

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

A STUDY EDITION FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

REVISED EDITION

EDITED BY
STEPHEN O. SMOOT



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Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints © By Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

On 15 July 1851, Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints published a short notice in the Church's European newspaper, *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star*, announcing the publication of "a new work which will soon be ready for sale." This work was expected to be "a source of much instruction and edification to many thousands of the Saints." The name Elder Richards gave this new volume was the Pearl of Great Price, taking his inspiration from Jesus's parable in Matthew 13:45–46.

Writing from Liverpool, England, Elder Richards informed readers in the preface to the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price that the volume was necessary because of "repeated solicitations of several friends of the publisher, who are desirous to be put in possession of the very important articles contained therein." By compiling this collection of "revelations, translations, and narrations" of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Elder Richards hoped that members of the Church would "increase their ability to maintain and to defend the holy faith" by becoming better informed of the "precious truths" revealed by the Prophet. "It would," he assured, "commend itself to all careful students of the scriptures." The content selected by Elder Richards for this new compendium included:

- Extracts from the book of Genesis and the Gospel of Matthew from Joseph Smith's inspired translation or revision of the King James Bible (known today among Latter-day Saints as the Joseph Smith Translation)
- The Book of Abraham, an inspired translation of Egyptian papyri acquired by the Prophet in the summer of 1835
- Extracts from Joseph Smith's personal history composed in the summer of 1838 and serialized in Church newspapers both in North America and Europe beginning in 1842
- Extracts from the Doctrine and Covenants, one of the three canonical books of the Church at the time (along with the Bible and the Book of Mormon)
- An extract from an 1842 account of Joseph Smith's history describing the foundational beliefs of the Church
- A poem composed by Elder John Jaques titled "Truth"

The Pearl of Great Price was immensely valued by the Saints in Great Britain, who now had convenient access to some of Joseph Smith's most impactful revelations and historical writings. It was not long, however, until Elder Richards's pamphlet, which was intended primarily for British Latter-

day Saints far removed from the bulwark of Zion in Utah, grew beyond its initial audience. Content from the Pearl of Great Price quickly became widely cited, and it was eventually realized that a second edition would be necessary to satisfy increasing demand. Accordingly, in 1878 Elder Orson Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve—with the assistance of Elder Richards and fellow Apostles Elders Albert Carrington, Brigham Young Jr., and George Q. Cannon—produced a second edition of the Pearl of Great Price that made significant revisions in both content and structure to the first edition while remaining true to the book’s original intent. Two years later on Sunday, 10 October 1880—the fifth day of the Fiftieth Annual General Conference of the Church—President Cannon, First Counselor in the First Presidency, proposed before the assembled body of Saints that the Pearl of Great Price be sustained as the Church’s fourth book of scripture and be considered “binding upon us as a people and a Church.” The proposal was sustained unanimously.

After its canonization, the Pearl of Great Price underwent three more major editions: one produced in 1902 under the supervision of James E. Talmage, another in 1921 under the supervision of Elder Talmage and other members of the Quorum of the Twelve, and a third in 1981 (revised in 2013), which is the current official edition used by the Church. The 1902 edition prepared by Elder Talmage standardized the contents of the Pearl of Great Price: the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham, the “Writings of Joseph Smith” (later Joseph Smith—Matthew and Joseph Smith—History), and the Articles of Faith. Two revelations added to the Pearl of Great Price on 3 April 1976, were moved a few years later in 1979 to the Doctrine and Covenants, becoming sections 137 and 138 of that book. Otherwise, the content of the Pearl of Great Price (including its chapter and versification system) known and cherished by Latter-day Saints today has remained effectively the same for over one hundred years.

Although diminutive in size, the Pearl of Great Price has had a profound impact on the faith of the Latter-day Saints. It is a book of scripture that spans dispensations. It reveals the grand scope of Creation as it unfolded under the direction of God and His Only Begotten; it reaches far back into the history of God’s interactions with His children, preserving important accounts from the lives of Adam, Eve, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses; it narrates the calling of Joseph Smith as prophet, seer, and revelator in modern times; it provides clear warnings about the signs and tribulations the Saints should expect as the world prepares to receive the Son of Man in His glory; and it provides a useful outline of the Saints’ fundamental principles of faith. It is a book that encompasses the beginning and the end, situating its readers in a world that predates humanity and extends well beyond the confines of this earth.

In harmony with the Lord’s commandment to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith” (Doctrine and Covenants 88:118), over the course of many decades Latter-day Saint scholars have probed the contents of the Pearl of Great Price with the tools of scholarship. Successive generations of committed

disciple-scholars who have closely studied the Pearl of Great Price have reaped a bountiful harvest, offering many important insights that greatly enhance appreciation for this remarkable text. Readers of the Pearl of Great Price today have access to a treasure trove of academic resources that make studying the text immensely rewarding.

To help facilitate awareness of these resources and to provide a sense of how they might be usefully synthesized to increase faith and understanding, the creation of a study edition of the Pearl of Great Price felt both appropriate and needful. The offering presented here, *The Pearl of Great Price: A Study Edition for Latter-day Saints*, hopes to satisfy the counsel given in Doctrine and Covenants 88:118 and to help both new and longtime members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints magnify their study of this sacred text.

The idea for this study edition had its genesis with the work of Book of Mormon Central, a nonprofit research foundation dedicated to making the Book of Mormon accessible, comprehensible, and defensible to the entire world. In its early years, Book of Mormon Central focused exclusively on making academic resources on the Book of Mormon accessible to a growing digital audience of curious and sometimes troubled Latter-day Saints who were encountering new information about their faith at a seemingly breakneck speed.

In 2019, Book of Mormon Central launched Pearl of Great Price Central—the first of several planned interconnected websites in a larger digital ecosystem now called Scripture Central—that sought to do for the Pearl of Great Price what it had already done for the Book of Mormon. By the end of 2020, Pearl of Great Price Central had produced dozens of short, informative articles on the individual books of the Pearl of Great Price, bibliographies and archival resources, videos and podcasts, an online study edition of the Book of Abraham, and a digital book on Joseph Smith’s First Vision. With these and other resources in mind (and with a desire to raise the Saints’ engagement with the text), research associates and members of the executive board of Scripture Central felt a study edition of the Pearl of Great Price would be an excellent medium for delivering this content to a general audience.

The online release of this study edition in 2022 was met with positive reception, and demand for a physical print version quickly followed. In response to repeated requests for a print format, The Interpreter Foundation partnered with Scripture Central to prepare this edition. Revisions for the second edition have been kept minimal to expedite publication and preserve the familiar tone and feel of the first. Most changes address minor errors or revisions to the reformatted text. The substance of the commentary and notes in this revised edition remains largely unchanged from the first edition, although some updates have been made that offer new insights.

Although this study edition endeavors to be informative and offer grounded readings of the text, it does not presume to offer the final say on how

to understand or otherwise interpret the Pearl of Great Price. Furthermore, the commentary offered herein has been deliberately kept short and focused so as not to draw readers' attention away from what matters most: the inspired scriptural text. As is true with any commentary, there is much that had to be left unsaid and many avenues of thought that had to remain unexplored out of practical necessity. For example, the matter of how to harmonize the scriptural accounts of the Creation or the lives of Adam and Eve with the findings of modern science has been left alone for the simple reason that the proper approach to these important topics requires the laying of more scholarly and exegetical groundwork than could be provided in the commentary offered herein.

Similarly, because it is the prerogative of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to determine doctrine for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this study edition has largely avoided providing doctrinal explication in a way that might presume to offer a definitive or "official" interpretation of the text. On the other hand, because devotional and pastoral application of scriptural teaching is so deeply personalized to the needs of the individual, such has also been omitted in this study edition. The focus of the commentary provided in this study edition is, consequently, predominantly historical, linguistic, text-critical, structural, and theological—that is, this edition attempts to understand the broader significance of the text's religious message. Both a general bibliography for the Pearl of Great Price as a whole and specific bibliographies for each book in the text have been provided, and readers are encouraged to consult the sources contained therein for additional scholarly insight.

A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The text underlying this second revised study edition of the Pearl of Great Price is the 1902 edition published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which is now in the public domain. The earlier online digital version of this study edition utilizes the current official (2013) text under a license granted to Scripture Central by the Church for exclusive digital use. In most if not all substantive textual respects, the 1902 edition is identical to the 2013 edition. Significant textual variants are noted and discussed in the commentary. In a few instances, for the convenience and familiarity of the reader, the body of the text has been amended to align with the 2013 edition, with these revisions indicated in brackets [] within the text. Also for consistency and reader convenience, the sections titled "Writings of Joseph Smith" in earlier editions of the Pearl of Great Price, including the 1902 edition, have been updated to their current titles (Joseph Smith—Matthew and Joseph Smith—History).

The facsimiles of the Book of Abraham are reproduced from the 2013 edition of the scriptures, used here with permission from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (© By Intellectual Reserve, Inc.). This version of the

facsimiles was selected because between their initial publication in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842 and their inclusion in the current edition of the Pearl of Great Price, the facsimiles underwent several reprintings, each featuring redrawn versions of varying accuracy. Consequently, past editions of the Pearl of Great Price in the public domain contain facsimiles that often differ noticeably from what Joseph Smith originally published. The 1981/2013 edition restores a more accurate version of the original *Times and Seasons* facsimiles while also correcting misnumbering introduced by the original printers. For these reasons, and because this is the form most familiar to modern Latter-day Saints, it serves as the basis for this study edition.

To enhance readability, this edition has repunctuated and reformatted the text, including the addition of new headings to subdivide it into meaningful narrative units.

THE BOOK OF MOSES

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY

In June 1830—just months after the publication of the Book of Mormon on 26 March 1830, and the founding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on 6 April 1830—Joseph Smith received an extraordinary revelation concerning a previously unknown incident in the life of the biblical prophet Moses. This revelation brought to light “the words of God which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain” (1:1). Now known as the first chapter of the Book of Moses, this revelation was the first tangible result of an inspired translation or revision of the Bible that the Prophet occupied himself with for at least the next three years of his life. The resulting text (known today as the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible but simply designated a “new translation” by the Prophet), and especially the portion related to Genesis 1:1–6:13 now canonized as the Book of Moses, has profoundly influenced Latter-day Saint theology.

The content from Joseph Smith’s revision of the King James Bible preserved today in the canonical Book of Moses was revealed between June 1830 and February 1831. Assisting the Prophet as scribes in this portion of the work were Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Emma Smith, and Sidney Rigdon. By the spring of 1831, after the Saints had relocated to Kirtland, Ohio, this initial dictated manuscript, commonly designated Old Testament Manuscript/Revision 1 (OT1), was copied and revised under the direction of Joseph Smith. It served as the base text from which the Prophet completed the rest of his translation of the Old Testament, which is referred to as Old Testament Manuscript/Revision 2 (OT2). However, some revisions continued to be made to the original dictated manuscript as well. Whereas OT1 reflects the Prophet’s initial prophetic outpouring connected to the Bible revision project, OT2, with its numerous revisions and emendations, appears to essentially reflect the final form of the text as intended by the Prophet. Together, OT1 and OT2 constitute the earliest extant manuscripts of the Book of Moses (and the rest of the Joseph Smith Translation) and are profitably studied together to discern how the Joseph Smith Translation, including the Book of Moses, grew out of an unfolding, “line upon line” revelatory process (2 Nephi 28:30).

In addition to early manuscript copies of the text that circulated among some Latter-day Saints, portions of the Book of Moses appeared in print as early as August 1832, when William W. Phelps published what is now Moses 7 in *The Evening and the Morning Star* in Independence, Missouri. Additional excerpts from the Book of Moses (including what is now designated Moses 5:1–16; 6:43–68; and 8:13–30) appeared in print not long thereafter. In the 1835 first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, excerpts from the translation of Genesis were quoted in the Lectures on Faith, further signifying the importance the early Saints attached to the Prophet’s biblical revisions. On one occasion Joseph Smith indicated that it was “not the will of the Lord” for the New Translation to be published serially as other histories or revelations had been but that it would instead be published as a single volume. (The New Testament was intended to also be published together with the Book of Mormon.) Joseph accordingly made serious though unfruitful efforts to publish the text in its entirety during his lifetime.

Recognizing the enormous value and doctrinal contributions of this text, Elder Franklin D. Richards included portions of the Book of Moses in the 1851 first edition of the Pearl of Great Price, drawing from both previously published excerpts and, it appears, unpublished manuscript copies in circulation at the time. Unlike the text’s current form, however, Richards’s version began with Moses 6–7 and then followed with Moses 1–5, 8. The text underwent further modification in the 1878 second edition prepared by Elder Orson Pratt. Besides rearranging the contents of the Book of Moses into its current order, Pratt utilized the published edition of the New Translation—the Inspired Version prepared by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ) in 1867—as the base text for this edition. It was this edition that would be canonized two years later, thus solidifying the basic structure of the text as read and appreciated by Latter-day Saints today.

STRUCTURE

The Book of Moses is recited in both first- and third-person narrative voices. The text opens with a third-person narrator describing Moses receiving a series of grand panoramic visions in which God reveals to him details about the earth and its inhabitants as well as the wider Creation. This opening chapter frames the ensuing narrative by depicting God as instructing Moses to record the information He is about to give him concerning the Creation and the early history of humanity (1:40–41; 2:1). Thereafter the text switches to the first-person voice of God as He retells the stories of Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Fall of Adam and Eve. At 5:4, however, the narrative voice reverts to the third person for the remainder of the canonical text. The cumulative effect of this narrative disjointedness blurs the lines between the primary narrators within the text (God and Moses) and Joseph Smith as the modern prophetic intermediary who rendered it into the familiar biblical idiom for modern readers.

Embedded in the narrative of the Book of Moses is a series of visions and revelations given to the primeval ancestors of humanity. Readers thus encounter revelations given to Moses (1:3–9, 24–41), Adam and Eve (6:51–68), and Enoch (7:2–11, 23–59, 65–67) as they progress through the story. They likewise encounter sometimes lengthy discourses, most notably Enoch's extended address at 6:40–7:1. Also woven into the narrative are artfully executed literary and thematic elements, such as the stark moral dichotomies depicted between the wicked descendants of Cain (5:42–57) and the righteous descendants of Seth (6:10–25), or the juxtaposition of Adam as the prototypical priest of God offering sacrifice in the similitude of the Only Begotten (5:4–12) and Cain as the prototypical priest of Satan offering his brother as humanity's first martyr (5:26–41). Poetic elements likewise feature in the text (7:41, 48), as does irony (5:33) and immense pathos (7:28–37). As a literary work, the Book of Moses is abundantly rich.

Being, as it is, in part a revision of the text of the King James Version of Genesis 1:1–6:13, the Book of Moses, of course, parallels the familiar biblical stories of the early chapters of Genesis. However, at several key points the text radically departs from the biblical text, introducing new themes, doctrines, characters, and narrative points. Satan, for example, who is absent from the Genesis text, makes several open appearances in the narrative as the chief antagonist of the drama (see 1:12–23; 4:1–4; 5:13–15, 18–31). Likewise, the mention (and presence) of God's Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, pervades the narrative. Although mentioned only briefly (and cryptically) at Genesis 5:18–24, Enoch plays a significant role in Joseph Smith's reworking of the biblical material, prominently occupying nearly two chapters (6:26–7:69) out of the eight that presently constitute the Book of Moses. The prophet Noah, who otherwise utters not a single word of dialogue in the Genesis text, is recast in the Book of Moses as a preacher of righteousness warning the evil inhabitants of earth of the impending deluge (8:23–24). These expansions afford the Book of Moses, in many points, a remarkable resemblance to the so-called "rewritten Bible" tradition that flourished in ancient Judaism and Christianity (a point that has been appreciated by many commentators).

SIGNIFICANCE FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Latter-day Saints have greatly cherished the Book of Moses for the knowledge it restores about the lives and teachings of Adam and Eve and other antediluvian personalities. Without question, the crowning truth revealed in the Book of Moses is the primacy of the gospel of Jesus Christ and how Adam and Eve were explicitly instructed directly by God in the foundational principles and ordinances of this gospel (5:4–12, 58–59; 6:51–68). This reconfiguration of the Genesis account to include plain mention of the salvific work of Jesus Christ in the earliest stages of human history drastically impacts how Latter-day Saints conceive God's unchanging, eternal plan of salvation for all His children.

In addition to making clear the primacy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Book of Moses also prefigures the rise and triumph of Zion in the latter days. As narrated in the text, Enoch and his people attained such a level of holiness in their Zion community that they ultimately enjoyed the blessing of translation into God's own presence (7:18–22, 60–64, 68–69). The concept of Zion, the New Jerusalem, in Latter-day Saint religious consciousness can in no small measure be traced back to this foundational text, which underpins the subsequent revelations Joseph Smith received on the establishment of latter-day Zion in anticipation of the return of Enoch's holy city at the Second Coming of the Son of Man (7:60–64; compare Doctrine and Covenants 45; 97:18–28).

One of the most profound passages in the Book of Moses that affects the Latter-day Saint understanding of the nature of God comes from Enoch's vision recorded at 7:23–40, wherein the prophet, to his great astonishment, beholds God weeping in sorrow because of the abject wickedness of His children. This moving display both refutes sectarian notions of an immutable, impassible deity and reorients how Latter-day Saints imagine their relationship with God as their Father. Other vivid anthropomorphisms in the text (see 1:6, 13, 16; 2:26–27; 6:57; 7:35) have become an integral part of the scriptural foundation from which Joseph Smith and subsequent Latter-day Saint thinkers have built compelling theologies concerning the nature of God.

The Book of Moses echoes themes from the Latter-day Saint temple endowment, making it a natural candidate for reading as a temple text. It begins with Moses's encounter with God, where he learns of his divine identity and is taught about God's work and glory—mirroring the temple's emphasis on divine instruction and identity. The narrative then moves through a cosmic vision of the Creation, the Fall, and the plan of salvation, all of which are central elements of the temple experience. As Moses receives greater light and knowledge through progressive revelation, the text models the covenantal ascent and spiritual transformation that the temple endowment portrays for participants. Thus, the Book of Moses serves as an important scriptural foundation for temple teachings on the Creation, the Fall, redemption through Jesus Christ, and, ultimately, exaltation.

The modern rediscovery of forgotten or neglected ancient apocryphal texts that also narrate accounts of the lives of Adam and Eve, Enoch, Noah, and other ancient prophets has drawn significant attention from Latter-day Saint scholars, who have scoured these and other sources in search of parallels with the Book of Moses. The results of these investigations have been unquestionably impressive, with noteworthy convergences between Joseph Smith's revealed text and related ancient sources. Especially significant are the parallels that the Enoch material in the Book of Moses shares with the corpus of apocryphal Enochic texts, which, as scholars now recognize, played a pivotal role in shaping much of the thinking of ancient Judaism and Christianity. While this evidence does not “prove” the historical authenticity of the Book of Moses, it neverthe-

less reinforces the Latter-day Saints' conviction that with his inspired revision of Genesis, Joseph Smith tapped into genuinely ancient wells of thought and restored ignored or forgotten accounts and themes. While questions remain about the degree to which the Book of Moses reflects the recovery of ancient Mosaic writings as opposed to being Joseph Smith's modern, inspired expansions on the biblical text (questions that will for now largely remain unresolved), what cannot be doubted are the ancient congruencies in the text, to say nothing of the book's profound doctrinal contributions to the Restoration.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviated designations for Book of Moses manuscripts used in this study edition follow Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004); and Kent P. Jackson, ed., *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005). They have been correlated with the designations used on the Joseph Smith Papers Project website.

OT1 = Old Testament Manuscript 1 = Old Testament Revision 1

OT2 = Old Testament Manuscript 2 = Old Testament Revision 2

Text and Commentary

THE BOOK OF MOSES

AN EXTRACT FROM JOSEPH SMITH'S NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

PROLOGUE—GOD'S REVELATION TO MOSES

1 The words of God which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain. ² And he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses. Therefore, Moses could endure his presence.

THE FIRST TRANSFIGURATION AND VISION OF MOSES

³ And God spake unto Moses, saying, "Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name. For I am with-

out beginning of days or end of years, and is not this endless? ⁴ And behold, thou art my son. Wherefore, look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands. But not all, for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease. ⁵ Wherefore, no man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory. And no man can behold all my glory and afterwards remain in the flesh on the earth. ⁶ And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son. And thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten. And mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior, for

1 The opening chapter of the Book of Moses narrates a dramatic experience of the eponymous prophet on an unnamed mountain (1:42) sometime after his encounter with God in the burning bush (1:17) but before the exodus of Israel out of Egypt (1:26). The first line of OT1 identifies this text simply as "A Revelation given to Joseph the Revelator June 1830." Scholars continue to wonder if Moses 1 is a standalone revelation or if it acts as a sort of preface to the rest of the Prophet's inspired revision of the book of Genesis. 1:40 appears to indicate that the account preserved in this chapter is a sort of framing device for the subsequent narrative. Although 1:40–41 indicates that Moses recorded his experience, without recourse to any ancient manuscripts it is unknown how much of this chapter is a restoration of lost text as opposed to Joseph Smith's expansive revelation about an important (but otherwise unknown) incident in Moses's life. **1:1–2** Moses being "caught up" into a high mountain and beholding the glory of God face-to-face evokes a temple setting and context comparable to imagery attested throughout the Hebrew Bible and other ancient sources. Latter-day Saint commentators have written extensively on this chapter, noting its similarity to other ascension texts wherein a prophet ascends into the presence of God and receives a divine commission. The striking parallels between Moses 1 and this body of ancient literature are undeniable. *Saw God face to face*. Compare Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 34:10. Other prophets so privileged to have beheld the Lord "face to face" include, but are not limited to, Enoch (7:4), Abraham (Abraham 3:11), Jacob (Genesis 32:30), and Moroni (Ether 12:39). **1:3** *Endless*. Compare 7:35. (See additionally Doctrine and Covenants 19:4–12.) **1:4** This is the first of several instances in this chapter where Moses is declared to be a son of God (compare 1:6–7, 13, 40). The status of Moses as a son of God will feature prominently later in the narrative when Lucifer attempts to deceive Moses into worshipping him (1:12–13). The Hebrew phrase "son of God" (*ben 'elohim*) denotes a divine or supernatural being. As a son of heavenly parents along with the rest of humanity, Moses was indeed a son of God; but in this context, the phrase likely implies more than mere divine parentage, signaling Moses's status as a participant in God's heavenly divine council. **1:5** The phrase "on the earth" is absent from OT1

he is full of grace and truth. But there is no God beside me, and all things are present with me, for I know them all. ⁷ And now behold, this one thing I show unto thee, Moses, my son. For thou art in the world, and now I show it unto thee.” ⁸ And it came to pass that Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created. And Moses beheld the world and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are and which were created. Of the same he greatly marveled and wondered. ⁹ And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses. And Moses was left unto himself. And as he was left unto himself, he fell unto the earth.

MOSES’S SOLILOQUY

¹⁰ And it came to pass that it was for the space of many hours before Moses

did again receive his natural strength like unto man. And he said unto himself, “Now for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.” ¹¹ But now mine own eyes have beheld God. But not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, for my natural eyes could not have beheld, for I should have withered and died in his presence. But his glory was upon me, and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.”

SATAN TEMPTS MOSES AND IS REBUKED

¹² And it came to pass that when Moses had said these words, behold, Satan came tempting him, saying, “Moses, son of man, worship me.” ¹³ And it came to pass that Moses looked upon Satan, and said, “Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the simil-

and was inserted interlineally in OT2. The implication seems to be that anybody who experiences the full scope and extent of God’s eternal glory throughout Creation cannot be withheld from a greater or more permanent level of deification, and therefore Moses was shown only a portion thereof. **1:6** Here the title of “Only Begotten” is invoked for the first time. This epithet will feature prominently throughout the rest of the book (see 2:1, 24–27; 3:18; 4:1, 3, 28; 5:7–9, 57; 6:52, 57, 59, 62; 7:50, 59, 62). As used in the New Testament, the term derives from the Greek *monogenēs* (with equivalents in Hebrew and Aramaic: *yēhîd*) and is featured in other scripture as a title for Jesus (see John 3:16; Alma 5:48; Doctrine and Covenants 76:23). It carries a sense of possessing a unique or special relationship to somebody else or of otherwise being “one of a kind.” (Isaac is afforded this attribute at Genesis 22:2 and Hebrews 11:17 even though Ishmael was his older half-brother.) *No God beside me*. Compare Isaiah 45:5, 21–22; Hosea 13:4–5; Doctrine and Covenants 76:1. This declaration is an affirmation of God’s incomparable status as the Father of humanity and Lord of Creation, not necessarily a declaration of His sole divine existence. Indeed, as depicted throughout the text, besides God stands His Only Begotten Son. **1:8** *Children of men*. The Hebrew meaning of this term (*bēnēy ’adam*) is simply “mortals, humans” (compare Abraham 3:27) **1:10** Compare Joseph Smith—History 1:20, where Joseph Smith reports being similarly exhausted after his visionary experience. See also 1 Nephi 1:6–7; Alma 19:6. **1:11** In the ancient mindset, encountering God or other divine beings was considered extraordinarily dangerous and potentially fatal (see Exodus 33:20; Judges 6:22–23; 13:21–23), for precisely the same reason given here. **1:12** Satan appears in the narrative here for the first time and will be a prominent antagonist throughout the rest of the account, scheming to influence the lives of the children of Adam and Eve in harmful ways. *Son of man*. Satan demotes Moses’s status to that of a mere mortal in an attempt to command his allegiance, seemingly

itude of his Only Begotten. And where is thy glory, that I should worship thee? ¹⁴ For behold, I could not look upon God, except his glory should come upon me, and I were transfigured before him. But I can look upon thee in the natural man. Is it not so, surely? ¹⁵ Blessed be the name of my God, for his Spirit hath not altogether withdrawn from me, or else where is thy glory, for it is darkness unto me. And I can judge between thee and God. For God said unto me, ‘Worship God, for him only shalt thou serve.’ ¹⁶ Get thee hence, Satan. Deceive me not. For God said unto me, ‘Thou art after the similitude of mine Only Begotten.’ ¹⁷ And he also gave me commandments when he called unto me out of the burning bush, saying, ‘Call upon God in the name of mine Only Begotten, and worship me.’”

¹⁸ And again Moses said, “I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him. For his glory has been upon me; wherefore I can judge between him and thee. Depart hence, Satan.”

¹⁹ And now, when Moses had said these words, Satan cried with a loud voice, and [ranted] upon the earth, and commanded, saying, “I am the Only Begotten. Worship me!” ²⁰ And it came to pass that Moses began to fear exceedingly. And as he began to fear, he saw the bitterness of hell. Nevertheless, calling upon God, he received strength, and he commanded, saying, “Depart from me, Satan, for this one God only will I worship, which is the God of glory.” ²¹ And now Satan began to tremble, and the earth shook. And Moses received strength, and called upon God, saying, “In the

unaware of God’s declaration at 1:4. Moses counters in the next verse and at 1:16 by affirming his ennobling status as a son of God in the “similitude” (that is, likeness or resemblance) of God’s Only Begotten. **1:15** *Darkness unto me.* Both OT1 and OT2 use the word “blackness” instead of “darkness.” This earlier reading may evoke a more visceral visual experience on Moses’s part (that is, Satan’s imitative glory is as the pitch blackness of night compared to the splendor and glory of God) and might relate to the “blackness” that characterizes the people of Canaan at 7:8 and the descendants of Cain in 7:22. (See also the commentary on these verses.) An ancient apocryphal Christian work depicts Satan drawing Adam and Eve “from brightness into darkness” and suggests “this devil” and his fallen angels have a “black” countenance. **1:17** This verse preserves one of God’s instructions to Moses otherwise unattested in the Hebrew Bible (see Exodus 3). **1:18** OT1 and OT2 add “and it is glory unto me” after “his glory has been upon me.” **1:19** *Satan ranted upon the earth.* OT1 and OT2 both read that Satan “wrent” upon the earth. This is most likely a variant of “rent” (the past tense of “rend”), as the 1902 edition reads, meaning that Satan broke up the earth around Moses in a terrible display of fury. The change to “ranted” occurred in the 1981 edition of the Pearl of Great Price. With either verb the imagery is basically the same: Satan, out of desperation and anger that Moses refused to worship him, lashed out in some type of terrifying display (see also 1:21). *I am the Only Begotten.* With this declaration, Satan desperately attempts to reassert his status as a once-ranking member of the divine council. He is, in effect, attempting still to subvert the Father’s plan even after his disastrous attempt to claim glory for himself in the premortal council (compare 4:1–4; Abraham 3:24–28). **1:20** Compare the description given by Joseph Smith of his encounter with Satan in the Sacred Grove in Joseph Smith—History 1:15–16. **1:21** In OT1 and OT2 Moses explicitly

name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan.”²² And it came to pass that Satan cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and he departed hence, even from the presence of Moses, that he beheld him not.²³ And now of this thing Moses bore record, but because of wickedness it is not had among the children of men.

THE SECOND TRANSFIGURATION AND VISION OF MOSES

²⁴ And it came to pass that when Satan had departed from the presence of Moses, that Moses lifted up his eyes unto heaven, being filled with the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and the Son.²⁵ And calling upon the name of God, he beheld his glory again, for it was upon him. And he heard a voice, saying, “Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters. For they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God.”²⁶ And lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days. For thou

shalt deliver my people from bondage, even Israel my chosen.”²⁷ And it came to pass, as the voice was still speaking, Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth, yea, even all of it, and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, discerning it by the Spirit of God.²⁸ And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof, and there was not a soul which he beheld not, and he discerned them by the Spirit of God. And their numbers were great, even numberless as the sand upon the seashore.²⁹ And he beheld many lands, and each land was called earth, and there were inhabitants on the face thereof.

³⁰ And it came to pass that Moses called upon God, saying, “Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so, and by what thou madest them.”³¹ And behold, the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face. And the Lord God said unto Moses, “For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me.

calls upon the name of Jesus Christ to rebuke Satan. Two subsequent scribal edits changed this to “his Son” and then finally “the Only Begotten,” the latter of which was used by Orson Pratt in the 1878 edition and subsequent editions of the Pearl of Great Price. Moses’s invoking the name of the Only Begotten as opposed to the name Jesus Christ is more in harmony with the repeated mention of this title throughout the previous verses, which perhaps accounts for the change. **1:22** Weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth is characteristic of Satan and those who share his eternal fate (see Mosiah 16:2; Alma 40:13; Doctrine and Covenants 19:5; 101:91; 133:73). **1:24** The imagery of Moses lifting up his eyes to behold another heavenly vision reflects a common biblical idiom sometimes used in visionary or quasi-visionary contexts (see Genesis 13:10, 14; 18:2; 22:4, 13; 24:63; 31:10, 12; 33:1; Exodus 14:10; Numbers 24:2; Deuteronomy 4:19; Psalm 121:1; 123:1; Isaiah 40:26; see also the commentary at Abraham 3:11–12). **1:25** Compare Exodus 7:1, where the Lord declares that Moses is “a god to Pharaoh.” The promise that Moses will have power over the waters is an allusion to the parting of the Red Sea (see Exodus 14:21–31). **1:29** Moses beholds in vision many lands called “earth.” The immediate context and 1:40 suggest that Moses is beholding many lands and their inhabitants on this planet, with each land called “earth” (Hebrew: *’eres*, “land, country, earth”). However, a grander cosmic scale involving multiple worlds cannot be fully ruled out in light of 1:37–38. **1:30–31** OT2 replaces “tell me” with “shew

³² And by the Word of my power have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. ³³ And worlds without number have I created, and I also created them for mine own purpose. And by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten. ³⁴ And the first man of all men have I called Adam, which is many. ³⁵ But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds that have passed away by the Word of my power. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man. But all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.”

