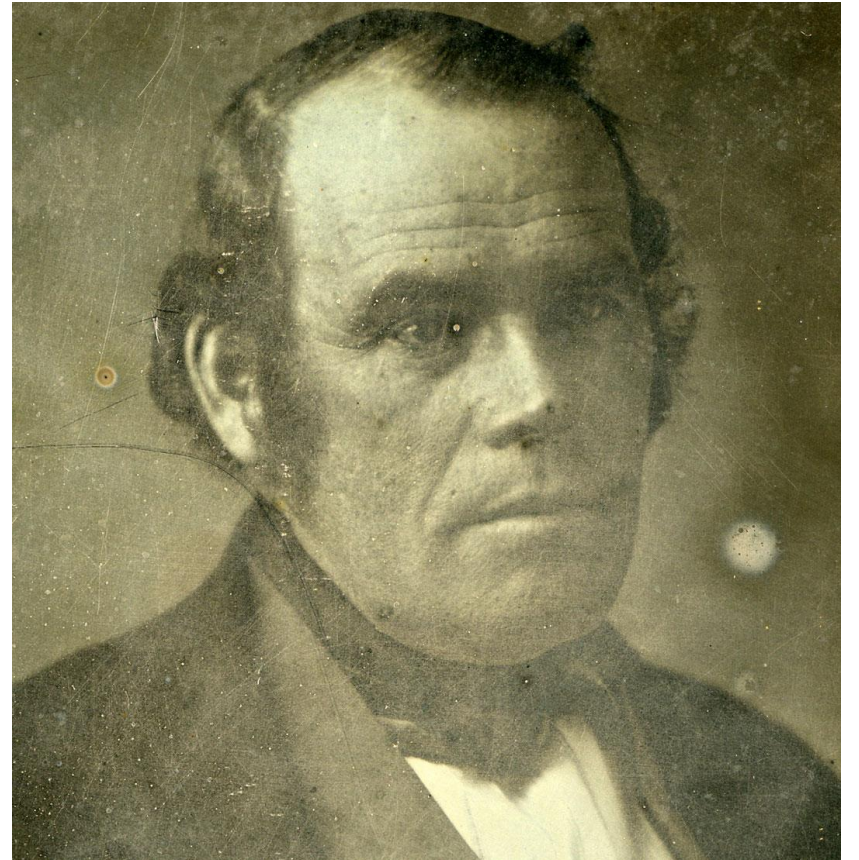
Andrew F. Ehat, "'They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet'—The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding," *BYU Studies* 19 no. 2 (1979): 145, 147.

Early LDS view of Freemasonry

"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...

There is a similarity of priesthood in masonry. Brother Joseph says masonry was taken from priesthood but has become degenerated. But many things are perfect."

(Parley P. Pratt Papers, Church Historical Department, Ehat, "'They Might Have Known That He Was Not a Fallen Prophet'—The Nauvoo Journal of Joseph Fielding," *BYU Studies* 19 no. 2, 1979, p. 145, spelling modernized.)



The relationship was understood in the 1840's

This testimony of the early introduction of the endowment and its relationship to freemasonry speaks of the power of the principles advocated by the prophet for while Heber C. Kimball had been a mason since his 1823 victor lodge days **his reaction to what might have been considered a blatant adaptation of freemasonry was one only of awe and respect.**

Ehat, p. 145.

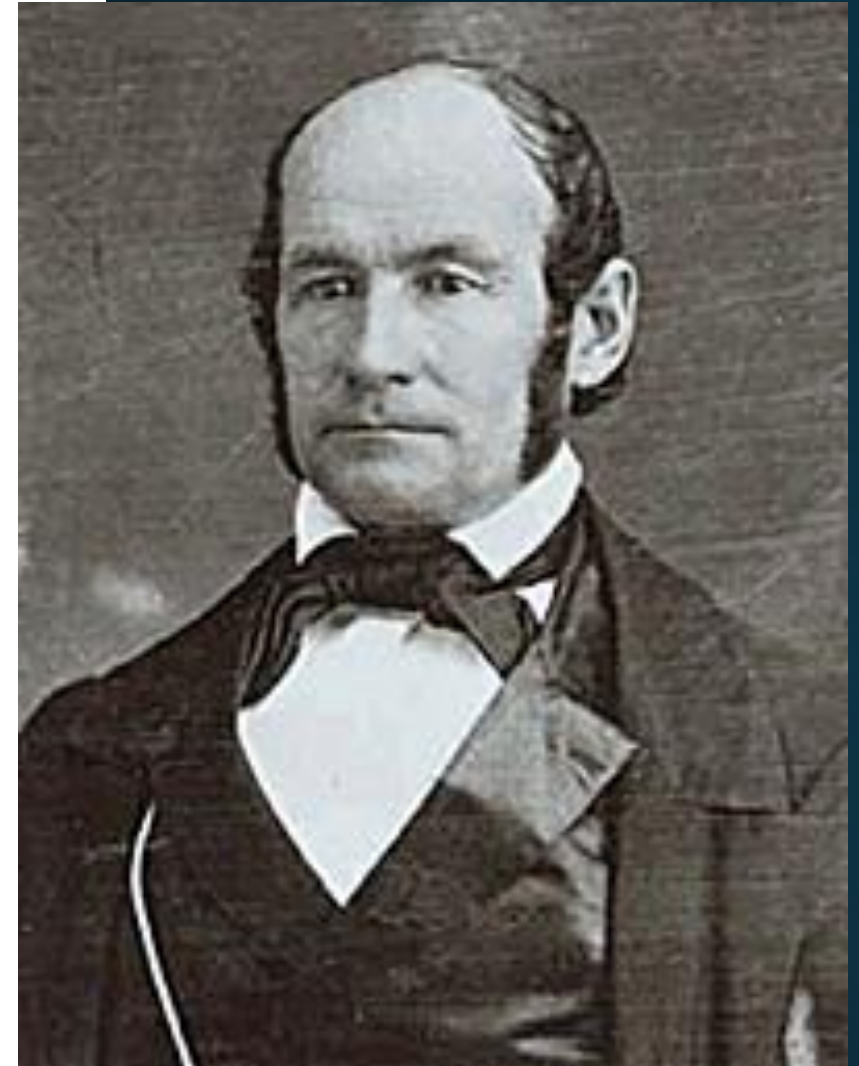
The Real Thing – Heber C. Kimball's Reaction

Heber C. Kimball once stated (11/13/1858):

"We have the true Masonry the Masonry of today is received from the apostasy which took place in the days of Solomon and David. They have now and then a thing that is correct, but we have the real thing."

Manuscript history of Brigham Young unpublished 13, November 1858, p. 1085. See also: Stanley B. Kimball, "Heber C. Kimball and Family," p. 459.

See also: <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=868c4a5f-781a-441a-8df7-dea5e689e369&crate=0&index=6>



Franklin D. Richards

Apostle Franklin D. Richards explained to his colleagues in the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, "A Masonic Lodge...was established in Nauvoo and Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Willard Richards, John Taylor, Lorenzo Snow, Orson Hyde, F. D. Richards, and about 1000 others in all became Masons. **Joseph the Prophet, 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.** The Masons admitted some keys of knowledge appertaining to Masonry were lost. **Joseph enquired of the Lord concerning the matter** and He revealed to the Prophet true Masonry, as we have it in our temples."



Stan Larson, ed., *A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Rudger Clawson*, p. 42. See also Buerger, *The Mysteries*, p. 57.

Greg Kearney's Argument

Q: Wouldn't it be more correct to say that Masonry came out of the endowment?

KEARNEY: It would be if you believed that Freemasonry has a continuous historical line from King Solomon's Temple to the current. Unfortunately, there is no historical evidence to support a continuous functioning line from Solomon's Temple to the present. **We know what went on in Solomon's Temple; it's the ritualistic slaughter of animals.**

(Greg Kearny, "The Message and the Messenger: Latter-day Saints and Freemasonry," August 2005 Fair Conference. See also: <https://missedsunday.com/memes/temple/true-masonry/>)

Kearney's Argument Opposed

Kearney's argument appears coherent upon an initial reading of the Tanakh. However, a more in-depth analysis reveals the presence of significant ritual elements embedded within the text, particularly in the Psalms. These include motifs of creation drama, cosmic combat, ritual feasting, sacred vestments, symbolic death and resurrection, enthronement, and kingship. The Psalms, which served as the liturgical backdrop for temple worship during the First Temple Period, reflect these rites. This rich ritual framework was, however, altered by the reforms of Josiah, which subsequently influenced the final form of the Hebrew Bible.

Sources to counter Kearney's view

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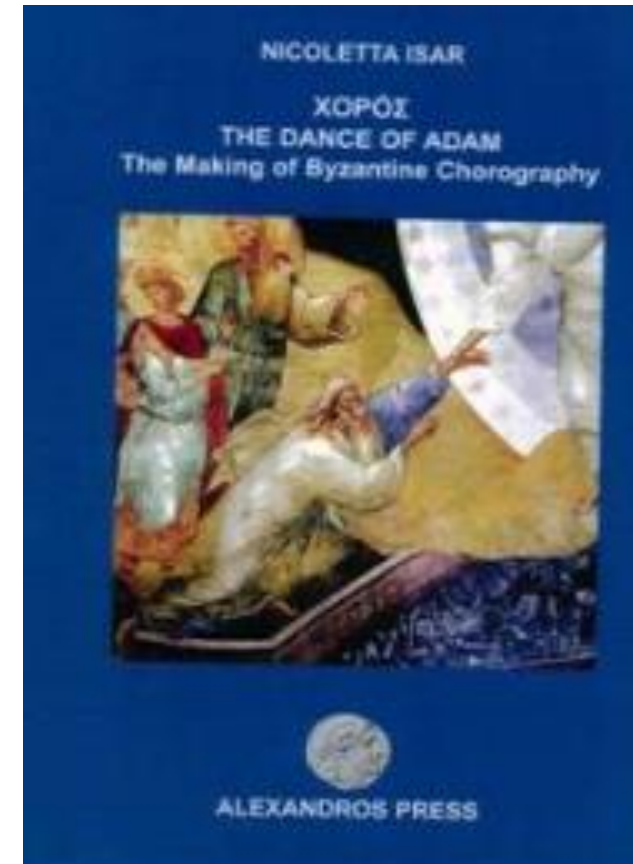
Things to Consider

- Sermon on the Mount shows us a preserved tradition, that the temple was not just a place where animals were sacrificed. There was an ancient tradition that many who heard Jesus speak recognized.
- Much of early Christian ritual, though lost to us, is preserved in art and architecture.

Repackaging, Borrowing

"Dance has a place in the mysteries because of its divine origin which are said to be "danced out" (ἐξορχεῖσθαι) therefore not a single ancient mystery-cult can be found that is without dancing... **The Early (Christian) Church borrows from classical antiquity the concept of χορός** to designate the congregation, and the worship in song in heaven and on earth."

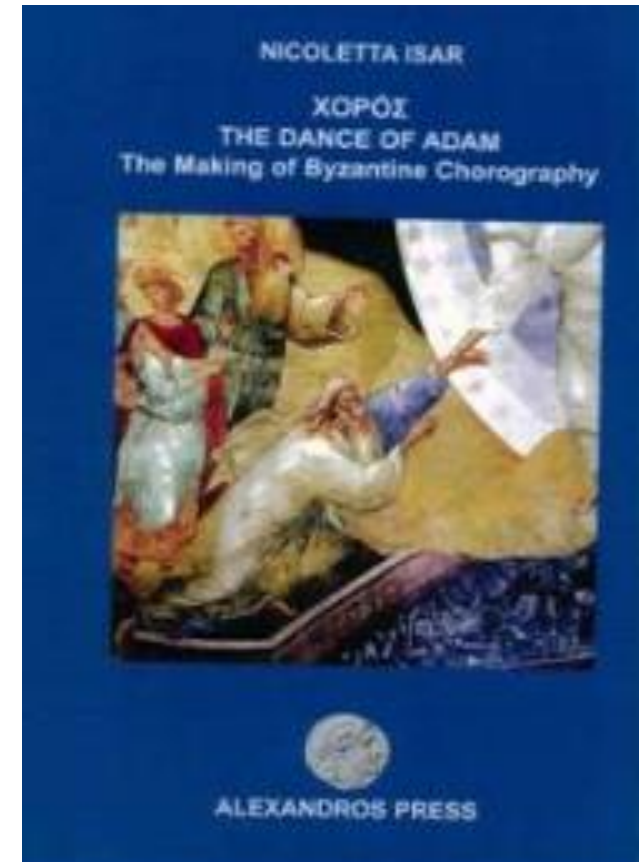
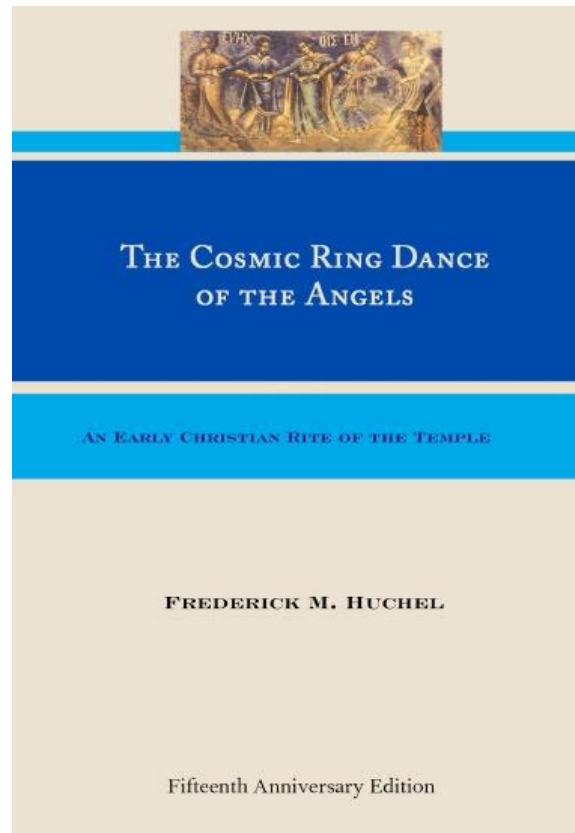
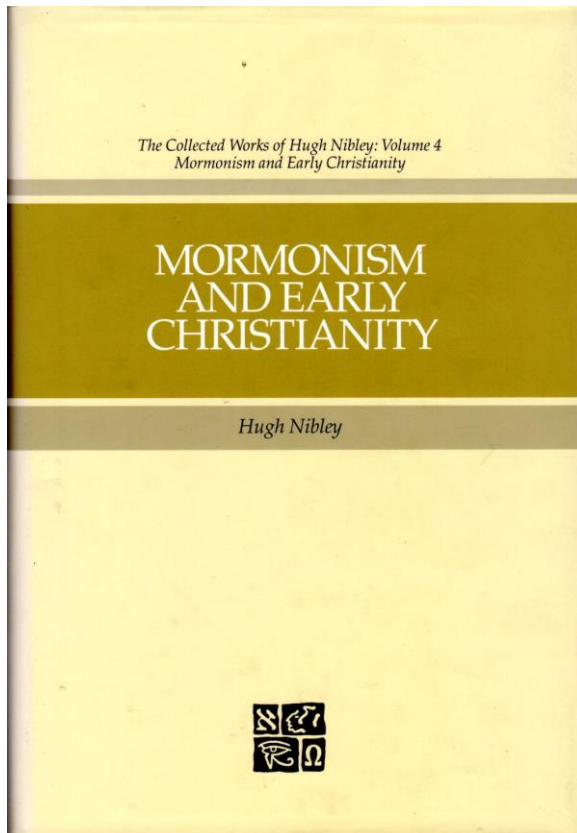
Nicoletta Isar, *Χορός: The Dance of Adam*, p. 27.



An antiphonal chorus

"A special place in the Christian tradition is held by the Gnostic and apocryphal text from the *Acts of John* known as the Hymn of the Dance. The name is due to its choreographic view of the **antiphonal chorus, a circle dance** performed by Jesus and his disciples on the night before his death." Isar, Χορός: *The Dance of Adam*, p. 36.