³⁶ And it came to pass that Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, “Be merciful unto thy servant, O God, and tell me concerning this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, and also

the heavens, and then thy servant will be content.” ³⁷ And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying, “The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine.

³⁸ And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come. And there is no end to my works, neither to my words.

³⁹ For behold, this is my work and my glory: to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. ⁴⁰ And now, Moses, my son, I will speak unto thee concerning this earth upon which thou standest. And thou shalt write the things which I shall speak.

⁴¹ And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught and take many of them from the book which thou shalt write, behold, I will raise up another like unto thee, and they shall be had again among the

me,” suggesting anticipation for another visionary experience. *Face to face*. For a second time Moses beholds the Lord face-to-face. As with Abraham (in Abraham 3:11) the context is a visionary glimpse of Creation. **1:32** The Only Begotten is identified as the Word of God’s power, anticipating the profound Logos hymn of John 1:1–18. **1:33** Compare Doctrine and Covenants 76:23–24. **1:34** The gloss provided in this verse identifies Adam as “many” (although the antecedent to “many” could also be “man” or “men,” a reading that is reinforced by 4:26). Coupled with 1:29, this may suggest a plurality of “Adams” who inhabit many lands called “earth” throughout God’s Creation. **1:35–36** The Creation that God reveals to Moses pertains only to this world (compare 1:40; 2:1), leaving open for speculation the nature of the rest of God’s innumerable Creations. The infinite and grand scope of God’s creative power throughout the cosmos as described in this text leaves the reader overwhelmed with a simultaneous sense of both astonishment and nothingness (compare Moses’s reaction at 1:10). **1:37** OT1 begins this verse with “And the Lord God spake unto Moses saying The Heavens there are many.” This was revised in OT2 to read: “And the Lord God spake unto Moses of the Heavens saying these are many.” **1:39** This verse—cherished and cited by Latter-day Saints as a short encapsulation of the purpose and intention behind God’s plan of salvation—is explicitly couched in the context of the purpose behind Creation and humanity’s existence. OT1 renders it “this is my work to my glory to the immortality & the eternal life of man.” The rendering of this verse so well known to Latter-day Saints today was made in OT2 and has been used by each edition of the Pearl of Great Price since 1878. In the OT1 rendering, the work of the Father in bringing about the immortality and eternal life of humankind is depicted more forcefully as being commensurate or proportional with

children of men, among as many as shall believe.”

EPILOGUE: AN INJUNCTION TO SECRECY

⁴² These words were spoken unto Moses in the mount, the name of which shall not be known among the children of men. And now they are spoken unto you. Show them not unto any except them that believe. Even so. Amen.

GOD REVEALS THE CREATION TO MOSES

(GENESIS 1:1–2:3; ABRAHAM 4:1–5:3)

2 And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, “Behold, I reveal unto you

concerning this heaven and this earth. Write the words which I speak. I am the Beginning and the End—the Almighty God. By mine Only Begotten I created these things.

THE FIRST DAY: CREATION OF THE HEAVEN AND EARTH

“Yea, in the beginning I created the heaven and the earth upon which thou standest. ² And the earth was without form and void. And I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the deep. And my Spirit moved upon the face of the water, for I am God. ³ And I, God, said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. ⁴ And I, God, saw the light, and that light was good. And I, God,

the increase of His glory. In other words, as more of His children attain immortality and eternal life, the glory of the Father increases. This anticipates teachings made by the Prophet Joseph Smith toward the end of his life that the eternal life and exaltation of God and His children compound as they continue to progress through the eternities. **1:42** This injunction to secrecy is especially appropriate when the account is viewed as a temple text and an apocalypse—that is, a revelation that unveils mysteries or secrets about the world, its destiny, and God’s plans for humanity (see the commentary for 7:65–67). A common feature in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature is the urge to keep the contents of revelations secret or otherwise shielded from profane or unworthy readers (compare Daniel 8:26 and also Matthew 17:9; Mark 9:9, where Jesus swears the disciples to secrecy after His transfiguration on a high mount).

2 This chapter commences the first of two Creation accounts found in the Book of Moses corresponding to Genesis 1:1–2:3. OT1 and OT2 respectively begin this chapter by designating it as “chapter first” and “The Book of Genesis Chapter first,” indicating some intention behind its being the opening chapter of the Prophet’s inspired revision of Genesis. As mentioned previously, it is unclear if the preceding chapter describing Moses’s visionary experience on the mount is a standalone revelation or a prologue to the narrative that commences with this chapter. Based on internal textual cues, the latter seems more likely. **2:1** *The Lord spake unto Moses.* In a radical departure from the Genesis text, which features an anonymous third-person narrator throughout, this chapter opens at first with an anonymous third-person narrator (Moses?) but then immediately shifts to the Lord narrating the details of Creation directly to Moses in the first person. In this respect, the text bears striking resemblance to the apocryphal book of Jubilees, which also begins with Moses’s being summoned to a high mountain where the Lord (or the angel of the Lord) gives an account of the Creation and other events from early biblical history that Moses is commanded to record. *This heaven and this earth.* As at 1:35–36, 40, the text indicates that the details of Creation being recounted to Moses pertain only to this world as a sort of singular narrative microcosm embedded within the larger scope of Creation. *By mine Only Begotten.* In another departure from the biblical text, the participation of God’s Only Begotten in the process of Creation is explicitly evoked. This will feature more prominently

divided the light from the darkness.
⁵ And I, God, called the light Day; and the darkness I called Night. And this I did by the Word of my power, and it was done as I spake. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

THE SECOND DAY: GOD DIVIDES
 THE FIRMAMENT AND THE WATERS

⁶ “And again, I, God, said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water,’ and it was so, even as I spake. And I said, ‘Let it divide the waters from the waters,’ and it was done. ⁷ And I, God, made the firmament and divided the waters, yea, the great waters under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, and it was so even as I spake. ⁸ And I, God, called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

THE THIRD DAY: GOD DIVIDES
 THE EARTH AND THE SEA

⁹ “And I, God, said, ‘Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place,’ and it was so. And I, God, said, ‘Let there be dry land,’ and

it was so. ¹⁰ And I, God, called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called I the Sea. And I, God, saw that all things which I had made were good. ¹¹ And I, God, said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed should be in itself upon the earth,’ and it was so even as I spake. ¹² And the earth brought forth grass, every herb yielding seed after his kind; and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed should be in itself, after his kind. And I, God, saw that all things which I had made were good. ¹³ And the evening and the morning were the third day.

THE FOURTH DAY: GOD MAKES
 THE GREATER AND LESSER LIGHTS

¹⁴ “And I, God, said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years. ¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,’

later (at 2:26) and is in harmony with the Book of Abraham’s depiction of Creation, which also speaks of more than one divinity participating (Abraham 4:1). **2:2** The earth being without form and void (*tôhû wā-bôhû*), with “darkness” (*hōšek*) being upon the face of the “deep” (*têhôm*), all evokes a sense of the cosmos in its primordial, uninhabitable condition (compare Abraham 4:2). **2:3** *My Spirit*. The Hebrew word used in Genesis 1:2 for “spirit” (*rûah*) can also mean “wind, breath.” Alongside the presence of God’s Only Begotten and Word (2:5), the text can be read as describing the presence of each member of the Godhead in this scene. **2:4** OT1 has the definitive article “the” instead of the demonstrative “that” modifying “light.” **2:5** OT1 has “Word” capitalized. Although it cannot be demonstrated conclusively, it is not hard to imagine that this was deliberate given the appropriateness of describing the Only Begotten as the Word of God’s power (see also 1:32, 35). **2:6** This celestial firmament (*raqia*; compare Fac 1, Fig 12; Fac 2, Fig 4) was envisioned by the ancients as something of a solid dome that was stretched out overhead (compare Abraham 4:6–8). **2:14–19** See the commentary at Abraham 4:14–19. **2:21** The “great whales” (*tannînim gēdôlim*) described in Genesis and elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (see Job 7:12; Ezekiel 32:2; Isaiah 27:1; Psalm 74:13) are attested in other ancient Near Eastern sources as mythical sea serpents that personify evil and chaos. By listing them as part

and it was so. ¹⁶ And I, God, made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. And the greater light was the sun, and the lesser light was the moon. And the stars also were made even according to my word. ¹⁷ And I, God, set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ and the sun to rule over the day, and the moon to rule over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And I, God, saw that all things which I had made were good. ¹⁹ And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

THE FIFTH DAY: GOD CREATES ANIMAL LIFE

²⁰ “And I, God, said, ‘Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl which may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.’ ²¹ And I, God, created great whales, and every living creature that moveth which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind. And every winged fowl after his kind. And I, God, saw that all things which I had created were good. ²² And I, God, blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the sea, and let fowl multiply in the earth.’ ²³ And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

THE SIXTH DAY: GOD AND HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN CREATE HUMANKIND IN THEIR IMAGE

²⁴ “And I, God, said, ‘Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind: cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind,’ and it was so. ²⁵ And I, God, made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing which creepeth upon the earth after his kind. And I, God, saw that all these things were good. ²⁶ And I, God, said unto mine Only Begotten, which was with me from the beginning, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,’ and it was so. And I, God, said, ‘Let them have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’ ²⁷ And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them. ²⁸ And I, God, blessed them, and said unto them, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.’ ²⁹ And I, God, said unto man, ‘Behold, I have given you every herb

of God’s creations, the text domesticates them under God’s power. **2:26–27** Here God speaks directly to His Only Begotten, who is participating in the unfolding events of Creation, as They prepare to create humanity in Their image. At Abraham 4:26–27 an unspecified number of Gods “counsel” together in this decision. Both texts thus evoke the presence of the divine council in this portion of the narrative. *Image and likeness.* Besides the obvious implications this language has for divine anthropomorphism and corporeality (compare Genesis 5:3; Ether 3:15–17), the language of humanity being in the image and likeness of God and His Only Begotten hearkens to the prevalent ancient Near Eastern practice of placing an image of a deity in a temple or shrine.

bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which shall be the fruit of a tree yielding seed. To you it shall be for meat.³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein I grant life, there shall be given every clean herb for meat.³¹ And it was so, even as I spake. And I, God, saw everything that I had made, and, behold, all things which I had made were very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”

THE SEVENTH DAY: GOD COMPLETES CREATION AND RESTS

3 “Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.² And on the seventh day I, God, ended my work, and all things which I had made. And I rested on the seventh day from all my work, and all things which I had made were finished, and I, God, saw that they were good.³ And I, God, blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it I had rested from all my work which I, God, had created and made.

Here God and His Son are enshrined, as it were, in Their newly formed terrestrial temple—the earth—through the creation of humanity. Furthermore, royalty in the ancient Near East was said to be in the image or likeness of a given patron deity, meaning the monarch had been endowed with a divine nature and was thus the mortal representative of the deity on earth. This concept is democratized in here, in the Book of Abraham, and in Genesis to extend to all of humanity. *Dominion over the earth.* Humanity is given dominion (*rādāh*; “to rule, have dominion”) over the forms of animal life heretofore created, putting them in the role, essentially, of God’s viceroys on earth. Far from granting humanity license to exploit or abuse the earth’s ecology, humanity’s lordship over other forms of animal life places on it a responsibility to treat the earth’s natural resources with care and equity, as any monarch ideally would to its subjects. Wanton bloodshed, the needless taking of life, and failure to show respect and restraint toward Creation is portrayed elsewhere in the text as Satanic (see 5:31–33, 49–57). *Male and female.* Members of both sexes are said to be made in the image of the God and His Only Begotten. This extends the divine nature of God to both men and women. Restoration teachings affirm the reality that all humans are the sons or daughters of divine heavenly parents. Although Her presence is not explicitly depicted either here or in the Genesis and Abraham accounts, it seems reasonable to infer the attendance of Heavenly Mother in the scene in light of additional revelation and the dichotomous male/female pairing so described (compare Abraham 4:26–27, where an unspecified number of Gods create man and woman after their likeness). **2:28** Men and women are idealized as maintaining the natural order of Creation established by God through procreation. Their claim to dominion over the earth and all forms of animal life is contingent on their ability to establish a worldwide human dynasty, as it were, that will extend this dominion in perpetuity. **2:29–30** Vegetables, fruit, and animals are ordained as sustenance (“meat,” with the archaic meaning of simply “food”) for humanity. Modern revelation reaffirms that the ideal human diet consists of a balance between these types of food and also provides regulation on how each type should be used (see Doctrine and Covenants 89:10–17).

3 Following the structure of the King James Version of Genesis, the Book of Moses begins this chapter by concluding the final day of the first Creation account and commencing a second Creation account that brings the focus onto the creation of Adam and Eve and the planting of the Garden of Eden. **3:2–3** God “rested” (*šābat*) on the seventh (*šēbīʿī*) day, forming a phonetic play on the Hebrew words that captures the significance of God completing His work of Creation

COMMENCEMENT OF A SECOND
ACCOUNT OF CREATION
(GENESIS 2:4-25; ABRAHAM 5:4-21)

⁴“And now, behold, I say unto you, that these are the generations of the heaven and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that I, the Lord God, made the heaven and the earth. ⁵ And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For I, the Lord God, created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth. (For I, the Lord God, had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth.) And I, the Lord God, had created all the children of men, and not yet a man to till the ground. For in heaven created I them, and there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air. ⁶ But I, the Lord God, spake, and there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. ⁷ And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also. Nevertheless, all things were before created, but spiritually were they created and made according to my word.

GOD PLANS A GARDEN IN EDEN

⁸ “And I, the Lord God, planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there I put the man whom I had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground made I, the Lord God, to grow every tree, naturally, that is pleasant to the sight of man. And man could behold it. And it became also a living soul. (For it was spiritual in the day that I created it. For it remaineth in the sphere in which I, God, created it, yea, even all things which I prepared for the use of man.) And man saw that it was good for food. And I, the Lord God, planted the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and also the tree of knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ And I, the Lord God, caused a river to go out of Eden to water the garden. And from thence

on the seventh day. **3:4** This verse marks a second Creation account that zooms up more closely and intimately on the creation of humanity. Whereas the preceding account describes Creation on a broad, cosmic scale, this account focuses on the formation of humanity and the placement of Adam and Eve in the garden. **3:5** In a detail unique to the Book of Moses, the Lord indicates that He had created all things “spiritually” before creating them “physically” (compare 3:7, 9). The full implication of this declaration has yet to be completely explicated. What, precisely, does “spiritual” Creation look like? And why did the order of spiritual Creation depicted in the previous chapter differ from the order of “physical” (presumably) Creation depicted here? From modern revelation (Doctrine and Covenants 131:7–8), Latter-day Saints affirm that there is some kind of physical property to spirit, yet many questions remain about the nature of spirit and its relationship to the material world. **3:8** The garden God plants is eastward (*miqedem*) in a land called Eden. Scholars have proposed various etymologies for the name Eden, ranging from roots meaning “steppe, plain” to “pleasure, luxury” and “bountiful, abundance.” That the garden was intended to be envisioned as a place of paradisiacal luxury and abundance is reinforced by the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint, which renders the word for “garden” in Genesis 2:8, 15 as *paradeisos*. **3:10** The beginning of this verse (“I, the Lord

it was parted, and became into four heads. ¹¹ And I, the Lord God, called the name of the first Pison, and it compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where I, the Lord God, created much gold. ¹² And the gold of that land was good, and there was bdellium and the onyx stone. ¹³ And the name of the second river was called Gihon; the same that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. ¹⁴ And the name of the third river was Hiddekel; that which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river was the Euphrates.

GOD PLACES THE MAN IN THE GARDEN

¹⁵ “And I, the Lord God, took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it. ¹⁶ And I,

the Lord God, commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee, but remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.’

ADAM NAMES THE ANIMALS

¹⁸ “And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten that it was not good that the man should be alone; wherefore, I will make a help meet for him. ¹⁹ And out of the ground I, the Lord God, formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and commanded that they should come unto Adam, to see what he would call

God, caused”) was inserted in OT2. OT1 originally read that “a river went out of Eden” without indicating that God was the causative agent of its existence and course. *River out of Eden*. The land of Eden is said to have a river flowing out of it that splits into four branches. This indicates that the land is elevated since the rivers flow away from it. Eden’s setting on a mount, or hill, evokes temple overtones. Based on this and other details, multiple scholars have persuasively argued that the Garden of Eden functions as a prototypical temple and Adam as a prototypical temple priest. **3:11** OT1 and OT2 originally both read, “Where there were created much gold.” The text was modified in OT2 to include “the Lord” as the creative agent. The 1902 edition of the Pearl of Great Price inserts “God” after “the Lord,” which has been used in subsequent editions. **3:11–14** Of the four rivers named in this verse, the last two (the *hīdeqel* and the *pěrāt*) have been widely identified with the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers of Mesopotamia, respectively. The identities of the first two rivers (the *pīšōn* and the *gīhōn*) are much less certain, and proposals since antiquity have ranged from the Nile in Egypt to the Ganges in India. The location of the land of Havilah is unknown, although the text depicts it as being rich in gold and precious stones. (Common proposals include locations throughout the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf.) The Ethiopia (biblical Kush) of the King James Version is more approximate to modern southern Egypt, Sudan, and Eritrea along the Red Sea than actual modern Ethiopia. These disparate and ambiguous geographical references seem intended to simultaneously, and paradoxically, give the location of Eden a real-world feel while also keeping its location mysterious and vague. See also the commentary at Abraham 5:10. **3:16–17** In a significant departure from the biblical text, the Book of Moses explicitly states that Adam and Eve were free to choose for themselves if they would follow the commandment to not eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. That their agency plays an indispensable role in God’s plan of salvation has been emphasized repeatedly by modern prophets and is affirmed by other books of Restoration scripture (see 2 Nephi 2:15–16). **3:18** *Help meet*. Although commonly treated as a noun in English (often rendered helpmeet or help-meet, meaning a companion or partner), this phrase comprises a

them. And they were also living souls, for I, God, breathed into them the breath of life, and commanded that whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that should be the name thereof. ²⁰ And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. But as for Adam, there was not found a help meet for him.

GOD CREATES THE WOMAN

²¹ “And I, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. And he slept, and I took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof. ²² And the rib which I, the Lord God, had taken from man, made I a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³ And Adam said, ‘This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.

She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. ²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.’ ²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”

THE FALL OF LUCIFER

4 And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying, “That Satan whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten is the same which was from the beginning. And he came before me, saying, ‘Behold, here am I, send me. I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it. Wherefore give me thine honor.’ ² But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved

noun (“help”) modified by an adjective (“meet”). The Hebrew phrase in Genesis 2:18, 20 means something like “suitable helper,” “a helping counterpart,” or even “a powerful counterpart” (*‘ezer kənegēdō*). This last rendering is especially attractive since it both works in context (the woman is meant to be Adam’s coworker and partner to help him in ways the other animals are not suitable for) and elevates Eve above her traditionally devalued status. In any case, with this descriptor the woman is decreed to be the man’s suitable corresponding opposite. **3:19 Commanded . . . unto Adam.** OT1 and OT2 both originally read that the animals were commanded by the Lord to “be brought” to Adam, but they do not specify the agent bringing the animals. The Hebrew of Genesis 2:19 indicates that God brought the animals to Adam in that version of the narrative as captured by the King James Version, but the text here seems to indicate God is commanding someone else to bring the animals. The change from the passive to the active voice in the Book of Moses (“that they [the animals] should come”) was likely made to resolve the perplexing nature of this passage as it originally read. *Living souls . . . into them.* In OT1 the passive voice is used (“. . . it was breathed into them the breath of life”). In OT2 this was revised to the active voice by inserting God as the verbal subject (“For I, God, breathed into them. . .”). **3:21–25** The creation of the woman as the “corresponding helper” for Adam caps off this chapter and prepares the narrative to focus on their experience together in the garden. *Deep sleep.* The ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible reads that God threw a “trance, vision” (*ekstasis*) on Adam before taking the rib to create the woman. This intriguing interpretation of the Hebrew *tardēmā* (“deep sleep, slumber”) suggests that the removal of Adam’s rib was a visionary experience rather than a physical one. *Adam’s rib.* The word used at Genesis 2:21–22 has traditionally been rendered “rib” based in part on the ancient Greek (*pleura*) and Latin (*costa*) translations of this passage. But another possible translation is simply “side” (*šēlā*). Other anatomical referents for this word have accordingly been suggested since at least the Middle Ages. *Woman taken from man.* The Genesis text employs another pun to emphasize Adam’s relationship with his newly fashioned

and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me, ‘Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.’³ Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me and sought to destroy the agency of man which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power, by the power of mine Only Begotten I caused that he should be cast down.⁴ And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice.

THE SERPENT TEMPTS EVE

⁵“And now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which I, the Lord God, had made. ⁶And Satan put it into the heart of the serpent (for he had drawn away many after him), and he sought also to beguile Eve, for he knew not the mind of God, wherefore

he sought to destroy the world. ⁷And he said unto the woman, ‘Yea, hath God said, “Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”’ (And he spake by the mouth of the serpent.)

⁸And the woman said unto the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. ⁹But of the fruit of the tree which thou beholdest in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ‘Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.’ ¹⁰And the serpent said unto the woman, ‘Ye shall not surely die, ¹¹for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’

ADAM AND EVE EAT THE FRUIT OF THE TREE

¹²“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it became pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make her wise, she took

helper: the woman (*iššā*) was taken from the man (*īš*) and the two create a symbiotic, unified entity before God.

4:1–4 Compare Abraham 3:24–28, which provides a similar account of the fall of Lucifer from the premortal council (see Doctrine and Covenants 29:36–39; 76:25–29). This material on the identity and origin of Satan is unique to the text and acts on both a narrative and theological level to introduce his character and purpose in the story. In the biblical account (Genesis 3:1, 14), a crafty (*ārûm*) serpent is the antagonist who beguiles Adam and Eve into transgression. However, this serpent is not positively identified as Satan in the biblical account, although this interpretation became standard in later Jewish and Christian tradition. This trend was also picked up later in Islam, with the Quran (2:35–36; 7:19–22; 20:120–121) explicitly identifying Satan as the one who tempted Adam and Eve. Restoration teaching, including the details revealed in this text, help clarify much of what is missing or unclear in the biblical account. **4:6–7** These verses appear to indicate that Satan is not the serpent itself but rather that he manipulated the serpent into doing his bidding. Interestingly, some ancient Jewish and Christian sources speculate whether the serpent was possessed by Satan to speak to Adam and Eve. The parenthetical comment in this verse is also intriguing since it could be read as indicating that the “serpent” was one of the rebellious spirits who followed Satan in the premortal world. Either that, or it suggests that Satan had some measure of influence over animal life. *Sought to destroy.* OT1 reads that Satan “thought” to destroy the world. **4:8–9** Despite popular modern notions that Adam and Eve ate an apple, neither the kind of tree nor its fruit is specifically identified in the text. Some ancient interpreters suggested the tree was a fig tree (which would make sense considering Adam and

of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and also gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat. ¹³ And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they had been naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons. ¹⁴ And they heard the voice of the Lord God, as they were walking in the garden, in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife went to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. ¹⁵ And I, the Lord God, called unto Adam, and said unto him, 'Where goest thou?' ¹⁶ And he said, 'I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I beheld that I was naked, and I hid myself.' ¹⁷ And I, the Lord God, said unto Adam, 'Who told thee thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, if so thou

shouldst surely die?' ¹⁸ And the man said, 'The woman thou gavest me, and commandedst that she should remain with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree and I did eat.' ¹⁹ And I, the Lord God, said unto the woman, 'What is this thing which thou hast done?' And the woman said, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.'

²⁰ "And I, the Lord God, said unto the serpent, 'Because thou hast done this thou shalt be cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.'

²¹ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. And he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' ²² Unto the woman, I, the Lord God, said, 'I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt

Eve made fig leaf aprons for themselves at Genesis 3:7), while others suggested it was a grapevine or even a date palm. *And the woman . . . garden.* This portion of text is missing from OT1 and was inserted into OT2. **4:10–11** The lie of the serpent is not that Adam and Eve would be like gods by partaking of the fruit (4:28; compare Genesis 3:22) but rather that they would not die in consequence of their action. Spiritually speaking, they died at the time they ate the fruit, and later they would physically die at the end of their mortal probation (compare Helaman 14:16). **4:13–14** With their eyes now open to the reality of good and evil, Adam and Eve recognize their vulnerability and nakedness before God's presence (compare 4:16), whereas previously they had no such recognition (3:25; compare Genesis 2:25). In response, they sew aprons ("girdles, loincloths"; *hăgôrôt*) for themselves to cover their nakedness and hide in the trees of the garden. *Walking in the garden.* In the Genesis account, Adam and Eve hide themselves when they hear the sound of God walking through the garden on a breezy day (Genesis 3:8). OT1 initially followed the Genesis text ("... they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden") but was revised to "... as they were walking in the garden." OT2 likewise changes the passage to "as they were walking" from "as he [God] was walking." As so revised, Adam and Eve hide themselves while they are walking about the garden after hearing the voice of God (but not the sound of God walking in the garden). **4:15** In the biblical text (Genesis 3:9), God asks Adam, "Where are you?" The rhetorical nature of the question has less to do with God actually wondering where Adam is and more to do with the former calling on the latter to account for his present circumstances. **4:20–25** As punishment for their respective roles in transgressing His command to not eat the fruit of the tree, God dispenses punishments tailored to each participant: the serpent is to be debased and despised among the animals (a type for Satan), Eve is to bear children in

bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.’²³ And unto Adam, I, the Lord God, said, ‘Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the fruit of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, ‘Thou shalt not eat of it,’ cursed shall be the ground for thy sake. In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.’²⁴ Thorns also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.’²⁵ By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou shalt return unto the ground (for thou shalt surely die), for out of it wast thou taken. For dust thou wast, and unto dust shalt thou return.’

ADAM NAMES EVE, AND THE TWO ARE EXPELLED FROM THE GARDEN

²⁶ “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living; for thus have I, the Lord God, called the first of all women, which are many.”²⁷ Unto Adam, and also unto his

wife, did I, the Lord God, make coats of skins, and clothed them.²⁸ And I, the Lord God, said unto mine Only Begotten, ‘Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil. And now lest he put forth his hand and partake also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever,’²⁹ therefore I, the Lord God, will send him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.³⁰ For as I, the Lord God, liveth, even so my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled.’³¹ So I drove out the man and I placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.

ANOTHER INJUNCTION TO SECRECY

³² “And these are the words which I spake unto my servant Moses, and they are true even as I will. And I have spoken them unto you. See thou show

pain (‘*ešev*), and Adam is to toil in hard labor as he supports himself and Eve. Notably, death is not decreed on either Adam or Eve as a punishment, suggesting that their foretold deaths (3:17) are perhaps not a God-ordained inevitability but a natural consequence of the Fall. **4:21** The antecedent to “he” at the end of this verse both here and in the biblical text (Genesis 3:15) is the woman’s seed (grammatically masculine in Hebrew). OT1 follows the KJV by using the pronoun “it.” (OT2 initially follows OT1 but was revised to “he.”) The Hebrew pronoun (*hû*) can mean either. **4:25** The final injunction of this verse plays on the sound of Adam’s name (which is similar to the Hebrew word for “ground,” *‘ādāma*) and the depiction of how God created Adam at 3:7 (compare Genesis 2:7). **4:26** The name Eve (*ḥawwa*) derives from the Hebrew root *ḥyh*, meaning “to live,” and is related to the word *ḥāy* (“living, alive”) used immediately after her name in this verse to describe her status as the “mother of all living.” This verse also indicates that the origin of Eve’s name ultimately comes from God, even though Adam is the one who names her. As said of Adam at 1:34, here Eve is said to be the first of many women (with the possible additional reading that she is one of many Eves). **4:27** This verse is missing in OT1 and was inserted into OT2. The coats of skin (*kāṭēnôt ‘ôr*) serve as clothing for Adam and Eve as they prepare for expulsion from the garden. Due in part to the similarity between the words in Hebrew, a tradition arose anciently that instead of coats of skin, Adam and Eve were clothed by God in radiant garments of light (*kāṭēnôt ‘ôr*). Other ancient sources depict Adam and Eve as exuding a divine splendor and glory before the Fall. **4:28–29** In the biblical account, God speaks to unnamed

them unto no man, until I command you, except to them that believe. Amen.”

ADAM AND EVE BEGET CHILDREN

5 “And it came to pass that after I, the Lord God, had driven them out, that Adam began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I the Lord had commanded him. And Eve, also, his wife, did labor with him. ² And Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth. ³ And from that time forth, the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land, and to till the land, and to tend flocks, and they also begat sons

and daughters.”

ADAM AND EVE CALL UPON THE LORD AND OFFER SACRIFICE

⁴ And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence. ⁵ And he gave unto them commandments that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord. ⁶ And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying, “Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord?” And Adam said unto him, “I

members of His divine council at Genesis 3:22. Here He speaks specifically to His Only Begotten and includes a reference to His earlier declaration at 3:16–17 and 4:9. **4:31** The word *cherubim* (*kērubîm*, plural form of *kērub*) is likely connected to the Akkadian *kāribu*, which referred to divine beings in ancient Mesopotamia who served as gatekeepers of palaces and temples. Here they likewise act as sentinels who guard the path to the tree of life from unauthorized trespassers (including the recently fallen Adam and Eve). Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible the cherubim are depicted as being placed atop the ark of the covenant in effigy and worked into the embroidery of the tabernacle (see Exodus 25:18–20, 22; 26:1, 31; 36:8, 35; 37:7–9; Numbers 7:89) as well as into the decoration of Solomon’s temple (see 1 Kings 6:23, 25, 27–29, 32, 35; 7:29, 36; 8:6–7). Other biblical passages depict God as being enthroned above the cherubim, suggesting a close association with the divine presence (see 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; Psalms 80:1; 99:1; Ezekiel 10:1–10). **4:32** The placement of this second injunction to secrecy is curious. Perhaps it appears here because of the temple imagery that pervades the account of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden—a fact that has been noticed and discussed by many scholars (see the bibliography for representative works).

5:1 OT1 begins by identifying this passage as “Chapter 2,” followed by “A Revelation concerning Adam after he had been driven out of the garden of Eden.” This heading is retained in OT2. Originally, this chapter in OT1 and OT2 were narrated in the third person, but insertions of first-person pronouns (“I, the Lord God,” etc.) in OT2 changed the point of view to first person. *Adam and Eve labor.* As his suitable helper, Eve assists Adam in his labor, a detail missing from the Genesis account. **5:2–3** In a significant expansion of the biblical text, Adam and Eve bear multiple unnamed sons and daughters who themselves bear the couple’s grandchildren before the birth of Cain, who in the biblical account is the first named son of Adam and Eve (Genesis 4:1). **5:4** It would appear that this verse marks the end of the first-person revelation of the Creation that God narrates to Moses. Here the narrator drops the first-person pronouns (except

know not, save the Lord commanded me.”

⁷ And then the angel spake, saying, “This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

⁸ Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.”

⁹ And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying, “I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever. That as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.” ¹⁰ And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying, “Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.”

¹¹ And Eve, his wife, heard all these

things and was glad, saying, “Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.” ¹² And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters.

SATAN TEMPTS THE CHILDREN OF ADAM AND EVE

¹³ And Satan came among them, saying, “I am also a son of God.” And he commanded them, saying, “Believe it not,” and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish.

¹⁴ And the Lord God called upon men by the Holy Ghost everywhere and commanded them that they should repent. ¹⁵ And as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins, should be saved; and as many as believed not and repented not,

in direct quotations of characters’ speech) and refers to the Lord in the third person. The other potential place that marks a narrative shift is at 5:59, which closes this literary unit. As it stands, it is difficult to delineate exactly where in the text the Lord stops instructing Moses in a first-person narrative (compare 2:1), but 5:4 seems like the most logical location. **5:4–12** In another narrative detail missing from the Genesis text, Adam and Eve call upon the name of the Lord, and Adam offers sacrifice. This casts Adam in the role of a prototypical priest with Eve as his counterpart. Sources from antiquity depict Adam in a similar light as being the first to offer sacrifice long before the institution of the Mosaic ordinances. (Other ancient sources suggest the coat of skins the Lord made for Adam and Eve were priestly vestments.) In contrast, Cain and Abel are the first ones mentioned as having offered sacrifices to the Lord in the biblical text (Genesis 4:3–4). *The angel of the Lord.* As at Abraham 1:15–16, it is possible that the text here is speaking of the Lord Himself. See the commentary at Abraham 1:16. *I know not.* In a display of obedience, Adam dutifully follows the command of the angel of the Lord despite not knowing the full purpose behind his actions. The thematic and theological link between sacrifice and obedience is unmistakable. *I am the only begotten.* Originally, in OT1 and OT2 the voice declares “I am Jesus Christ,” with “the only begotten of the father” being inserted into OT2. *Adam was filled.* A scribal insertion in OT2 reads that Adam blessed God and was filled “with the Holy Ghost.” This insertion was subsequently deleted. *Blessed be . . . have joy.* In OT1 and OT2 Adam

should be damned. And the words went forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree; wherefore they must be fulfilled.

THE BIRTH OF CAIN AND ABEL

¹⁶ And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to call upon God. And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words.” But behold, Cain hearkened not, saying, “Who is the Lord, that I should know him?”

¹⁷ And she again conceived and bare his brother Abel. And Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

SATAN TEMPTS CAIN

¹⁸ And Cain loved Satan more than God, and Satan commanded him, saying, “Make an offering unto the Lord.” ¹⁹ And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit

of the ground an offering unto the Lord. ²⁰ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering. ²¹ But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. (Now Satan knew this, and it pleased him.) And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. ²² And the Lord said unto Cain, “Why art thou wroth? Why is thy countenance fallen? ²³ If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted. And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door, and Satan desireth to have thee. And except thou shalt hearken unto my commandments, I will deliver thee up, and it shall be unto thee according to his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. ²⁴ For from this time forth thou shalt be the father of his lies; thou shalt be called Perdition; for thou wast also before the world. ²⁵ And it shall be said in time to come that these abom-

originally exclaims, “Blessed be the name of God for my transgression for in this life I shall have joy.” Compare Doctrine and Covenants 107:53–57. **5:13** As with his half-truth to Eve about the consequences of partaking the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Satan deceives the children of Adam and Eve with another half-truth. In this instance, it concerns his status as a son of God (see 1:19; 4:1). Satan is indeed a son of God along with the other spirits begotten in the premortal world, but he is not *the* Son of God who was chosen to save humanity. In an effort to frustrate the plan of redemption, Satan commands the children of Adam and Eve to “believe it not”—meaning the divinely revealed truths taught to them by their parents (5:12). The description of fallen men and women as carnal, sensual, and devilish will feature again later in the narrative (6:49). **5:16** Here and in the biblical text (Genesis 4:1), Eve declares that she has “gotten” (“acquired, created, purchased”; *qānāh*) a new son named Cain (*qayīn*), forming another play on words in the narrative. Later at 5:31 this pun will be inverted into a Satanic negative when Cain declares that he “may murder and get gain.” Cain becomes a prototype for those who enter into Satan-inspired conspiracies (that is, secret combinations) to obtain worldly possessions. *Who is the Lord?* Cain’s declaration prefigures the declaration of Pharaoh to Moses (Exodus 5:2). The rhetorical thrust of the question is to cast aside the power of the Lord and reject His authority. **5:17** Abel’s name in Hebrew (*hebel*) derives from the word for “breath, vapor,” perhaps foreshadowing that he will be “snuffed out,” as it were, by his brother as the first martyr. **5:26–31** The biblical record is sparse on details when it comes to the motive behind Cain’s murder of Abel, saying only that he was “very wroth” with his brother on account of the Lord’s accepting

inations were had from Cain; for he rejected the greater counsel which was had from God. And this is a cursing which I will put upon thee, except thou repent.”

CAIN ENTERS A COVENANT WITH SATAN

²⁶ And Cain was wroth, and listened not any more to the voice of the Lord, neither to Abel, his brother, who walked in holiness before the Lord. ²⁷ And Adam and his wife mourned before the Lord, because of Cain and his brethren. ²⁸ And it came to pass that Cain took one of his brothers’ daughters to wife, and they loved Satan more than God. ²⁹ And Satan said unto Cain, “Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die. And swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands.” ³⁰ And Satan swore unto Cain that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret. ³¹ And Cain said, “Truly I am Mahan,

the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain.” Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness.

CAIN MURDERS ABEL AND IS CURSED

³² And Cain went into the field, and Cain talked with Abel, his brother. And it came to pass that while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him. ³³ And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying, “I am free! Surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands.” ³⁴ And the Lord said unto Cain, “Where is Abel, thy brother?” And he said, “I know not. Am I my brother’s keeper?” ³⁵ And the Lord said, “What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother’s blood cries unto me from the ground. ³⁶ And now thou shalt be cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand. ³⁷ When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.”

³⁸ And Cain said unto the Lord,

Abel’s offering over his own (Genesis 4:5). This has consequently generated considerable speculation amongst ancient and modern interpreters about the matter. The text here offers important insight by clarifying that Satan was behind Cain’s illegitimate sacrifice and that the latter consciously entered a covenant with the former for the purpose of acquiring his brother’s wealth. The text therefore depicts Cain’s murder of Abel as cold and premeditated, not an act of violent passion as one might otherwise suppose from reading only the biblical account. *They shall surely die.* In a twisted inversion of God’s pronouncement at 3:17, Satan announces that those members of Cain’s family who break their covenant with him will forfeit their life (a fate that will befall Cain’s grandson Irad at 5:50). *Done in secret.* The text depicts the pact that Cain enters into with Satan as the prototypical secret combination (compare Helaman 6:26–27; Ether 8:20–26). Once again, the narrative contrasts the godly, positive depiction of Adam as the prototypical priest offering sacrifice in the name of the Only Begotten with the depiction of Cain as a false priest offering Abel as a sacrifice in the name of Satan. *Master Mahan.* The etymology of Mahan is unknown, but is perhaps related to the Aramaic *mhy* (“strike, wound, kill”), which would be

“Satan tempted me because of my brother’s flocks. And I was wroth also; for his offering thou didst accept and not mine. My punishment is greater than I can bear!” ³⁹ Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the Lord, and from thy face shall I be hid. And I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he that findeth me will slay me, because of mine iniquities, for these things are not hid from the Lord.” ⁴⁰ And I the Lord said unto him, “Whosoever slayeth thee, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And I the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. ⁴¹ And Cain was shut out from the presence of the Lord, and with his wife and many of his brethren dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

THE WICKED GENERATIONS OF CAIN

⁴² And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch, and he also begat many sons and daughters. And he builded a city, and he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. ⁴³ And unto Enoch was born Irad, and other sons and daughters. And Irad begat Mahujael, and other sons and daughters. And Mahujael begat Methusael, and other sons and daughters. And Methusael begat Lamech. ⁴⁴ And Lamech took unto himself two wives; the name of one being Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. ⁴⁵ And Adah bare Jabal. He was the father of such as dwell in tents, and they were keepers of cattle. And his brother’s name was Jubal, who was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. ⁴⁶ And Zillah, she also bare Tubal Cain, an instructor of

thematically consistent with Cain’s declaration at 5:31. In OT1 the name is given as Mahon. **5:33** Cain’s declaration (“I am free!”) upon murdering his brother could not be more tragically ironic as he now finds himself firmly in bondage to Satan. Satan offers a counterfeit for the type of freedom the Lord granted earlier in the narrative to Adam and Eve (3:16–17). **5:38** In another narrative inversion, Cain attempts to shift the blame for his transgression onto Satan, not unlike the attempt his mother made previously at 4:19. But whereas Eve committed her transgression out of some measure of ignorance, Cain acts deliberately in his murder of Abel, thus rendering his attempt to shift blame onto Satan utterly absurd. **5:39** In OT1 and OT2 originally Cain laments that he has been driven from “the face of the Earth,” with “Lord” being inserted into OT2 to substitute “earth.” He also fears in both OT1 and OT2 that he will be slain for his “oath” as opposed to his “iniquities,” as also emended in the latter. **5:40** The Lord sets a mark (’ôṭ; “sign, token”) upon Cain not as a punishment but as a preservative measure (compare Genesis 4:15). The nature of this mark is not specified in the text. Nor, for that matter, does the text say that Cain will live forever. The curse set upon Cain is that he is to roam the earth as a wandering fugitive and will reap no harvest when he attempts to farm for his food. Nowhere does the text say anything about either the curse or the mark having anything to do with black skin or priesthood restriction, as some have erroneously interpreted. Modern leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have officially disavowed any such racist readings of the text. See also the commentary at 7:6–8 and Abraham 1:24. **5:42–56** The first of three genealogies in the text begins here (compare 6:10–25; 8:1–11) and describes the wicked descendants of Cain, who quickly become embroiled in intergenerational familial intrigue and bloodshed. Once again, the text here departs dramatically from the Genesis account (Genesis 4:16–24) by depicting

every artificer in brass and iron. And the sister of Tubal Cain was called Naamah.

⁴⁷ And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, “Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech. For I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. ⁴⁸ If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech shall be seventy and sevenfold.” ⁴⁹ For Lamech having entered into a covenant with Satan, after the manner of Cain, wherein he became Master Mahan, master of that great secret which was administered unto Cain by Satan. And Irad, the son of Enoch, having known their secret, began to reveal it unto the sons of Adam. ⁵⁰ Wherefore Lamech, being angry, slew him, not like unto Cain, his brother Abel, for the sake of getting gain, but he slew him for the oath’s sake.

⁵¹ For, from the days of Cain, there was a secret combination, and their works were in the dark, and they knew every man his brother. ⁵² Wherefore the Lord cursed Lamech, and his house, and all them that had covenanted with Satan. For they kept not the commandments of God, and it

displeased God, and he ministered not unto them. And their works were abominations, and began to spread among all the sons of men. ⁵³ And it was among the sons of men, and among the daughters of men these things were not spoken, because that Lamech had spoken the secret unto his wives, and they rebelled against him, and declared these things abroad, and had not compassion. ⁵⁴ Wherefore Lamech was despised, and cast out, and came not among the sons of men, lest he should die. ⁵⁵ And thus the works of darkness began to prevail among all the sons of men. ⁵⁶ And God cursed the earth with a sore curse, and was angry with the wicked, with all the sons of men whom he had made. ⁵⁷ For they would not hearken unto his voice, nor believe on his Only Begotten Son, even him whom he declared should come in the meridian of time, who was prepared from before the foundation of the world.

THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED IN THE DAYS OF ADAM

⁵⁸ And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his

Satan as the antagonist driving this conflict in order to ensure the perpetuation of his secret combination established with Cain. *Enoch*. This Enoch, son of Cain (5:42), is not to be confused with the righteous Enoch, son of Jared (6:21), who will feature prominently in the next two chapters. *Master Mahan*. Also rendered Mahon in OT1. **5:52–57** This portion of the narrative describing the wickedness and abominations of Cain’s descendants acts as a foil to the forthcoming narrative about Enoch and his righteous city Zion. The corrupting influence Cain’s descendants have on the children of Adam and Eve serves to increase the tension of the drama involving Enoch (and later Noah) and raise the narrative stakes with Enoch’s ministry and preaching. **5:58–59** Here the narrative shifts away from Cain and returns to Adam and Eve, setting up what is to follow in the next chapter concerning the righteous descendants of the couple and the ministry of Enoch. *Unto . . . ordinance*. Inserted into OT2.

6:1–2 OT2 designates this the sixth chapter and describes it as “the genealogy from Adam to

own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. ⁵⁹ And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam, by an holy ordinance, and the Gospel preached, and a decree sent forth, that it should be in the world, until the end thereof. And thus it was. Amen.

THE BIRTH OF SETH

6 And Adam hearkened unto the voice of God and called upon his sons to repent. ² And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and he called his name Seth. And Adam glorified the name of God, for he said, “God hath appointed me another seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.” ³ And God revealed himself unto Seth and he rebelled not, but offered an acceptable sacrifice like unto his brother Abel. And to him also was born a son, and he called his name Enos. ⁴ And then began these men to call upon the name of the Lord, and the Lord blessed them.

ADAM KEEPS A BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

⁵ And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded in the language of Adam, for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration. ⁶ And by them their children were taught

to read and write, having a language which was pure and undefiled. (⁷Now this same priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also.) ⁸ Now this prophecy Adam spake, as he was moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and a genealogy was kept of the children of God. And this was the book of the generations of Adam, saying, “In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him, ⁹ in the image of his own body, male and female, created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created and became living souls in the land upon the footstool of God.”

THE RIGHTEOUS GENERATIONS OF ADAM AND EVE

¹⁰ And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image, and called his name Seth. ¹¹ And the days of Adam, after he had begotten Seth, were eight hundred years, and he begat many sons and daughters.

¹² And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died. ¹³ Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begat Enos, and prophesied in all his days, and

Enoch & plan of salvation &c.” *Seth*. The King James Version of Genesis 4:25 has Eve giving Seth his name and making this exclamation. The underlying Hebrew of this verse has Eve giving Seth his name but is somewhat ambiguous grammatically as to whether she or Adam made the exclamation (although contextually it seems to be Eve). Ancient versions (including the Septuagint and the Aramaic Targum Onkelos) clearly have Eve making the pronouncement. Interestingly, some apocryphal sources, such as the book of Jubilees, depict Adam as naming Seth and making the declaration. The name Seth (*šēt*) derives from the word “to set, appoint” (*šīt*), as reflected in the pronouncement that God “appointed” Seth to be a replacement to Abel (compare Genesis 4:25). **6:5–9** Genesis 5:1 mentions a “book of the generations of Adam,” but here the text greatly expands on this concept and restores details not present in the biblical record. Most notably, the text mentions a pure language spoken by Adam in which he instructed

taught his son Enos in the ways of God; wherefore Enos prophesied also. ¹⁴ And Seth lived, after he begat Enos, eight hundred and seven years, and begat many sons and daughters.

¹⁵ And the children of men were numerous upon all the face of the land. And in those days Satan had great dominion among men, and raged in their hearts. And from thenceforth came wars and bloodshed, and a man's hand was against his own brother in administering death, because of secret works seeking for power. ¹⁶ All the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died. ¹⁷ And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan. And Enos and the residue of the people of God came out from the land, which was called Shulon, and dwelt in a land of promise, which he called after his own son, whom he had named Cainan. ¹⁸ And Enos lived,

after he begat Cainan, eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat many sons and daughters. And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years, and he died.

¹⁹ And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel. And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died. ²⁰ And Mahalaleel lived sixty-five years, and begat Jared. And Mahalaleel lived, after he begat Jared, eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died. ²¹ And Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begat Enoch. And Jared lived, after he begat Enoch, eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And Jared taught

his family and kept a book of remembrance. This Adamic language is mentioned elsewhere in the narrative (6:46, 57). Joseph Smith and other early Latter-day Saints showed interest in recovering this lost Adamic tongue. *Spirit of inspiration*. OT1 reads that those who called upon God could “write with the finger of inspiration.” This was initially followed by OT2 but subsequently revised to the current reading (notably replacing “finger” with “spirit”). *Priesthood*. This parenthetical comment about this “same priesthood” enduring to the end of the world (which was omitted in OT1 and added into OT2) is odd. It suggests some connection between priesthood and keeping records in the pure language of Adam but is left unexplained. It could be referring to those descendants whose names were recorded in the book as being sealed to Adam and Eve (as opposed to the descendants of Cain). Read this way, 6:6 is a parenthetical elaboration about the book, and 6:7 is a reference to the patriarchal order of the priesthood. *Adam spake*. OT1 omits “by the Holy Ghost.” **6:10–25** The second genealogy of the text (5:42–51; 8:1–11) describes the righteous descendants of Adam and Eve in contrast to Cain’s wicked descendants described in the last chapter. The ages of these patriarchs were revised at multiple points by Oliver Cowdery in OT1. The ages of the patriarchs in the canonical text come from the readings preserved in OT2. (Compare Doctrine and Covenants 107:41–52.) The extraordinary ages of the patriarchs parallel Mesopotamian king lists, which likewise record extravagantly long ages and reigns for ancient kings. The intent in the Mesopotamian material appears to be to ascribe legendary, larger-than-life status to these kings, not to preserve straightforward chronological information. A similar interpretative approach might be employed here and in the Genesis account. (Note, for instance, that ages are not given for Cain and his descendants at 5:42–56.) *And Enos . . .*

Enoch in all the ways of God. ²² And this is the genealogy of the sons of Adam, who was the son of God, with whom God, himself, conversed. ²³ And they were preachers of righteousness, and spake and prophesied, and called upon all men, everywhere, to repent. And faith was taught unto the children of men. ²⁴ And it came to pass that all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died. ²⁵ And Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begat Methuselah.

THE PROPHETIC CALL OF ENOCH

²⁶ And it came to pass that Enoch journeyed in the land among the people. And as he journeyed, the Spirit of God descended out of heaven, and abode upon him. ²⁷ And he heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Enoch, my son, prophesy unto this people, and say unto them, ‘Repent.’ For thus saith the Lord, I am angry with this people, and my fierce anger is kindled against them. For their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off. ²⁸ And for these many generations, ever since the day that I created them, have they gone astray, and have denied me,

and have sought their own counsels in the dark. And in their own abominations have they devised murder, and have not kept the commandments, which I gave unto their father, Adam. ²⁹ Wherefore, they have foresworn themselves, and, by their oaths, they have brought upon themselves death. And a hell I have prepared for them, if they repent not. ³⁰ And this is a decree which I have sent forth in the beginning of the world, from my own mouth, from the foundation thereof. And by the mouths of my servants, thy fathers, have I decreed it, even as it shall be sent forth in the world, unto the ends thereof.”

³¹ And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying, “Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me. For I am slow of speech. Wherefore am I thy servant?” ³² And the Lord said unto Enoch, “Go forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands,

Cainan. Inserted into OT2. The Cainan (*qênān*) mentioned in this verse and at 6:18–19 (and at Genesis 5:9) is not to be confused with the Canaan (*kēnāʿan*) of Genesis 9:18 nor the Canaan of 7:6–8, 12. *Genealogy of the sons of Adam.* In OT1 this is said to be the genealogy “of the Sons of God which was the sons of Adam,” a reading also reflected in OT2 but subsequently revised to the current reading. **6:26** This verse begins a new narrative unit about Enoch that greatly expands on the scant details about this figure preserved at Genesis 5:18–24. In addition to providing a lengthy narrative about the life and ministry of Enoch, 6:26–7:69 restores important doctrinal teachings in the form of a series of discourses delivered and visions beheld by this patriarch. Latter-day Saint scholars have written extensively on the remarkable parallels between the Enoch material in the text and the body of ancient apocryphal sources about Enoch (see the bibliography for representative samples of this work). **6:26–36** Enoch’s prophetic call follows a pattern detected in the Bible and non-biblical texts. Elements in this pattern typically include a divine confrontation (6:26), an introductory word and commission (6:27–30), an objection (6:31), a

and I will do as seemeth me good.
³³Say unto this people, ‘Choose ye this day, to serve the Lord God who made you.’ ³⁴Behold my Spirit is upon you, wherefore all thy words will I justify. And the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course. And thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me.”

ENOCH BECOMES A SEER

³⁵And the Lord spake unto Enoch, and said unto him, “Anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see.” And he did so. ³⁶And he beheld the spirits that God had created, and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye. And from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: “A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.”

ENOCH BEGINS HIS MINISTRY

³⁷And it came to pass that Enoch went forth in the land, among the people,

standing upon the hills and the high places, and cried with a loud voice, testifying against their works. And all men were offended because of him. ³⁸And they came forth to hear him, upon the high places, saying unto the tent-keepers, “Tarry ye here and keep the tents, while we go yonder to behold the seer, for he prophesieth, and there is a strange thing in the land; a wild man hath come among us.” ³⁹And it came to pass when they heard him, no man laid hands on him, for fear came on all them that heard him, for he walked with God.

ENOCH’S DISCOURSE—THE PLAN OF SALVATION

⁴⁰And there came a man unto him, whose name was Mahijah, and said unto him, “Tell us plainly who thou art, and from whence thou comest.” ⁴¹And he said unto them, “I came out from the land of Cainan, the land of my fathers, a land of righteousness unto this day. And my father taught

reassurance (6:32), and a final sign (6:33–36). *By their oaths.* Alluding to 5:26–31, 49–53. *Enoch the lad.* At this point in the narrative Enoch is already at least sixty-five years old (6:25). Relative to the age of the patriarchs as given in the text, this makes Enoch comparatively young at the time of his commission. This declaration finds striking parallel with apocryphal sources, which speak of Enoch being called a lad or youth at the time of his prophetic call and afterward, when it seems to have become a title for him. *Slow of speech.* Compare the similar objection given by Moses when required to speak forcefully to Pharaoh on behalf of his people (Exodus 6:12, 30). *Brought upon themselves death.* In OT1 the text says the people “have eaten unto themselves death” (OT2: “they have eat unto themselves”), a movingly poetic reference to 4:12. The text was subsequently revised to the current reading in OT2. *Choose ye this day.* OT1 reads, “Choose ye this day a God who made you” (followed by OT2 and subsequently revised to the current reading). *Enoch the seer.* The depiction of Enoch as a seer who was granted supernatural visionary ability is frequent in extra-biblical sources. In most of these accounts Enoch is granted a visionary tour of the celestial world, whereas in others, as here, his eyes are opened to behold spiritual or heavenly beings. One notable difference with other scriptural depictions of seers is that Enoch is never explicitly given a seeric device or instrument to use in his ministry (compare Abraham 3:1; Joseph Smith—History 1:35; Mosiah 8:13, 15–17). *Natural eyes.* OT1 omits “to the natural eye.” **6:40** Mahijah is the only other named character in the Enoch narrative. He appears practically out of nowhere to interrogate Enoch about his preaching. The name of this figure has been persuasively argued to find ancient attestation in the form of a certain Mahaway (or, variously,

me in all the ways of God. ⁴² And it came to pass, as I journeyed from the land of Cainan, by the sea east, I beheld a vision. And lo, the heavens I saw, and the Lord spake with me, and gave me commandment. Wherefore, for this cause, to keep the commandment, I speak forth these words.”

⁴³ And Enoch continued his speech, saying, “The Lord which spake with me, the same is the God of heaven, and he is my God, and your God, and ye are my brethren, and why counsel ye yourselves, and deny the God of heaven? ⁴⁴ The heavens he made; the earth is his footstool, and the foundation thereof is his. Behold, he laid it, a host of men hath he brought in upon the face thereof. ⁴⁵ And death hath come upon our fathers. Nevertheless, we know them, and cannot deny, and even the first of all we know, even Adam. ⁴⁶ For a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God. And it is given in our own language.”

⁴⁷ And as Enoch spake forth the words of God, the people trembled, and could not stand in his presence.

⁴⁸ And he said unto them, “Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall

came death, and we are made partakers of misery and woe. ⁴⁹ Behold Satan hath come among the children of men, and tempteth them to worship him. And men have become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God. ⁵⁰ But God hath made known unto our fathers that all men must repent.

ENOCH'S DISCOURSE—THE BAPTISM OF ADAM

⁵¹ “And he called upon our father Adam by his own voice, saying, ‘I am God. I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh.’ ⁵² And he also said unto him, ‘If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth—which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men—ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name. And whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you.’ ⁵³ And our father Adam spake unto the Lord, and said, ‘Why is it that men must repent and be baptized in water?’ And the Lord said unto Adam, ‘Behold I

Mahawai, Mahway, Mahuy; from the Aramaic *mhwy*), who appears in a fragmentary copy of an Enoch text discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. **6:41** Evidently a land named after Enoch's great-grandfather Cainan (6:17–19), not the better-known land of Canaan. **6:46** Referring to Adam's book of remembrance mentioned at 6:5. **6:48** Compare Lehi's famous declaration at 2 Nephi 2:25. **6:51–53** This specific dialogue (as well as that preserved at 6:55–68) is not present in the preceding chapters, but that Adam and Eve had a knowledge of the fundamental principles of the gospel is made clear at 5:58–59. The range of verses from 6:51–68 embeds a heretofore unmentioned revelation to Adam as recounted by Enoch in his discourse. *The gift of the Holy Ghost*. OT1 omits “receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (but added to OT2). OT1 inserts at the top of the manuscript page where 6:52 begins “The Plan of Salvation.” **6:55** OT1 and OT2 originally both read, “That Christ hath atoned.” This verse should not be mistaken as an affirmation of the

have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden.’⁵⁴ Hence came the saying abroad among the people, that the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children, for they are whole from the foundation of the world.⁵⁵ And the Lord spake unto Adam, saying, ‘Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin, even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good.’⁵⁶ And it is given unto them to know good from evil, wherefore they are agents unto themselves, and I have given unto you another law and commandment.⁵⁷ Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence. For in the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his Only Begotten, is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time.

⁵⁸ “Therefore I give unto you a commandment, to teach these things freely unto your children, saying

⁵⁹ that by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten, that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life, in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory.⁶⁰ For by the water ye keep the commandment, by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified.⁶¹ Therefore, it is given to abide in you: the record of heaven, the Comforter, the peaceable things of immortal glory, the truth of all things, that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things, that which knoweth all things, and hath all power, according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment.⁶² And now, behold, I say unto you, this is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time.⁶³ And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are

Christian conception of “original sin.” Rather, it is an affirmation only that the posterity of Adam and Eve are subject to the deleterious conditions of the Fall. 6:57 OT1 reads fairly close to the current text: “. . . in the language of Adam man of holyness is his name & the name of his only begotten is the Son of man even Jesus Christ a righteous Judge which shall come.” In OT2 this was revised to read: “. . . in the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name; & the name of his only begotten, is the son[,] a man[,] a righteous Judge who shall come in the meridean of time.” The reading of OT1 has been preferred in each edition of the Pearl of Great Price since the 1851 first edition. Curiously, nearly all of the titles mentioned in this verse are also mentioned, with reference to a single individual, in one ancient Enoch text. *Man of Holiness*. This title or

temporal, and things which are spiritual, things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath. All things bear record of me.’

⁶⁴ “And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. ⁶⁵ And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the

Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. ⁶⁶ And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying, “Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever. ⁶⁷ And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. ⁶⁸ Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. Amen.”

ENOCH’S DISCOURSE CONCLUDES

7 And it came to pass that Enoch continued his speech, saying, “Behold, our father Adam taught these things, and many have believed

name for God in the pure language of Adam has unmistakably potent anthropomorphic implications. The concept of holiness (*qōdeš*) anciently entailed a sense of separateness or apartness from what is profane or common—thereby sacredness. God, as affirmed here and elsewhere in scripture, is the supreme embodiment and personification of holiness in its maximal sense. *Son of Man*. See the commentary at Abraham 3:24–28. **6:58–59** These verses read in OT1: “I give unto you a commandment to teach these things freely unto your Children saying that in as much as they were born into the world by the fall which bringeth death by water & blood & the spirit which I have made & so became of dust a living soul even so ye must be born again of water & the spirit & cleansed by blood even the blood of mine only begotten into the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven.” OT2 initially followed OT1 with only slight variation but was subsequently revised to the current reading. The passage and the next verse play on a linkage between water, spirit, and blood. Just as water (both amniotic fluid and drinkable water), spirit (both the begotten premortal spirit and breath in the lungs), and blood are necessary components for physical life, so too are water (baptism), spirit (the gift of the Holy Ghost), and blood (the atoning blood of Christ) necessary for eternal life. **6:60** Although the imagery evoked here applies to the first principles and ordinances of the gospel, the typology may also be richly applied to the temple phases of justification, sanctification, and exaltation (through not only Christ’s sacrifice but also the consecration of the disciple) reflected in the initiatory ordinance and later in the endowment and sealing ordinances. **6:62** Although Latter-day Saints today typically use the term “plan of salvation” to refer to the cosmic journey of God’s children from and back into His presence, here and in other Restoration scripture (for example, Alma 24:14; 42:5) it refers to the process of sanctification through the atonement of Jesus Christ. **6:64–65** One ancient apocryphal text depicts Adam and Eve as being immersed in the Jordan and Tigris rivers, respectively, as part of their penance after the Fall. Adam being baptized by water and the spirit serves as a gospel prototype for the need of all humanity to be cleansed by both water baptism and by the reception of the gift of the Holy Ghost. **6:66–68** The voice of the Lord ratifies Adam’s baptism by water and spirit and affirms that he is a priest after the order of the Son of God (compare Hebrews 7:3; Alma 13:7, 9; Doctrine and Covenants 78:16; 84:6–17). Not only the gospel but also the priesthood is thus projected by the text as reaching back into the earliest days of humanity.

and become the sons of God, and many have believed not, and have perished in their sins, and are looking forth with fear, in torment, for the fiery indignation of the wrath of God to be poured out upon them.”

ENOCH'S VISION OF THE LORD AND THE TRIBES

² And from that time forth Enoch began to prophesy, saying unto the people, that, “As I was journeying, and stood upon the place Mahujah, and cried unto the Lord, there came a voice out of heaven, saying, ‘Turn ye, and get ye upon the mount Simeon.’