Circles, Rites of the Ancients



Helaman 5

23 And it came to pass that Nephi and Lehi were encircled about as if by fire, even insomuch that they durst not lay their hands upon them for fear lest they should be burned. Nevertheless, Nephi and Lehi were not burned; and they were as standing in the midst of fire and were not burned.

24 And when they saw that **they were encircled about with a pillar of fire**, and that it burned them not, their hearts did take courage.

See also: 1 Ne. 1; 3 Ne. 17; 1 Enoch 14.17-23; Dan. 7.9-10; *Apocalypse of Abraham* 18; Ezk. 1.4-28; Ex. 3.1-10.



Circles – The Ancient Cosmos

“The sacred ring dance is a cosmic dance...The geocentric cosmos is the cosmos which was then – and is now – actually seen in the sky. The earth lay at the center of a series of concentric crystal spheres. **The viewer is the center of *his* cosmos. The temple lies at the center of its cosmos.** The circle-dance necessarily takes place at the center of the cosmos for the participants. The cosmos of the circle-dance is the ancient, sacred, geocentric cosmos, the cosmos embodied in St. Peter’s Basilica, in the cathedral at Chartres, in Stonehenge, and in Westminster Abbey.”

Frederick Huchel, *The Cosmic Ring Dance of the Angels*, p. 35.



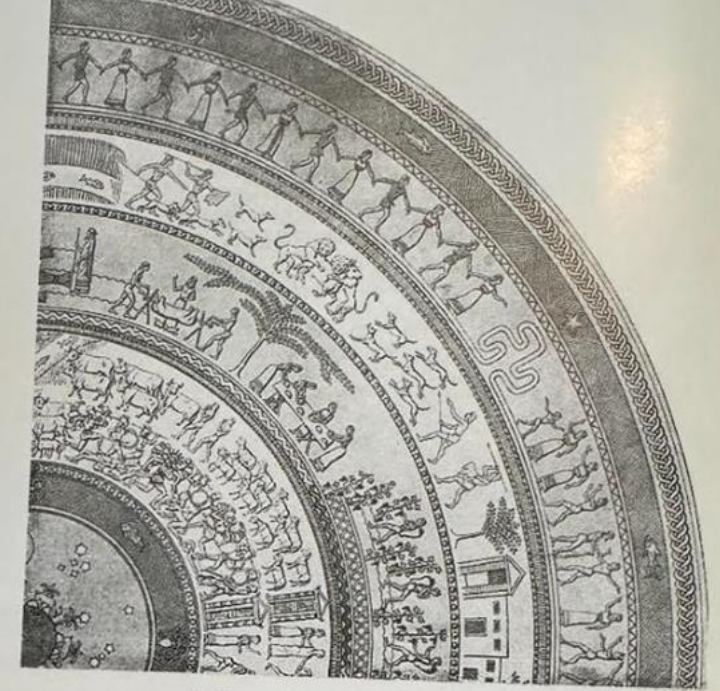
Axis Mundi – Latin: world axis: line or stem through the center of the earth connecting its surface to the underworld and the heavens

“So, the sacred circle dance is a dance of circumambulation, and the dancing is around some focal point, whether it be the cross, Jesus, the Ark, or the altar- or Mary herself, as the Asherah pillar. The cross is clearly a representation of the *axis mundi*. From the altar of the temple arose the column of smoke which ascended as a pillar unto heaven. The Ark of the covenant stood in the Holy of Holies... the pillar of smoke arose directly above the Ark. **The sacred ring dance, then, takes place around the *axis mundi*... (which is the) precursor for opening the hollow pillar of the *Canalis Mundorum* (channel of the worlds/canal of the universe), the conduit between the temple, or altar, or holy circle or the crossing of the *cardo* and *deumanus*, and heaven itself. After one is sensitized to this principle, one can see this in the scriptures.”**

Circles – The Ancient Tradition

Nicoletta Isar demonstrates that the ring dance of early Christianity was rooted in an ancient tradition spanning centuries before Christ.

Image Right: Isar, p. 298



3. Reconstruction of Achilles' shield.



4. Detail with the gesture "hand on wrist" (*epi karmo*) of the dance *geranos*, amphora, 7th c. B.C., Archaeological Museum, Tinos.



Circles – The Ancient Tradition

“The gesture of Christ rising swiftly by the hand the forefather Adam will be central in my analysis, which aims to revalue it as a rhetorical and performative figure ascribed to a definite ritual.”

Nicoletta Isar, *Χορός: The Dance of Adam*, p. 50.

Circles – The Ancient Tradition

Nibley explains:

The further back we go the more prominent becomes the rite in the church. The actual performance of such a rite is described in a very old text attributed to Clement of Rome and preserved in a seventh-century Syriac translation entitled “The Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ as delivered orally by him to us the apostles after his resurrection following his death.” In celebrating the sacrificial death of the Lord (Pulver calls his study “The Round Dance and the Crucifixion”), the bishop would:



Chora Church, Istanbul, Turkey

Circles – The Ancient Tradition

“make the sacrifice, the *veil* of the *gate* being drawn aside as a sign of the straying of the former people; he would make the offering within the veil along with priests, deacons, authorized widows, subdeacons, deaconesses, readers and such as were endowed with spiritual gifts. As leader the bishop stands in the middle . . . [the men and women are assigned their places, north, south, east and west, around him]. Then all give each other the sign of peace. Next, when absolute silence is established, the deacon says: **“Let your hearts be to heaven. If anyone has any ill feeling towards his neighbor, let him be reconciled. If anyone has any hesitation or mental reservations [doubts] let him make it known;** if anyone finds any of the teachings incongenial, let him withdraw [etc.]. For the Father of Lights is our witness with the Son and visiting angels. Take care lest you have aught against your neighbor Lift up your hearts for the sacrifice of redemption and eternal life. Let us be grateful for the knowledge which God is giving us.” The bishop . . . says in an awesome voice: “Our Lord be [or is] with you!” And all the people respond: “And with thy spirit.” After this, **“a sort of antiphonal follows with the people in the ring responding to the worlds of the bishop.”**

Hugh Nibley, “The Early Christian Prayer Circle,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2010, p. 66. Nibley cites Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, Mainz: Kirchleim, 1899, 36–37.

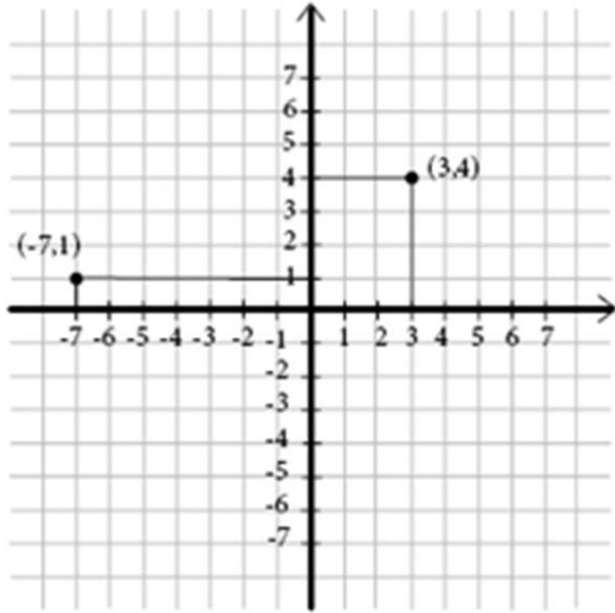
The Great Center – The *Axis Mundi*

The idea of the universal center of the race is found throughout the ancient world. It's the scene of great events. At **hundreds of holy shrines**, each believed to **mark the exact center of the universe** and represented as the point at which the four corners of the earth converged [the middle *omphalos*] — "the navel of the earth" [the *umbilicus*] — one might have seen assembled at the New Year — the moment of creation, the beginning and ending of time — vast concourses of people, each thought to represent the entire human race in the presence of all its ancestors and gods.

Nibley, [*Temple and Cosmos*](#), 133/489.

Remember Christ, the Rock

And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is **upon the rock of our Redeemer**, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is **a sure foundation**, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall. (Helaman 5.12)



Helaman 5: What map are you using?

Foundation Stone

 16 languages ▼

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Coordinates:  31.7780°N 35.2354°E﻿ / ﻿

For other uses, see [Cornerstone \(disambiguation\)](#).

The **Foundation Stone** (Hebrew: אֶבֶן הַשֵּׁטִיּוּיָא, romanized: *ʿEḇen haŠetīyyā*, lit. 'Foundation Stone'), or the **Noble Rock** (Arabic: الصخرة المشرفة, romanized: *al-Saḡrah al-Mušarrafah*, lit. 'The Noble Stone') is the rock at the center of the [Dome of the Rock](#) in [Jerusalem](#). It is also known as the **Pierced Stone**, because it has a small hole on the southeastern corner that enters a cavern beneath the rock, known as the [Well of Souls](#).

Traditional Jewish sources mention the stone as the place from which the creation of the world began. Classical Jewish sources also identify its location with that of the [Holy of Holies](#).^{[1][2]}

Location [edit]

The rock is located towards the centre of the [Temple Mount](#), a term usually applied to an artificial platform built and expanded over many centuries at the top of Jerusalem's southern hill. The current shape is the result of an expansion by [Herod the Great](#) on top of vaults over a [summit](#) called [Mount Moriah](#) which three millennia ago was the highest elevation in early Jerusalem's proximity to the [City of David](#).^[*citation needed*]

Early Muslim writings argue that the [Dome of the Rock](#), completed in 691, is the site of the [Holy of Holies](#) and therefore the location of the Foundation Stone. The [history](#) by the 9th-century writer [al-Tabari](#) has [Kaʿb al-Aḥḇār](#), a Jewish convert to Islam, asking the



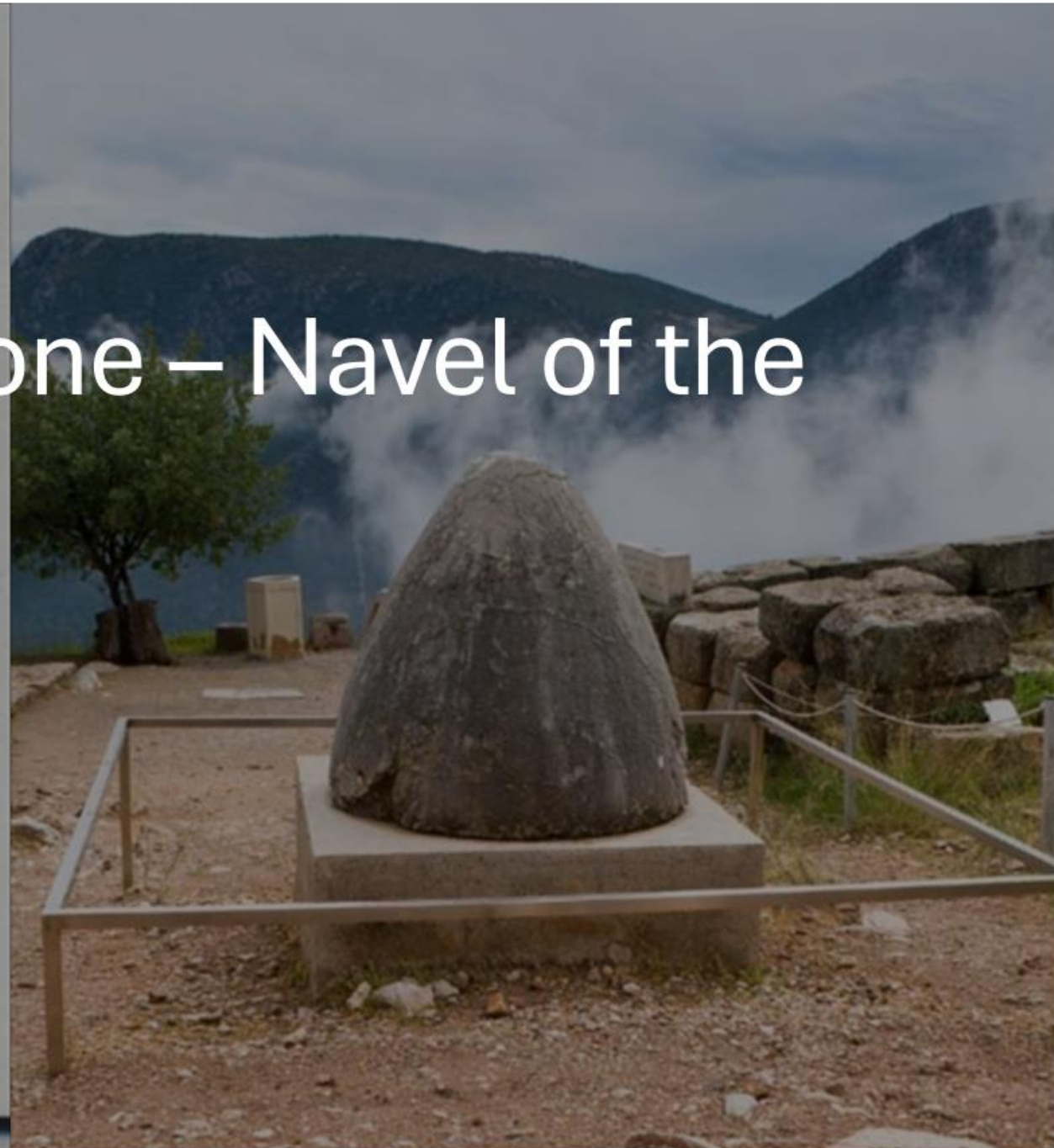
The Foundation Stone in the floor of the [Dome of the Rock](#) shrine in [Jerusalem](#). The round hole at upper left penetrates to a small cave, known as the [Well of Souls](#), below. The

Eden, the rock, the creation and Helaman 5.12

Traditional Jewish sources mention the stone as the place from which the creation of the world began. Classical Jewish sources also identify its location with that of the Holy of Holies.

(Tractate Yoma 2:12; y. Yoma 5:3; b. Yoma 54b; PdRK 26:4; Lev. R. 20:4. [The History of al-Tabari](#), vol. XII, p. 194–195.)

The Omphalos Stone – Navel of the World





ὀμφαλός: The Navel of the world

Eden (אֶדֶן): The center of the center of the world

The Garden of Eden was the central point between the heavens and the earth, what is referred to as "an axis mundi." From it radiate primal streams to the four quarters of the world. It is the navel or omphalos, this central point, where primal streams extend to the four quarters. Eden acts as the navel or *omphalos*, with the tree of life situated at "the center of this center." Eden contained the first earth that penetrated the waters of chaos at creation. **Coming to the rock meant coming home to Eden.**

The Benben stone

The term "Benben" in ancient Egyptian refers to the primeval mound or the first land that emerged from the chaotic waters of Nun at the beginning of creation. The word itself is derived from the verb "bn" (ben), which means "to rise" or "to swell." Thus, "Benben" can be understood to mean "the mound that rises" or "the rising mound."





George Washington within the Omphalos

George
Washington
Masonic National
Memorial –
Alexandria,
Virginia.



Emanuel Leutze
(1816-1868), *George
Washington as a
Master Mason*

https://nationalheritagemuseum.typepad.com/library_and_archives/2009/02/george-washington-in-lexington.html



*Washington as a
Freemason*

lithograph by
Strobridge &
Gerlach.

Source:
<https://www.loc.gov/resource/pga.02796/>



The Center





Our Lady of the Pillar –
Chartres Cathedral,
France.

Inverted
Omphalos Stone –
Church of the Holy
Sepulchre,
Jerusalem.