³ And it came to pass that I turned and went up on the mount. And as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory. ⁴ And I saw the Lord, and he stood before my face, and he talked with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face. And he said unto me, ‘Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations.’ ⁵ And it came to pass that I beheld in the valley of Shum, and lo, a great people which dwelt in tents,

which were the people of Shum. ⁶ And again the Lord said unto me, ‘Look!’ And I looked towards the north, and I beheld the people of Canaan which dwelt in tents. ⁷ And the Lord said unto me, ‘Prophecy!’ And I prophesied, saying, ‘Behold the people of Canaan, which are numerous, shall go forth in battle array against the people of Shum, and shall slay them that they shall utterly be destroyed. And the people of Canaan shall divide themselves in the land, and the land shall be barren and unfruitful, and none other people shall dwell there but the people of Canaan. ⁸ For behold, the Lord shall curse the land with much heat, and the barrenness thereof shall go forth forever.’ (And there was a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan, that they were despised among all people.)

⁹ “And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me, ‘Look!’ And I looked, and I beheld the land of Sharon, and the land of Enoch, and the land of Omner, and the land of Heni, and the land of Shem, and the land of Haner,

7:1 OT2 designates this chapter “Enochs prophecy &c.” Enoch’s discourse from the previous chapter concludes with this verse. 7:2 Enoch’s vision of the Lord parallels Moses’s own visionary experience narrated in chapter 1 on several points, including the vision’s taking place on a mountain (1:1; 7:2) the visionary being transfigured (1:2, 25; 7:3), seeing the Lord “face to face” (1:2; 7:4), and being shown the world and its inhabitants (1:8; 7:4). *Mahujah*. The name *Mahujah* is clearly a variant of *Mahijah* from the previous chapter (6:40), but there is some uncertainty about whether to interpret this second instance of the name as a person or a place based on the manuscript history. See the commentary at 6:40. 7:6–8 Both OT1 and OT2 record the name in this range of verses as “Canaan.” It is tempting to consider this rendering of the name as a scribal mishearing of the previously encountered *Cainan* (6:17–19, 41–42), not only because the two names are homophonous but also because the biblical Canaan will not feature in the history of the early patriarchs until after the Flood at Genesis 9:18. This suggestion, however, must necessarily remain speculative. If “Canaan” was in fact intended, then it would seem that the text here preserves the only known mention of this pre-Flood people Enoch beheld in vision. Whatever relationship they might have had with the later biblical Canaan is not clear from the text.

and the land of Hanannihah, and all the inhabitants thereof. ¹⁰ And the Lord said unto me, ‘Go to this people, and say unto them, ‘Repent,’ lest I come out and smite them with a curse, and they die.’ ¹¹ And he gave unto me a commandment that I should baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, which is full of grace and truth, and of the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and the Son.”

ENOCH RESUMES HIS MINISTRY, PERFORMS WONDERS

¹² And it came to pass that Enoch continued to call upon all the people, save it were the people of Canaan, to repent. ¹³ And so great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them. And he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command. And the rivers of water were turned out of their course, and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness, and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him. ¹⁴ There also came up a land out of the depth of the sea, and

so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off and went upon the land which came up out of the depth of the sea. ¹⁵ And the giants of the land, also, stood afar off. And there went forth a curse upon all people that fought against God. ¹⁶ And from that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them, but the Lord came and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness. ¹⁷ The fear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the glory of the Lord which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the land, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish.

ZION IS ESTABLISHED AND TRANSLATED

¹⁸ And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness, and there was no poor among them. ¹⁹ And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion. ²⁰ And it came to pass that Enoch talked with the Lord, and he said unto

The curse of Canaan. The text describes a curse of barrenness upon the land of the people of Canaan as well as a “blackness” covering the people. The curse applies only to the land, however, with no mention of a curse upon the pre-Flood Canaanites themselves. The “blackness” of the people of Canaan is never explicitly depicted in a racialized manner (that is, as speaking of skin color). Elsewhere in the text, “blackness” is used to describe the presence of Satan in contrast to the brilliant glory of God, suggesting that a spiritualized reading of the “blackness” of the Canaanites and the descendants of Cain (7:22) is to be preferred. (See the commentary at 1:15.) Modern leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have officially rejected any racist interpretations of these and related passages of scripture that attempt to link personal worthiness and value in the eyes of God with skin color. 7:15 The identity of the “giants” mentioned here (and at 8:18) is not clarified in the text. In the biblical record, the “giants” of Genesis 6:4 (and elsewhere—for example, Numbers 13:33; Ezekiel 32:27) are the Nephilim

the Lord, “Surely Zion shall dwell in safety forever.” But the Lord said unto Enoch, “Zion have I blessed, but the residue of the people have I cursed.”

²¹ And it came to pass that the Lord showed unto Enoch all the inhabitants of the earth. And he beheld, and lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven. And the Lord said unto Enoch, “Behold mine abode forever.”

²² And Enoch also beheld the residue of the people which were the sons of Adam. And they were a mixture of all the seed of Adam save it were the seed of Cain, for the seed of Cain were black, and had not place among them.

ENOCH’S VISION OF THE WEeping GOD

²³ And after that Zion was taken up into heaven, Enoch beheld, and lo, all the nations of the earth were before him. ²⁴ And there came generation upon generation. And Enoch was high and lifted up, even in the bosom of the Father, and of the Son of Man. And behold, the power of Satan was upon all the face of the earth. ²⁵ And he saw

angels descending out of heaven, and he heard a loud voice, saying, “Wo, wo be unto the inhabitants of the earth.”

²⁶ And he beheld Satan, and he had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness. And he looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced. ²⁷ And Enoch beheld angels descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son. And the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion.

²⁸ And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept. And Enoch bore record of it, saying, “How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?”

²⁹ And Enoch said unto the Lord, “How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity?” ³⁰ And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations. And thy

(from the Hebrew *nāpal*; “to fall”), enigmatic beings depicted as ferocious and large and who since antiquity have been widely understood to be fallen angels. Alternatively, the giants here could be the Gibborim (from the Hebrew *gābar*; “to be mighty, strong”), renowned warriors of old also mentioned at Genesis 6:4 in connection with the Nephilim (and sometimes identified as such). The Nephilim and the Gibborim feature prominently as antagonists to God and His righteous people in ancient Enochic literature, a theme that is also captured in the text (7:12–17). **7:18–22** The name Zion derives from the Hebrew *šîôn* and may denote “castle, fortress” among other potential meanings. The defining characteristic of Zion as depicted here is a place (and people) of holy unity and equity. Note that both the people and their city are afforded the name. In addition to being a city of holiness, Zion is also a refuge from the wicked descendants of Cain, who can claim no portion of Zion as their own. **7:23** Enoch’s vision of the weeping God is one of the most arresting in Restoration scripture. It is couched in the context of God’s abject sorrow (and later anger) at the inhabitants of the earth because of how firmly Satan has them in his power (7:26) despite the earnest ministry of angels to the descendants of Adam (7:27). **7:26** In OT1 the chain, rather than Satan, veils the earth by the text’s using the impersonal pronoun “it.” The change to “he” (making Satan the antecedent) was made in OT2. **7:28–31** The motif of

curtains are stretched out still, and yet thou art there, and thy bosom is there, and also thou art just. Thou art merciful and kind forever. ³¹ And thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations, from all eternity to all eternity. And naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne. And mercy shall go before thy face and have no end. How is it thou canst weep?”

³² The Lord said unto Enoch, “Behold these thy brethren. They are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them. And in the Garden of Eden gave I unto man his agency. ³³ And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father. But behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood. ³⁴ And the fire of mine indignation is kindled against them. And in my hot displeasure will I send in the floods upon them, for my fierce anger is kindled against them. ³⁵ Behold,

I am God. Man of Holiness is my name. Man of Counsel is my name. And Endless and Eternal is my name also. ³⁶ Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made, and mine eye can pierce them also. And among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren. ³⁷ But behold, their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers. Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom. And the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands. Wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer? ³⁸ But behold, these which thine eyes are upon shall perish in the floods. And behold, I will shut them up. A prison have I prepared for them. ³⁹ And that which I have chosen hath plead before my face. Wherefore, he suffereth for their sins, inasmuch as they will repent in the day that my Chosen shall return unto me, and until that day they shall be in torment. ⁴⁰ Wherefore, for this shall the heavens

the weeping God in the text is significant in two ways: first, it is in harmony with other ancient motifs captured in both biblical and non-biblical texts, and second, it speaks profoundly of God as a passible being who is responsive to humanity and is moved to genuine emotion. *Enoch's reaction*. Enoch's incredulous reaction to witnessing God and the heavens weep underscores the profundity and significance of what is being depicted in this passage. On a narrative level, readers are likewise meant to be amazed at what they are encountering. *God vs. Enoch weeping*. In OT1 it is both God who weeps upon seeing the wickedness of the earth (“... and it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the peop[le] [a]nd he wept and Enoch bore record of it”) as well as the heavens that weep (“... how is it the heavens weep and Shed fourth her tears as the rain upon the Mountains and Enoch said unto the heavens how is it that thou canst weep seeing thou art holy”). In OT2 this was revised to depict Enoch as weeping (“... And it came to pass, that the God of Heaven <Enock> looked upon the residue of the people & wept”) along with the heavens (“... <he beheld and lo! The heavens wept also> and shed forth her <their> tears”). The reason for this revision is unknown, but it is not too difficult to image that, much like Enoch, Joseph Smith or his scribes working on the text were astonished at what

weep, yea, and all the workmanship of mine hands.”

ENOCH'S VISION OF THE FLOOD

⁴¹ And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Enoch, and told Enoch all the doings of the children of men. Wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity, and his bowels yearned, and all eternity shook. ⁴² And Enoch also saw Noah and his family, that the posterity of all the sons of Noah should be saved with a temporal salvation. ⁴³ Wherefore Enoch saw that Noah built an ark, and that the Lord smiled upon it, and held it in his own hand. But upon the residue of the wicked the floods came and swallowed them

up. ⁴⁴ And as Enoch saw this, he had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens, “I will refuse to be comforted.” But the Lord said unto Enoch, “Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look.”

⁴⁵ And it came to pass that Enoch looked. And from Noah he beheld all the families of the earth. And he cried unto the Lord, saying, “When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the Righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified and have eternal life?” ⁴⁶ And the Lord said, “It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance.” ⁴⁷ And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh. And his soul rejoiced, saying, “The Righteous is

they were reading and so revised the text. Each edition of the Pearl of Great Price since the 1851 first edition has followed the reading of OT1. Even the change from God to Enoch weeping in OT2 does not take away too dramatically from the image of God weeping for a few reasons: in both recensions, Enoch acknowledges this is what he's seeing at 7:29–30, at 7:31 it is clear he is speaking to (and of) God, and at 7:32 it is the Lord who answers Enoch's questions. It should also be noted that in other ancient Enoch texts, both God *and* Enoch (as well as the heavens and earth) are variously depicted as weeping. 7:32 OT2 substitutes “intelligence” for “knowledge” and indicates that humankind “had” their agency, not that it was given to them. 7:33 OT2 reads that humanity should “serve me as their God.” 7:34 God's emotions swing from sorrow to anger as He later pronounces judgment in the form of the coming Flood (7:38). 7:35 OT1 and OT2 both read “man of council” rather than “counsel,” thus capturing the presence of God's divine council in the text (see also the commentary at 1:4, 18; 2:26–27; 4:28–29; compare Abraham 3:22–23). 7:37 OT2 reads that Satan is their “master” rather than “father.” 7:41–47 Enoch's vision of the coming Flood finds parallel with one ancient apocryphal Enoch text that depicts the prophet as being forewarned of the Flood in a dream. *Enoch's heart swelled*. In OT1 “and his heart swelled” was inserted interlineally. In OT2 the phrase was deleted and substituted with “and he beheld.” This movingly poetic depiction of Enoch parallels the earlier depiction of God weeping, and indeed Enoch weeps at 7:44. *Enoch's soul rejoiced*. OT1 and OT2 originally read, “And he saw and rejoiced.” 7:48–52 Like God and Enoch, the personified earth also mourns over the condition of fallen humanity, which causes the prophet, once again, to weep (7:49). The text vividly portrays even nature itself as reacting negatively to the consequences of the Fall. *Covenant with Enoch*. OT1 reads that God covenanted with Noah. This was revised in OT2 to describe a covenant with Enoch. 7:54–59 On the significance of the title Son of Man, see the commentary at Abraham 3:24–28. *Spirits in prison*. Compare 1 Peter 3:18–20; Doctrine and Covenants 76:71–77; 88:96–99; 138:8, 28, 42. 7:62–64 The imagery of righteousness sweeping

lifted up, and the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world. And through faith I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me.”

ENOCH'S VISION OF THE WEARY EARTH

⁴⁸ And it came to pass that Enoch looked upon the earth, and he heard a voice from the bowels thereof, saying, “Wo, wo is me, the mother of men. I am pained, I am weary, because of the wickedness of my children. When shall I rest, and be cleansed from the filthiness which is gone forth out of me? When will my Creator sanctify me, that I may rest, and righteousness for a season abide upon my face?”

⁴⁹ And when Enoch heard the earth mourn, he wept, and cried unto the Lord, saying, “O Lord, wilt thou not have compassion upon the earth? Wilt thou not bless the children of Noah?” ⁵⁰ And it came to pass that Enoch continued his cry unto the Lord, saying, “I ask thee, O Lord, in the name of thine Only Begotten, even Jesus Christ, that thou wilt have mercy upon Noah and his seed, that the earth might never more be covered by the floods.”

⁵¹ And the Lord could not withhold, and he covenanted with Enoch, and sware unto him with an oath, that he

would stay the floods, that he would call upon the children of Noah. ⁵² And he sent forth an unalterable decree, that a remnant of his seed should always be found among all nations, while the earth should stand. ⁵³ And the Lord said, “Blessed is he through whose seed Messiah shall come. For he saith, ‘I am Messiah, the King of Zion, the Rock of Heaven, which is broad as eternity. Whoso cometh in at the gate and climbeth up by me shall never fall. Wherefore, blessed are they of whom I have spoken, for they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy.’”

ENOCH'S VISION OF THE SON OF MAN

⁵⁴ And it came to pass that Enoch cried unto the Lord, saying, “When the Son of Man cometh in the flesh, shall the earth rest? I pray thee, show me these things.” ⁵⁵ And the Lord said unto Enoch, “Look!” And he looked and beheld the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, after the manner of men. ⁵⁶ And he heard a loud voice, and the heavens were veiled, and all the creations of God mourned, and the earth groaned, and the rocks were rent, and the saints arose, and were crowned at the right hand of the Son of Man with crowns of glory. ⁵⁷ And as

the earth as a flood in preparation for the restoration of Zion and the coming of the Son of Man appropriates the imagery of the Flood already mentioned (7:34, 41–47) and forthcoming in the story of Noah (8:17, 24). Righteousness coming “down out of heaven” juxtaposed with truth coming “out of the earth” also prefigures the conjoining of the heavenly and earthly Zion (7:63). Truth coming out of the earth may additionally allude to the Book of Mormon, the coming forth of which (from its burial in the earth) would be a sign of the gathering of Israel in the last days (3 Nephi 21:1–2). *New Jerusalem*. See Ether 13:3–6, 9–10; Doctrine and Covenants 84:1–5; 133:56. **7:65–67** Enoch is shown an apocalypse (a revelation or “uncovering”; from the Greek *apokalypsis*) of the end of the world and final judgment of humanity. The apocalyptic worldview

many of the spirits as were in prison came forth and stood on the right hand of God. And the remainder were reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day.

⁵⁸ And again Enoch wept and cried unto the Lord, saying, “When shall the earth rest?” ⁵⁹ And Enoch beheld the Son of Man ascend up unto the Father. And he called unto the Lord, saying, “Wilt thou not come again upon the earth? Forasmuch as thou art God, and I know thee, and thou hast sworn unto me, and commanded me that I should ask in the name of thine Only Begotten. Thou hast made me, and given unto me a right to thy throne, and not of myself, but through thine own grace. Wherefore, I ask thee if thou wilt not come again on the earth.”

THE LORD ENSURES THE RESTORATION OF ZION

⁶⁰ And the Lord said unto Enoch, “As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfil the oath which I have made unto you concerning the children of Noah. ⁶¹ And the day shall come that the earth shall rest, but before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth. And the heavens shall shake, and also the earth. And great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve. ⁶² And righteous-

ness will I send down out of heaven. And truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten, his resurrection from the dead, yea, and also the resurrection of all men. And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth unto a place which I shall prepare, an holy city, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming. For there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem.”

⁶³ And the Lord said unto Enoch, “Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there, and we will receive them into our bosom, and they shall see us. And we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other. ⁶⁴ And there shall be mine abode, and it shall be Zion, which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made. And for the space of a thousand years the earth shall rest.”

ENOCH'S VISION OF THE SECOND COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

⁶⁵ And it came to pass that Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, in the last days, to dwell on the earth in righteousness for the space of a thousand years. ⁶⁶ But before that day he saw great tribulations among the wicked. And he also saw the sea, that

strongly pervades the Enochic tradition of antiquity. **7:68–69** The culmination of Enoch's faith and ministry is the translation of the city and people of Zion into heaven. The example of Enoch and his righteous city serves as a scriptural archetype that has strongly influenced Restoration theology on the concept of Zion and the Second Coming.

8:1–11 The third and final genealogy of the Book of Moses (compare 5:42–51; 6:10–25) traces the lineage of Enoch to his great-great-grandson Noah. **8:1** *And all . . . thirty years.* This phrase is

it was troubled, and men's hearts failing them, looking forth with fear for the judgments of the Almighty God, which should come upon the wicked. ⁶⁷ And the Lord showed Enoch all things, even unto the end of the world. And he saw the day of the righteous, the hour of their redemption, and received a fulness of joy.

ENOCH AND HIS PEOPLE ARE TRANSLATED

⁶⁸ And all the days of Zion, in the days of Enoch, were three hundred and sixty-five years. ⁶⁹ And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion. And it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom. And from thence went forth the saying: "Zion is fled!"

THE GENERATIONS OF ENOCH

8 And all the days of Enoch were four hundred and thirty years. ² And it came to pass that Methuselah, the son of Enoch, was not taken, that the covenants of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to Enoch, for he truly covenanted with Enoch that Noah should be of the fruit of his loins. ³ And it came to pass that Methuselah prophesied that from his loins should spring all the kingdoms of the earth through Noah, and he took glory unto himself. ⁴ And there

came forth a great famine into the land, and the Lord cursed the earth with a sore curse, and many of the inhabitants thereof died.

⁵ And it came to pass that Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begat Lamech.

⁶ And Methuselah lived, after he begat Lamech, seven hundred and eighty-two years, and begat sons and daughters. ⁷ And all the days of Methuselah

were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died. ⁸ And Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and begat a son. ⁹ And he called his name Noah, saying, "This son shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed."

¹⁰ And Lamech lived, after he begat Noah, five hundred and ninety-five years, and begat sons and daughters.

¹¹ And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.

THE MINISTRY OF NOAH

¹² And Noah was four hundred and fifty years old, and begat Japheth. And forty-two years afterward he begat Shem of her who was the mother of Japheth, and when he was five hundred years old he begat Ham.

¹³ And Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed, and

inserted interlineally in OT1. **8:5** *The age of Methuselah.* In OT1 and OT2 the age of Methuselah at the birth of Lamech is given as 187 years, but in OT1 the age was crossed out and replaced with 218 years. **8:9** Noah is said by his father to be one who will provide comfort to his family during the famine. This declaration plays on the name Noah (*nôah*) and the Hebrew root meaning "to comfort" (*nḥm*). **8:12** *And Noah . . . begat Ham.* This entire verse is missing in OT1, which instead simply reads: "And Noah was five Hundred years old and Noah begat shem Ham and Japheth." This was revised to the current reading in OT2. **8:13** Like Moses (see 1:4, 13), Noah and his sons are designated sons of God. **8:14–15** In the perplexing Genesis account (Genesis

they were called the sons of God.¹⁴ And when these men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, the sons of men saw that those daughters were fair, and they took them wives, even as they chose.¹⁵ And the Lord said unto Noah, “The daughters of thy sons have sold themselves. For behold, mine anger is kindled against the sons of men, for they will not hearken to my voice.”¹⁶ And it came to pass that Noah prophesied, and taught the things of God, even as it was in the beginning.¹⁷ And the Lord said unto Noah, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he shall know that all flesh shall die. Yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years. And if men do not repent, I will send in the floods upon them.”¹⁸ And in those days there were giants on the earth, and they sought Noah to take away his life. But the Lord was with Noah, and the power of the Lord was upon him.¹⁹ And the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his Gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch.

²⁰ And it came to pass that Noah called upon the children of men, that they should repent. But they hearkened not unto his words.²¹ And also, after that they had heard him, they came up before him, saying, “Behold, we are the sons of God. Have we not taken unto ourselves the daughters of men? And are we not eating and drinking, and marrying, and giving in marriage? And our wives bear unto us children, and the same are mighty men, which are like unto men of old, men of great renown.” And they hearkened not unto the words of Noah.²² And God saw that the wickedness of men had become great in the earth. And every man was lifted up in the imagination of the thoughts of his heart, being only evil continually.²³ And it came to pass that Noah continued his preaching unto the people, saying, “Hearken, and give heed unto my words.”²⁴ Believe and repent of your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, even as our fathers, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost, that ye may have all things made manifest. And if ye do not this, the floods will come in

6:1–2), the “sons of God” (*bēnê ’elohim*) are apparently depicted as divine or supernatural beings (identified as angels in some ancient sources) who cohabitated with mortal women—thus violating the divine-human boundary envisioned in Creation and provoking God to anger. Here, Noah and his sons are afforded the title “sons of God” while wicked and disobedient “sons of men” (that is, mortal descendants of Adam and Eve) are the culprits. Some ancient Jewish and Christian sources identify the sons of God in the Genesis passage as mortal men (in some instances identified as the descendants of Seth). **8:16** Here and at 8:19–20, 23–24, Noah prophesies and preaches repentance, a detail missing from the Genesis account but included in multiple ancient Jewish and Christian sources (compare 2 Peter 2:5), which also highlight Noah’s righteousness. **8:18** As at 7:15, here the text (compare Genesis 6:4) reports giants inhabiting the earth who antagonize Noah. On the possible identity of these giants, see the commentary at 7:15. **8:24** OT1 adds “the gift of” in the promise that those who repent and are baptized shall “receive the Holy Ghost.” **8:21** The wicked inhabitants who reject Noah’s preaching falsely claim

upon you.” Nevertheless, they hearkened not.²⁵ And it repented Noah, and his heart was pained that the Lord had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at the heart.²⁶ And the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air. For it repenteth Noah that I have created them, and that I have made them. And he hath called upon me, for they have sought his life.”²⁷ And thus Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. For Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generation. And he walked with God, as did also his three

sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.²⁸ The earth was corrupt before God, and it was filled with violence.²⁹ And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.³⁰ And God said unto Noah, “The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence, and behold, I will destroy all flesh from off the earth.”

for themselves the noble status God afforded to Noah and his sons. The irony of their declaration lies in the fact that they mistakenly believe their moral autonomy and agency grants them divine status without consideration of their actions (compare 4:28; Genesis 3:22). **8:24** Here Noah explicitly mentions the coming Flood for the first time in his preaching, thus fulfilling the words of the Lord at 8:17 and Enoch’s prophecy at 7:41–47. **8:25–26** This revision of the King James Version of Genesis 6:6 (“it repented the Lord”) most likely reflects Joseph Smith’s desire to avoid confusion over the connotation of the English word *repent* and any attending misapprehension about some supposed need on God’s part to repent for any wrongdoing. An archaic, obsolete meaning of *repent* captured in the King James Version is “to feel regret,” as reflected in the underlying Hebrew (*nĥm*) of this verse (that is, God sorrowed at His creating humanity because of their abject sinfulness). As revised here, it is Noah who grieves over the depraved condition of humanity, which God acknowledges. The added detail that these wicked people sought Noah’s life heightens the tension of the story and provides additional justification for God’s decision to terminate humanity. **8:27** Noah is both “just” and “perfect” in his generation. These two terms in Hebrew (*šadiq* and *timam*) denote a sense of moral uprightness and personal integrity (but not necessarily a sense of absolute sinlessness or being free from any mortal flaw or shortcoming). Here these terms take on new Christological and soteriological significance in light of the text depicting Noah as having accepted and taught the gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed to Adam and Enoch. By virtue of his righteousness and responsiveness to God’s calling, Noah finds grace or favor (*ḥēn*) in the eyes of the Lord. **8:30** The canonical narrative ends on the foreboding note of God announcing the “end of all flesh” and the imminent coming of the divine cataclysm. Although the Prophet translated and revised more biblical material from Genesis beyond what is present in the canonical text, the reason for the abrupt ending here is likely that no additional Book of Moses material was published during Joseph Smith’s lifetime that Franklin D. Richards could draw from to include in the 1851 edition of the Pearl of Great Price.

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY

In the summer of 1835, a traveling antiquities showman named Michael Chandler rode into the growing Latter-day Saint community of Kirtland, Ohio. In his possession was a collection of Egyptian mummies and papyrus scrolls. After exhibiting the antiquities to Joseph Smith, the Prophet determined that one of the scrolls contained the writings of Abraham and another the writings of Joseph of Egypt. He subsequently purchased at least four or five papyrus documents and four mummies from Chandler and set about efforts to translate the records. Precisely how Joseph translated the papyri is unknown. Contemporary sources indicate that the Prophet translated the record by divine revelation (a few mention the Urim and Thummim in connection with the translation) but do not offer more specific details.

The successive migrations of the Latter-day Saints from Ohio to Missouri and then to Illinois in the late 1830s halted work on the Book of Abraham. During this time, Joseph Smith expressed his desire to continue translating the Egyptian records but was unable to because of pressing church and civic duties. He was finally able to prepare a publishable version of the Book of Abraham in early 1842. The text and three accompanying illustrations first appeared serially for a public readership in Nauvoo, Illinois, in the *Times and Seasons* between 1 March and 16 May 1842. Later that year, the text (and the first facsimile) was republished in the *Millennial Star* in England for British Latter-day Saints under the editorial supervision of Elder Parley P. Pratt. Nine years later, in 1851, the Book of Abraham was included in the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price and has appeared in each subsequent edition of the book.

After his death in 1844, Joseph Smith's collection of papyri and mummies transferred to various individuals (including his mother, Lucy Mack Smith, and his widow Emma Hale Smith), with part of it eventually ending up in the Wood's Museum in Chicago. This portion of the collection is presumed lost to the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Another portion of the collection, however, had found its way to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. This quantity, including the original papyrus fragment of Facsimile 1, was returned to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in November 1967. Since

then, the known extant fragments of the Joseph Smith Papyri have remained in the custody of the Church in Salt Lake City.

Associated with the translation of the Book of Abraham is a collection of manuscripts (a portion of one in the handwriting of Joseph Smith, but most in the handwriting of clerks such as Oliver Cowdery and William W. Phelps) sometimes called the Kirtland Egyptian Papers. The documents reflect effort on the part of their creators to interact with the text of the Book of Abraham. Some of the papers also appear to show efforts to decipher some of the writing from the Egyptian papyri and create a systematized grammar of the Egyptian language. The exact nature of these documents, including the extent of Joseph Smith's involvement in their creation and their relationship to the English text of the Book of Abraham, remains uncertain as scholars continue to probe their meaning and significance. Although they perhaps offer a glimpse into the mental efforts undertaken in the unfolding revelatory process in the production of the Book of Abraham (compare Doctrine and Covenants 9:8), to what extent the documents were intended to convey revealed truths as opposed to sincere speculation is ultimately unknown. It also appears unlikely that they were intended to act as a sort of translation key to the Book of Abraham. These papers were a collaborative work in progress and have never been formally accepted among Latter-day Saints as revealed knowledge or binding scripture.

The surviving Egyptian papyri fragments have been translated by both Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint Egyptologists and do not contain any of the text of the Book of Abraham. Instead, they contain copies of ancient Egyptian texts known as the Book of Breathings and the Book of the Dead. The relationship between the revealed English text of the Book of Abraham and the papyri fragments is a matter of ongoing investigation, with different theories having been offered over the years to account for this incongruence. While some have argued that the text of the Book of Abraham was contained on a portion of papyri no longer extant, others have viewed the text as the result of the papyri catalyzing Joseph Smith's revelatory insights on the life and teachings of Abraham. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accommodates either of these views and does not take an official position on the translation of the Book of Abraham other than to say it was accomplished by divine inspiration (something Joseph Smith and others who assisted him in the translation of the text also affirmed).

STRUCTURE

The Book of Abraham is narrated in an autobiographical voice that is consonant in tone and style with Joseph Smith's other scriptural productions. Like the Book of Mormon, it purports to be a historical narrative, although it does contain poetic and literary elements such as parallelism and a brief soliloquy (2:12–13). The text recounts scenes from the history of the eponymous biblical patriarch and offers a personalized glimpse into Abraham's life as he flees his

idolatrous kinsfolk in his homeland of Ur of the Chaldees, enters a covenant with God, and beholds a spectacular vision of the cosmos and Creation.

Some of the content in the book parallels passages from the book of Genesis, most notably Genesis 12 (Abraham 2) and Genesis 1–2 (Abraham 4–5). But its opening act (chapter 1) and grand cosmology (chapter 3) have no biblical correlation. Unlike any other book of Latter-day Saint scripture, the Book of Abraham is appended by three facsimiles which serve to visually illustrate the text’s narrative (Facsimiles 1 and 3) and draw readers into its cosmology (Facsimile 2).

The text ends abruptly in the Garden of Eden with Adam naming the newly created animals. Textual elements (2:21) and Facsimile 3 suggest that the narrative was on track to have readers eventually witness Abraham in Egypt instructing Pharaoh’s court in matters of astronomy (the very astronomy being annunciated in the text, as indicated at 3:15). Themes of priesthood, covenants, sacrifice, obedience, and Abraham’s aptitude as a seer run throughout the extant narrative, suggesting that these elements too would have been prominent in the remainder of the account. Unfortunately, despite the explicitly stated intentions of Joseph Smith, no additional story content was published beyond what is extant. Some sources suggest that material beyond what appears in the published Book of Abraham had been translated by the Prophet, but no such putative material was made available in print before his death on 27 June 1844.

Peppered throughout the text are clearly recognizable Hebrew words (see 3:13, 16, 18) that are the result of Joseph Smith’s study of Hebrew under the tutelage of Joshua Seixas in the early months of 1836. Likewise, key phrases in the text’s Creation account are rendered in ways that are more in harmony with the underlying Hebrew of the King James Version of Genesis 1–2 (for example, the choice of “expanse” over “firmament” at 4:6). These and other clues from the extant manuscripts suggest that the Prophet was actively and consciously involved in shaping the English translation of the Book of Abraham and not merely a passive agent receiving and channeling a pre-rendered text. Without the ability to check the English text against any ancient Abrahamic manuscript, however, the precise nature of the translation of the Book of Abraham must remain in the realm of conjecture, and readers would be wise not to allow these and other unanswerable questions to diminish the power of the text’s narrative or the profundity of its teachings.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The most pronounced contribution of the Book of Abraham to Latter-day Saint theology is undoubtedly what the text reveals about humankind’s relationship to God in the premortal world. Although other books of Latter-day Saint scripture contain references to the concept of the pre-mortality of humankind, it is Abraham’s vision recorded at 3:22–28 that captures most clearly a picture

of the eternal identity of God's children and their purpose here on earth. This cosmology is memorialized in the beloved hymn "If You Could Hie to Kolob," penned by William W. Phelps, who scribed for Joseph Smith during the text's translation process. Drawing from the Book of Abraham's description of the great star or planet nearest to the throne or residence of God (3:3–10), the hymn evokes contemplative reverence for the grandeur of eternity and the human soul's yearning to progress back to its Father's presence, themes appropriately in harmony with Abraham's account.

Besides offering a depiction of the pre-mortal council, the Book of Abraham significantly augments how Latter-day Saints understand the Abrahamic covenant. Elements missing in the Genesis account of Abraham's covenant with God (Genesis 17) but preserved at 2:6–11 include the central importance of priesthood in the Abrahamic covenant and the culminating blessings of eternal life. The book likewise expands how Latter-day Saints conceive of Creation since the text departs in numerous ways from the conventional readings of the Creation account contained in Genesis 1:1–2:4. For example, the Book of Abraham refashions the "days" of Creation into "times," emphasizing the (apparently lengthy) periods of unfolding preparation in the process of the earth's creation (4:1–5:3). The text explicitly mentions the participation of multiple Gods counselling together as they undertook Creation (4:1), a detail hinted at in the Genesis account (Genesis 1:26–27) but prominently narrated in the Book of Abraham (4:26–27; 5:2–3).

Like the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham can be read as a temple text. In addition to the overt quotations found in the temple endowment, the text mirrors the covenantal journey portrayed in the ritual. It begins with Abraham's desire to receive priesthood blessings and be instructed in greater knowledge, echoing temple themes of seeking, revelation, and divine empowerment. The text then presents a vision of the premortal council and divine plan, as well as a Creation narrative—core components of the endowment. Abraham's progression from one who seeks greater blessings to one who receives divine knowledge and commission reflects the temple pattern of ascent into God's presence, making the Book of Abraham a rich scriptural lens through which to understand Latter-day Saint temple theology.

The Book of Abraham's portrait of the ancient world and its expansive cosmology have captured the curiosity of Latter-day Saint writers who have sought ways to make sense of this sometimes perplexing text. While much about the Book of Abraham remains elusive—not the least being the precise relationship the translated text shares with the papyri scrolls obtained by the Prophet Joseph Smith—scholars have been able to piece together a plausible ancient context and setting for the book that makes it much more comprehensible and enriching. The text can also be appreciated for the role it played in shaping Joseph Smith's teachings on such subjects as the eternity of spirit (3:18) and the participation of multiple divinities in organizing Creation (4:1).

Whether the text is read in these contexts or not, there is no denying that this short book of only five chapters presents profound and important eternal truths from which Latter-day Saints greatly benefit.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviated designations for Book of Abraham manuscripts used here follow Brian M. Hauglid, ed., *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2010). They have been correlated with the designations used in Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Volume 4: Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2018).

Ab1 – Abraham Manuscript 1 Lines 1–21 on folio 1a of Ab4 (Abraham 1:1–3) W. W. Phelps (1835) = Book of Abraham Manuscript, circa July–circa November 1835–C [Abraham 1:1–2:18]

Ab2 – Abraham Manuscript 2 (Abraham 1:4–2:6) Frederick G. Williams (1835) = Book of Abraham Manuscript, circa July–circa November 1835–A [Abraham 1:4–2:6]

Ab3 – Abraham Manuscript 3 (Abraham 1:4–2:2) Warren Parrish (1835) = Book of Abraham Manuscript, circa July–circa November 1835–B [Abraham 1:4–2:2]

Ab4 – Abraham Manuscript 4 begins at line 22 on folio 1 of Ab1 (Abraham

1:4–2:13) Warren Parrish (1835) = Book of Abraham Manuscript, circa July–circa November 1835–C [Abraham 1:1–2:18]

Ab5 – Abraham Manuscript 5 (Abraham 1:1–2:18) Willard Richards (1842) = Book of Abraham Manuscript and Explanation to Accompany Facsimile 1, circa February 1842 [Abraham 1:1–2:18]

T&S – Times and Seasons (Abraham 1–5) = Book of Abraham and Facsimiles, 1 March–16 May 1842

MS – Millennial Star (Abraham 1–5), 3 July 1842–4 August 1842.

Text and Commentary

THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

A translation of some ancient records that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt. The writings of Abraham while he was in Egypt, called the Book of Abraham, written by his own hand upon papyrus.

PROLOGUE—ABRAHAM SEEKS THE PATRIARCHAL ORDER

1 In the land of the Chaldeans, at the residence of my father, I, Abraham, saw that it was needful for me to obtain another place of residence. ² And, finding there was greater happiness, and peace, and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the

same. Having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

Heading This heading was published alongside the text of the Book of Abraham in the 1 March 1842, issue of the *T&S* and has appeared, with some modification, in each reprinting of the text. *The writings of Abraham.* The heading as published in the *T&S* describes the text as “purporting to be the writings of Abraham.” The phrase “purporting to be” was dropped in the 1878 edition of the Pearl of Great Price. This should not be taken to mean Joseph Smith or those who assisted him in the translation of the Book of Abraham doubted or questioned the authenticity of the text. Rather, “purport” in the Prophet’s day merely meant “to mean, to signify.” *By his own hand.* The phrase “by the hand” is attested as an ancient Egyptian idiom to denote authorship and agency. It also appears in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Haggai 1:1; 2:1; Zechariah 7:7, 12; Malachi 1:1) to denote the prophetic agent issuing the word of the Lord (compare 1 Corinthians 16:21; Galatians 6:11; Colossians 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:17; Philemon 1:19). The phrase “written by his own hand, upon papyrus,” accordingly, need only be taken here as attributing authorship of the text to Abraham, not necessarily as a declaration that Abraham physically wrote the papyrus manuscripts acquired by Joseph Smith. Ab1 begins: “Translation of the Book of Abraham written by his own hand upon papyrus and found in the CataCombs of Egypts.” **1** The opening chapter of the Book of Abraham narrates the patriarch’s life in Ur of the Chaldees, focusing on his escape from his murderous kinsmen. It contains much unique material that is not paralleled in the sparse biblical account of the early life of Abraham (see Genesis 11:27–32). **1:1** *In the land of the Chaldeans.* The narrative in the published text of the Book of Abraham takes place in the land of the Chaldeans (Ur), Haran, and then Canaan. Abraham never actually sets foot in Egypt in the extant text, although from 2:21 and Facsimile 3 it is clear this is where the narrative was leading. Although Joseph Smith intended to translate and publish more text, he unfortunately did not accomplish that before his death. The location of Abraham’s Ur of the Chaldees (see 1:20; 2:1–4; compare Genesis 11:27–32) is disputed. The most popular candidate for Abraham’s Ur is Tell el-Muqayyar in southern Iraq. However, various sites in modern Syria and Turkey have also been proposed. *I, Abraham.* The autobiographical voice and structure of the text parallels the inscription of Idrimi (circa 1460–1400 BC), king of the Amorite city of Alalakh. **1:2** Abraham begins his prologue with a list of titles and attributes. Some of Abraham’s titles are shared by

³It was conferred upon me from the fathers. It came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundations of the earth to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, [or] first father, through the fathers unto me. ⁴I sought for mine appointment unto the priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed.

THE IDOLATRY OF ABRAHAM'S KINSFOLK

⁵My fathers having turned from their righteousness, and from the holy commandments which the Lord

their God had given unto them, unto the worshiping of the gods of the heathen, utterly refused to hearken to my voice. ⁶For their hearts were set to do evil, and were wholly turned to the god of Elkenah, and the god of Libnah, and the god of Mahmackrah, and the god of Korash, and the god of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. ⁷Therefore, they turned their hearts to the sacrifice of the heathen in offering up their children unto their dumb idols, and hearkened not unto my voice, but endeavored to take away my life by the hand of the priest of Elkenah. (The priest of Elkenah was also the priest of Pharaoh.)

Jesus (see, for example, Hebrew 4:14–16), thereby signifying the patriarch as a type of Christ. **1:3** Ab1 omits “it was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers,” making the sentence read: “I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers from the beginning of time . . .” *First Father*. The 1902 and 1921 editions of the text read, “Our first father.” The 1981 edition corrected this to read, “Or first father,” bringing it into conformity with Ab1 and the 1842 printing. **1:4** The theme of priesthood and rightful priesthood succession is prominent in the text. Pharaoh makes claim to a counterfeit priesthood (see 1:25–28), and the covenant Abraham enters into with God includes explicit stipulations related to priesthood (see 2:9–11). **1:5–7** *The idolatry of Abraham's kinsfolk*. Joshua 24:2 preserves brief mention of the idolatry of Abraham's father, Terah. The idolatry of Abraham's kinsfolk is a common motif in extra-biblical Jewish and Islamic accounts of the life of the patriarch. *Elkenah* . . . *Pharaoh*. The names Elkenah and Libnah are given as Elkkener or Elkeenah and Zibnah in the Kirtland-era manuscripts (as at 1:13, 17, 20, 29), while the name of the god Korash is either omitted or rendered here as Koash in Ab4. The name Elkenah is attested in Northwest Semitic and Anatolian inscriptions as *Elkurniša*. It appears as a male personal name in the King James Version of the Old Testament (see Exodus 6:24; 1 Samuel 1:1, 4, 8, 19, 21, 23), but not as a deity's name. It is a shortened version of an epithet meaning “God, creator of earth” (*ʾēl qônēh ʾāreš*). Libnah is plausibly attested in texts from ancient Ugarit and is likely derived from the Semitic root *lbn*, meaning “to be white” (as in the Ugaritic *labanu* or the Hebrew *lābēn*). Mahmackrah remains unattested and the origin of the name unknown. It might be identifiable with the name of a deity found at Beth-Shean rendered in Egyptian as *Mkr* or *Mʿkꜣrꜣ*, but this is uncertain. Korash is perhaps attested in ancient Hittite as *kurša*, a type of bag that was a symbol for a deity and so was treated as such. The name Pharaoh derives from Egyptian and means literally “great house” (*pr-ꜥꜣ*). This god could plausibly be the crocodile deity Sobek or the falcon deity Horus (Fac 1, Fig 9 would suggest the former), both deities anciently having been associated with the Egyptian monarch and both of whose iconography is attested at sites such as Ebla in northern Syria during Abraham's day.

HUMAN SACRIFICE IN THE LAND OF CHALDEA

⁸Now at this time it was the custom of the priest of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to offer up upon the altar which was built in the land of Chaldea, for the offering unto these strange gods, men, women, and children. ⁹And it came to pass that the priest made an offering unto the god of Pharaoh, and also unto the god of Shagreel, even after the manner of the Egyptians. (Now the god of Shagreel was the sun.) ¹⁰Even the thank-offering of a child did the priest of Pharaoh offer upon the altar which stood by the hill called Potiphar's Hill, at the head of the plain of Olishem.

¹¹Now, this priest had offered upon this altar three virgins at one time,

who were the daughters of Onitah, one of the royal descent directly from the loins of Ham. These virgins were offered up because of their virtue; they would not bow down to worship gods of wood or of stone. Therefore, they were killed upon this altar, and it was done after the manner of the Egyptians.

CHALDEAN PRIESTS MAKE AN ATTEMPT ON ABRAHAM'S LIFE

¹²And it came to pass that the priests laid violence upon me that they might slay me also, as they did those virgins upon this altar. (And that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record.) ¹³It was made after the form of a bedstead, such as was had among the Chaldeans,

1:8–9 *Human sacrifice.* Although the offering of human life to the idolatrous gods was done “after the manner of the Egyptians,” it was said to be done in the land of Chaldea. The modern terminology of “human sacrifice” does not appear in the text. Only once is this practice called “the sacrifice of the heathen” (1:7). Otherwise, it is called an “offering” or “thank-offering” (1:9–10). The extent to which peoples of the ancient Near East practiced what is sometimes today called “human sacrifice” remains debated. Ritual or sacred violence is attested among the Egyptians of Abraham’s day in the form of execration rituals in which enemies and other threats to Egypt were ritually destroyed. These rituals were mainly carried out on effigies but in at least one documented case on an actual human victim. Trespassers of sacred space, rebels against the king, and desecrators of tombs were also deemed worthy of capital punishment by the ancient Egyptians. *Egyptian presence in the land of Chaldea.* The text mentions a “priest of Pharaoh” conducting these sacrifices “after the manner of the Egyptians” (1:10–11), suggesting some level of awareness of Egyptian culture and religion in Abraham’s homeland. (But note that the ethnic origin of this priest is not given, only that he served the god Pharaoh mentioned in the text.) Based on the current archaeological record, this detail converges much better with a setting for Abraham’s Ur in modern Syria or Turkey than with the site of Tell el-Muqayyar in southern Iraq. **1:9** *The god of Shagreel.* The identity of this god is unknown, but the name suggests for itself a Semitic origin. **1:10** *Potiphar’s Hill.* The name Potiphar derives from Egyptian and means “the one whom [the god] Re has given” (*p3-di-p3-r*; compare Genesis 39:1). The apparent association between Shagreel, the god of the sun, and Potiphar’s Hill at 1:9–10 would be appropriate since Re was a solar deity in ancient Egyptian religion. *The plain of Olishem.* Adjacent to Potiphar’s Hill is the plain of Olishem, which has been persuasively identified as the toponym Ullisum (or, variously, Ulishum, Ullissum, and Ullis) mentioned in inscriptions from the Akkadian king Naram-Sin (circa 2254–2218 BC). **1:12–14** In a cruelly ironic inversion of the story of the binding of Isaac (see Genesis 22), here it is Abraham who is almost sacrificed. But

and it stood before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and also a god like unto that of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. (¹⁴That you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fashion of them in the figures at the beginning, which manner of figures is called by the Chaldeans, Rahleenos, which signifies hieroglyphics.)

JEHOVAH DELIVERS ABRAHAM

¹⁵ And as they lifted up their hands upon me, that they might offer me up and take away my life, behold, I lifted up my voice unto the Lord my God, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and he filled me with the vision of the Almighty, and the angel of his presence stood by me, and immediately unloosed my bands.

¹⁶ And his voice was unto me, “Abraham, Abraham, behold, my name is Jehovah, and I have heard thee, and have come down to deliver thee, and to take thee away from thy father’s house, and from all thy kinsfolk, into a strange land which thou knowest not of. ¹⁷ And this because they have turned their hearts away from me, to worship the god of Elkenah, and the god of Libnah, and the god of Mahmackrah, and the god of Korash, and the god of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Therefore, I have come down to visit them, and to destroy him who hath lifted up his hand against thee, Abraham, my son, to take away thy life. ¹⁸ Behold, I will lead thee by my hand, and I will take thee, to put upon thee my name, even the priesthood of thy

unlike the loving, trusting relationship displayed between Abraham and Isaac as father and son in the Genesis account, here the idolatrous priests lay violence on Abraham against his will. **1:12** Ab1 interlineally inserts “I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record”; Ab2 reads “that is lying before you” and sublineally inserts “at the commencement of this record.” The references to Facsimile 1 in the text of the Book of Abraham (compare 1:14) were apparently a secondary insertion on the part of Joseph Smith or one of his scribes and not original to the revealed text. **1:14** Referring to Facsimile 1 (as at 1:12). The gloss “which signifies hieroglyphics” appears for the first time in the *T&S* printing of the text, suggesting that it comes from Joseph Smith or one of the clerks in the printing office at the time of publication in 1842. In Ab2 and Ab3 the word is rendered Kahleenos. It is unknown what language the Chaldeans of Abraham’s day spoke. **1:15** In another intertextual nod to the story of the binding of Isaac, “the angel of the Lord” stops Abraham from “stretch[ing] forth his hand” and sacrificing his son in the Genesis account (see Genesis 22:10–11), whereas here “the angel of [the Lord’s] presence” saves Abraham from the idolatrous priests who had “lifted up their hands” to slay him. **1:16** Even though the “angel of his presence” stood next to Abraham (compare Fac 1, Fig 1, where this figure is called the “Angel of the Lord”), from this verse it is clear that Jehovah delivered the patriarch, thus implying that the “angel of his presence” is Jehovah Himself (compare Genesis 16:9–14; Exodus 3:2). **1:16–17 Abraham.** The Kirtland-era manuscripts and the *T&S* give the name as Abram instead of Abraham, and the Lord continues to address the patriarch as such. The name was changed to Abraham in the *MS* printing in 1842. *Jehovah.* Like Moses on the mount (see Exodus 3), here Abraham receives the revelation of the Lord’s true name (compare Joseph Smith Translation, Exodus 6:3). *Strange land.* The “land which thou knowest not of” refers to the land of Canaan. “Strange” in this sense means “foreign” or “unknown.” *Mahmackrah.* Rendered Mah Mach-rah in Ab2 and Mahmachrah in Ab3, Ab4. **1:18–19** The Lord promises Abraham that He will lead him by the hand, put His name on him, and give him priesthood

father, and my power shall be over thee. ¹⁹ As it was with Noah so shall it be with thee; but through my ministry my name shall be known in the earth forever, for I am thy God.”

THE LORD SMITES THE FALSE CHALDEAN PRIEST

²⁰ Behold, Potiphar’s Hill was in the land of Ur, of Chaldea. And the Lord broke down the altar of Elkenah, and of the gods of the land, and utterly destroyed them, and smote the priest that he died. And there was great mourning in Chaldea, and also in the court of Pharaoh (which Pharaoh signifies king by royal blood).

THE DISCOVERY OF EGYPT

²¹ Now this king of Egypt was a descendant from the loins of Ham and was a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth. ²² From this descent sprang all the Egyptians, and thus the blood of

the Canaanites was preserved in the land. ²³ The land of Egypt being first discovered by a woman, who was the daughter of Ham, and the daughter of Egyptus (which in the Chaldean signifies Egypt, which signifies that which is forbidden).

²⁴ When this woman discovered the land it was under water, who afterward settled her sons in it; and thus from Ham sprang that race which preserved the curse in the land.

THE COUNTERFEIT PRIESTHOOD OF PHARAOH

²⁵ Now the first government of Egypt was established by Pharaoh, the eldest son of Egyptus, the daughter of Ham, and it was after the manner of the government of Ham, which was patriarchal. ²⁶ Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all

power. The covenantal language and temple imagery of these verses is unmistakable. The reference to Noah alludes to the covenant made in Genesis 9:8–17. **1:20** In an overt act of iconoclasm that would have been tantamount to decide in an ancient Near Eastern mindset, the Lord destroys the Chaldean idols and, for good measure, slays the idolatrous priest. This signals the abject impotence of the false gods of Abraham’s rivals. **1:21–24** *The discovery of Egypt*. Origin myths were prevalent in the ancient Near East. Some of the common elements in these myths include the presence of a primordial flood, a description of the origin of humanity, and an etiological explanation for the condition of the world. These themes are echoed in this passage. Abraham’s understanding of the origins of Egypt are best viewed in the context of the mythic milieu of his day and age. *The blood of the Canaanites*. A dynasty of Semitic or Levantine (“Canaanite”) rulers was established in the Nile Delta of Lower Egypt sometime around 1800–1725 BC. This was followed by another dynasty of Semitic kings known commonly as the Hyksos. The mention of the king of Egypt in Abraham’s day being a “partaker of the blood of the Canaanites” could perhaps be a reference to a ruler from either of these dynasties. Alternatively, it could be a reference to the pre-Flood Canaanites mentioned at Moses 7:6–9. *Egyptus*. The name of the daughter of Ham in Kirtland manuscripts is given as Zeptah. The name arguably derives from Egyptian, meaning “son of [the god] Ptah” (*sz-ptḥ*). The name is said to signify “that which is forbidden” in Chaldean, not Egyptian. As with the gloss at 1:14, it is possible that this is a folk etymology or poetic metonymy, much like how centuries later the name Babylonian (“Chaldean”) came to mean something like “superstitious” and was associated with soothsaying and astrology (compare Daniel 2:2, 10). *The curse of Ham*. The mention of Ham and the “curse in the land” appears to be a reference to the enigmatic account of Noah and his sons in Genesis

his days, seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the priesthood. ²⁷Now Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry. ²⁸But I shall endeavor, hereafter, to delineate the chronology running back from myself to the beginning of the creation, for the records have come into my hands, which I hold unto this present time.

FAMINE IN THE LAND OF CHALDEA
²⁹Now after the priest of Elkenah was smitten that he died, there came a fulfilment of those things which were said unto me concerning the land of Chaldea, that there should be a famine in the land. ³⁰Accordingly, a famine prevailed throughout all the land of Chaldea, and my father was sorely tormented because of the famine, and he repented of the evil which he had determined against me, to take away my life. ³¹But the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore, a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day. And I

9:18–27. The precise nature of this curse is not specified, although it involved some kind of restriction to holding the priesthood based on the description at 1:26–27. These verses have in the past been misread to justify a ban on men of African descent from holding the priesthood, even though the text says nothing about the curse and priesthood restriction being associated with skin color. From the immediate context it is apparent that the issue is more along the lines of rightful priesthood succession rather than skin color (compare 1:3–4, 25–27, 31). The racist reading of these verses that links worthiness to hold the priesthood with skin color has been officially rejected by modern leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (See also the commentary at Moses 7:6–8.) **1:25** The Kirtland-era manuscripts render the name Egyptus as Egyptes, probably reflecting how it was pronounced by Joseph Smith and contemporaries. **1:26** Pharaoh is described as a “righteous man” who enjoyed some blessings but was unauthorized to hold priesthood. Unlike the hardhearted and murderous Pharaoh of the Exodus account (see Exodus 1:15–22; 5: 7–9), the Pharaoh of this text is portrayed as sincere but misguided. **1:27** Pharaoh is treated as a personal name at 1:25, but in this instance appears to be a title held by multiple individuals (comparable perhaps to the Caesars of ancient Rome or the Nephis of the Book of Mormon). Although there appear to be a few rare earlier attestations, it did not become commonplace to refer to the Egyptian monarch with the title of pharaoh until after Abraham’s day. **1:29–30** The famine serves as a literary element that drives the narrative forward and gives Abraham motivation to leave his ancestral home. In the Genesis account the motivation for the flight of Abraham and his family is not specified (Genesis 11:27–12:5). **1:31** Foreshadowing the Creation account in Abraham 4–5. *Records of the fathers*. Some apocryphal Jewish works depict Abraham as having had ancestral records from which he gained knowledge and wisdom. In one of these works, Abraham teaches the Egyptians out of the book

shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me.

ABRAHAM FLEES CHALDEA
(GENESIS 12:1–5)

2 Now the Lord God caused the famine to wax sore in the land of Ur, insomuch that Haran, my brother, died. But Terah, my father, yet lived in the land of Ur, of the Chaldees. ² And it came to pass that I, Abraham, took Sarai to wife, and Nehor, my brother, took Milcah to wife, who was the daughter of Haran. ³ Now the Lord had said unto me, “Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee.” ⁴ Therefore I left the land of Ur, of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and I took Lot, my brother’s son, and his wife, and Sarai, my wife. And also my father followed after me, unto the land which we denominated Haran. ⁵ And the famine abated, and

my father tarried in Haran and dwelt there, as there were many flocks in Haran. And my father turned again unto his idolatry, therefore he continued in Haran.

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT
(GENESIS 12:1–3; 17:1–14)

⁶ But I, Abraham, and Lot, my brother’s son, prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord appeared unto me, and said unto me, “Arise, and take Lot with thee. For I have purposed to take thee away out of Haran, and to make of thee a minister to bear my name in a strange land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession, when they hearken to my voice. ⁷ For I am the Lord thy God. I dwell in heaven; the earth is my footstool. I stretch my hand over the sea, and it obeys my voice. I cause the wind and the fire to be my chariot. I say to the mountains, ‘Depart hence,’ and behold, they are taken away by a whirlwind, in an instant, suddenly. ⁸ My name is Jehovah, and I know the

of Enoch, while in another he learns from ancestral records the language of Adam (said to be Hebrew) and of the Creation.

2:2 *Nehor*. The name is rendered Nahor in both the Kirtland and Nauvoo-era manuscripts, possibly reflecting how it was pronounced. **2:3** *Abraham*. As with 1:16–17, the name is given as Abram in the manuscripts and T&S printing. **2:4** The city (and land) of Haran has been widely identified with a city by the same name in southern Turkey near modern Urfa (*Şanlıurfa*). The name is attested in records from ancient Ebla. According to this verse, it appears that the city (and land) got its name from Abraham himself in memory of his brother who perished in the famine mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. **2:5** Abraham’s father reverts to his idolatry, forcing Abraham to leave him behind, thereby fulfilling the commandment he received from God to leave his “country” (that is, his homeland; *’āreṣ*), his “kindred” (that is, his ethnic group; *môledet*), and his “father’s house” (that is, his family; *bēyt ’āb*). This both raises the stakes of the narrative and demonstrates Abraham’s great faith, as he obviously sacrificed much to secure the blessings promised to him by God. **2:6–11** *The Abrahamic covenant*. As promised at 1:18–19, and in parallel with Genesis 15 and 17, here Abraham enters a covenant with God. In its most basic definition, *covenant* in the biblical and ancient Near Eastern sense means something like “pact” or “treaty.” It involves, at a minimum, two parties, one of which typically sets the terms and conditions of the covenant, which the other is obliged to uphold. Numerous treaties or

end from the beginning; therefore, my hand shall be over thee. ⁹ And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and priesthood unto all nations. ¹⁰ And I will bless them through thy name. For as many as receive this gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father. ¹¹ And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and in thee (that is, in thy priesthood) and in thy seed (that is,

thy priesthood). For I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal.”

ABRAHAM'S SOLILOQUY

¹² Now after the Lord had withdrawn from speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart, “Thy servant has sought thee earnestly, now I have found thee. ¹³ Thou didst send thine angel to deliver me from the gods of Elkenah, and I will do well to hearken unto thy voice; therefore,

covenants between political entities (kings or rulers of city-states or empires) from the ancient Near East have been recovered. In the Hebrew Bible, as in here, it is God who sets the terms and conditions of the covenant and who acts as the ultimate authority to either revoke or sustain the covenant depending on how well His servants execute their obligations. *The covenantal pattern.* Ancient treaties or covenants typically followed a set pattern. The structure of the covenantal pattern evolved over time, but typically featured a solemn oath or ceremony, a preamble, a historical prologue, named witnesses to the covenant, stipulations, promised blessings for keeping the covenant, and promised curses for breaking the covenant. The covenant Abraham enters with God here features several of these elements, including a solemn ceremony (2:6), a preamble (2:6–8), stipulations (2:9–10), and blessings and curses (2:11). *Lot as witness.* Lot, Abraham's nephew, is present with him during the covenant ceremony, thus fulfilling the need for witnesses. The Lord, however, appears only to Abraham in the theophany. *Jehovah as cosmic deity.* In the ancient Near East, various gods were commonly believed to have specialized control over the forces of nature (for example, in ancient Canaanite religion Baal controlled rain and vegetation, and Yamm controlled the sea). Jehovah's mastery over the elements demonstrates His cosmic dominion and His preeminence among the gods of the heathen nations. *The true name of God.* As at 1:16, the Lord reveals His true name to Abraham, thereby granting him special access to the divine and forming a special covenantal bond. *Covenant and priesthood.* Importantly, the covenant blessings promised to Abraham are said here to include priesthood blessings, a detail missing in the biblical record. In return for being made “a great nation” and “great among all nations,” Abraham and his descendants are expected to bless the whole earth with priesthood ordinances. Those who enter and accept Abraham's covenant and priesthood are blessed to be counted as his descendants and thereby as heirs to the covenantal promises. The glosses, which clarify the Lord's instructions, provided at 2:11 make it clear that the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are conceptually tied to the priesthood. It is unclear who provided these glosses—whether Abraham himself in his record or Joseph Smith in his translation. *Blessings of salvation.* The culmination of the Abrahamic covenant is nothing less than “the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal.” As with Doctrine and Covenants 132:29–33, the text here emphasizes that the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant extend into the eternities. **2:12–13** Abraham recognizes

let thy servant rise up and depart in peace.”

ABRAHAM JOURNEYS INTO CANAAN

(GENESIS 12:4–9)

¹⁴ So I, Abraham, departed as the Lord had said unto me, and Lot with me. And I, Abraham, was sixty and two years old when I departed out of Haran. ¹⁵ And I took Sarai, whom I took to wife when I was in Ur, in Chaldea, and Lot, my brother’s son, and all our substance that we had gathered, and the souls that we had won in Haran, and came forth in the way to the land of Canaan, and dwelt in tents as we came on our way. ¹⁶ Therefore, eternity was our covering and our rock

and our salvation, as we journeyed from Haran by the way of Jershon, to come to the land of Canaan. ¹⁷ Now I, Abraham, built an altar in the land of Jershon, and made an offering unto the Lord, and prayed that the famine might be turned away from my father’s house, that they might not perish. ¹⁸ And then we passed from Jershon through the land unto the place of Sechem. It was situated in the plains of Moreh, and we had already come into the borders of the land of the Canaanites, and I offered sacrifice there in the plains of Moreh, and called on the Lord devoutly, because we had already come into the land of this idolatrous nation.

that his miraculous delivery out of the hands of the murderous priest of Elkenah (see 1:12–19) serves as proof that God could fulfill His covenant promises. **2:14–20** This material parallels the account in Genesis 12:4–9 but with some notable differences, including at least one named location along the journey and Abraham’s age at the time of departure. **2:14** Here Abraham is said to have been sixty-two when he left Haran. In the Genesis account (Genesis 12:4), he is said to be seventy-five. Ancient and medieval extra-biblical sources put Abraham at, variously, fifty-two, sixty, seventy, seventy-five, and eighty years old at the time of his departure. **2:15** Those journeying with Abraham into Canaan are his wife, Sarai; his nephew, Lot; and a group of “souls” (compare Genesis 12:5) of unspecified number. In the Genesis account, Abraham “gets” these “souls” from Haran, whereas here he “wins” them; presumably meaning he converted them through his preaching and numbered them in the covenant. (In fact, this is precisely how ancient Jewish interpreters understood Abraham’s acquisition of these persons into his party.) Traveling in large numbers with plenty of provisions would have ensured an overall safer journey into the “strange” (foreign) land of Canaan. **2:16** *Jershon*. The name of this location is rendered Jurshon in Ab4, probably reflecting how it was pronounced. The location of this site is unknown and is not named in the corresponding chapter in Genesis. From the description given here, it appears to be located somewhere between Haran in northern Mesopotamia and Sechem in Canaan. A possible candidate is modern Jerash (ancient Gerasa) in northern Jordan. This Jershon should not be confused with the Jershon of the Book of Mormon (Alma 27:22–24). **2:17** Abraham builds an altar at Jershon and offers sacrifice to the Lord, an action he will repeat at Sechem and Bethel (see 2:18, 20; compare Genesis 12:7–8). In the first instance, Abraham offers sacrifice in a sort of intercessory prayer for his father, demonstrating his continued love for him despite his idolatrous (and murderous) behavior. Besides this, Abraham’s offering of sacrifice expresses gratitude to God for safe entry into Canaan and consecrates this new land, thereby making it suitable for sacred ritual activity. (This is necessary because Canaan is said to be an “idolatrous nation” at 2:18.) The text does not specify what kind of sacrifice Abraham made. Both animal and vegetable or cereal sacrifices were ubiquitous in the cultures of the ancient Near East and could be

THE LORD APPEARS AGAIN TO ABRAHAM

(GENESIS 12:7–8)

¹⁹ And the Lord appeared unto me in answer to my prayers, and said unto me, “Unto thy seed will I give this land.” ²⁰ And I, Abraham, arose from the place of the altar which I had built unto the Lord, and removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched my tent there—Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east. And there I built another altar unto the Lord, and called again upon the name of the Lord.