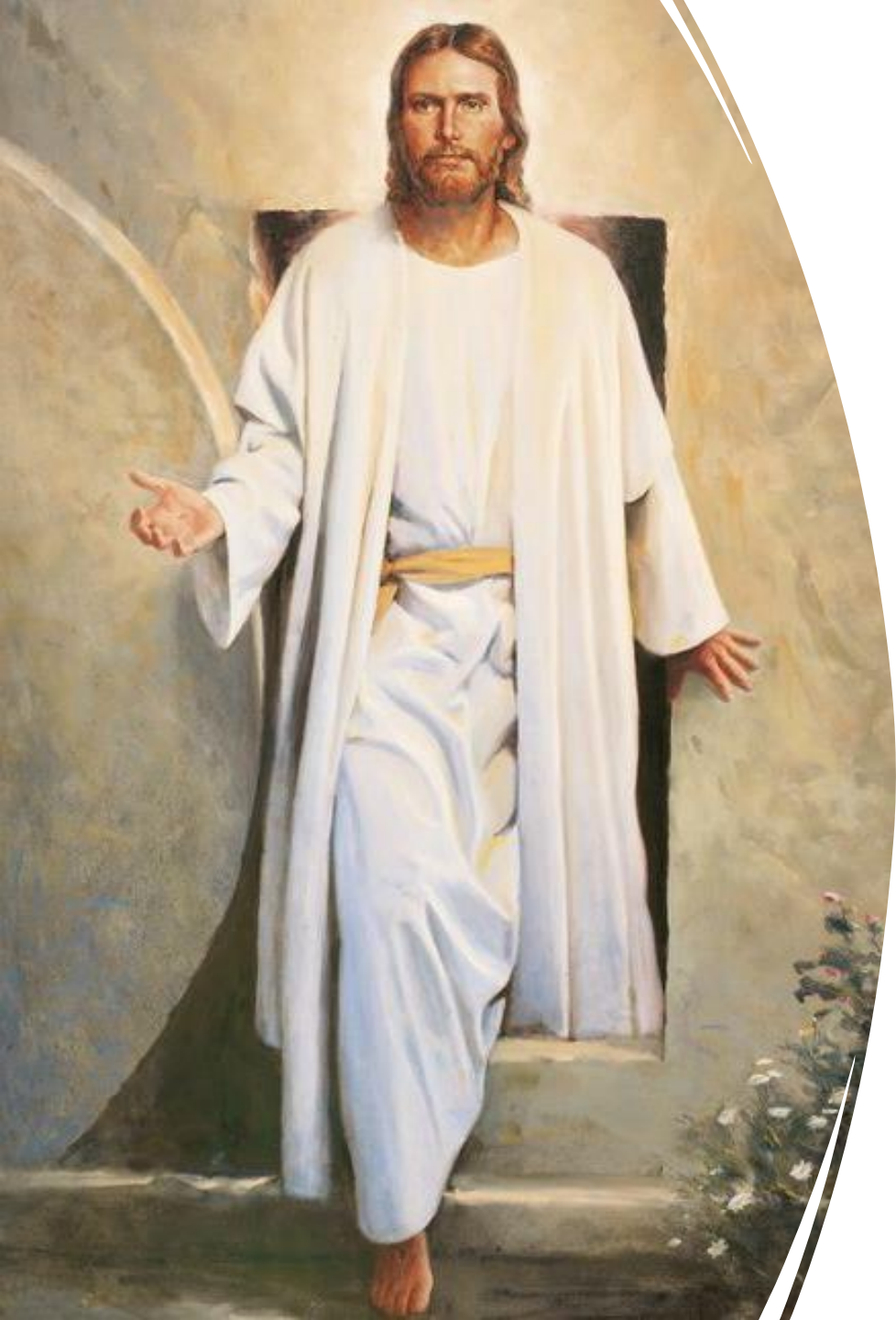


Jerusalem – The Center Point of the World

In contrast to other omphalos stones, this stone at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is inverted. In this configuration, it symbolizes the sacred feminine as a womb of the Virgin Mary, the cup of Christ.

In its center is a rounded disk embossed with an equilateral cross, similar to a sun disk, indicating that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is **the navel of the world**. Allegorically this stone depicts Jesus, as the son of God and Mary, the foundation stone of the world.





Personal application

How is Jesus Christ your foundation?

How can you make sure he becomes or remains foundational to your life?

Bees, Beehives, and the Holy of Holies

"Land of milk and honey" (about 20 times in the Old Testament)

Honey was "the food of the gods" (Ransome, [The Sacred Bee](#), p. 123; Cook, [The Bee in Greek Mythology](#), p. 15.)

The Hebrew words for bee (דבורה), honey (דבש), and oracle, or inner sanctuary (דבר) are all related words.

Bees were considered sacred (Steiner, [Bees](#))

The Greeks used honey in ritual connected with the transition between the material and spiritual worlds (Steiner, [Bees](#), p. 205.)



Bees, Beehives, and the Holy of Holies

Asenath (bride of Joseph) has an angelic visitor she shares honeycomb with *(Joseph and Asenath 16.7)*

Jesus eats honeycomb as he reveals his resurrected state to his disciples *(Luke 24)*

Bees were considered the messengers of the heavens and prophecy *(Ransome, p. 82-99 and Cook, p. 8.)*

Bees are the creatures from our pre-existent world *(Nibley, "The Deseret Connection," [Abraham in Egypt.](#))*

Adam and Eve were guided by bees when they left Eden *(Nibley, "The Deseret Connection," [Abraham in Egypt.](#))*



Asenath's beatitude

In Jewish literature only a few beatitudes belong to the type we find in association with mystery cults. Of this group the most instructive one is found in the Hellenistic- Jewish novel *Joseph and Aseneth*, a work heavily influenced by mystery-cult language. After Aseneth, an Egyptian woman (cf. Gen 41:45, 50; 46:20), has converted to the Jewish religion, **she passes through an elaborate initiation ritual**, at the culmination of which the initiating "angel of God" pronounces this beatitude upon her (*Jos. Asen.* 16.7-8):



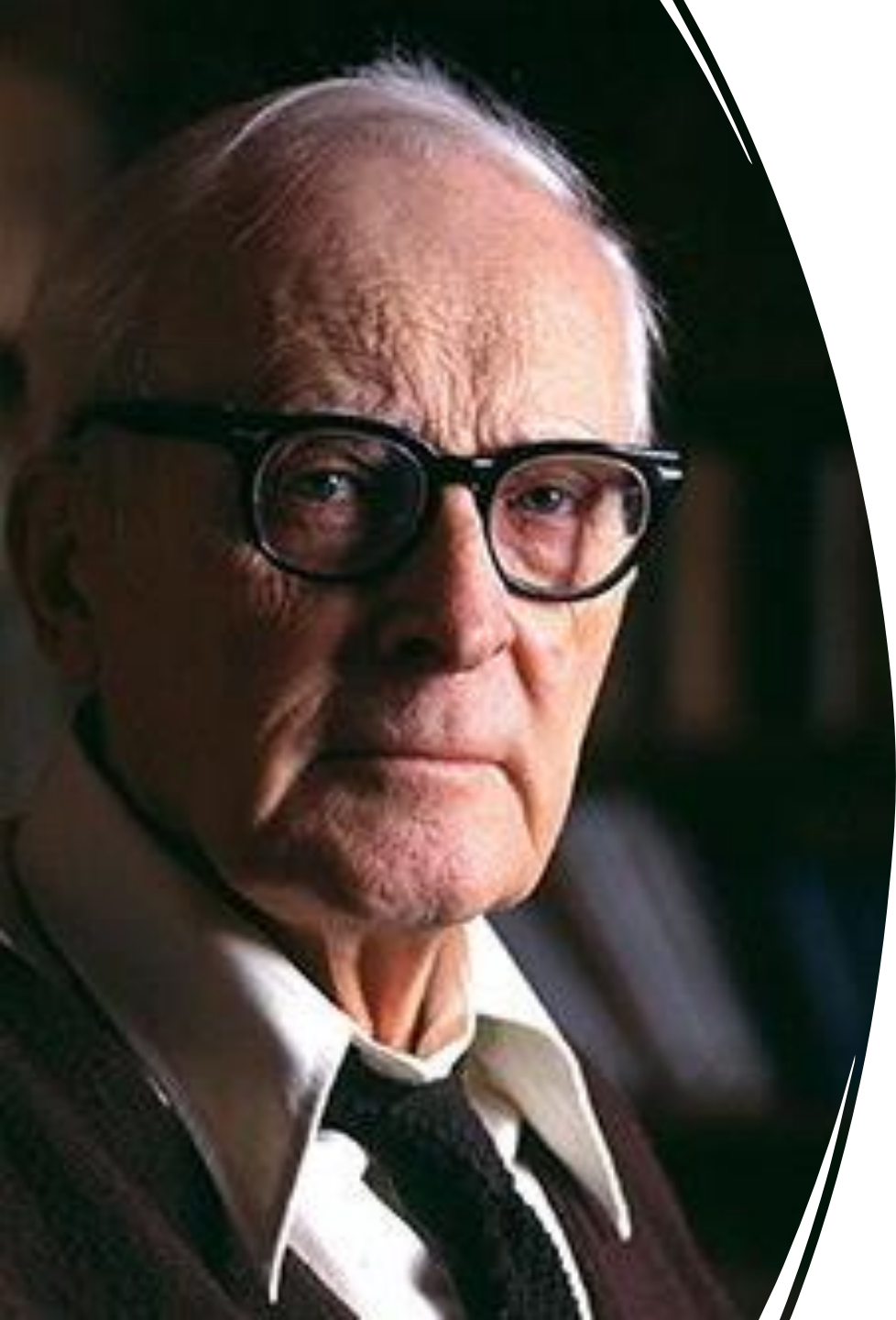
The Sermon of the Mount
by Hans Dieter Betz

Hermeneia—
A Critical
and
Historical
Commentary
on the
Bible

Asenath – initiated into the mysteries

Blessed are you, Aseneth (μακαρία εἶ σὺ, Ἄσενέθ) because the ineffable mysteries of God have been revealed to you, and blessed are those who attach themselves to the Lord in repentance, because they eat from the (honey-)comb. For the bees of the paradise of delight have made this honey, and the angels of God eat of it, and everyone who eats from it will not die forever.

(Betz, [*The Sermon on the Mount*](#), p. 100)



Deseret is waiting

Deseret designates the land as the goal of migration—the promised land, quite literally, "the Holy Land" ...

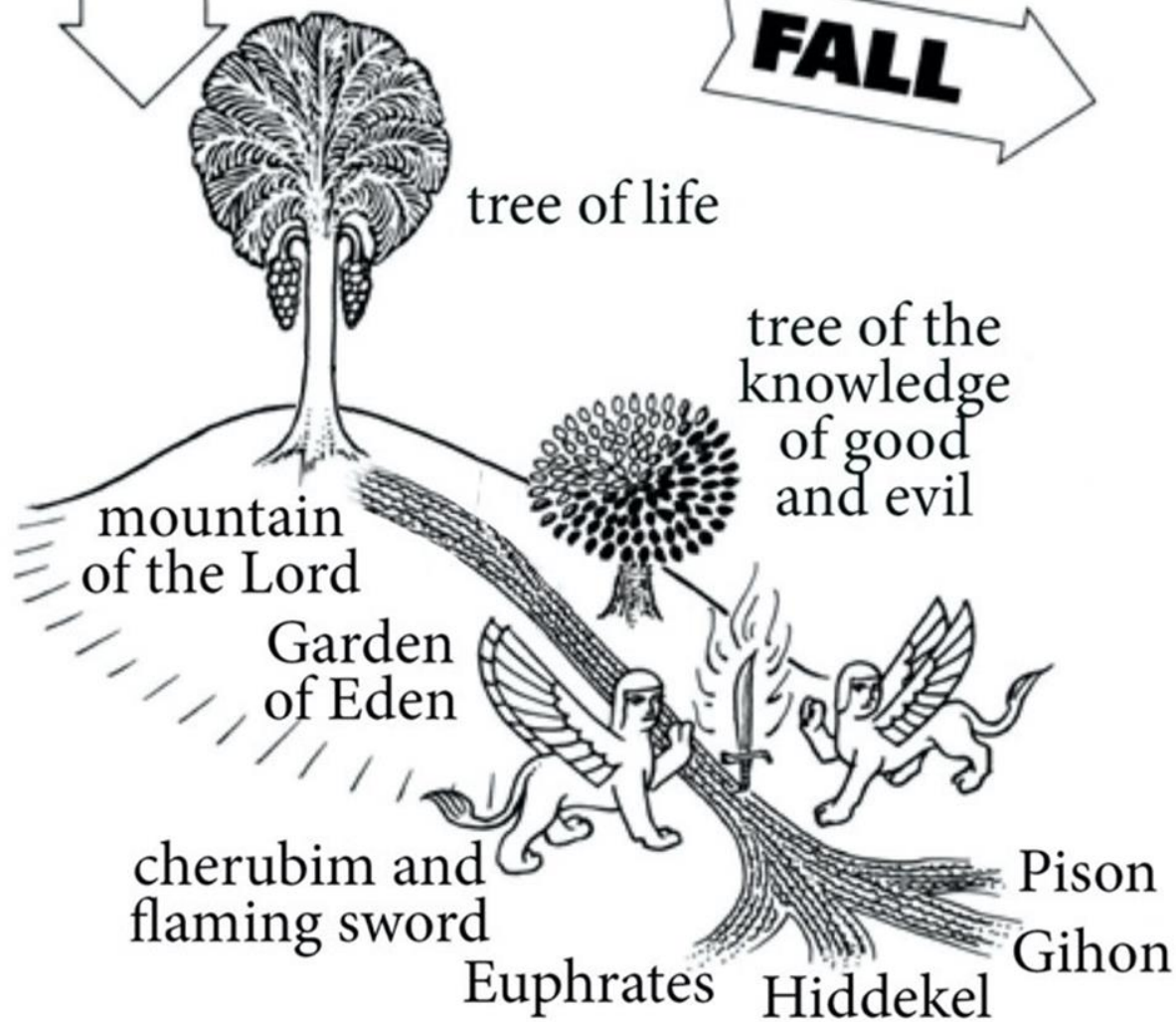
Why has the bee been brought back to our consciousness among the more exotic baggage of the Restored Gospel? The most likely explanation is the least appealing one.

Repeated echoes from the remote past keep reminding us that the office and calling of the bee was to bring about the stirrings of life, reviving the biological cycle in a world that had been totally ravaged by cosmic forces of destruction. Is, then, **Deseret waiting in the wings**, held in reserve against the day, soon to come, when its salutary services will be required again?

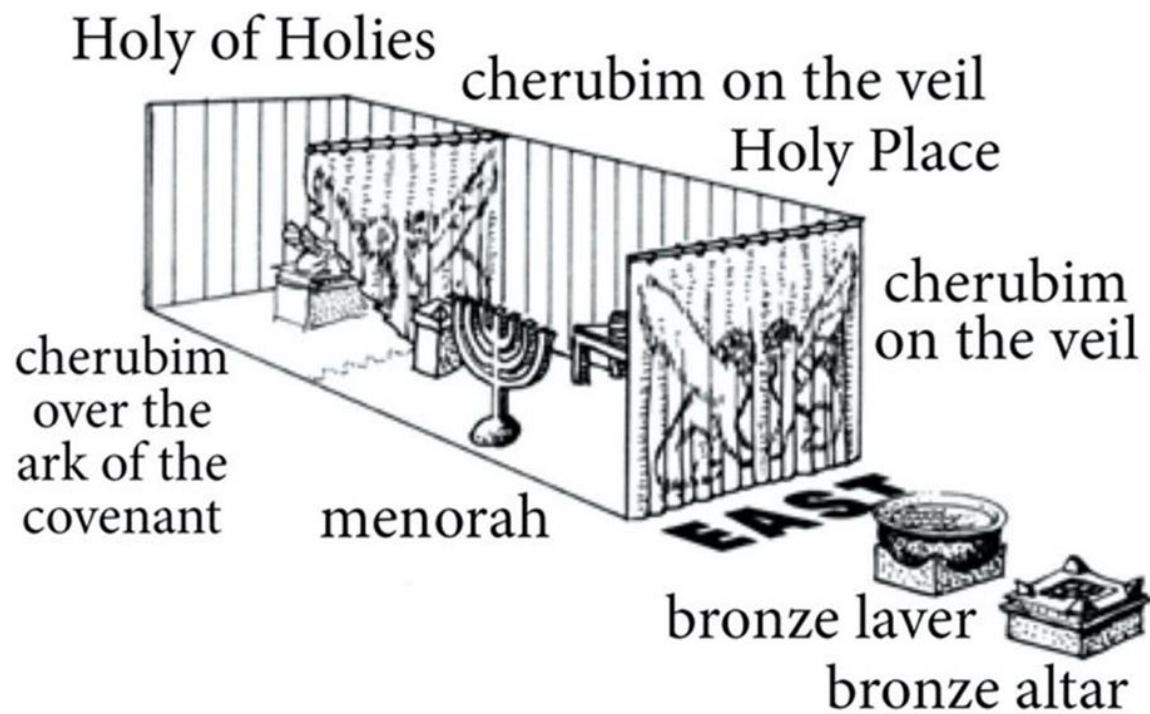
Nibley, "The Deseret Connection," [Abraham in Egypt](#).