ABRAHAM TRAVELS ON TO EGYPT

(GENESIS 12:9–10)

²¹ And I, Abraham, journeyed, going on still towards the south. And there

was a continuation of a famine in the land. And I, Abraham, concluded to go down into Egypt, to sojourn there, for the famine became very grievous.

THE LORD INSTRUCTS ABRAHAM BEFORE ENTERING EGYPT

(GENESIS 12:11–13)

²² And it came to pass when I was come near to enter into Egypt, the Lord said unto me, “Behold, Sarai, thy wife, is a very fair woman to look upon. ²³ Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see her, they will say, ‘She is his wife,’ and they will kill you, but they will save her alive. Therefore, see that ye do on this wise: ²⁴ let her say unto the Egyptians, she is thy sister, and thy soul shall live.”

²⁵ And it came to pass that I, Abraham,

offered as tokens of gratitude or as gifts for a deity, to fulfill ritual duties, in funerary practices, in divinatory and exorcism practices, and to ratify covenants and treaties. (This last category appears to explain Abraham’s actions in Genesis 15:9–11.) **2:18** *Sechem*. Rendered Sichem in the King James Version. The name of this location is attested in Egyptian sources from Abraham’s day and is widely identified with Tell Balata in the modern West Bank. *The plains of Moreh*. Sechem is said to be situated adjacent to a location called the plains of Moreh (compare Genesis 12:6), or more properly, the “oak” or “terebinth” (*‘elon*) of Moreh (or, even more literally, “the oracle/teacher oak”). The rendering here is most likely dependent on the King James Version (Genesis 12:6). Several authorities agree that the oak of Moreh was probably a local Canaanite shrine (a sacred tree). Unlike in the King James Version Genesis account, here Abraham identifies the land of Canaan as an “idolatrous nation” and explains that he offered authorized sacrifices and called upon the Lord “devoutly” to, it appears, counter this local idolatry. **2:19** In response to Abraham’s devotion, the Lord appears to him and gives him his own oracle (right there at the “oracle tree,” as it were) that his “seed” would inherit this land. The play on horticultural imagery cannot be missed. **2:20** *Bethel*. This location is widely identified with modern Beitin in the West Bank (with a minority favoring the site of el-Bireh not far from Beitin as an alternative candidate). It is here that later, in Genesis 28:10–22, Abraham’s grandson Jacob would experience his famous dream and theophany. *Hai*. Also rendered Ai in modern biblical translations (meaning “the ruin”), this site, a sort of sister city to Bethel, is identified by most scholars with et-Tell just east of Beitin in the West Bank. It plays a prominent role in the book of Joshua as a city captured by the Israelites (Joshua 7–8). **2:21** The motivation for the journey to Egypt is, as with the motivation to leave Haran, to escape a famine. In the extant text of the Book of Abraham, however, the patriarch never actually sets foot in Egypt. **2:22–25** Unlike in the parallel account in Genesis 12:11–13, here the Lord instructs Abraham to call Sarai his sister instead of his wife. The concern underlying this subterfuge is clear from the text. Given the capacity for callousness in ancient royalty, this fear was not unrealistic. The text is taking advantage of an

told Sarai, my wife, all that the Lord had said unto me, “Therefore say unto them, ‘I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee.’”

ABRAHAM RECEIVES A REVELATION BY THE URIM AND THUMMIM

3 And I, Abraham, had the Urim and Thummim, which the Lord my God had given unto me, in Ur of the Chaldees. ² And I saw the stars, that they were very great, and that one of them was nearest unto the throne of God; and there were many great ones which were near unto it.

KOLOB, THE GOVERNING ONE

³ And the Lord said unto me, “These are the governing ones, and the name of the great one is Kolob, because it is near unto me, for I am the Lord thy God. I have set this one to govern all those which belong to the same order as that upon which thou standest.”

⁴ And the Lord said unto me, by the Urim and Thummim, that Kolob was after the manner of the Lord, according to its times and seasons in the revolutions thereof; that one revolution was a day unto the Lord, after his manner of reckoning, it being one thousand years according to the time appointed unto that whereon thou standest. This is the reckoning of the Lord’s time, according to the reckoning of Kolob. ⁵ And the Lord said unto me, “The planet which is the lesser light, lesser than that which is to rule the day, even the night, is above or greater than that upon which thou standest in point of reckoning, for it moveth in order more slow. This is in order because it standeth above the earth upon which thou standest, therefore the reckoning of its time is not so many as to its number of days, and of months, and of years.”

⁶ And the Lord said unto me, “Now,

ambiguity in ancient Egyptian language and culture. In ancient Egyptian, the word for *wife* (*hmt*) meant “wife,” but the word for *sister* (*snt*) could mean either “sister” or “wife.” Genesis 20:12 identifies Sarai as Abraham’s half-sister. The Lord was thus not instructing Abraham to outright lie but rather to be evasive or purposefully ambiguous. A text recovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls depicts Abraham as being warned of this impending danger in a dream.

³ This chapter features some of the more distinctive and important elements of Latter-day Saint cosmology. The depiction of Kolob, a great star or planet nearest to the throne of God, and some of the most explicit details in Restoration scripture about the premortal council in heaven are derived from this chapter. **3:1–2** *Urim and Thummim*. Abraham is said to have had the Urim and Thummim, by which he communicated with God. Note that Abraham does not necessarily see his cosmic vision through the Urim and Thummim but rather seems to use it to, at a minimum, speak with God (3:4). That Abraham’s Urim and Thummim was the same as the one possessed by the brother of Jared (Ether 3:21–28) is unlikely. Rather, it seems more probable that Abraham possessed a separate seeric or oracular instrument that was rendered as “Urim and Thummim” by Joseph Smith in his translation. (No physical description of the Urim and Thummim or how it was used as an oracular device is provided in the text.) Intriguingly, medieval Jewish sources posit that Abraham had a glowing precious stone or some other instrument (something like an astrolabe) for studying the stars. *Abraham as astronomer*. Ancient and medieval sources report that Abraham was knowledgeable in astronomical sciences. Some of these sources even depict Abraham as bringing a knowledge of mathematics and astronomy to Egypt.

Abraham, these two facts exist, behold thine eyes see it. It is given unto thee to know the times of reckoning, and the set time, yea, the set time of the earth upon which thou standest, and the set time of the greater light which is set to rule the day, and the set time of the lesser light which is set to rule the night.⁷ Now the set time of the lesser light is a longer time as to its reckoning than the reckoning of the time of the earth upon which thou standest.⁸ And where these two facts exist, there shall be another fact above them, that is, there shall be another planet whose reckoning of time shall be longer still.⁹ And thus there shall be the reckoning of the time of one planet above another, until thou come nigh unto Kolob, which Kolob is after the reckoning of the Lord's time, which Kolob is set nigh unto the throne of

God, to govern all those planets which belong to the same order as that upon which thou standest.¹⁰ And it is given unto thee to know the set time of all the stars that are set to give light, until thou come near unto the throne of God.”

THE LORD SHOWS ABRAHAM OTHER CELESTIAL BODIES

¹¹ Thus I, Abraham, talked with the Lord, face to face, as one man talketh with another, and he told me of the works which his hands had made.

¹² And he said unto me, “My son, my son” —and his hand was stretched out—“behold I will show you all these.” And he put his hand upon mine eyes, and I saw those things which his hands had made, which were many. And they multiplied before mine eyes, and I could not see the end thereof.¹³ And he said unto

3:3 Kolob. Here Kolob is mentioned for the first time. In the text it is said to be a star or planet; a “great [star/planet]” and a “governing one”; “nigh unto the throne of God”; used to tell relative time (3:4); and a signifier of “first creation” (Fac 2, Fig 1). The name may derive from the reconstructed Afroasiatic root **k̄lb/k̄rb*, meaning “interior, inside, middle.” Descendent cognates that likely relate to Kolob are attested in Egyptian (*k̄z̄b*; “interior, midst”), Akkadian (*qerbum*; “inside”), and Hebrew (*qereb*; “inside, middle”). Alternatively, the name Kolob might derive from the Semitic root *klb*, meaning “dog” (as in the Akkadian *kalbu* or Hebrew *keleb*), and might thereby be identifiable with the dog-star Sirius, which held especially significant calendrical and religious significance for the ancient Egyptians. The converging characteristics between Kolob and Sirius are compelling (for example, Sirius was recognized as a great star by the ancients, served an important calendrical and timekeeping purpose, was depicted as being a ruling star, and so on) but this identification remains unconfirmed. *Near unto God.* An important theme in this chapter is the relative proximity of graded stars to God’s celestial residence. Kolob is repeatedly said to be nearest to the throne of God (here and at 3:9–10, 16), thus making it the greatest of the governing astronomical bodies. If Kolob does indeed derive from the root **k̄lb/k̄rb*, then this emphasis on its nearness and proximity to God would work well as a pun on the name. **3:5–10 Geocentric cosmology.** The “order[s]” and “set time[s]” of celestial objects (the moon, the sun, other planets, and Kolob) are enumerated from Abraham’s vantage point on earth (“upon which thou standest”). This has led some scholars to view the cosmology of the Book of Abraham as geocentric, meaning Abraham is observing celestial phenomena from the “reckoning” of the earth. *Times of reckoning and set time(s).* The text does not clarify what it meant by these terms at 3:6, but the terms could refer to, respectively, the reckoned times of the movement of celestial

me, “This is Shinehah” (which is the sun). And he said unto me, “Kokob,” (which is star). And he said unto me, “Olea” (which is the moon). And he said unto me, “Kokaubeam” (which signifies stars, or all the great lights, which were in the firmament of heaven).¹⁴ And it was in the nighttime when the Lord spake these words unto me, “I will multiply thee, and thy seed after thee, like unto these. And if thou canst count the number of sands, so shall be the number of thy seeds.”

THE GRADATION OF CELESTIAL BODIES IN RELATION TO THE GRADATION OF SPIRITS

¹⁵ And the Lord said unto me, “Abraham, I show these things unto thee before ye go into Egypt, that ye may declare all these words. ¹⁶ If two things exist, and there be one above the other, there shall be greater things above them. Therefore, Kolob is the greatest of all the Kokaubeam that thou hast seen, because it is nearest unto me. ¹⁷ Now, if there be two things, one above the other, and the moon be above the earth,

then it may be that a planet or a star may exist above it. And there is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it. ¹⁸ Howbeit that he made the greater star, as, also, if there be two spirits, and one shall be more intelligent than the other, yet these two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning. They existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum” (or eternal).

¹⁹ And the Lord said unto me, “These two facts do exist, that there are two spirits, one being more intelligent than the other, there shall be another more intelligent than they. I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all. ²⁰ The Lord thy God sent his angel to deliver thee from the hands of the priest of Elkenah. ²¹ I dwell in the midst of them all. I now, therefore, have come down unto thee to declare unto thee the works which my hands have made, wherein my wisdom excelleth them all, for I rule in the heavens above, and in the earth

objects from a geocentric perspective or possibly the true times of motion for these bodies set by God detached from a geocentric view. *Kolob as governing planet.* 3:9 appears to identify Kolob as a planet, whereas elsewhere this chapter calls Kolob a star (3:16). While confusing for modern readers, this is to be expected from a text from Abraham’s day since anciently planets, stars, and even constellations and other celestial objects were not uniformly distinguished as they are with modern scientific nomenclature. In any case, Kolob is said to govern the planets (celestial bodies) below it. Kolob can thus rightly be seen as a type of Christ, the Master of the cosmos in proximity with His Father (see Doctrine and Covenants 45:1; 76:23–24; Moses 1:33; 2:1). **3:11–12 Abraham’s theophany.** As Enoch (Moses 7:4; Doctrine and Covenants 107:49) before him and Jacob (Genesis 32:30) and Moses (Exodus 33:11; Moses 1:2, 31) after, Abraham receives a dramatic theophany (compare 2:6). The parallel language with Moses’s theophany on the mount is especially striking. *Abraham the seer.* A *Leitmotif* running through this chapter is a depiction of Abraham as a seer: Abraham *sees* or is otherwise *shown* celestial bodies, spirits (or intelligences), God Himself, and the premortal council (3:2, 6, 11–12, 15–16, 21–22). Furthermore, the Lord instructs the heavenly council to wait and *see* if the premortal intelligences will do all things they are commanded on earth (3:25). This echoes a *Leitmotif* in Genesis where Abraham

beneath, in all wisdom and prudence, over all the intelligences thine eyes have seen from the beginning. I came down in the beginning in the midst of all the intelligences thou hast seen.”

ABRAHAM SEES THE PREMORTAL INTELLIGENCES

²² Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was. And among all these there were many of the noble and great ones. ²³ And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said, “These I will make my rulers.” For he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good. And he said unto me, “Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born.”

THE PREMORTAL COUNCIL

(MOSES 4:1-4)

²⁴ And there stood one among them that was like unto God, and he said unto those who were with him, “We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell. ²⁵ And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them. ²⁶ And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon. And they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate. And they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.”

sees the Lord and the land of his inheritance (see Genesis 12:1, 7; 13:15). **3:13** *Names of celestial objects.* Here the Lord shows Abraham various celestial bodies and gives them names. Shinehah is plausibly attested as a name for the sun’s ecliptic in Egyptian texts from Abraham’s day (š[ī]-n-ḥz or š-nḥz). Kokob is clearly recognizable as the Hebrew word for star, as is Kokaubeam in the plural (compare the Akkadian *kakkabu*). An etymology for Olea, identified as the moon, does not immediately present itself. Proposals include that it derives either from Hebrew (*yārēah*) or Egyptian (*iḥ[w]*), but this is doubtful. Shinehah appears as a codename for Kirtland Township in the 1835 first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, and “Olea Shinehah” (also attested as “Olahah Shinehah”) appears in an 1838 revelation of Joseph Smith. These names are associated with the location of Adam-ondi-Ahman (compare Doctrine and Covenants 117:8), suggesting, alternatively, that they may relate to the “pure language” of Adam (compare Moses 6:5–9). **3:14** A primary purpose behind the Lord showing Abraham these celestial bodies is to provide a simile for the innumerable quantity of his descendants (compare Genesis 15:5; 22:17). Note especially the parallel language at 3:12. **3:15–21** The vision of graded stars and other celestial bodies pivots here to a vision of the premortal spirits varying in grades of intelligence (3:18). Just as Abraham encounters a hierarchy of stars until he comes nigh unto the throne of God, so too he encounters a hierarchy of spirits or intelligences until he finally approaches God Himself, the supreme Intelligence. The description and imagery of the stars and spirits illustrates an unmistakable conceptual link between the two in this chapter. **3:15** Abraham is explicitly told to declare to the Egyptians what he learned from his vision. (This corresponds with what is depicted in Facsimile 3 but is not described in any of the extant narrative.) This might explain why Abraham was shown what some scholars have argued is a pre-scientific geocentric view of the cosmos. In order for Abraham to successfully share truths about the plan of salvation with the Egyptians, he would need to couch his visions in a worldview that would have been comprehensible to his audience (compare 2 Nephi 31:3; Doctrine and Covenants 1:24). **3:18** *Stars and*

²⁷ And the Lord said, “Whom shall I send?” And one answered like unto the Son of Man, “Here am I, send me.” And another answered and said, “Here am I, send me.” And the Lord said, “I will send the first.” ²⁸ And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate. And at that day many followed after him.

THE GODS ORGANIZE THE
HEAVENS AND THE EARTH
(GENESIS 1:1-2:3; MOSES 2:1-3:3)

4 And then the Lord said, “Let us go down.” And they went down at the beginning, and they (that

is, the Gods) organized and formed the heavens and the earth. ² And the earth, after it was formed, was empty and desolate, because they had not formed anything but the earth. And darkness reigned upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of the Gods was brooding upon the face of the waters.

THE FIRST TIME: THE GODS
PRONOUNCE DAY AND NIGHT

³ And they (the Gods) said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. ⁴ And they (the Gods) comprehended the light, for it was bright. And they

spirits. The pivot between graded stars and graded spirits plausibly rest on a pun in the Egyptian language. The Egyptian word for spirit (*ꜥḥ*) is phonetically similar to the word for the light and brilliance of stars and other celestial bodies (*lꜥḥ*). In Egyptian texts from before and during Abraham’s day, the spirits of the deceased were sometimes conceptualized as a star. In some of these texts the goal in the afterlife is for the spirit of the deceased (particularly that of the deceased king) to be exalted among the stars in the celestial, cosmic realm. The imagery of stars/spirits in Abraham’s vision plays nicely on mythological and cosmic symbolism already prevalent among the ancient Egyptians. *Gnolaum*, or *eternal*. The word is clearly recognizable as the Hebrew word for “everlasting, eternal” (*olam*). In Genesis 21:33 Abraham plants a tamarisk tree at Beer-Sheba and dedicates it to “the everlasting God” (*el ’olam*). The eternity of spirit or intelligence was a teaching Joseph Smith emphasized in the final years of his ministry, including in his now-famous King Follett Sermon of 7 April 1844. 3:22–23 Abraham is shown the premortal intelligences that were “organized” into the premortal divine council. These intelligences or spirits are described as “noble and great ones” and are decreed by God to become “rulers” in mortality because they are good. Abraham is identified as one of these noble and great spirits. This evokes depictions of the divine council of God and His attending divine beings (called, variously, gods, the sons of god[s], angels, holy ones, etc.) in the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern texts. It also subtly plays on and subverts ideas in ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian religion that kings were divinely foreordained by the gods to be rulers. Instead, Abraham’s vision reveals that he and other righteous spirits were foreordained by the Lord to be rulers. This delegitimizes the rule of Abraham’s rival Pharaoh, who, while still being righteous, at 1:26–27 tries to “fain claim” to priesthood to which he does not have a right. 3:24–28 Abraham is shown a vision of what transpired in the divine council just before the unfolding of Creation (compare Moses 4:1–4). This passage is supremely important for the modern Latter-day Saint doctrine of the premortal existence of humanity since it is one the most explicit on this subject in all scripture. *Creation from matter*. Unlike traditional Jewish and Christian teaching, the text at 3:24 affirms creation from preexisting matter, not creation *ex nihilo*, or from nothing. In creation myths from Abraham’s day, Creation was often envisioned as an act of divine fashioning of chaotic elements (typically a primordial cosmic ocean). This, indeed, is how Genesis 1:1–3 envisions Creation. *The purpose of mortality*. At 3:25 an important purpose is given for why the earth was created and populated with the premortal spirits: to see if they would obey the commands of the Lord

divided the light, or caused it to be divided, from the darkness. ⁵ And the Gods called the light Day, and the darkness they called Night. And it came to pass that from the evening until morning they called night; and from the morning until the evening they called day. And this was the first, or the beginning, of that which they called day and night.

THE SECOND TIME: THE GODS
ORDER THE EXPANSE

⁶ And the Gods also said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters,

and it shall divide the waters from the waters.” ⁷ And the Gods ordered the expanse, so that it divided the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so, even as they ordered. ⁸ And the Gods called the expanse, Heaven. And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that they called night. And it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day. And this was the second time that they called night and day.

God, the supreme Intelligence. From other scripture, it is clear that this test of obedience is part of the Lord’s work to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of humankind (see Moses 1:39). *The first estate.* The language of 3:26 is appropriated from Jude 1:6, which speaks of angels who did not keep their “first estate” (more literally, their “own position [of authority]”; *eaoutou archē*) but instead were destined for damnation. The point made in the text here is that those intelligences who excelled in their “first estate” (premortal, disembodied state) by adhering to the Lord’s commandments would have “glory” (eternal life and exaltation) added upon them if they successfully traversed their “second estate” (probationary mortality). It is, in effect, a concise formulation of the plan of salvation. *The Son of Man.* In biblical Hebrew, the phrase “son of man” (*ben ’adam*) connotes “mortal, human.” It is used prominently in the book of Ezekiel when God addresses the prophet, and also in Moses 1:12 when Satan denigrates Moses. In later apocalyptic works, most notably Daniel (especially Daniel 7:13–14), the Son of Man (Aramaic: *bar ’enash*) is an eschatological figure who assumes rulership over the earth at the end of days. Believed by His disciples to be this very eschatological figure (compare Revelation 1:13), Jesus is identified as the Son of Man in numerous instances throughout the canonical Gospels. In the Book of Moses (Moses 6:57; 7:35), one of the Adamic names for God the Father is revealed to be Man of Holiness. The identity of the premortal Jesus as “one like unto the Son of Man” at 3:27 might be understood simultaneously in these contexts: He is the Firstborn of the Man of Holiness (compare Doctrine and Covenants 78:20; 93:21–22; 95:17), one who condescended to become a mortal (compare 1 Nephi 11:14–36), and the foreordained millennial King (compare Revelation 19:15–16). *The fall of Lucifer.* At 3:27–28 the fall of Lucifer is briefly narrated (compare Moses 4:1–4; 2 Nephi 2:17–18). Upset that he was not selected to be the Father’s redemptive emissary, Lucifer (here left unnamed, merely identified as “another” or “the second”) becomes angry and draws many of the premortal intelligences away with him. The language clearly portrays some sense of rebellion or open mutiny against the Father’s plan (compare Doctrine and Covenants 76:25–27). Certain biblical writings (e.g., Genesis 6:1–4; Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28:1–10; 28:11–19; Job 38; Daniel 11–12; Psalm 82) are later echoes of a much earlier Near Eastern mythic archetype of conflict in the divine council that results in the fall or overthrow of a rebellious deity.

4 The Book of Abraham’s account of the Creation significantly impacts how Latter-day Saints understand this important subject. The more noteworthy elements introduced by the Book of Abraham include creation by organizing preexisting matter, multiple Gods (the divine council) participating in the process, and the seeming fact that the periods (“days”) of Creation were

THE THIRD TIME: THE GODS DIVIDE THE EARTH AND GREAT WATERS

⁹ And the Gods ordered, saying, “Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the earth come up dry.” And it was

so as they ordered. ¹⁰ And the Gods pronounced the dry land, Earth; and the gathering together of the waters, pronounced they, Great Waters. And the Gods saw that they were obeyed. ¹¹ And the Gods said, “Let us prepare the earth to bring forth grass; the herb

less temporally definite. The Creation account here directly follows the divine council scene of 3:24–28 and should indeed be read as the narrative continuation of that scene. The modern chapter divisions for the text were introduced in 1902 by James E. Talmage. As it appeared in the *T&S* under the editorship of Joseph Smith and as it appeared in the 1851 first edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*, there was no chapter division between 3:28 and 4:1. Read as one continuous narrative, the divine council decides on a course of action in 3:24–28 and then executes that decision beginning here. (See the commentary for Moses 2.) **4:1** *Let us go down*. The cohortative language here clearly parallels Genesis 1:26; 11:7. As so used both here and in Genesis, it signals the execution of group action. In the biblical Creation narrative of Genesis 1, God does not enlist the effort of the divine council until the creation of humankind. Here, however, and in the Book of Moses (2:1), the divine council participates in Creation from the earliest steps. *The Gods*. As with the glosses earlier in the text (1:7, 9, 12, 14, 20, 23; 2:11), it is not clear if these explanatory comments were original to Abraham or introduced by Joseph Smith or his scribes. In either case, the text departs from the Genesis account by explicitly introducing multiple divinities as being involved in the creative process. *Organized and formed*. The text explicitly rejects notions of creation *ex nihilo* by employing the verbs “organize” and “form” throughout. Although departing from traditional Jewish and Christian ideas of Creation, this absence of creation *ex nihilo* grounds the Book of Abraham more comfortably in the milieu of the ancient Near East during Abraham’s day. It also more closely aligns the text with the underlying Hebrew of Genesis 1. This may be, in part, the result of Joseph Smith’s study of Hebrew under the tutelage of Joshua Seixas in Kirtland, Ohio, in the early months of 1836. As with the Hebrew terminology that appears in the text (3:13, 16, 18) and the explanations to the facsimiles (see, for example, Fac 1, Fig 12; Fac 2, Figs 4–5), it appears that the Prophet’s rendering of this Creation account was influenced by his knowledge of Hebrew. It remains uncertain to what extent his secular learning helped shape the articulation of this revelation—or, conversely, to what extent the revelation itself, as tailored by a divine influence, was adapted for or integrated with Joseph Smith’s growing knowledge of ancient languages. **4:2** *The formation of the earth*. Even after being formed, the earth remains empty and desolate (compare Genesis 1:2; Moses 2:2), until it would be populated with life and given purpose. This suggests that Creation entails more than just the act of physical generation but also functional assignment. *The deep*. As with Genesis 1:2 and Moses 2:2, here the text describes a primordial dark abyss, with darkness “reigning” (a verb absent from the biblical text and from the Book of Moses) over the early stages of the earth’s formation. All this aligns the text with tropes from creation myths from Abraham’s day and signals that Creation is still in its primeval stages. **4:3–5** In Abraham’s account the Gods do not “create” light but rather “comprehend” the light and “divide” it from the darkness, thereby recognizing the day-night cycle. This reinforces the point that Creation involves teleological reckoning or assigning purpose to observable phenomena. **4:6–8** The expanse that separates the waters corresponds to the firmament of Genesis 1:6 and Moses 2:6 (see commentary). Once again, Joseph Smith’s rendering here appears to derive from his knowledge of Hebrew, as it is indeed a more precise rendering of the Hebrew *raqia’* (compare Fac 2, Fig 4). **4:9–13** *Waters and*

yielding seed; the fruit tree yielding fruit, after his kind, whose seed in itself yieldeth its own likeness upon the earth.” And it was so, even as they ordered.

¹² And the Gods organized the earth to bring forth grass from its own seed, and the herb to bring forth herb from its own seed, yielding seed after his kind, and the earth to bring forth the tree from its own seed, yielding fruit, whose seed could only bring forth the same in itself, after his kind. And the Gods saw that they were obeyed. ¹³ And it came to pass that they numbered the days: from the evening until the morning they called night; and it came to pass, from the morning until the evening they called day. And it was the third time.

THE FOURTH TIME: THE GODS ORGANIZE LIGHT

¹⁴ And the Gods organized the lights in the expanse of the heaven, and caused them to divide the day from the night, and organized them to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years, ¹⁵ and organized them to be for lights in the expanse of the heaven to

give light upon the earth. And it was so. ¹⁶ And the Gods organized the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. (With the lesser light they set the stars also.) ¹⁷ And the Gods set them in the expanse of the heavens, to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to cause to divide the light from the darkness.

¹⁸ And the Gods watched those things which they had ordered until they obeyed. ¹⁹ And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that it was night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that it was day. And it was the fourth time.

THE FIFTH TIME: THE GODS PREPARE THE WATERS FOR LIFE

²⁰ And the Gods said, “Let us prepare the waters to bring forth abundantly the moving creatures that have life, and the fowl, that they may fly above the earth in the open expanse of heaven.” ²¹ And the Gods prepared the waters that they might bring forth great whales, and every living creature

earth. The Gods continue their organization of the earth by gathering the seas, dividing the land, and preparing for the generation of vegetation. The subtle detail at 4:9 (“let the earth come up dry”) that is absent in the King James Version of Genesis 1:9 (as well as in its underlying Hebrew) and Moses 2:9 evokes ancient Egyptian creation imagery of the primeval hillock springing from the primordial waters. This detail would have resonated well with Abraham’s Egyptian audience (compare 3:15). *Ordered and obeyed.* A running *Leitmotif* throughout this account is that of the Gods “ordering” or “pronouncing” the stages of Creation and the elements accordingly “obeying” those commands (compare Helaman 12:6–23). This departs from the language of Genesis and the Book of Moses but is consistent with the text’s overall portrait of creation through divine organization and conjures imagery of kingly dominion establishing order over a previously chaotic cosmos. **4:14–19** Previously, at 4:3–5, the Gods divided the light from the darkness for the reckoning of time. Here they organize “the lights in the expanse of the heaven” (that is, the stars) for the same purpose. Kolob, the greatest star, also reckons time (3:4). Ancient Near Eastern peoples tracked the motion of stars for calendrical and timekeeping purposes. Tracking

that moveth, which the waters were to bring forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after their kind. And the Gods saw that they would be obeyed, and that their plan was good.

²² And the Gods said, “We will bless them, and cause them to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas or great waters; and cause the fowl to multiply in the earth.” ²³ And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning that they called night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day. And it was the fifth time.

THE SIXTH TIME: THE GODS PREPARE THE EARTH FOR LIFE AND CREATE HUMANKIND

²⁴ And the Gods prepared the earth to bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth after their kind. And it was so, as they had said. ²⁵ And the Gods organized the earth to bring forth the beasts after their kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after its

kind. And the Gods saw they would obey. ²⁶ And the Gods took counsel among themselves and said, “Let us go down and form man in our image, after our likeness, and we will give them dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” ²⁷ So the Gods went down to organize man in their own image, in the image of the Gods to form they him, male and female to form they them.

²⁸ And the Gods said, “We will bless them.” And the Gods said, “We will cause them to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” ²⁹ And the Gods said, “Behold, we will give them every herb bearing seed that shall come upon the face of all the earth, and every tree which shall have fruit upon it. Yea, the fruit of the tree yielding seed to them we will give it, it shall be for their meat.

the motion of the star Sirius (see the commentary at 3:3) was especially important in ancient Egypt as its heliacal rising heralded the new year and the onset of the annual flooding of the Nile. Along with this, the Gods decree that the “two great lights” (the sun and the moon) are to rule the day and night, respectively, providing light to the earth. *Until they obeyed*. The remarkable language of 4:18, which has no corresponding verse in Genesis 1 or Moses 2, suggests that a process of gradual unfolding is involved even in the Gods’ commands or decrees in organizing the earth. **4:20–23** In departing once again from Genesis 1, here the Gods “prepare” the earth to bring forth aquatic and avian life. At 4:21 a plan for Creation is mentioned for the first and only time, and the Gods recognize it as “good.” The immediate context suggests that this plan was invoked specifically to prepare the earth for sentient animal life, which would eventually lead to human life. **4:26–27** After preparing mammalian, insect, and reptile life (4:24–25), the Gods form humankind in their image and likeness. This they counsel to do, thereby explicitly evoking the presence of the divine council. The creation of humans after the image and likeness of the Gods is the capstone of Creation. *Image and likeness*. See the commentary at Moses 2:26–27. The notion of humanity being in the image of deity works especially well for Abraham’s account,

³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, behold, we will give them life, and also we will give to them every green herb for meat. And all these things shall be thus organized.” ³¹ And the Gods said, “We will do everything that we have said, and organize them; and behold, they shall be very obedient.” And it came to pass that it was from evening until morning they called night; and it came to pass that it was from morning until evening that they called day. And they numbered the sixth time.