CREATION

FALL



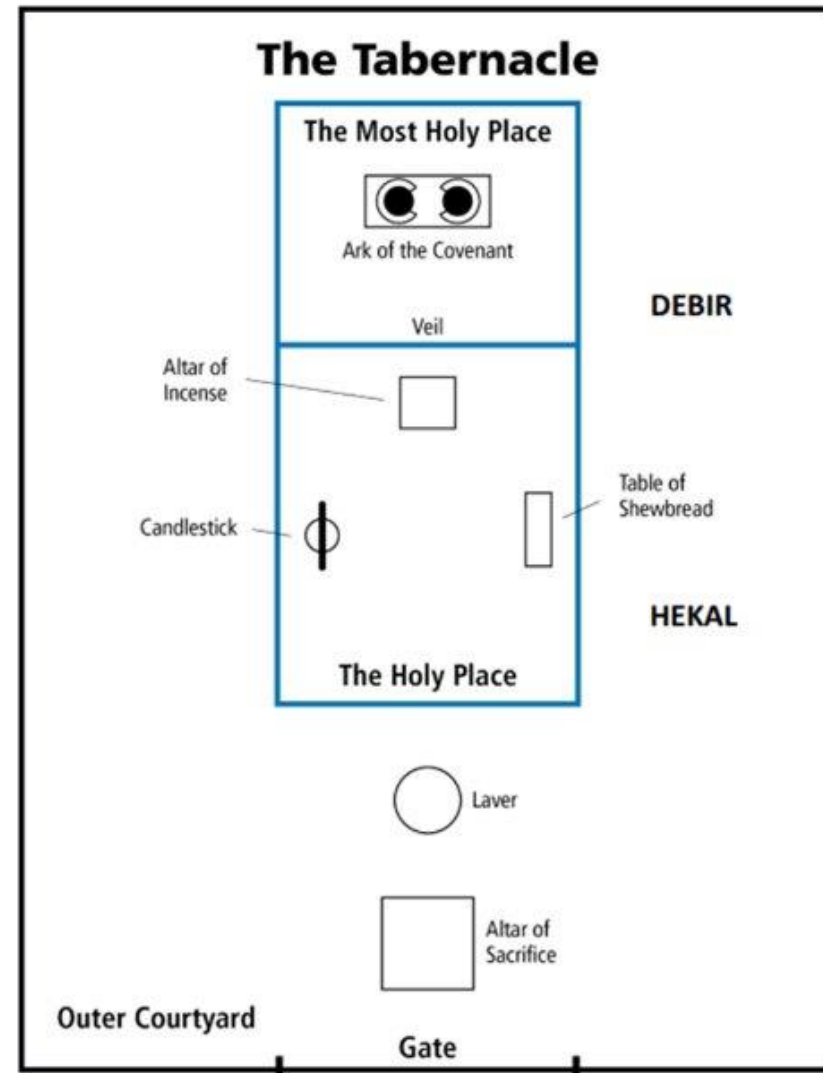
ATONEMENT

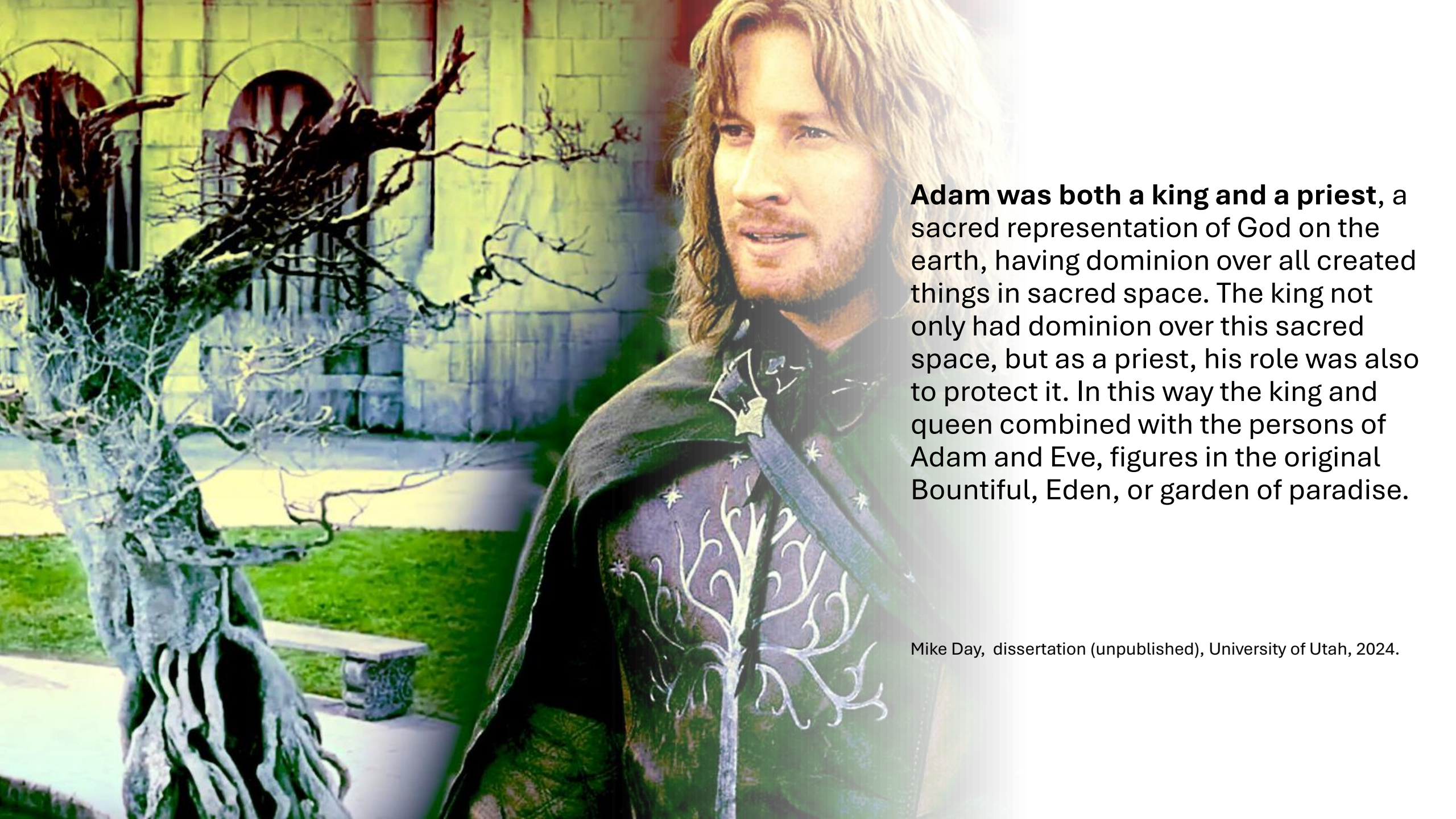


The architecture and furniture of the temple are used by BOM prophets to teach truth

Ziony Zevit points out that Eden literally means “Bountiful.”

Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?*, 2013, p. 89, 98, 113, 253, 239.





Adam was both a king and a priest, a sacred representation of God on the earth, having dominion over all created things in sacred space. The king not only had dominion over this sacred space, but as a priest, his role was also to protect it. In this way the king and queen combined with the persons of Adam and Eve, figures in the original Bountiful, Eden, or garden of paradise.

Mike Day, dissertation (unpublished), University of Utah, 2024.



Signs

Revelation 1.1

Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός
δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει καὶ
ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ
δούλῳ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννῃ

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and **signified** it by his angel unto his servant John.

Image source: Innis Fripp, "John the Revelator Shown the Heavenly City."
<https://www.thechurchnews.com/living-faith/2023/12/3/23984922/come-follow-me-december-4-10-church-leaders-scholars-said-about-revelation-1-5/>

Signs

Sēmainō - σημαίνω

1. "To give a sign, signify, indicate"
2. "To make known"

A ritual hand gesture can also signify an oath, it can also signify "entering into an action."

David Calabro, [Understanding Ritual Hand Gestures of the Ancient World: Some Basic Tools](#), *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 37 (2020): 293-308. See also: Calabro, *Ritual Gestures of Lifting, Extending, and Clasping the Hand(s) in Northwest Semitic Literature and Iconography*, Dissertation, University of Chicago, 2014.

Brigham Young's Explanation

Let me give you a definition in brief. Your endowment is, to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the holy Priesthood, and gain your eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.

Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 1941, p. 416.



Signs or Tokens

- Rainbow after the flood – Gen. 9.12-17
- Abrahamic covenantal token of circumcision – Gen. 17.11-12
- Moses receives a token – Ex. 3.12
- Blood of the Passover Lamb – Ex. 12 & 13.14-16
- Aaron's rod – Num. 17.10
- Jesus' hands and feet as tokens of his suffering – John 20.26-27, 3
Ne. 11.14-15

The Lord swears an oath

וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂאתִי אֶת-יָדִי לָתֵת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק
וְלְיַעֲקֹב וְנָתַתִּי אֹתָהּ לָכֶם מִוְרֶשֶׁה אֲנִי יְהוָה

And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the **which I did swear to give** it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD. (Ex. 6.8)

וְהֵבֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׂאתִי אֶת-יָדִי לָתֵת אֹתָהּ לְיִצְחָק וְלְיַעֲקֹב וְנָתַתִּי אֹתָהּ לָכֶם מִוְרֶשֶׁה אֲנִי יְהוָה literally reads, "which I did lift up my hand to give"

See also: Gen. 14.22; Num. 14.30; Deut. 32.40; Neh. 9.15, 28; Ps. 106.26; Ezk 20.5-6, 15, 23; Ezk. 47.14.

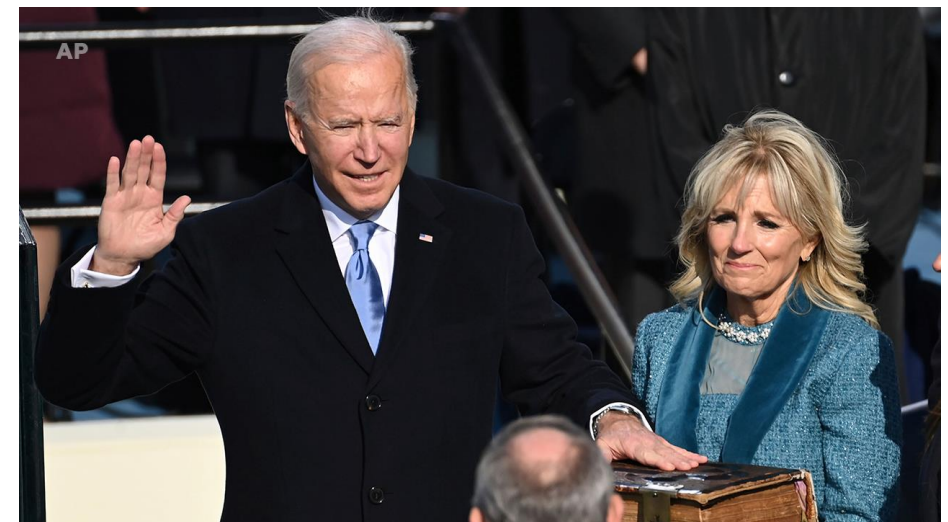
Oath of Office

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."



George Washington at his first inauguration.
Federal Hall in New York City, April 30, 1789.
Engraving (c) National Archives

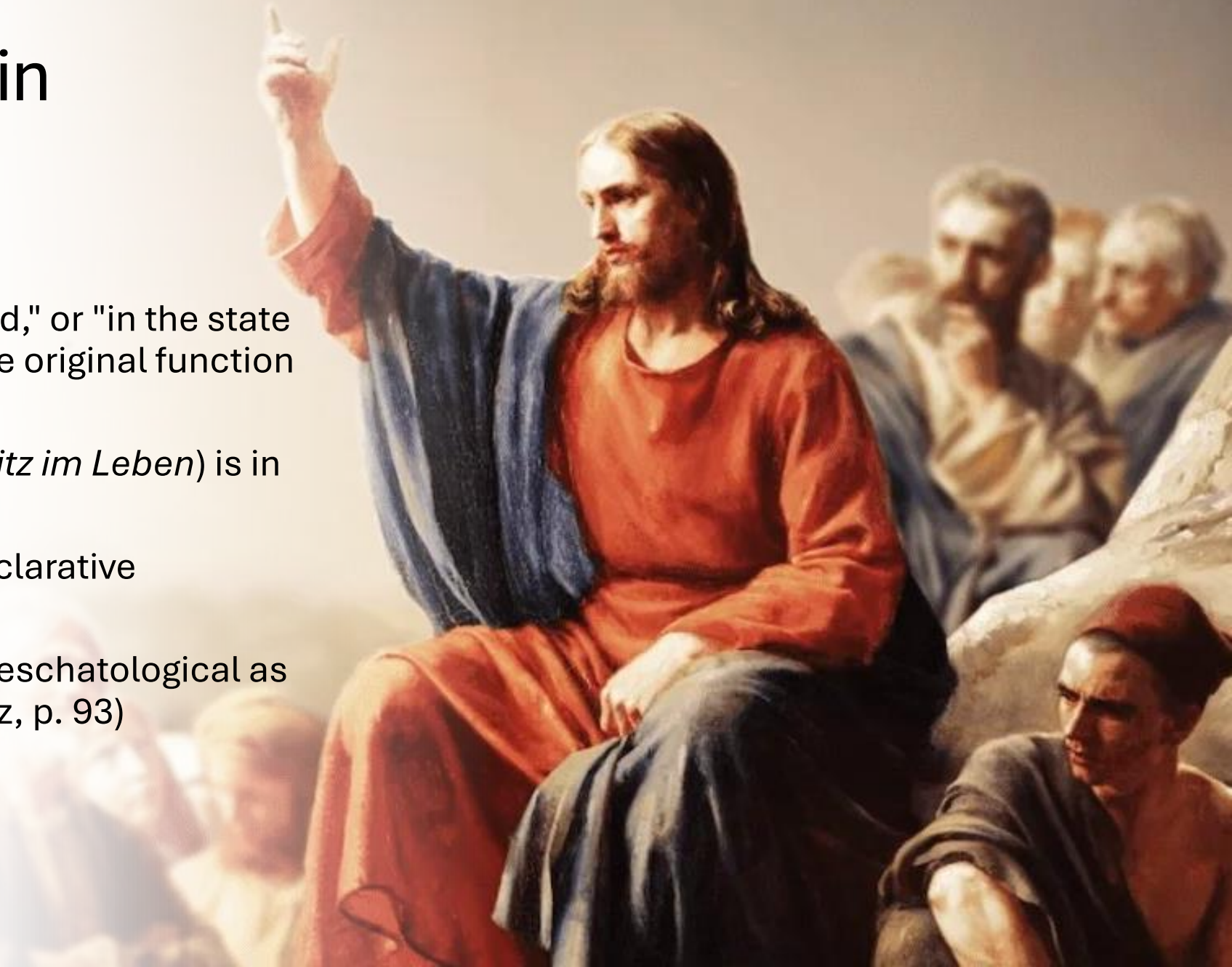
The oath is found in Article II of the Constitution.



The Beatitudes in Matthew 5

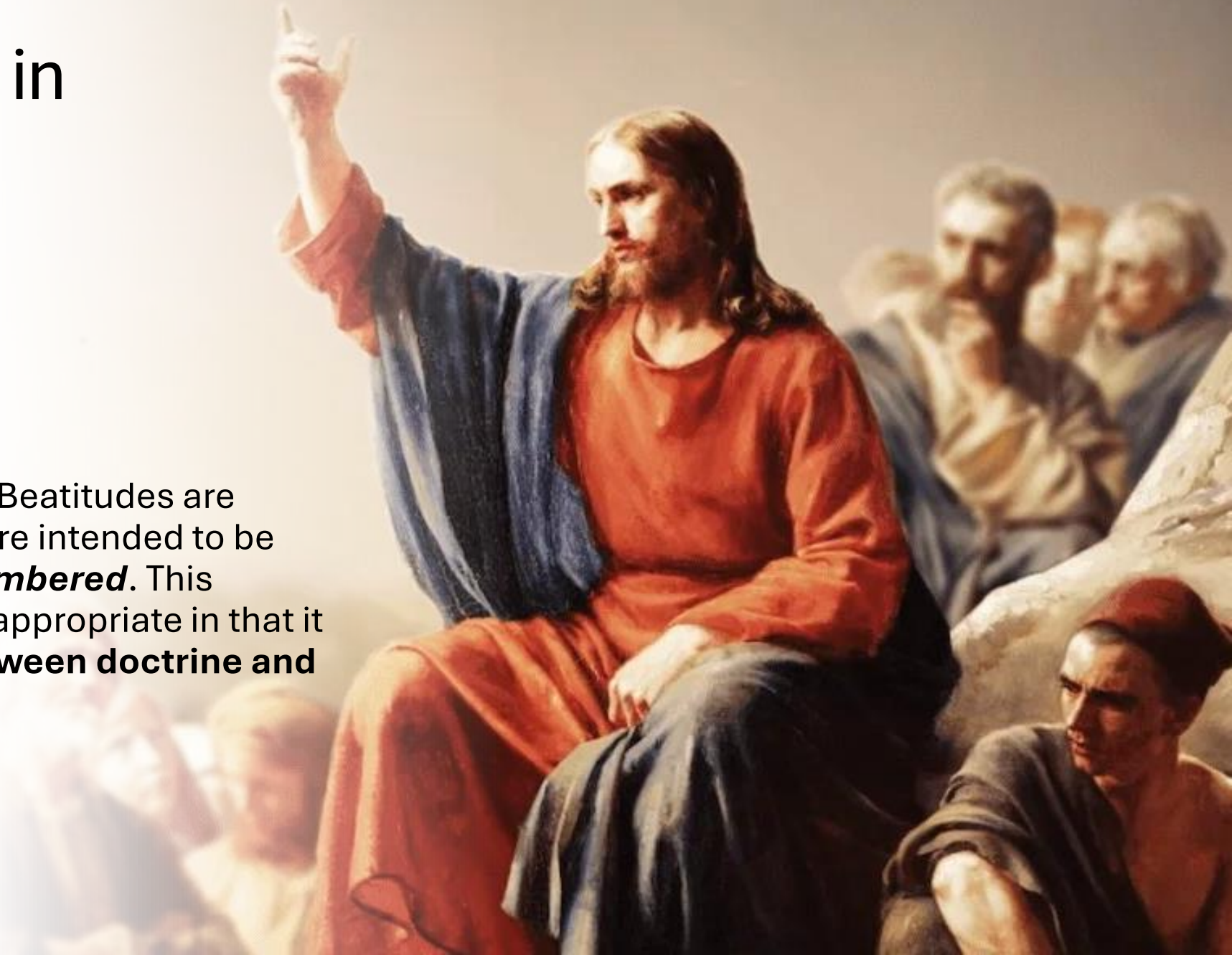
Μακάριος Makarios = "blessed," or "in the state of the gods." (Matt. 5.1-12) The original function of these statements were:

1. Their original function (*Sitz im Leben*) is in ritual.
2. Their nature is that of declarative statements.
3. The future orientation is eschatological as well as this-worldly. (Betz, p. 93)



The Beatitudes in Matthew 5

In their present context, the Beatitudes are doctrinal statements; they are intended to be ***learned by heart and remembered***. This secondary function is quite appropriate in that it shows the **connections between doctrine and ritual**. (Betz, p. 95)



Classical Pistis

- *Pistis* refers to trusting both gods and men.
- Sophocles discussed the active consulting of the gods to learn desirable courses of action. Once a god revealed the proper course of action, *pistis* was described as the ability to “put faith in the god.” *Oed. Tyr.*, 1445
- Xenophon linked *pistis* with fidelity within friendship. *An.* 1.6.3
- Aristotle commented that there “is no stable friendship without fidelity (*aneu pisteōs*), and fidelity (*pistis*) comes with time.” *Eud. Eth.* 7.2.39 1237b 12-13

Pistis as a pledge or covenant

- In the third-century BC Septuagint rendition, *pistis* was used to describe the Jewish leaders' commitment
(2 Esdr. 20:1; Neh. 10:1)
- Of the 195 occurrences of *pistis* in Josephus, 58 have the sense of "pledge"
- For Gentile Christians, *pistis* would have avoided the traditionally strong Jewish associations of the Old Covenant (*hē diathēkē*)

Pistis in the Gospels

- The phrase “for my sake” frequently emphasizes faithfulness to Jesus as a broker (Matt. 10:18, 39; 16:25; Mark 8:35; 10:29; 13:9; Luke 9:24)
- The new trustworthy in-group of fictive kin receives Jesus’ total allegiance as his own family once did (Mark 3:31-35; Matt. 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21)
- Now members of this in-group owe similar allegiance to Jesus because one cannot serve both God’s goals and anything or anyone else (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:11)
- To demonstrate faith one should keep commandments, give money to the poor, and follow him, “keeping commandments and good works of selling and giving” (Mark 10:20-21)

Pistis, covenantal relationships in the NT

- Old Testament patriarchs were faithful models of the centrality of the covenant in Hebrews
- Likewise Paul demonstrated *pistis* in preaching Christ's gospel throughout Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thessalonians 1:8).
- *Pistis* was characterized as a three-way relationship between God the Father and the faithful and also Christ and the faithful in 1 and 2 Timothy

Pistis leads to commitments and baptism

During a baptismal service in the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions*, the baptizand solemnly testified “I align myself with Christ, I pledge commitment (*pisteuō*), and I am baptized”

Constitutiones Apostolorum 7:41:2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8.



Pistis/Fides Coins 1st-3rd Centuries AD



Commodus. AD 177-192.
Silver Denarius.

Rome mint. Struck AD 192.

Obverse: Laureate head right.

Reverse: Fides standing left, holding standard and cornucopia; star to right.

RIC III 233; MIR 18, 840-4/30; RSC 583a



Probus AE Antoninianus.

Rome Mint, 276 AD.

Obverse: IMP C M AVR PROBVS AVG, radiate, cuirassed bust right.

Reverse: FIDES MILIT, Fides standing, holding sceptre and transverse ensign. Mint-mark XXIE.

Cohen 248. RIC 151.



Commodus Denarius. 192 AD

Obverse: M COMM ANT P FEL AVG BRIT P P, laureate head right.

Reverse: FIDEI COH P M TR P XVI COS VI, Fides standing left with grain ears & standard.

RIC 220, Cohen 127, BMC 298



Gallienus AE Antoninianus. Asian mint.
266 AD.

Obverse: GALLIENVS AVG, radiate draped bust right.

Reverse: FIDES LEG, emperor standing left, holding two ensigns.

RIC 635, Cohen 225.



NERVA. 96-98 AD. AR Denarius

Obverse: IMP NERVA CAES AVG P M TR P COS II P P, laureate head right

Reverse: CONCORDIA EXERCITVVM, clasped hands.

RIC II 2; RSC 16.



Hadrian. AD 117-138.

Silver Denarius.

Rome mint. Struck circa AD 134-138.

Obverse: Laureate head right.

Reverse: Fides standing right, holding grain ears and plate of fruit.

RIC II 241A; RSC 717

Pistis/Fides Seals Marriages and Fidelity



*The dextrarum junctio illustrating the concord of Antoninus Pius and Faustina the Elder and a sacramentum or oath of allegiance alluding to the fidelity of the army towards Trajan.
Schematically drawn from contemporary sestertii.*



Constantine as a charioteer is welcomed to heaven by the hand of God. Bronze coin minted at Alexandria, two times enlarged. Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks.

Obverse: DV CONSTANTINVS PT AVGVSTVS

Reverse: SMALA

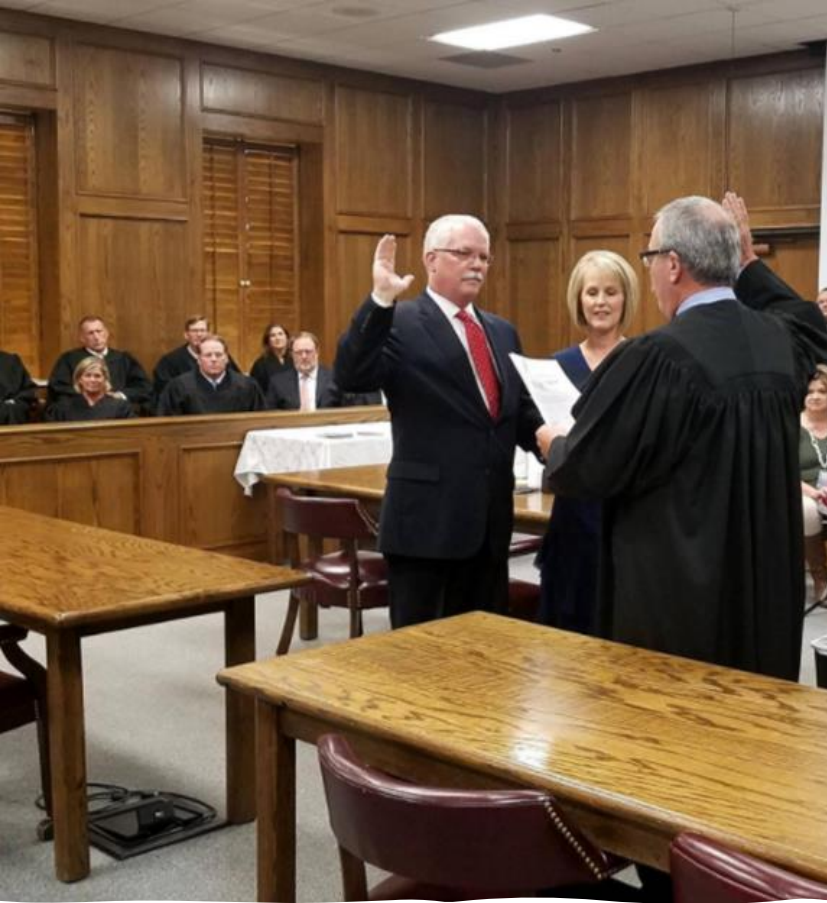
Clasped Right Hands = Faith

- The Roman historian Tacitus used the phrase “renew right hands” (*renovare dextras*) as a synonym for renewing a treaty *Annales* II.58
- Romans sometimes sent clasped right hands (*dextras*) in effigy before entering into a contract
- This ritual invited another to a renewed handclasp signifying a renewal of an alliance relationship.

Historiae I, 54, II, 8

Schmidt, Faith — *pistis* (πίστις)





Ancient Source

Many ritual hand gestures, oaths, and ceremonial clothing likely have an ancient source

Receiving a name and a handclasp

Isaiah 56.5

וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם בְּבֵיתִי וּבְחוֹמֹתַי יָד וְשֵׁם טוֹב מִבָּנִים וּמִבָּנוֹת שֵׁם עוֹלָם אֶתֶן-לוֹ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכָּרֵת

Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls **a place and a name** better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. (Isa. 56.5 KJV)

To them I will give **a handclasp and a name** within the walls of my house that is better than sons and daughters; I will endow them with an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. (Isa. 56.5, Gileadi trans.)



“The figure of linking arms by placing the “hand over the wrist” (ἐπὶ καρπῷ χεῖρας ἔχοντες) is an epic formula and a particular type of ritual gesture. This ritual gesture was enacted during the sacred dances performed by gods on the wedding day. Archaeological sources indicate similar representations on Athenian red-painted vases from the 5th century BC used in wedding ceremonials.”



A symbol of the resurrected Christ and Marriage Bond

“Christ is the originating principle of uniting the separated elements of the cosmos. It is my assumption that Christ’s gesture analyzed in this chapter (“hand over the wrist”) is the visual metaphor of the doctrinal aspect of the *Anastasis* (resurrection) defined as a mystical link or a nuptial bond. Theologically, as well as iconographically, Adam stands for humanity as a whole.” (Isar, *Xopός: The Dance of Adam*, p. 73.)

Eternal lineage – Isaiah

The promise of an eternal lineage for a man and woman who enter into God's covenantal promises:

I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

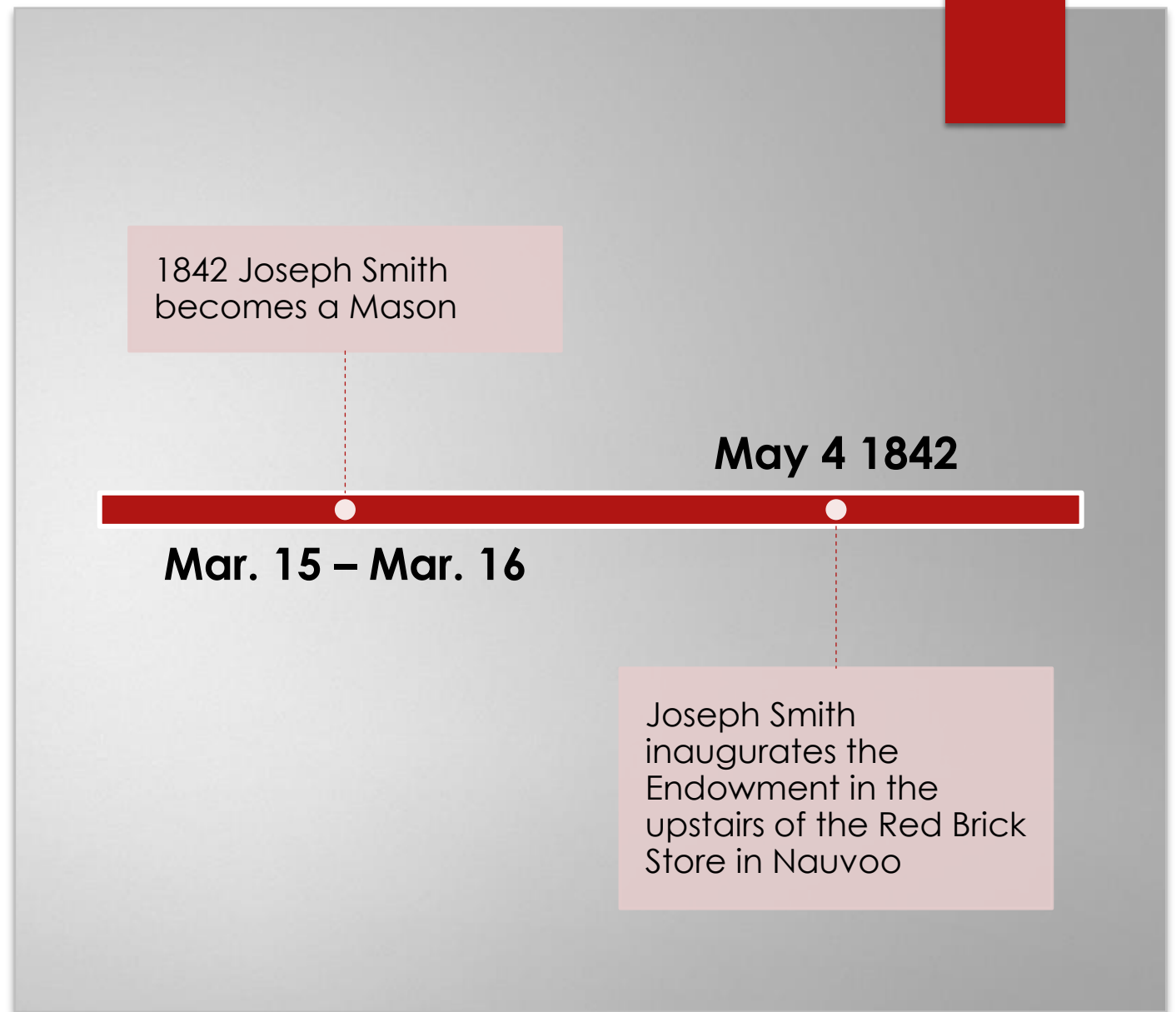
(Isaiah 61.8-10)

Matt Brown's timeline of Masonry & the Temple

Accusation: Because there is similarity between the Endowment and Masonry, some critics say Joseph Smith cribbed Masonic symbols to create the Endowment ceremony in the temple.