THE SEVENTH TIME: THE GODS CONCLUDE THE CREATION

5 “And thus we will finish the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them.” ² And the Gods said among themselves, “On the seventh time we will end our work, which we have counseled; and we will rest on the seventh time from all our work which we have counseled.” ³ And the Gods concluded upon the seventh time—because that on the seventh time they would rest from all their works which they (the Gods) counseled among themselves to form—and sanctified it. And thus were their deci-

sions at the time that they counseled among themselves to form the heavens and the earth.

THE GENERATIONS OF THE HEAVENS AND OF THE EARTH (GENESIS 2:4–25; MOSES 3:4–25)

⁴ And the Gods came down and formed these the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were formed in the day that the Gods formed the earth and the heavens, ⁵ according to all that which they had said concerning every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. For the Gods had not caused it to rain upon the earth when they counseled to do them, and had not formed a man to till the ground. ⁶ But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

THE GODS FORM A MAN AND PLANT A GARDEN

⁷ And the Gods formed man from the dust of the ground, and took his spirit (that is, the man’s spirit), and put it into him, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. ⁸ And the Gods planted a garden, eastward in Eden, and there they put the man, whose spirit they

as it parallels ancient Egyptian notions of the Egyptian monarch and humanity at large being the divine offspring and the image of deity who therefore enjoy special status as well as divine concern and attention. **4:31** *Very obedient*. This injunction to obedience, unique to this account, is more plausibly read as something of an apodictic charge (akin to the “thou shalt nots” of the Ten Commandments), not a descriptive statement on the nature of humanity. At 3:25 the Lord declares that one of the purposes of sending the premortal intelligences to earth is to see if they will be obedient to the commandments given to them while in a probationary state.

5 The concluding chapter of the Book of Abraham ends abruptly with Adam giving names to the animals in the garden. In an unpublished editorial dated 1 March 1842, Joseph Smith signaled his intention to “contin[ue] to translate & publish [the rest of the Book of Abraham] as fast as possible till the whole is completed.” Eleven months later, John Taylor, acting as editor of the *T&S*, published a notice in the paper that the Prophet “promise[d] . . . to furnish us with further

had put into the body which they had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground made the Gods to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life, also, in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. ¹⁰ There was a river running out of Eden, to water the garden, and from thence it was parted and became into four heads.

THE GODS PLACE THE MAN IN THE GARDEN

¹¹ And the Gods took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it. ¹² And the Gods commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, ¹³ but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. For in the time that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” (Now I, Abraham, saw that it was after the

Lord’s time, which was after the time of Kolob, for as yet the Gods had not appointed unto Adam his reckoning.)

THE GODS CREATE A HELPER AS A COMPANION FOR THE MAN

¹⁴ And the Gods said, “Let us make an help meet for the man, for it is not good that the man should be alone, therefore we will form an help meet for him.” ¹⁵ And the Gods caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And they took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in the stead thereof. ¹⁶ And of the rib which the Gods had taken from man, formed they a woman, and brought her unto the man. ¹⁷ And Adam said, “This was bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. Now she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ¹⁸ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto

extracts from the Book of Abraham.” Joseph’s death on 27 June 1844, put an end to the translation and publication of any additional material from the Book of Abraham. **5:1** The chapter begins with a direct quotation from the Gods without the customary quotation formula (“And the Gods said . . .”) that is found throughout the previous chapter. This oddity might be explained as either a scribal error in the transmission of the Book of Abraham or a typographical error on the part of the printers of the *T&S*. There is no extant manuscript for any text beyond 3:26, however, so confirmation for this proposal remains elusive. **5:2–3** Once again the verb “counsel” is used to indicate the deliberateness behind the Gods’ activity. The “time that they counseled among themselves to form the heavens and the earth” appears to refer to the council scene in 3:24–26, thereby reinforcing the narrative continuity of the text and making the presence of the divine council in this text unambiguous. **5:4** As with Genesis 2:4 and Moses 3:4, this verse marks the commencement of a second Creation account. See the commentary at Moses 3:4. **5:7** Another gloss explains that the human’s spirit as well as the breath of life (compare Genesis 2:7; Moses 3:7) is what constitutes a living soul (compare Doctrine and Covenants 88:15). The detail of the human’s spirit being a component to a living soul is missing from the Genesis and Moses accounts. **5:10** The text is missing the names of the four branches of the river that flows out of Eden: the Pishon, the Gihon, the Tigris, and the Euphrates (see the commentary at Moses 3:11). The omission must be deliberate, but the reason for such is not clear. **5:11** Adam’s responsibility to dress and keep the garden parallels humanity’s dominion over the animals. Both cases include an implicit sense of responsibility to preserve and protect Creation. **5:13** Here the gloss clearly comes from Abraham and explains that Adam was not yet aware of the fact that the Gods had appointed celestial objects to be used for keeping time. As such, the only point of temporal

his wife, and they shall be one flesh.”
¹⁹ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

ADAM NAMES THE ANIMALS

²⁰ And out of the ground the Gods formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that should be the name thereof.

²¹ And Adam gave names to all cattle, to the fowl of the air, to every beast of the field. And for Adam, there was found an help meet for him.

reckoning available to Adam was Kolob (having just come down from the premortal council adjacent thereto). As explained at 3:4, “one revolution [of Kolob] was a day unto the Lord” and was equivalent to one thousand years on earth. 5:14 On the woman as a help meet for Adam, see the commentary at Moses 3:18. 5:20–21 In the biblical account, Adam names the animals at Genesis 2:19–20 before he is put to sleep and has one of his ribs removed to create the woman. As told in Genesis 2, the reason the woman was created was because none of the animals named by Adam were found to be suitable partners; thus reinforcing the ontological distinction between human and beast. Here the text rearranges the order of events, placing the naming of the animals after the creation of the woman. The logic here seems to be that the creation of woman was not an afterthought or accident but instead took preeminence. The text does not hint that the woman was only created after the other animals were seen as incompatible partners for Adam, as it is in the biblical account. The sudden end of the narrative is unfortunate since the last sentence seems to be gearing up to provide important details about the relationship between Adam, Eve, and the animals. *Adam names the angels.* In the Quran (2:30–33), Adam does not name the animals in the garden but is asked to name God’s angels as a test of his piety and his knowledge of the secrets of heaven, a theme that resonates with the Latter-day Saint temple experience.

FACSIMILES OF THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM

INTRODUCTION TO THE FACSIMILES

The facsimiles of the Book of Abraham have accompanied the text in each edition of the Pearl of Great Price since the 1851 first edition. Although the facsimiles have historically had only marginal influence on the doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, readers of the Book of Abraham have nevertheless long been curious about them. To date, however, no single systematic methodology has been advanced for studying the facsimiles, nor has a single theory been articulated about the facsimiles that can account for all the evidence. Some scholars have interpreted the facsimiles from an purely Egyptological vantage, while others have compared the facsimiles with ancient Semitic elements. Others still have focused on how the facsimiles work together with the text of the Book of Abraham to create a sort of ritualized dramatization of the narrative. It is evident that Joseph Smith approached the facsimiles as a seer and prophet rather than as a scholar of ancient Egyptian. As such, his explanations do not entirely align with the interpretations of modern Egyptologists; though in many instances, they do reflect genuine ancient Egyptian and Semitic concepts.

For this study edition, the commentary will focus on two main components to the facsimiles: their ancient Egyptian context and meaning and how they act in relation to the text of the Book of Abraham as revealed by Joseph Smith. Areas of convergence between Joseph Smith's explanations and ancient Egyptian and Semitic concepts will also be highlighted while not presuming to say that these convergences are definitive or provide the only way to approach or interpret the facsimiles. Readers interested in seeing different approaches to the facsimiles are encouraged to consult the reference works included in the accompanying bibliography.

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A FACSIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM, NO. 1



Figure 1. The Angel of the Lord.

Figure 2. Abraham fastened upon an altar.

Figure 3. The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice.

Figure 4. The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and Pharaoh.

Figure 5. The idolatrous god of Elkenah.

Figure 6. The idolatrous god of Libnah.

Figure 7. The idolatrous god of Mahmackrah.

Figure 8. The idolatrous god of

Korash.

Figure 9. The idolatrous god of Pharaoh.

Figure 10. Abraham in Egypt.

Figure 11. Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians.

Figure 12. Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau, to be high, or the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word, Shaumahyeem.

COMMENTARY ON FACSIMILE NO. 1

Facsimile 1 originally appeared at the beginning of a papyrus scroll owned by an ancient Egyptian priest named Hor. The original illustration was drawn on this papyrus scroll adjacent to a text on that same scroll known today as the Book of Breathings. This copy of the Book of Breathings can be securely dated to the Ptolemaic period of Egyptian history (circa 330–30 BC). The type of scene depicted in this facsimile from an Egyptological perspective is frequently called a lion couch scene—due, naturally, to the prominent lion couch in the center of the picture.



Figure 1. *The Angel of the Lord.*

In the original papyrus illustration (called a *vignette* in Egyptological nomenclature), the head of this bird figure is missing. It probably had a human head, thereby possibly representing the *Ba* (*bꜣ*) of the deceased owner of the papyrus (Hor). The *Ba*, a fundamental component of the ancient Egyptian notion of what constituted a human being, is a difficult concept to fully grasp and translate into a modern conceptual counterpart. Often rendered as “soul” (or left untranslated), the *Ba* essentially constituted the nonmaterial essence of an individual (their personality, character, reputation, “self,” and so on). Gods also had a *Ba* that could be detected in any phenomenon or action, which demonstrated the given deity’s presence or essence. The *Ba* could freely come and go after death and could even be sent and commanded to perform certain tasks (such as deliver messages or appear in dreams) if properly ordered. For this last reason, it appears, in the Greco-Roman period the *Ba* was sometimes rendered in Greek as “assistant, attendant” (*paredros*) and was conceptualized in parallel function with “messengers” (*angeloi*). This figure corresponds to the “angel of [the Lord’s] presence” described at Abraham 1:15; 2:12, who rescues the patriarch from otherwise certain death.

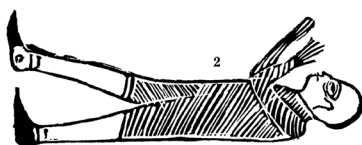


Figure 2. *Abraham fastened upon an altar.*

The figure on the lion couch at the center of the vignette has been interpreted by Egyptologists as, variously, the mummy of the deceased Hor being prepared for embalming, the resurrected Hor, or the resurrected god Osiris. These interpretations are not necessarily exclusionary since in Egyptian belief the mummified, resurrected deceased was identified with the god Osiris. As preserved today, there is a lacuna, or gap, in the middle of this figure cutting off the torso and arms. It is unknown when this portion of the vignette was damaged and when some unknown person attempted to (re)draw the figure with pencil. In

the original vignette the figure is wearing a knee-length kilt (which was drawn up to the neck in the printed facsimile) and anklets. Both hands are raised in the air (the traces of the fingers of the hands are still visible) in what has been interpreted, variously, as either a position that denotes a struggle, the classical Egyptian gesture of prayer and supplication, or the deceased reaching out to embrace his *Ba* (see Fig 1). The first two interpretations of this gesture would accord well with the narrative in Abraham 1:12–15. By the Roman period, Abraham had become a syncretized substitute for the god Osiris in Jewish works drawing from Egyptian literary and mythological elements. In a papyrus from Thebes dating to the second or third centuries AD, a female mummiform figure is depicted on a lion couch similar to the lion couch in Facsimile 1, and the name of Abraham, among others, is invoked underneath as a sort of magical keyword to make the spell effective.



Figure 3. *The idolatrous priest of Elkenah attempting to offer up Abraham as a sacrifice.*

This figure has been interpreted among Egyptologists as either the god Anubis or a priest preparing the deceased for embalming and burial. As preserved today, there is a lacuna where the figure's head would be. There appear to be traces of a headdress over the figure's right shoulder that indicate that the figure originally may have had the head of a jackal. This plus the figure's black skin lend themselves to identifying this

figure as either the god Anubis or a priest imitating the god while wearing a mask in a ritual setting. The figure's left arm is extended over Figure 2, but the hand is missing in a lacuna. Eyewitnesses to the papyrus from the nineteenth century described this figure as wielding a knife, as depicted in the printed facsimile. The crescent shape of the knife in the facsimile would be consistent with the shape of flint knives used in ancient Egypt in ritual slaughter and execration rites. These strands of evidence reinforce the overall probability that the knife was original to the vignette. The priest of Elkenah is depicted endeavoring to take away Abraham's life at Abraham 1:7–12, 20.

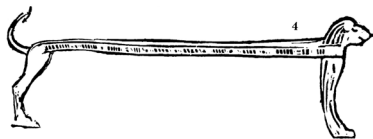


Figure 4. *The altar for sacrifice by the idolatrous priests, standing before the gods of Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, Korash, and Pharaoh.*

At Abraham 1:12–13 this altar is said to have been made “after the form of a bedstead,

such as was had among the Chaldeans.” In its funerary Egyptian context, the lion couch (also sometimes called a funerary bed or lion bed in Egyptological literature) served as the bier of the deceased. Numerous examples of funerary iconography exist depicting the preparation of the mummy on the lion couch. Non-funerary examples of the lion couch are also attested, such as in

the theogamy and royal birthing scenes of Hatshepsut at the temple of Deir al-Bahri. Alabaster offering tables shaped as elongated lions (carved in relief) are reminiscent of lion couch funerary biers (such as the splendid gold lion couch recovered from the tomb of Tutankhamun) and Ptolemaic lion-shaped alabaster embalming platforms for the Apis bull. By the Ptolemaic period the word for lion couch (*nmit*) was homophonous with the words for “slaughterhouse, abattoir” and “offering” (*nmt*), according well with the sacrificial setting ascribed to the lion couch scene in the Book of Abraham.



Figure 5. *The idolatrous god of Elkenah.*

Figures 5–8 are what are commonly called canopic jars (after early Egyptologists associated the human-headed jar in the assemblage as Kanopos, the helmsman of the ship of the legendary king Menelaus). These cylinder-shaped vessels held the viscera of the deceased (specifically, the lungs, stomach, liver, and intestines) during the mummification process. The jars were identified and conflated by the ancient Egyptians with the four sons of the god Horus (see also Fac 2, Fig 6), who guarded the jars containing the mummified organs. Figure 5, the falcon-headed jar, is widely recognized as the deity Qebhsenuf, one of the four sons of Horus. In the context of the Abrahamic text revealed by Joseph Smith, these four figures correspond to the four idolatrous gods mentioned at Abraham 1:6, 13, 17. The relationship of the identities of the four named gods in the text of the Book of Abraham and the four sons of Horus in Facsimile 1 is not clear.



Figure 6. *The idolatrous god of Libnah.*

The jackal-headed canopic jar often identified with the god Duamutef, one of the four sons of Horus.



Figure 7. *The idolatrous god of Mahmackrah.*

The baboon-headed canopic jar often identified with the god Hapy, one of the four sons of Horus.



Figure 8. *The idolatrous god of Korash.*

The human-headed canopic jar often identified with the god Imsety, one of the four sons of Horus.



Figure 9. *The idolatrous god of Pharaoh.*

The crocodile figure underneath the lion couch has perplexed scholars since this element is unique to this lion couch

vignette. It may be the deity Sobek, the primordial crocodile god and lord of the Nile, in which case Joseph Smith's identification of this figure as the god Pharaoh would be entirely appropriate. Alternatively, it could be the crocodile who appears in the myth of the death and resurrection of the god Osiris as a magical creature who assisted the goddess Isis in reassembling Osiris's limbs. In any case, the crocodile was worshipped as a sacred, powerful animal by the ancient Egyptians, and numerous mummified crocodiles have been recovered. As with the gods Elkenah, Libnah, Mahmackrah, and Korash, the god Pharaoh is mentioned at Abraham 1:6, 8–10, 13, 17 as one of the idolatrous gods worshipped by Abraham's kinsmen.



Figure 10. *Abraham in Egypt.*

An offering table with what appears to be a lotus flower. Underneath appears to be two jars, one on each side of the stand, perhaps containing ointment or perfume. In Facsimile 3, Figure 3 this figure (also an offering table) is said to *signify* Abraham in Egypt, suggesting a more abstract representation was intended in Joseph Smith's explanation than the face value Egyptian meaning of this figure. Offering tables served an important role in both mortuary and temple settings as a place to dedicate food, drink,

and other offerings (such as ointments and incense) to either the deceased for use in the afterlife or the deity in the temple. The lotus held deep mythological significance for the ancient Egyptians since in some Egyptian creation accounts the sun god was born from a lotus that emerged from the primordial water. As such, the lotus was closely associated with the solar cycle and was thus a symbol of rebirth and divinization.

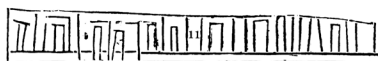


Figure 11. *Designed to represent the pillars of heaven, as understood by the Egyptians.*

Another unique element in this lion couch vignette, these parallel, columned niches appear to depict the façade characteristic of Egyptian temples, tombs, and palaces. They also share a visual affinity with the *serekh* (*srh*) sign that bore one of the names of the Egyptian monarch. The Egyptian concept of the “pillars of heaven” (compare Job 26:11) is attested as early as the Old Kingdom, referring to the Egyptian belief that the sky was a solid firmament supported by pillars located at the four corners of the earth (compare Fac 2, Fig 6). These pillars were cosmic supports often represented artistically as a stylized Djed pillar, symbolizing stability and the strength required to uphold the heavens. In this respect, Figures 11–12 should be conjoined to get the full intended effect of this symbolism. Temple columns could, naturally, symbolize the upholding of the heavens in a manner congruent with the “pillars of heaven” described by Joseph Smith.



Figure 12. *Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament over our heads; but in this case, in relation to this subject, the Egyptians meant it to signify Shaumau, to be high, or*

the heavens, answering to the Hebrew word, Shaumahyeem.

The zigzagging lines in this figure represent water, within which the crocodile is depicted swimming. In its Egyptian context, this water likely symbolizes the Nile or possibly the Lake of Khonsu mentioned in the Book of Breathing. The term Raukeeyang is recognizably the Hebrew *rāqī'a* (“expanse, firmament”; compare Genesis 1:6; Abraham 4:6), which in biblical cosmology denotes the divine structure separating the waters above from the waters below (see the commentary at Moses 2:6; Abraham 4:6–8). This concept finds parallel in Egyptian cosmology, where the sky goddess Nut arches over the earth as a divine embodiment of the heavens, often associated with celestial waters. The motif of primeval or heavenly waters is thus deeply rooted in both Egyptian and Israelite thought, and Joseph Smith’s explanation reflects a synthesis of these traditions. He equates the expanse upheld by pillars (Fig 11) with the watery heavens themselves, aligning with ancient cosmological frameworks. The term Shaumahyeem likewise recognizably corresponds to the Hebrew *šāmayîm* (“heavens, sky”), while Shaumau may perhaps be intended as a hypothetical reconstructed root of Shaumahyeem. These Hebrew terms are rendered according to the transliteration conventions taught by Joseph Smith’s Hebrew instructor, Joshua Seixas, whose grammar was used in Kirtland in early 1836. Throughout the facsimiles (see also Fac 2, Figs 4 and 5), Joseph applies Hebrew linguistic and conceptual frameworks to elucidate Egyptian symbols. While this blending of Hebrew and Egyptian may appear unconventional by modern academic standards, it is consistent with nineteenth-century linguistic assumptions and reflects the Prophet’s effort to interpret Egyptian cosmology through the revelatory and philological means available to him.

A FACSIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM, NO. 2

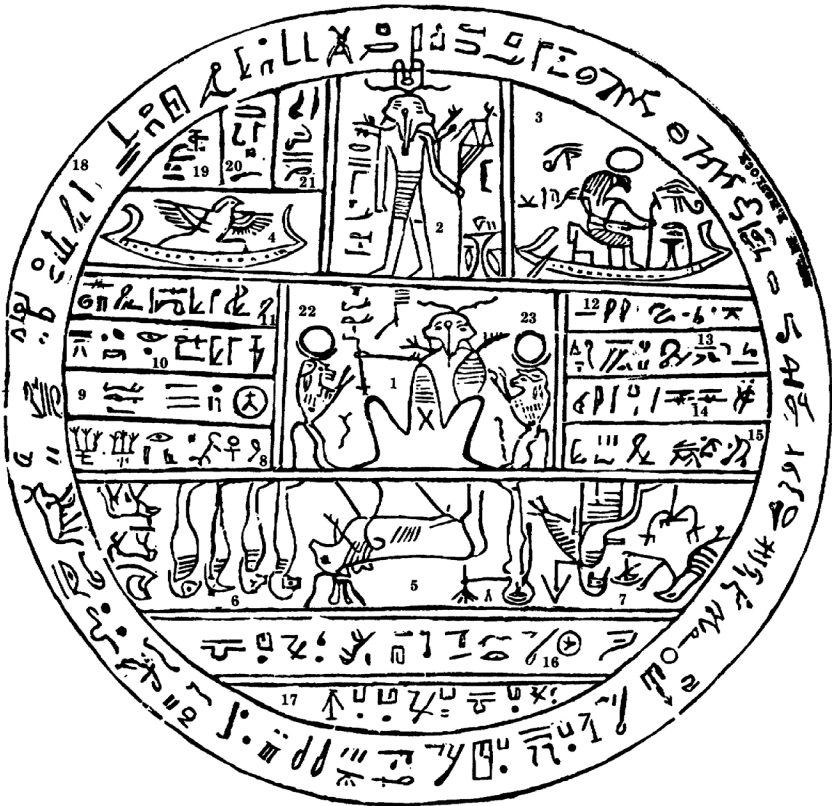


Figure 1. Kolob, signifying the first creation, nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God. First in government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time. The measurement according to celestial time, which celestial time signifies one day to a cubit. One day in Kolob is equal to a thousand years according to the measurement of this earth, which is called by the Egyptians Jah-oh-eh.

Figure 2. Stands next to Kolob,

called by the Egyptians Oliblish, which is the next grand governing creation near to the celestial or the place where God resides; holding the key of power also, pertaining to other planets, as revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar, which he had built unto the Lord.

Figure 3. Is made to represent God, sitting upon his throne, clothed with power and authority; with a crown of

eternal light upon his head; representing also the grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood, as revealed to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as also to Seth, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and all to whom the Priesthood was revealed.

Figure 4. Answers to the Hebrew word Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament of the heavens; also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand; answering to the measuring of the time of Oliblish, which is equal with Kolob in its revolution and in its measuring of time.

Figure 5. Is called in Egyptian Enish-go-on-dosh; this is one of the governing planets also, and is said by the Egyptians to be the sun, and to borrow its light from Kolob through the medium of Kae-e-vanrash, which is the grand Key, or, in other words, the governing power, which governs fifteen other fixed planets or stars, as also Floeese or the Moon, the Earth and the Sun in their annual revolutions. This planet receives its power through the medium of Kli-flos-is-es, or Hah-ko-kau-beam, the stars represented by numbers 22 and 23, receiving light from the revolutions

of Kolob.

Figure 6. Represents this earth in its four quarters.

Figure 7. Represents God sitting upon his throne revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood; as also, the sign of the Holy Ghost unto Abraham in the form of a dove.

Figure 8. Contains writings that cannot be revealed unto the world, but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God.

Figure 9. Ought not to be revealed at the present time.

Figure 10. Also.

Figure 11. Also. If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen.

Figures 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, [and 21] will be given in the own due time of the Lord.

The above translation is given as far as we have any right to give at the present time.

COMMENTARY ON FACSIMILE NO. 2

Facsimile 2 of the Book of Abraham is a type of Egyptian document called a hypocephalus. The name derives from Greek (*hypo tēn kephalēn*) and means literally “under the head” (corresponding to the Egyptian *hr tp*). The hypocephalus was a specialized funerary amulet that was placed under (or sometimes just near) the head of the deceased and served to protect the deceased in the afterlife, provide light and heat for the deceased, and to transform the deceased into a resurrected divine being. Hypocephali also served as astronomical documents, functioning as a type of guide through the cosmos for the deceased. The hypocephalus that served as the basis for Facsimile 2 was owned anciently by a man named Sheshonq, whose name appears in Figure 8, and most likely dates to the Ptolemaic period.



Figure 1. *Kolob, signifying the first creation, nearest to the celestial, or the residence of God. First in government, the last pertaining to the measurement of time. The measurement according to celestial time, which celestial time signifies one day to a cubit. One day in Kolob is equal to a thousand years according to the measurement of this earth, which is called by the Egyptians Jah-oh-eh.*

Kolob features prominently in the cosmology of the Book of Abraham as a star or planet nearest to the residence of God (Abraham 3:3–10). As with the explanation to this figure, Kolob in the text of the Book of Abraham is said to have timekeeping significance (Abraham 3:9). The comment that celestial time “signifies one day to a cubit” is perplexing, but perhaps is meant to describe angular velocity, or the speed at which an object revolves relative to another object (in this case the orbits of celestial bodies). According to this understanding, the movement of Kolob (assuming it is intended to be a physical star in the visible night sky; see the commentary accompanying Abraham 3:3) is being measured in cubits, an anciently attested phenomenon for other celestial bodies. In its Egyptian context this figure is identified in other hypocephali as the god Amun (or Amun-Re), a supremely important deity in ancient Egypt as the primeval, self-generating creator god whose name means “hidden one” (*imn*). Although usually depicted in hypocephali with four heads, representing the universality and totality of this god’s power over the cosmic elements, here the figure has two heads, as also attested in other hypocephali. He holds what appears to be the Egyptian *wꜥs*-scepter, indicating his lordly dominion. A copy of Facsimile 2 drafted sometime between 1835 and 1842 indicates that this portion of the hypocephalus was damaged and that restorations were made to it before its publication in March 1842. Flanking this figure are two baboons (Figs 22 and 23) adorned with

horned moon discs performing gestures of praise. They appear to represent the moon (among other possible celestial connections, including astral) and are receiving light and heat from the central figure, which was understood by the ancient Egyptians to represent the sun. Jah-oh-eh, said here to mean “the measurement of this earth,” might reflect a rendering of the Egyptian word for “soil, field” (*ꜣḥ/ꜣḥt*), or, alternatively, could be a rendering of the Tetragrammaton, the divine name (YHWH; Jehovah), but these identifications remain tentative.



Figure 2. *Stands next to Kolob, called by the Egyptians Oliblish, which is the next grand governing creation near to the celestial or the place where God resides; holding the key of power also, pertaining to other planets, as revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar, which he had built unto the Lord.*

This figure is identified in some hypocephali as Amun, or Amun-Re. It is a crowned, two-headed deity and is holding the Wepwawet standard (*wꜣwꜣwt*; “Opener of the Way”) and what appears to be an *ankh* (*ꜥḥ*) symbol (a symbol for life), based on the draft hand copy. The glyphs to the left of the figure read: “The name of this great god.” No immediate etymology for Oliblish, as rendered here, presents itself. To the right of the deity is an offering table (compare Fac 1, Fig 10; Fac 3, Fig 3). The reference to Abraham building an altar and offering sacrifices alludes to either Abraham 2:17 or 2:20 (compare Genesis 12:7) and appears to make a narrative link between Abraham offering sacrifice and his revelation about Kolob and other celestial bodies. This suggests that this is when Abraham received the revelation described in Abraham 3.

Figure 3. *Is made to represent God, sitting upon his throne, clothed with power and authority; with a crown of eternal light upon his head; representing also the grand Key-words of the Holy Priesthood, as revealed to Adam in the Garden of Eden, as also to Seth, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and all to whom the Priesthood was revealed.*



This portion of the hypocephalus appears to have been damaged before the publication of Facsimile 2 in March 1842. Joseph Smith or a clerk assisting him in the printing of the Book of Abraham restored the damaged portion by filling it with a figure from the Joseph Smith Papyri (specifically, from P. Joseph Smith IV, a copy of the Book of the Dead). In other hypocephali this portion is often filled by either one or two registers that feature combinations of figures, typically including a falcon, the *Ba* (spirit), the goddesses Isis or Nephthys, a scarab beetle, or the god Re, typically on a boat. Here it is the god Re (or Re-Horakhty) seated on his solar barque and flanked by two *wedjat* (*wꜣḏꜣt*) eyes. Atop his head is a solar disc.

He holds a scepter and is seated before an offering table with a lotus (compare Fac 1, Fig 10; Fac 3, Fig 3). The *wedjat* eye was a symbol for health and wholeness (compare Fac 2, Fig 7). There is no overt reference to God revealing the key words of the priesthood to Abraham or the other patriarchs in the extant text of the Book of Abraham, but it is perhaps hinted at with the language of priesthood in Abraham 2:9, 11.

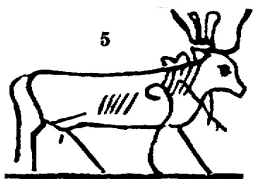
Figure 4. *Answers to the Hebrew word Raukeeyang, signifying expanse, or the firmament of the heavens; also a numerical figure, in Egyptian signifying one thousand; answering to the measuring of the time of Oliblish, which is equal with Kolob in its revolution and in its measuring of time.*



Compare Facsimile 1, Figure 12 and Facsimile 2, Figure 2. This mummified hawk with outstretched

wings appears in other hypocephali, where it is sometimes identified as, variously, “a living *Ba*,” “the lord of heaven,” the solar god Re (compare Fac 2, Fig 3), or the god Osiris. Alternative, it might be a form of either of the hawk gods Horus or Sokar, personifications of the sky.

Figure 5. *Is called in Egyptian Enish-go-on-dosh; this is one of the governing planets also, and is said by the Egyptians to be the sun, and to borrow its light from Kolob through the medium of Kae-e-vanrash, which is the grand Key, or, in other words, the governing power, which governs fifteen other fixed planets or stars, as also Floeese or the Moon, the Earth and the Sun in their annual revolutions. This planet receives its power through the*



medium of Kli-flos-is-es, or Hah-ko-kau-beam, the stars represented by numbers 22 and 23, receiving light from the revolutions of Kolob.

This cow figure is sometimes labeled in other hypocephali as Ihet or Mehet-Weret, two bovine goddesses commonly identified with the goddess Hathor. Elsewhere Hathor is seen wearing a sun disc between her horns, which is fitting given her solar attributes and her role as both the consort and daughter of the sun god. By the time of the Joseph Smith Papyri, Hathor was being identified by ancient Egyptians explicitly as the sun itself. Hah-ko-kau-beam is recognizable as the Hebrew definite plural form for “star” (*ha-kôkâbîm*; compare Abraham 3:13), but no obvious etymologies for Enish-go-on-dosh, Kae-e-vanrash, Floeese, or Kli-flos-is-es, as rendered here, stand out, although the *eese* and *is-es* elements in these words might be related to the name of the Egyptian goddess Isis.