1. What was revealed to Joseph before he became a Mason?
2. Where did these symbols come from?
3. Can God reveal truths to us “in our culture?” (D&C 1:24)

Masonry and the Temple: A Timeline



Conflicts and Challenges to Faith

“Because of the conflicts and challenges we face in today’s world, I wish to suggest a single choice—a choice of peace and protection and a choice that is appropriate for all. **That choice is faith. ... Choose faith over doubt**, choose faith over fear, choose faith over the unknown and the unseen, and choose faith over pessimism. ...

“**When logic, reason, or personal intellect come into conflict with sacred teachings and doctrine**, or conflicting messages assault your beliefs ... , **choose to not cast the seed out of your heart by unbelief** [see Alma 32:28]. Remember, we receive not a witness until after the trial of our faith (see Ether 12:6)”

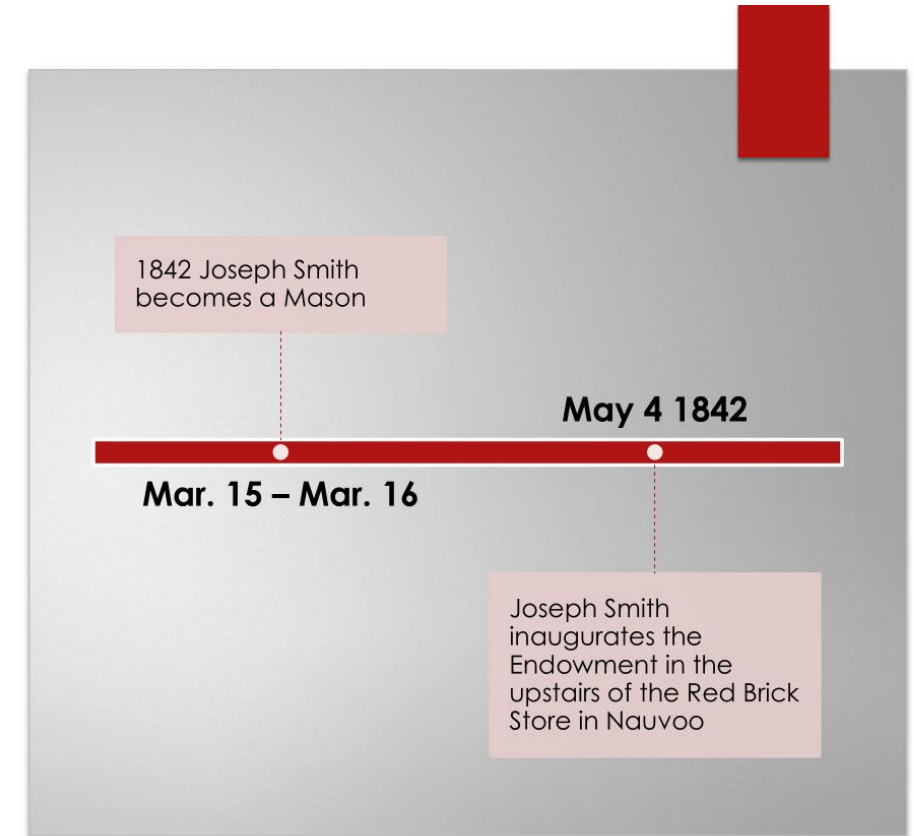
(Richard C. Edgley, “Faith—the Choice Is Yours,” 31, 32–33).



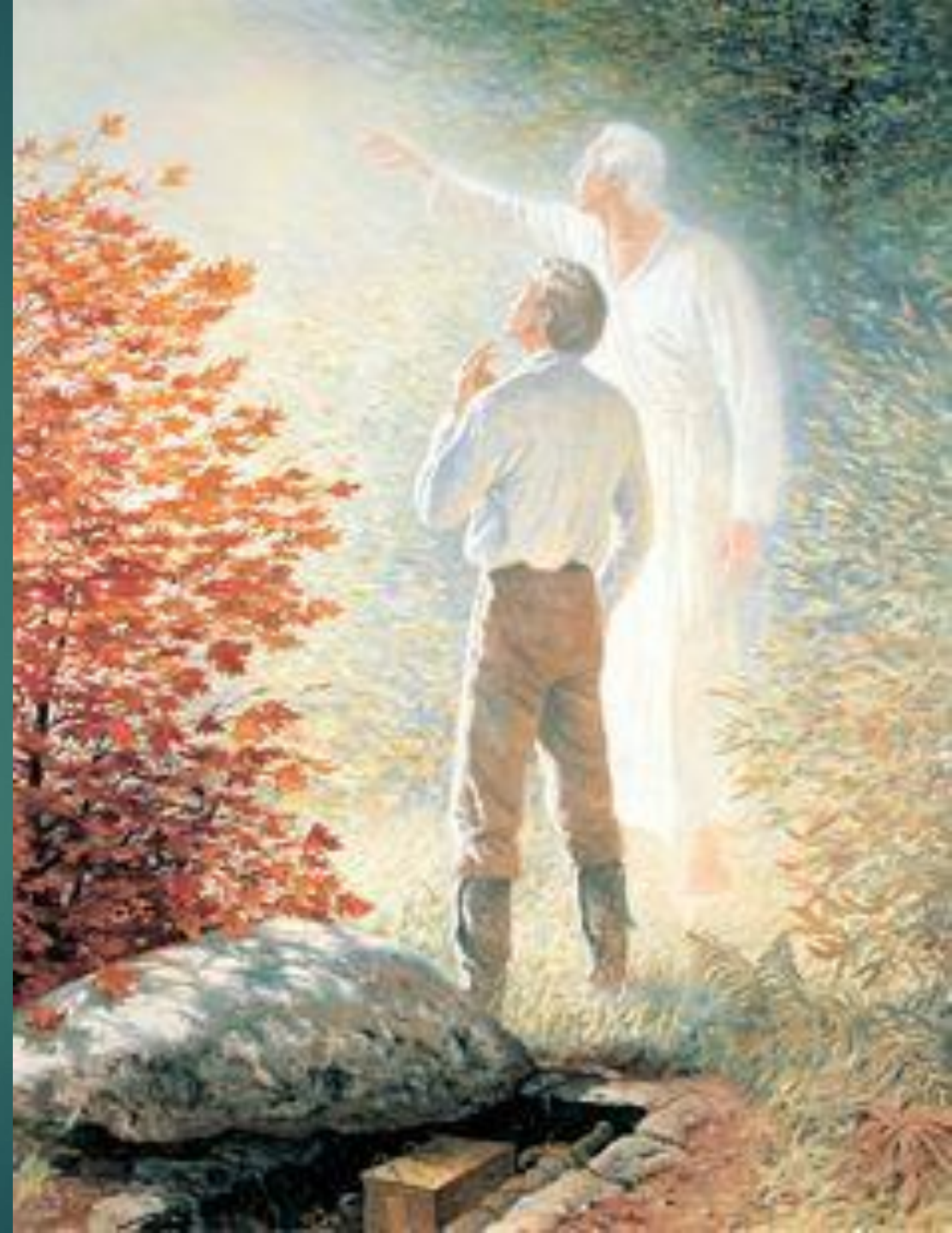
My story

1988-89 – Faith crisis

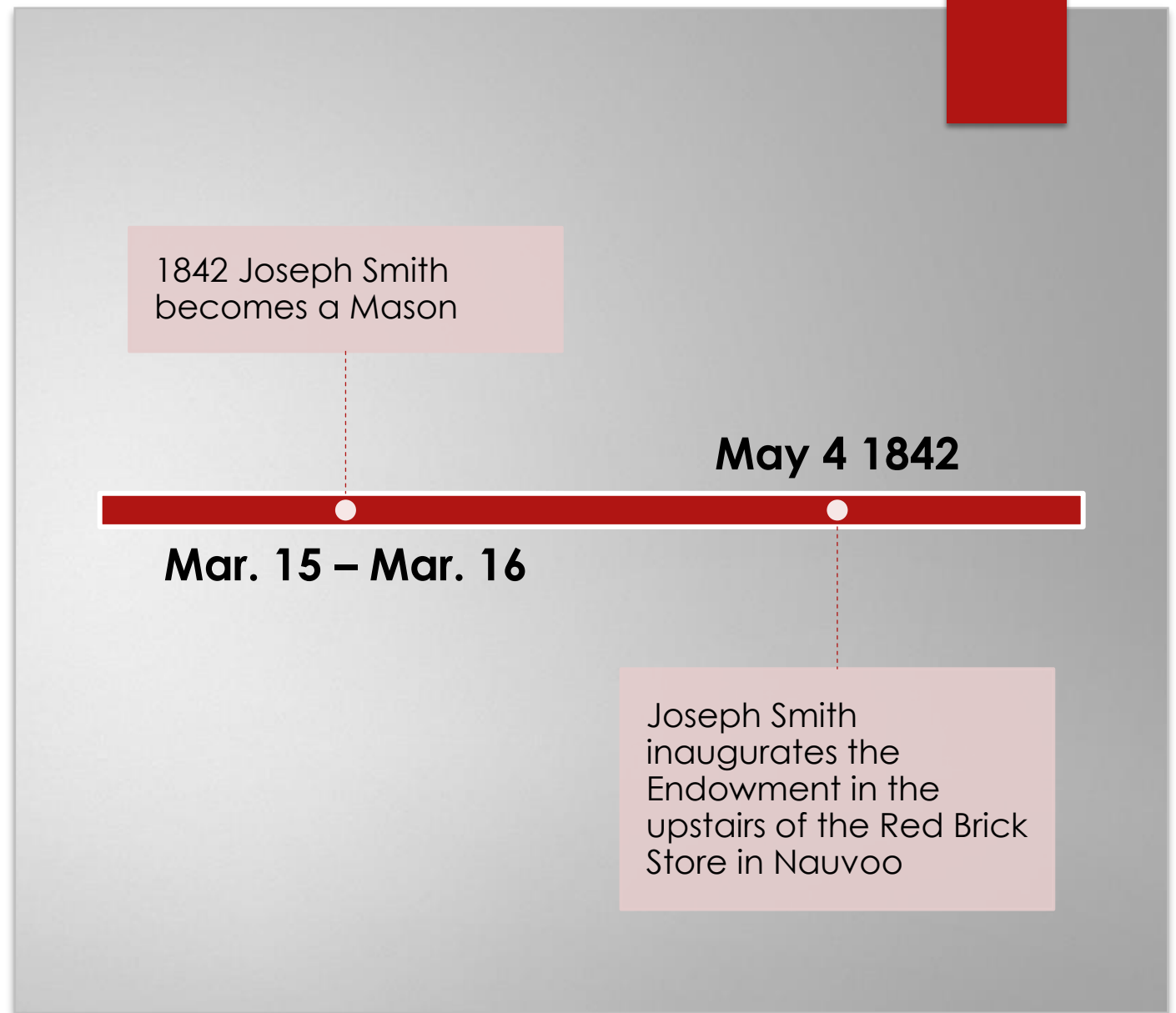
Masonry
and the
Temple: A
Timeline



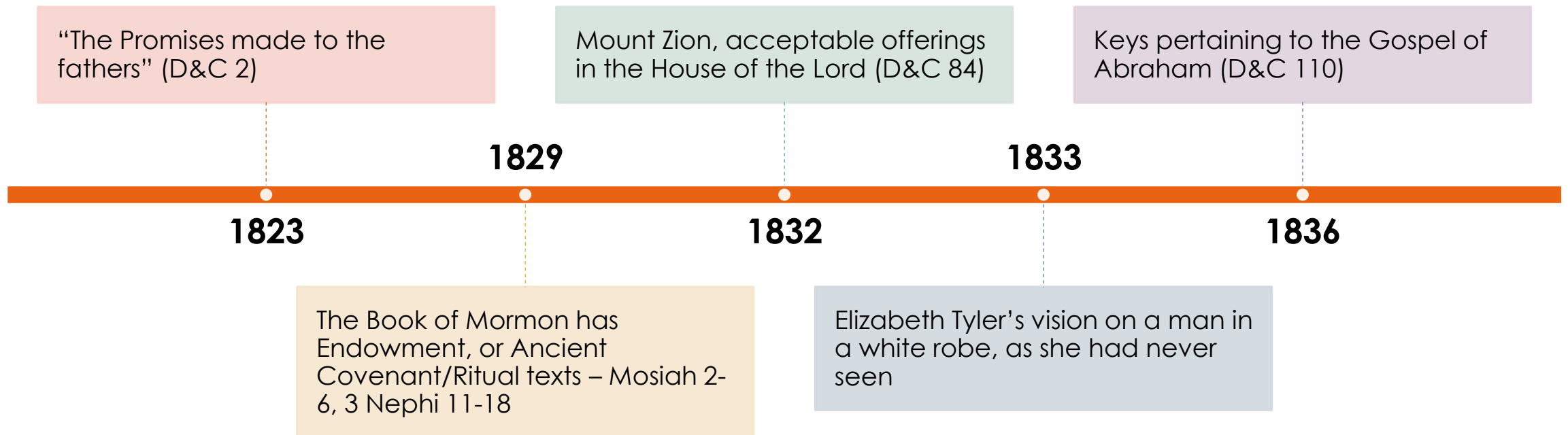
What was revealed
to Joseph before he
became a Mason?



Masonry and the Temple: A Timeline



Masonry and the Temple: A Timeline



Ancient Covenant Pattern

1. The preamble
2. Historical prologue (description of what the king has done for the subjects)
3. Stipulations – Terms of the Covenant (to secure fidelity of the subjects to the king)
4. Deposition of the text of the treaty or covenant (special writings and other means to ensure that the covenants aren't forgotten and are recorded and reviewed)
5. List of witnesses
6. Statement of curses and blessings (the results of disobedience or obedience)

(Source: Jon Levenson, *Sinai and Zion, An Entrance into the Jewish Bible*. See also Stephen D. Ricks, "Kingship, Coronation, and Covenant in Mosiah 1–6," in King Benjamin's Speech: "That Ye May Learn Wisdom," ed. John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks, FARMS, 1998, 256–60.)

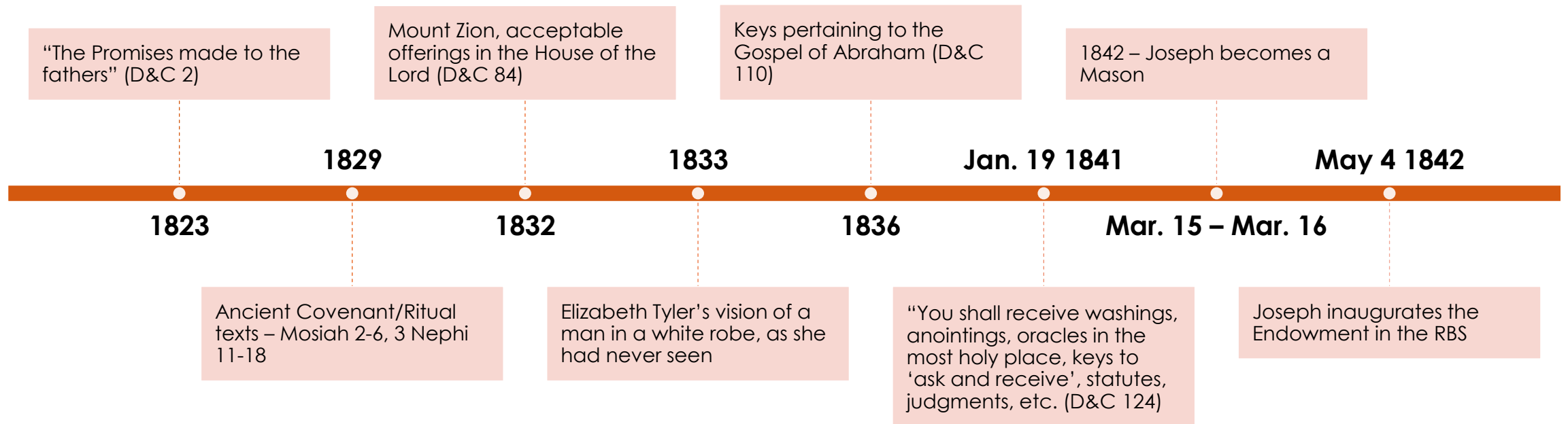
Treaty Covenant Pattern in Mosiah 1-6, The Old Testament and in the Endowment

Treaty-Covenant Pattern in the Old Testament and Benjamin's Speech

The Endowment in the 1800's included a preamble, and the antecedent history would obviously have included the creation narrative. The current endowment includes language that brings to mind the pre-earth council. The terms of the covenant with its blessings and cursings were also included in the 1800's. The recitation of the covenant was given at the conclusion of the rite.

Elements	Exodus 19:3b-8	Exodus 20-24	Deuteronomy	Joshua 24	Mosiah 1-6
Preamble	19:3b	20:1	1:1-5	24:1-2a	1:1-2:9a
Antecedent History	19:4	20:2	1:6-3:29	24:2b-13, 16b-18a	2:9b-21, 23-30
Terms of the Covenant	19:5-6	20:3-23:19	4-26	24:14, 18b, 23	2:22, 24b, 31-41; 4:6-30
Formal Witness	19:8	24:3	31:19	24:16a, 19a, 21-23	5:2-8
Blessings and Curses	19:5	23:20-33	27:9-28:68	24:19b-20	3:24-27; 5:9-15
Recital of the Covenant/ Deposit of the Text	19:7	24:4-8	27:1-8; 31:9, 24-26	24:25-27	2:8, 9a; 6:1-3, 6

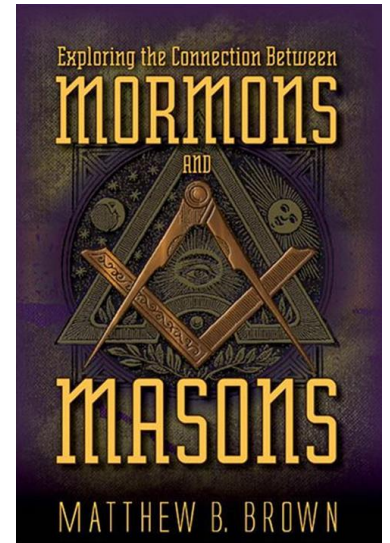
Masonry and the Temple: A Timeline



Matt Brown's Conclusion

“By examining all of the above timeline items, it becomes obvious that the Nauvoo-era temple ordinances and doctrines did not suspiciously materialize after Joseph Smith became a Freemason. It can be plainly seen that the Lord was involved in the restoration of the fullness of temple activities from the outset of the latter-day dispensation (JS-H 1.30-41). He not only taught His prophet the concepts of temple worship (see D&C 84), but He also sent His representatives to bestow keys of accomplishment on Joseph Smith (D&C 110), and then He listed the ritual activities that would take place inside of His holy house (D&C 124)- all before the Prophet was taught the mysteries of Masonry.”

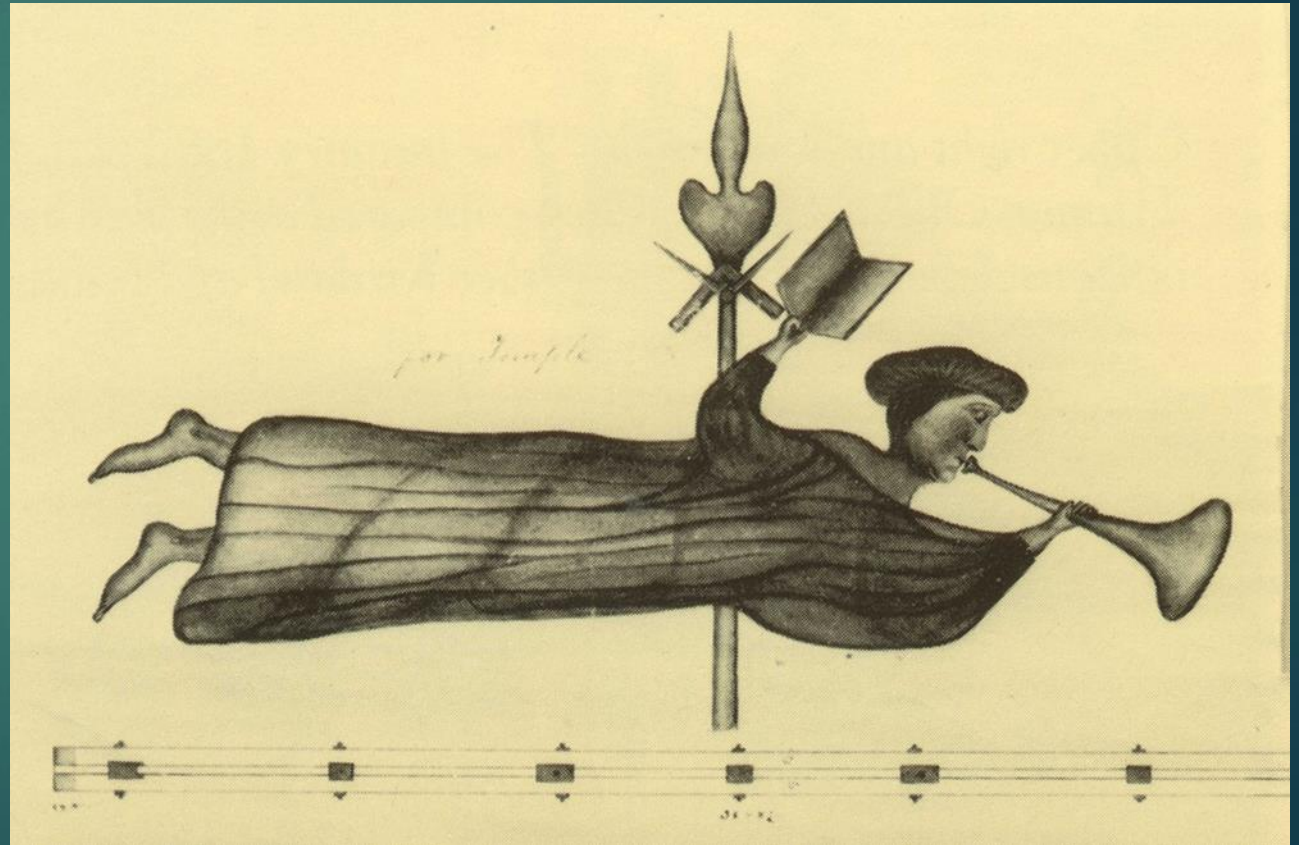
Brown, [Exploring the Connection Between Mormons and Masons](#), p. 99.



Where did these symbols come from?

*Nauvoo Temple Weather Vane
Detail, circa 1841–1845*

Architect William Weeks made this sketch of the angel weather vane placed atop the Nauvoo Temple in January 1846.



The basis for the symbols of Freemasonry

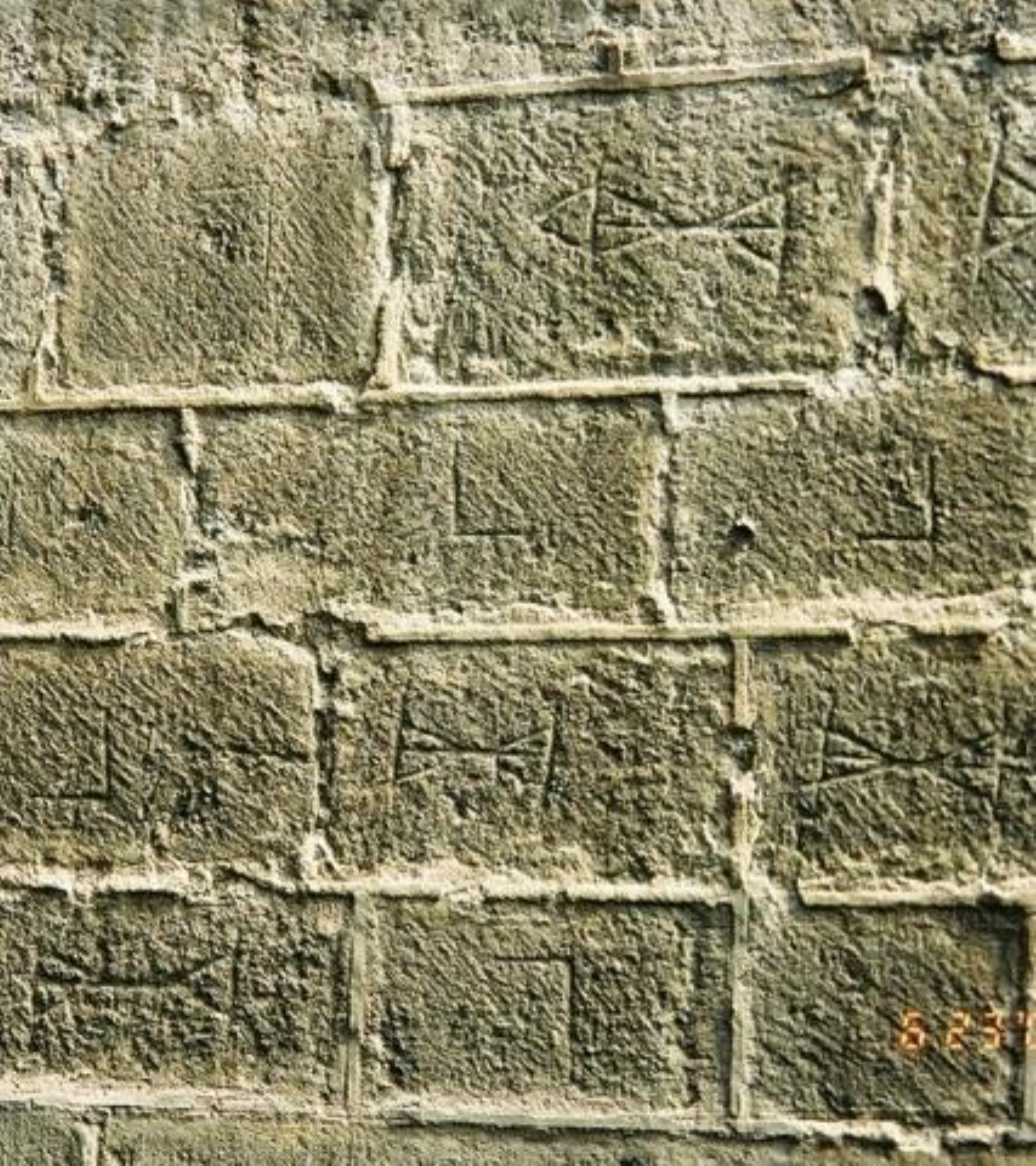
One author writes, “The real basis of Freemasonry... is Christian understanding,” and the purpose of the rites is to place man on a figurative pilgrimage to God’s heavenly temple.”

Jeff Roundy, *Latter-day Saints Q&A*. See also: *Freemasonry Today*, issue 43, Winter 2007/08, p. 18.

Masonry and the Temple

Symbols come from an ancient source





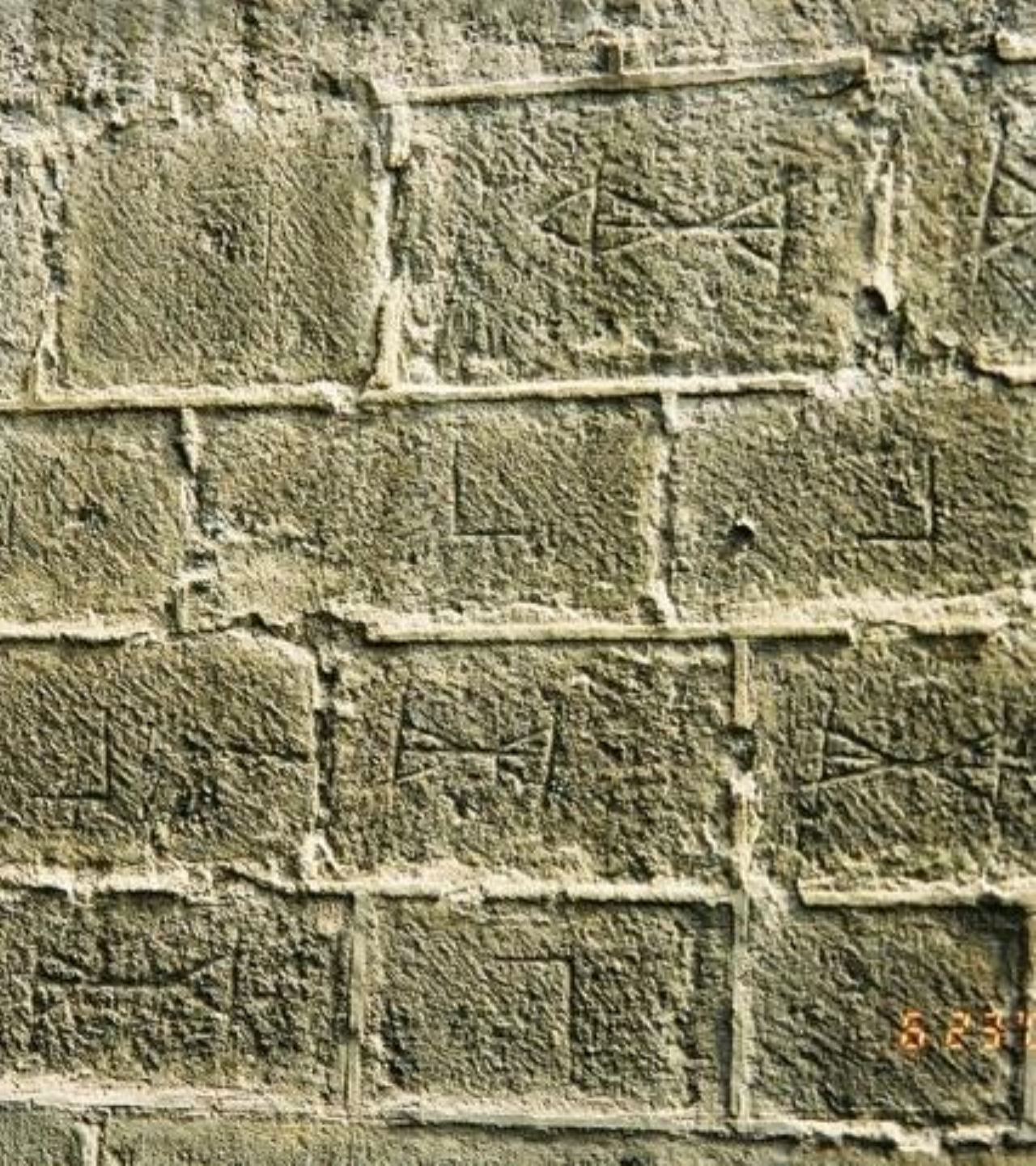
Masonry in scripture

Joseph was a “tekton” (Matt 13:55)

Matthew 16 Upon this Rock I will
build my church... thou art PETROS...
upon this PETRA I will build my church!

1 Corinthians 3 Ye are the temple of
God

(Masonry marks in a church in Toledo,
Spain)



Masonry in scripture

The stone which the builders rejected, the same is the head of the corner. (Luke 20:17)

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11–12)



Procession of the Saints, The Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo. This structure was built by Theoderic (493-526) next to his palace and was originally used as a Palatine Church of Arian religion.

Cyril of Jerusalem (313-386 AD) and the holy anointing



You were anointed on your brow and your other sense-organs, and so while the body is anointed in outward appearance with myrrh, the soul (psyche) is sanctified by the life-bestowing Holy Spirit.

First of all you were anointed on the brow (*metopon*, forehead and eyes, lit. “space between the eyes”) to free you from the shame which completely involved the First Man when he fell, and that you might clearly perceive (or reflect, *katoptrizisthe*), the glory of the Lord with wide-open mind (lit. with uncovered face). Then your ears that you might receive the hearing ears of the mysteries of God.... Next come the nostrils, that upon receiving the holy ordinance you may say: “We are the sweet odor of Christ to God among the saved.” After that (you were anointed) on the breast (“the seat of feeling, passion and thought,” Liddell and Scott), that, clothed with the breastplate of righteousness, you may stand against the wiles of the Devil—(countering his evil thoughts with good ones)...

<https://www.templestudy.com/2008/04/23/cyril-of-jerusalem-on-washings-and-anointings/>

God reveals truths to us in our culture. In other words, God uses things we understand to teach us higher truth.



God uses things we understand to teach us higher truth

And the Word became
flesh, and dwelt among us
(and we beheld his glory,
glory as of the only
begotten from the Father),
full of grace and truth.

(John 1:14 ASV)

Points to Remember

- The temple lies at the center of strengthening our faith, since the Savior and His doctrine are the very heart of the temple.
- Joseph was a seer. We may not see all that he saw as he made connections with the symbols of his time.
- Joseph did the best he could under his circumstances. Temple ordinances have been gradually refined since his day.
- The temple and its covenants prepare us to receive further light and knowledge, and to live a consecrated life, and establish Zion.
- “The word becoming flesh” in our day and in us can mean that God will use elements from our current world to teach us about his world.

CREATION

FALL

ATONEMENT

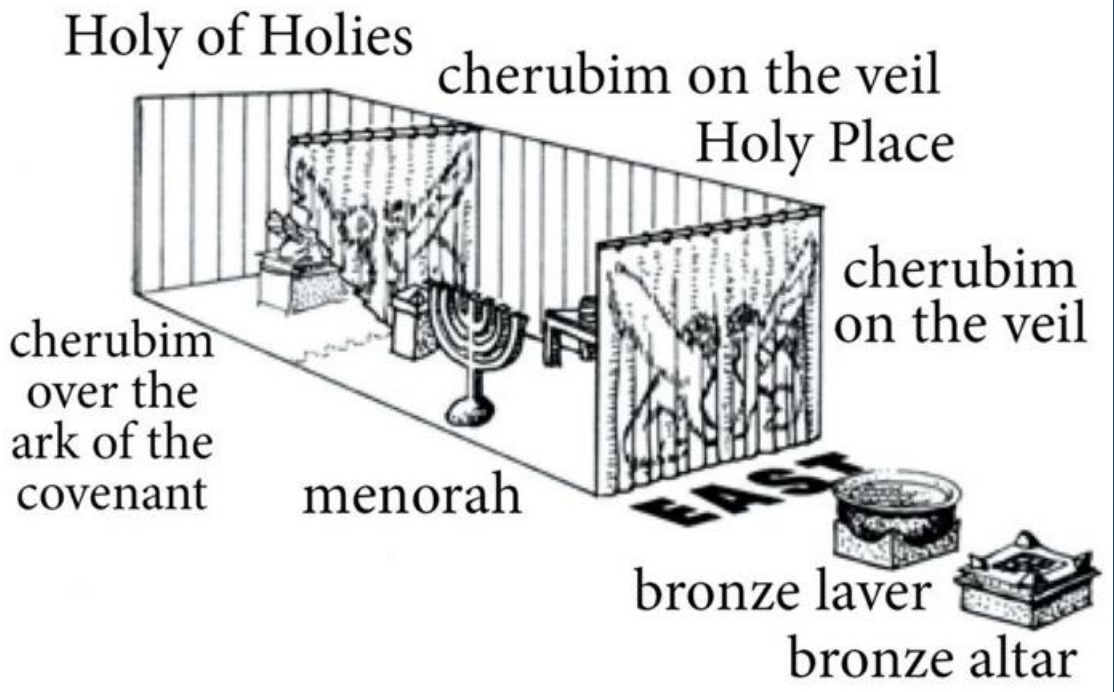
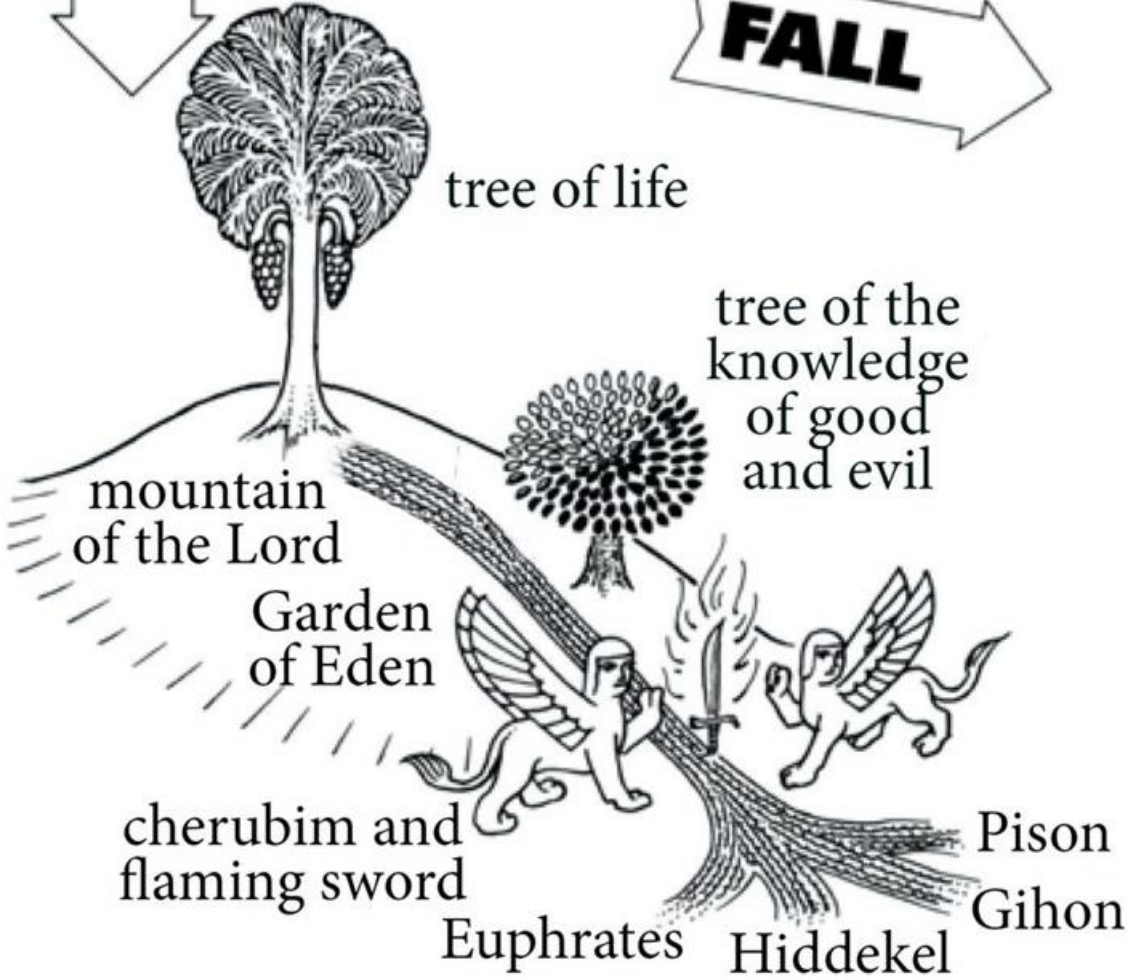


Figure 1. Adapted from Michael P. Lyon, 1952--: *Sacred Topography of Eden and the Temple*, 1994. The outbound journey of the Creation and the Fall at left is mirrored in the inbound journey of the Israelite Tabernacle at right.

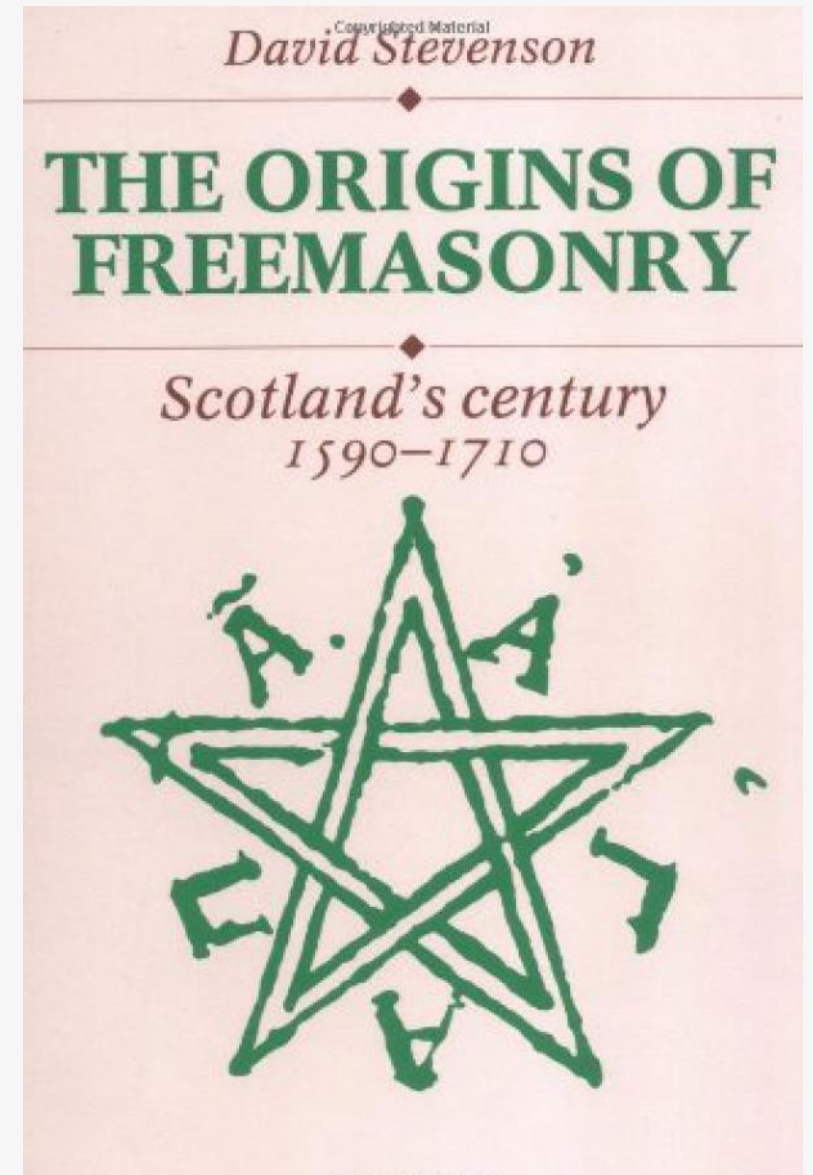
Bits added after filming the episode

On October 16, 1646, Ashmole recorded in his diary that he was made a Freemason at Warrington, Lancashire. This is one of the earliest known written records of an English Masonic initiation. He wrote:

"I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire, with Colonel Henry Mainwaring of Karinham in Cheshire." This entry is significant because it provides concrete evidence of the existence of Freemasonry in the mid-17th century in England, predating the establishment of the first Grand Lodge in 1717.

Stevenson writes, "This, then, is the first known 'lodge' in England (apart from Medieval-type building-site lodges), and the first 'lodge' known anywhere with no operative members." –

Stevenson, *The Origins of Freemasonry*, p. 219. See also: Baigent and Leigh, *The Temple and the Lodge*, p. 156.

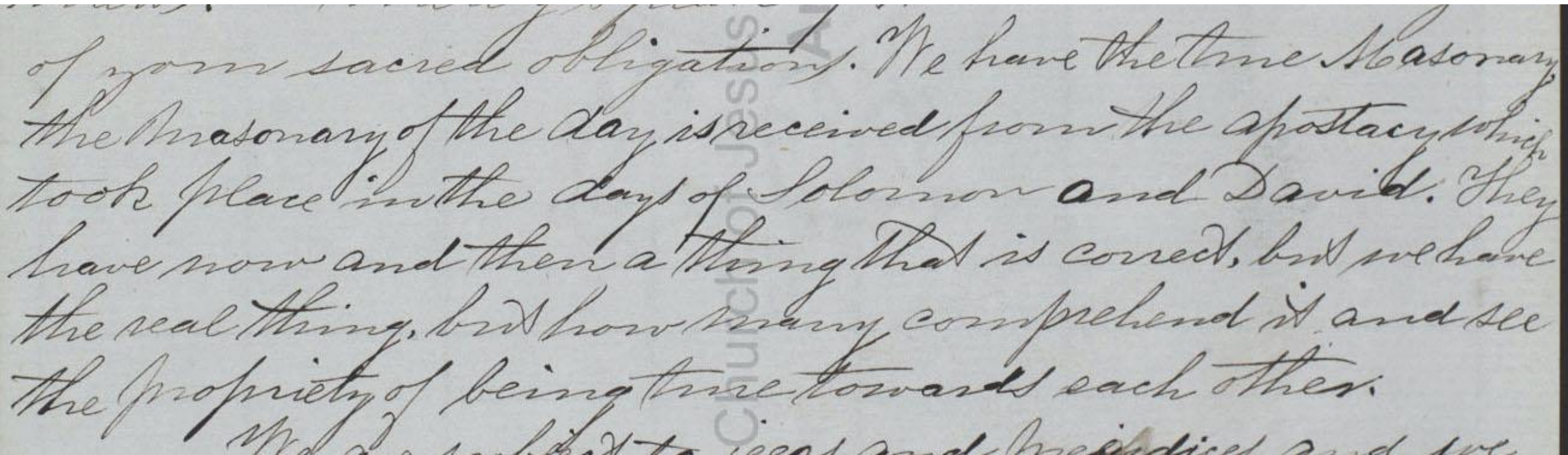


Heber C. Kimball attributes Freemasonry to Solomon and David and Church possesses true Masonry.

Date – Nov. 13, 1858

Speech, scribed by John V. Long

Source Link: <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=868c4a5f-781a-441a-8df7-dea5e689e369&crate=0&index=6>

A snippet of a handwritten manuscript in cursive script. The text discusses the nature of Masonry, contrasting the 'true Masonry' of Solomon and David with the 'apostacy' of the 'Masonry of the day'. It emphasizes the importance of being true to one another.

of your sacred obligations. We have the true Masonry
the Masonry of the day is received from the apostacy which
took place in the days of Solomon and David. They
have now and then a thing that is correct, but we have
the real thing, but how many comprehend it and see
the propriety of being true towards each other.
We are subject to errors and prejudices and we

Learning: Our responsibility

Each member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has an individual responsibility to learn and live the Lord's teachings and to receive by proper authority the ordinances of salvation and exaltation. We should not expect the Church as an organization to teach or tell us everything we need to know and do to become devoted disciples and endure valiantly to the end. Rather, our personal responsibility is to learn what we should learn, to live as we know we should live, and to become who the Master would have us become.

(Elder David A. Bednar, [Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing](#), April 2019 General Conference)



We need to teach about the temple in our homes

Elder Bednar continues:

Temple preparation is most effective in our homes. But many Church members are unsure about what appropriately can and cannot be said regarding the temple experience outside of the temple. President Ezra Taft Benson described why this uncertainty exists:

“The temple is a sacred place, and the ordinances in the temple are of a sacred character. Because of its sacredness we are sometimes reluctant to say anything about the temple to our children and grandchildren. As a consequence, many do not develop a real desire to go to the temple, or when they go there, they do so without much background to prepare them for the obligations and covenants they enter into. I believe *a proper understanding or background* will immeasurably help prepare our youth for the temple ... [and] will foster within them a desire to seek their priesthood blessings just as Abraham sought his.”

[\(Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson \(2014\), 174; emphasis added; see also Ezra Taft Benson, “What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, 8.](#)

Guidelines

- Two basic guidelines can help us achieve the proper understanding emphasized by President Benson.
- Guideline #1. *Because we love the Lord, we always should speak about His holy house with reverence. We should not disclose or describe the special symbols associated with the covenants we receive in sacred temple ceremonies. Neither should we discuss the holy information that we specifically promise in the temple not to reveal.*
- Guideline #2. *The temple is the house of the Lord. Everything in the temple points us to our Savior, Jesus Christ. We may discuss the basic purposes of and the doctrine and principles associated with temple ordinances and covenants.*



Across the generations, from the Prophet Joseph Smith to President Russell M. Nelson, the doctrinal purposes of temple ordinances and covenants have been taught extensively by Church leaders. A rich reservoir of resources exists in print, audio, video, and other formats to help us learn about initiatory ordinances, endowments, marriages, and other sealing ordinances.

(Elder David A. Bednar, [Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing](#), April 2019 General Conference)

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