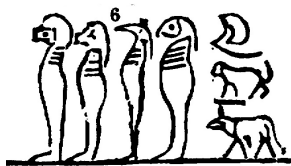


Figure 6. *Represents this earth in its four quarters. The four sons of Horus (compare Fac 1, Figs 5–8) do indeed represent the four cardinal points of the earth, among other important functions including the protection of the deceased.*

Figure 7. Represents God sitting upon his throne revealing through the heavens the grand Key-words of the Priesthood; as also, the sign of the Holy Ghost unto Abraham in the form of a dove.



This seated figure is a form of the deity Min (or Min-Amun), sometimes identified in hypocephali as “the great god,” “the lord of life,” and “the lord of all.” His back is bird-form (a hawk tail), thus perhaps attributing to him aspects of the god Horus. Here, as in some other hypocephali, he appears to be ithyphallic, which, on the one hand, may signify sexual potency, fertility, creation, and rejuvenation, or, on the other hand, aggression and power. His arm is raised above him as he holds a flagellum, a gesture associated with kingship and displays of power. Before him the minor deity Nehebkau (commonly depicted as an anthropomorphized snake, but other times, as here, as an anthropomorphized falcon) presents the *wedjat* eye (compare Fac 2, Fig 3) to the seated figure of Min. As noted above, the extant text of the Book of Abraham contains no explicit reference to God revealing the key words of the priesthood to Abraham, nor does the canonical text mention Abraham receiving the sign of the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove.

Figures 8–11. 8 Contains writings that cannot be revealed unto the world, but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God. 9 Ought not to be revealed at the present time. 10 Also. 11 Also. If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen.

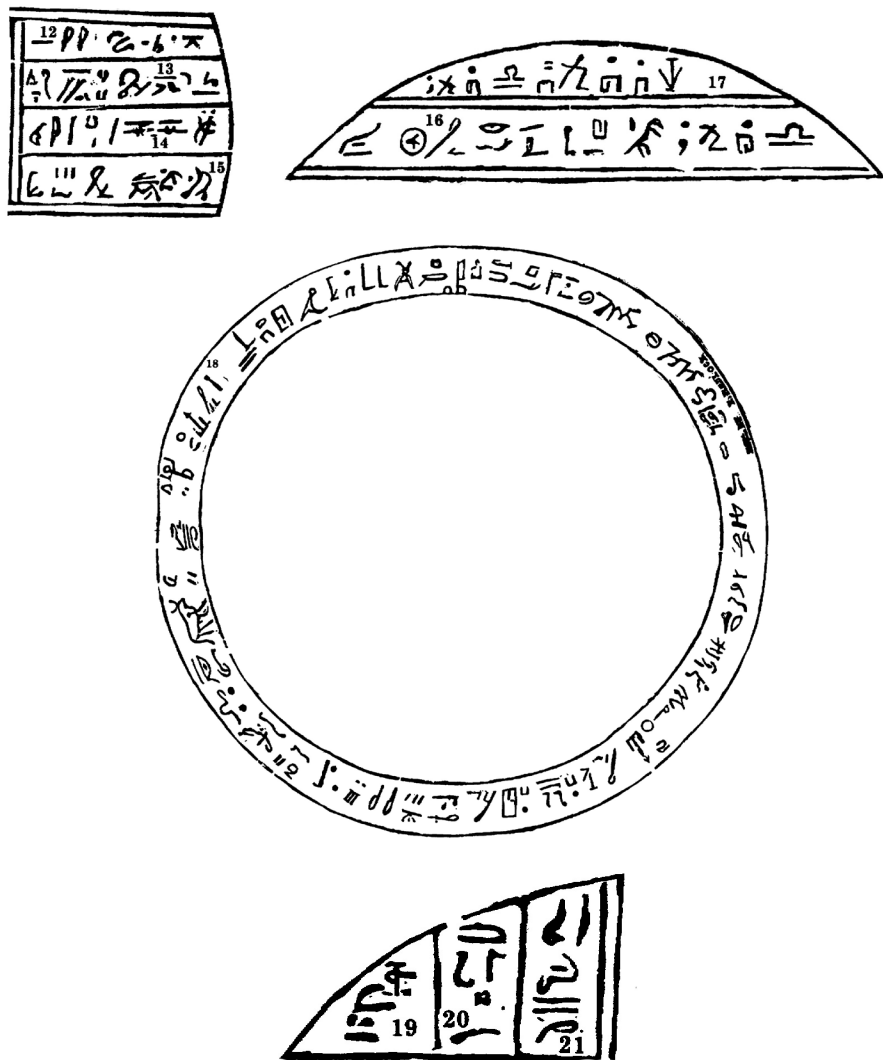


These four lines contain hieroglyphic text, most of which remains legible enough to permit translation. Beginning from the top row and reading right to left, the inscription can be rendered as: “O noble god at the time of creation—great god, lord of heaven, earth, the underworld, the waters, [and the mountains]—may the soul of Osiris-Sheshonq live!” An alternative reading for the hieroglyphs in

Figures 10 and 9 has been proposed as: “. . . he who made heaven, earth, and the underworld — its (i.e., the earth’s) great waters. . .” This reading resonates with the cosmological themes in Abraham 3 and the visionary account of the Creation in Abraham 4–5. A manuscript copy of the explanations for Facsimile 2 from March 1842 renders the closing phrase “so let it be” as “so mote it be,” an archaic expression meaning “so may it be,” often encountered in Masonic ritual settings. (Joseph Smith became a Freemason the same month that he published Facsimile 2.)

Figure 12–21. Will be given in the own due time of the Lord. The above translation is given as far as we have any right to give at the present time.

Because the hieroglyphic characters in these figures were poorly copied in the



printed facsimile, they have been read and reconstructed in different ways by Egyptologists. The lines of text in Figures 12–15 were already damaged prior to the publication of Facsimile 2 and were restored by filling them in with fragmentary text from the Book of Breathing. One possible reading of Figures 16 and 17 (written upside down) is: “(This) tomb is a place of crossing. Do not be deceived! This *Ba* and his lord shall never be led astray in the underworld.” The rim inscription (Fig 18) begins at the top and reads counterclockwise: “I am the one enclosed [?] in the temple of the Benben in Heliopolis—most exalted, most glorious, [?] a virile bull without his equal, the great god in the temple of the Benben in Heliopolis . . . that great god in Heliopolis . . .” As with Figures 12–15, the characters on the right side of the rim were restored with fragmen-

tary text from the Book of Breathings, preventing further reading. Figures 19–21, read from right to left, state: “You shall be as this god of Djedet.” The original *Times and Seasons* publication of Facsimile 2 misnumbered Figures 19–21, omitting Figure 20. As a result, the numbering jumps from Figure 19 to 21, followed by two figures labeled as Figure 22: one for the right column of text above Figure 4, and another for the baboon to the left of Figure 1. This misnumbering was corrected in the 1851 first edition of the Pearl of Great Price.

A FACSIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM, NO. 3



Figure 1. Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne, by the politeness of the king, with a crown upon his head, representing the Priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand.

Figure 2. King Pharaoh, whose name is given in the characters above his head.

Figure 3. Signifies Abraham in Egypt [as given also in Figure 10 of Facsimile No. 1].

Figure 4. Prince of Pharaoh, King of

Egypt, as written above the hand.

Figure 5. Shulem, one of the king's principal waiters, as represented by the characters above his hand.

Figure 6. Olimlah, a slave belonging to the prince.

Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of Astronomy, in the king's court.

COMMENTARY ON FACSIMILE NO. 3

Facsimile 3 originally appeared on the same papyrus as Facsimile 1 at the end of the Book of Breathings. The name of the owner of the papyrus, Hor, is visible in the bottom row of hieroglyphs. This facsimile in its Egyptian context has been persuasively argued to be a presentation scene in which the deceased (Hor) is brought into the presence of the deity Osiris in the culmination of his process of postmortem divinization.



Figure 1. *Abraham sitting upon Pharaoh's throne, by the politeness of the king with a crown upon his head, representing the priesthood, as emblematical of the grand Presidency in Heaven; with the scepter of justice and judgment in his hand.*

This figure is, in the context of an ancient Egyptian presentation scene, Osiris sitting enthroned as lord of the afterlife. The name Osiris is perhaps legible in the hieroglyphs in the third column from the left of this figure. He wears the Atef (ꜥtꜥ) crown, which is typically (but not exclusively) worn by Osiris as an emblem of his authority as ruler and sovereign of the afterlife. He brandishes the *Heka* (ḥkꜣ) crook, a symbol of kingship, again signifying his role as king of the afterlife. (Compare Fac 1, Fig 2, also identified by some as Osiris and also identified by Joseph Smith as Abraham, thus reinforcing the syncretic link between these two figures.)



Figure 2. *King Pharaoh, whose name is given in the characters above his head.*

This figure has been identified by Egyptologists as the goddess Isis, the sister-wife of the god Osiris who is often featured in comparable presentation and judgement scenes in Egyptian art. Unfortunately, the hieroglyphs in the column next to this figure's head were poorly redrawn in this facsimile, and so the name of this figure is not legible. The bovine horns and moon (or solar?) disc atop this figure might identify it as the goddess Hathor, but Isis is also known to bear this iconography, and so without the name being legible, identifying this figure remains problematic. Assuming the figure is Isis, it is compelling to note that at the time of the Joseph

Smith Papyri, because of her royal associations, she was identified as, variously, “the Pharaoh(ess) of the whole land,” “ruler of the two lands [i.e. Egypt] in the house of joy,” “the Pharaoh(ess) of everything,” “ruler of Egypt,” and “excellent ruler on the throne of her father,” among other royal epithets.



Figure 3. *Signifies Abraham in Egypt [as given also in Figure 10 of Facsimile No. 1.]*

An offering stand customary for presentation scenes such as this. See the commentary accompanying Facsimile 1, Figure 10. The explanation in the 1902 edition of the Pearl of Great Price reads: “Signifies Abraham in Egypt; referring to Abraham, as given in the ninth number of the *Times and Seasons*. (Also as given in the first fac-simile of this book.)”



Figure 4. *Prince of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, as written above the hand.*

Based on the feather sported by this figure atop its head, and on the barely legible hieroglyphs at the top of the column next to it, this figure in its Egyptian context is the goddess Maat, the divine embodiment of cosmic order, harmony, justice, and truth. Maat guides Hor, the owner of the papyrus (Fig 5), by the right hand into the presence of Osiris as both of them make the customary ritual gesture of greeting and hailing. The associations between Maat and kingship are plentiful, as the king was expected to perform and uphold *mꜣꜥt* (“justice,” “order,” “rightness,” etc.) in both the ritual and political spheres to ensure the perpetual defeat of *isꜣꜥt* (“chaos,” “disharmony,” etc.), thereby fulfilling his role as sustainer of Maat (both the goddess and the abstract concept).



Figure 5. *Shulem, one of the king’s principal waiters, as represented by the characters above his hand.*

The name Shulem is an attested Semitic name from Abraham’s day, and his epithet “king’s principal waiter” has close attested parallels in Egyptian administrative titles. Shulem, however, does not appear in the canonical text of the Book of Abraham, leaving his role in the narrative unknown. Egyptologists have identified this figure as Hor, the deceased owner of the papyrus scroll. His name is perhaps legible in the second column from the left of this figure, right above the hand, but has some irreg-

ularities compared to how it is attested elsewhere on the papyrus (suggesting either that it is not his name or that the glyphs were copied poorly). Hor, in the Egyptian context of this scene, is being introduced into the presence of Osiris (Fig 1) as part of the culmination of his postmortem deification.



Figure 6. *Olmlah, a slave belonging to the prince.*

As with Shulem, Olmlah does not appear in the extant Book of Abraham text, leaving his role in the narrative unknown. This figure has been identified by Egyptologists as the god Anubis, based on comparable iconography from other presentation scenes and from proposed readings of the (badly copied) hieroglyphs above him. However, although Anubis is a likely identification for this figure in its Egyptian context, there are challenges to this identification, leaving some uncertainty as to the identity of this figure.

Abraham is reasoning upon the principles of astronomy in the king's court.

This portion of the narrative is foreshadowed at Abraham 3:15 and probably would have picked up after the Creation account depicted in Abraham 4–5 but was never published by Joseph Smith. The canopy of twenty-three stars depicted on the ceiling of this scene is unique to this vignette, having no parallel in comparable vignettes from other copies of the Book of Breathings. The stars might be an iconographic reference to one of the explicit purposes of the Book of Breathings, which was to make the deceased (in this case Hor) “appear in heaven as the disk of the moon” and “to make his body shine as Orion in the body of Nut [the sky].” Although the facsimile reproduced a line of hieroglyphs below this scene, they were passed over without comment in Joseph Smith’s explanations. Many of the glyphs in the bottom row are illegible, but enough are legible to discern that various gods are being invoked to bless Hor, the owner of the papyrus, whose name appears as “Osiris-Hor” about two-thirds of the way into the row of glyphs reading left to right. In both the bottom row and in the glyphs to the left of Figure 5 Hor is deemed “true of voice,” meaning he has been vindicated in his postmortem judgment.

JOSEPH SMITH—MATTHEW

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY

On 7 March 1831, Joseph Smith received the revelation that is now canonized as the forty-fifth section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Embedded in this lengthy revelation is a recitation of and expansion on Jesus's Olivet Discourse as recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 (Doctrine and Covenants 45:15–59). This section is prefaced with the Lord's declaration that He “will speak unto you and prophesy, as unto men in days of old” and would otherwise “show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before them in the flesh” (vv. 15–16). After rehearsing this material—consisting of Jesus's prophecy of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, the scattering of the Jews, and the signs of His return as the glorified Son of Man—the Lord instructed the Prophet to commence translating the New Testament as part of his inspired revision of the Bible (now called the Joseph Smith Translation) that he had begun that previous summer (vv. 60–61). With Sidney Rigdon as his scribe, Joseph began producing his “Translation of the New Testament translated by the power of God” (so designated in the header of the original manuscript) the next day, 8 March 1831, leaving off where he had reached in his revision of the Old Testament (Genesis 24:41).

It is not known precisely when Joseph Smith reached Matthew 24 in this “new translation” of the Bible (as he himself called it), but it certainly would not have been much longer after he began revising the New Testament. As with his translation of the opening chapters of Genesis that is now canonized as the Book of Moses, the Prophet originally dictated his revision of Matthew 24 to Sidney Rigdon, who captured the dictation in what is now commonly designated New Testament Manuscript 1 (NT1, which covers Matthew 1:1–26:71). Shortly after this initial translation work, Church historian and recorder John Whitmer began producing a copy of this manuscript that served as the working draft for the rest of the revision of the New Testament. This manuscript, commonly designated New Testament Manuscript 2 (NT2), underwent additional revisions as the Prophet refined the project, including the material that had been previously produced with Rigdon in NT1.

As with his translation of the content in the book of Genesis that is now the Book of Moses, early Latter-day Saints quickly recognized the significance of the Prophet's revision to Matthew 24. In the mid-1830s, what is now designated Joseph Smith—Matthew appeared in print and circulated in the form of a standalone “broadside” (a handbill), which was subsequently recopied in other contemporary publications, such as John Corrill's 1839 *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* and the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price. There it appeared as “An Extract from a Translation of the Bible” alongside the extracted material from Joseph Smith's revision of Genesis (also circulating in print during the Prophet's lifetime), and it has appeared in each subsequent edition of the Pearl of Great Price.

STRUCTURE

Joseph Smith—Matthew begins at Matthew 23:39 with a brief narrative that frames the discourse. Following the Gospel of Matthew, Joseph Smith—Matthew narrates Jesus finishing His lamentations over Jerusalem, leaving the city and crossing the Kidron valley, and delivering the discourse on the Mount of Olives (see, respectively, Matthew 23:37–39 and JS–M 1:1; Matthew 24:1–2 and JS–M 1:2; Matthew 24:3 and JS–M 1:4). As also with the Gospel of Matthew, Joseph Smith—Matthew presents this discourse as a response to the disciples' inquiring of Jesus concerning the signs of His coming (Matthew 24:3; JS–M 1:4).

One of the most pronounced revisions Joseph Smith—Matthew makes on the biblical version of this discourse is to more clearly present Jesus as addressing two separate, consecutive events: (1) the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and the scattering of the Jews; (2) His return as the triumphant Son of Man. The pivot appears at around 1:21, although it is still not entirely clear where to precisely demarcate when Jesus is prophesying events in the first century AD and when He is prophesying events related to His Second Coming. Blurring this even more is the repetition of some events or themes in both timelines, such as the desecrating sacrilege (the “abomination of desolation” mentioned at 1:12, 32), the rise of false Christs (1:6, 22), or the spread of iniquity (1:10, 30). Nevertheless, it is clear from other passages such as 1:34 that some events in the biblical account that appear as expected to unfold in the first century in fact are yet to be fulfilled (see Matthew 24:34).

Jesus employs four parables in this discourse to illustrate the principles He wishes to impress upon His disciples. The first, the parable of the carcass and eagles (or vultures) at 1:27, concerns the gathering of the elect. The second, the parable of the fig tree at 1:38–39, emphasizes the need to be watchful for the signs of Jesus's return. The third, the parable of the thief in the night at 1:47–48, warns that the disciples must ever be on their guard lest they be caught unprepared at their Lord's return. The fourth and final parable at 1:49–55 provides contrasting portraits of good and evil servants and their respective rewards at

the Lord's coming. In each case the parable is followed by additional instruction that develops the respective intent. Quotations of or allusions to texts from the Hebrew Bible are also peppered throughout this discourse, reinforcing the prophetic implications of these passages.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Latter-day Saint concern for eschatology, or the theology of the last days and the final destiny of humanity, arose early in the restored Church of Jesus Christ. Several of Joseph Smith's canonized revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants (for example, sections 1, 29, 43, 45, 84, and 133) elaborate on the signs and events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ to the earth, the Millennium, and related doctrines. The millenarian worldview of the early Saints was greatly informed both by the Prophet's revelations and also by his revising of biblical prophecies, including those recorded in Matthew 24.

Although the Lord's warnings to His disciples in the Olivet Discourse are grave, their intention is not to frighten but rather to inform and, ultimately, encourage. The promise extended to faithful, watchful Saints in the last days is that their diligence and precaution will be rewarded with their joining the Lord at His coming and their triumph over the wicked (see 1:37, 55). Read in this light, Joseph Smith's revisions to the Olivet Discourse ultimately reaffirm the relevance of the Lord's promises to His ancient disciples and to modern Saints—that once the earth finds its millennial rest, He “shall be in their midst, and his glory shall be upon them, and he will be their king and their lawgiver” (Doctrine and Covenants 45:59).

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviated designations for Joseph Smith—Matthew manuscripts used in this study edition follow Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004). They have been correlated with the designations used on the Joseph Smith Papers Project website.

NT1 = New Testament Manuscript 1 = New Testament Revision 1

NT2 = New Testament Manuscript 2 = New Testament Revision 2

Text and Commentary

JOSEPH SMITH—MATTHEW

AN EXTRACT FROM JOSEPH SMITH'S NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

THE APOSTLES INQUIRE OF JESUS

1 “For I say unto you, that ye shall not see me henceforth, and know that I am he of whom it is written by the prophets, until ye shall say, ‘Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord, in the clouds of heaven, and all the holy angels with him.’” Then understood his disciples that he should come again on the earth, after that he was glorified and crowned on the right hand of God. ² And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple. And his disciples came to him, for to hear him, saying, “Master, show us concerning the buildings of the temple, as thou hast said, ‘They shall be thrown down, and left unto you desolate.’” ³ And Jesus said unto them, “See ye not all these things, and do ye not understand them? Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left here, upon this temple, one stone

upon another that shall not be thrown down.”

⁴ And Jesus left them and went upon the Mount of Olives. And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, “Tell us when shall these things be which thou hast said concerning the destruction of the temple, and the Jews; and what is the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world, or the destruction of the wicked, which is the end of the world?”

THE SIGNS OF CALAMITY IN THE FIRST CENTURY

⁵ And Jesus answered, and said unto them, “Take heed that no man deceive you. ⁶ For many shall come in my name, saying, ‘I am Christ,’ and shall deceive many. ⁷ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations, for my name’s sake.

1 Although the canonical text is a revision of Matthew 24, the text actually begins a verse before at Matthew 23:39. The Olivet Discourse (compare Mark 13:1–8; Luke 21:5–11) was delivered during Jesus’s final mortal week, after the triumphal entry (Matthew 21) but before the Last Supper (Matthew 26). **1:1–3** In both the King James Version and here, Jesus’s Olivet Discourse is delivered in the context of the Apostles inquiring concerning His prophecy of the destruction of the temple. This framing is brought out more explicitly in Joseph Smith’s revision. *Blessed . . . with him.* Paraphrase of Psalm 118:26 and Daniel 7:13. Compare Matthew 24:30; 26:64; Mark 14:62. *Destruction of the temple.* The temple of Herod was destroyed in AD 70 when Rome sacked Jerusalem after the outbreak of a Jewish nationalist revolt. **1:4** The Mount of Olives is located east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley (compare Zechariah 14:4). Jesus likely chose to deliver this discourse here to avoid the large crowds gathered in the city for the celebration of Passover. Herod’s temple would have been plainly visible as Jesus delivered this discourse. **1:6** New Testament writings preserve mention of some contemporaries of Jesus claiming to be the Messiah (Acts 5:36–37; 21:38) and of anti-Christ’s attempting to deceive the early church (1 John 2:18). **1:7** NT1 originally read, “You shall be hated of all men,” which was emended to read, “You shall be hated of all nations” (as also in NT2). **1:8** NT1 adds, “And shall hate one another.”

⁸“And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another. ⁹And many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many. ¹⁰And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. ¹¹But he that remaineth steadfast and is not overcome, the same shall be saved. ¹²When you, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, then you shall stand in the holy place. Whoso readeth let him understand. ¹³Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains. ¹⁴Let him who is on the housetop flee, and not return to take anything out of his house. ¹⁵Neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes. ¹⁶And wo unto them that are with child, and unto them that give suck in those days. ¹⁷Therefore, pray

ye the Lord that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.

THE TRIBULATIONS OF THE JEWS

¹⁸“For then, in those days, shall be great tribulation on the Jews, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, such as was not before sent upon Israel, of God, since the beginning of their kingdom until this time; no, nor ever shall be sent again upon Israel. ¹⁹All things which have befallen them are only the beginning of the sorrows which shall come upon them. ²⁰And except those days should be shortened, there should none of their flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake, according to the covenant, those days shall be shortened.

A WARNING OF FALSE CHRISTS

²¹“Behold, these things I have spoken unto you concerning the Jews. And again, after the tribulation of

1:9 Compare Matthew 7:15. **1:11** NT1 reads, “He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved.” **1:12** The “abomination of desolation” spoken of by Jesus is a reference to Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11, which speaks of the “desolating abomination(s)” (*šiqûšim mēšômēm, ha-šiqûš mēšômēm, šiqûš šômēm*, captured in the Greek of Matthew as the *dbelygma tēs erēmōseōs*). It refers to a pollutant that sacrileges the holiness of the temple. The desecration of the Jerusalem temple by Antiochus IV Epiphanes during the Maccabean Revolt of 167–160 BC, wherein he erected an image of Zeus in the temple, is often linked to this prophecy in the book of Daniel (compare 1 Maccabees 1:54). Jesus uses this imagery from Daniel as a type for both the imminent desolation of Jerusalem (and with it, Herod’s temple), as well as the desolating sacrilege preceding His Second Coming (1:32). The disciples are admonished to stand in holy places when they encounter such sacrilege. **1:13–17** To escape the foretold calamities, Jesus warns His disciples to be prepared to flee at a moment’s notice. The instruction to flee into the mountains went against conventional ancient thinking, which prompted people during a siege or prolonged warfare to secure themselves in walled cities (such as Jerusalem) for better protection. With this, Jesus warns that the disciples will not find safety in manmade structures. Those with vulnerable family members such as children will find their situation exacerbated since hunger and famine frequently follow disruptive events like those described here. Likewise, those forced to flee during the rainy winter, when travel is difficult, or the sabbath, when travel is forbidden, will likewise be at a great disadvantage. **1:18–20** The tribulations of the Jews following the disastrous outcome of the Jewish Revolt are described in graphic detail in such sources as Josephus, the first century Jewish historian. *Variant reading.* NT1 originally read, “. . . such as was not before since the beginning of the world to this time no nor ever shall be and except those days should be

those days which shall come upon Jerusalem, if any man shall say unto you, ‘Lo, here is Christ, or there,’ believe him not. ²²For in those days there shall also arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant. ²³Behold, I speak these things unto you for the elect’s sake. And you also shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars. See that ye be not troubled, for all I have told you must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ²⁴Behold, I have told you before. ²⁵Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, ‘Behold, he is in the desert,’ go not forth, ‘Behold, he is in the secret chambers,’ believe it not. ²⁶For as the light of the morning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west,

and covereth the whole earth, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

THE FIRST PARABLE AND MORE SIGNS OF JESUS’S COMING

²⁷“And now I show unto you a parable. Behold, wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together; so likewise shall mine elect be gathered from the four quarters of the earth. ²⁸And they shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars. ²⁹Behold I speak for mine elect’s sake. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. ³⁰And again, because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall not be overcome, the same shall be saved. ³¹And again, this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all

shortened all these things are the beginnings of sorrows and except those days should be shortened there should flesh be saved but for the elects sake those days shall be shortened.” This was revised both in NT1 and again in NT2 with other additions to produce the current reading. **1:21** Jesus informs His disciples of the immediate context of the previous verses—namely, the events of the first century connected to the destruction of the temple and its aftermath. Here He pivots into a description of future signs that will precede His glorious return, beginning in 1:22–26 with a description of false Christs that will arise in the vacuum left by the destruction of the temple and, more broadly, in the Great Apostasy. *Lo here, lo there.* Compare Joseph Smith—History 1:5. **1:25–26** Jesus promises that His return will be accompanied by great glory that will cover the earth. Those who claim to be Christ but insist on dividing into small factions are to be dismissed as false Christs. **1:27** The first of four parables illustrating the principles of Jesus’s discourse commences with this verse. *Eagles.* The Greek *aetoi* can indeed mean “eagles,” but in this context perhaps means “vultures.” The imagery, especially appropriate in the context of war and tribulation, is that of a flock of carrion raptors circling over a rotting carcass (compare Deuteronomy 28:25–26; 1 Samuel 17:44; Psalm 79:1–2; Ezekiel 39:17–20). True to His hyperbolic didactic method (see Matthew 5:29–30), Jesus uses this vivid imagery to great effect in this parable describing the gathering of the elect in the last days. But the imagery is powerful not just because of its setting in a reeling, rotting world but also because it highlights the speed at which vultures seem to rapidly converge from long distances to find their nourishment (that is, the rapidity and scale of the final gathering). **1:30** NT1 reads, “He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved.” **1:32** The prophecy of the abomination of desolation (compare 1:12) is explicitly said to have two fulfillments or types: one concerning the destruction of the Jerusalem

nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked. ³² And again shall the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, be fulfilled.

³³ “And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. ³⁴ Verily, I say unto you, this generation, in which these things shall be shown forth, shall not pass away until all I have told you shall be fulfilled. ³⁵ Although the days will come that heaven and earth shall pass away, yet my words shall not pass away, but all shall be fulfilled. ³⁶ And as I said before, after the tribulation of those days, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. ³⁷ And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived, for the Son of

Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

THE SECOND PARABLE AND AN ADMONITION TO WATCHFULNESS

³⁸ “Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When its branches are yet tender, and it begins to put forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh at hand. ³⁹ So likewise mine elect, when they shall see all these things, they shall know that he is near, even at the doors. ⁴⁰ But of that day, and hour, no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God in heaven, but my Father only. ⁴¹ But as it was in the days of Noah, so it shall be also at the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴² For it shall be with them, as it was in the days which were before the flood; for until the day that Noah entered into the ark they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. ⁴³ And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁴ Then

temple in the first century and another concerning the events of the last days before Jesus's glorious return. **1:33** Quotation of Isaiah 13:10 (compare Joel 2:10). **1:34** As recorded in Matthew 24:34, Jesus prophesied that the events described in the previous verses would occur in His own generation (*genea autē*). This has historically proven problematic for Christian interpreters since the events described obviously were not fulfilled in the first century. As revised here, the events of 1:27–33 are projected onto a future date and are yet to be fulfilled. **1:36** Jesus evokes similar language at the beginning of this discourse (see 1:1). Compare also Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62, where Jesus repeats this language (a paraphrase of Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13) during His interrogation before Caiaphas. **1:38–40** The imagery in the parable of the fig tree is correlated to the need for the disciples to remain watchful for the return of the Son of Man. Just as the budding branches of the fig tree anticipate the coming of summer, so the events described in the previous verses anticipate the coming of the Son of Man. By recognizing such, the disciples can be on their guard for when the Second Coming commences (the timing of which only God himself knows). **1:41–43** See Genesis 6–7; Moses 8:12–30. The final cataclysm will parallel the primeval cataclysm, with the majority of the world unaware of or otherwise unconcerned with paying heed to the signs of the forthcoming danger. **1:44–45** The text revises Matthew 24:40 to

shall be fulfilled that which is written, that in the last days, two shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴⁵Two shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken, and the other left. ⁴⁶And what I say unto one, I say unto all men. Watch, therefore, for you know not at what hour your Lord doth come.

THE THIRD PARABLE

⁴⁷“But know this, if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to have been broken up, but would have been ready. ⁴⁸Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.

THE FOURTH PARABLE AND FINAL WARNING

⁴⁹“Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant? Whom his lord hath made

ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season. ⁵⁰Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. And verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods. ⁵¹But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, ‘My lord delayeth his coming,’ ⁵²and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, ⁵³the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵⁴and shall cut him asunder, and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵⁵And thus cometh the end of the wicked, according to the prophecy of Moses, saying, ‘They shall be cut off from among the people.’ But the end of the earth is not yet, but by and by.”

include reference to an otherwise unknown or unattested written prophecy. These verses at Matthew 24:40–41 have been marshalled to support the doctrine of the rapture, or the teaching that Jesus’s true disciples will be snatched away suddenly to meet Him in the clouds at his coming (compare 1 Thessalonians 4:17). Modern revelation speaks of righteous Saints being “caught up” to dwell with the Lord at His coming but does not elaborate on what precisely this means (see Doctrine and Covenants 27:18; 88:95–97). Compare also Moses 7:62–65. A sense of what early Latter-day Saints imagined by being “caught up” to meet the Lord at His Second Coming can be gained from the lyrics to the hymn “Let Zion in Her Beauty Rise,” composed by Edward Partridge and included in the first hymnbook of the Church, published in 1835. **1:47–48** With this parable Jesus again emphasizes that the disciples cannot know when He will return, so they must be watchful and diligent. **1:49–50** Jesus uses one more parable to ask rhetorically who qualifies as a good servant and then provide the answer: those who are prepared for His coming and are found working diligently over their stewardship (compare Matthew 25:1–13). By contrast, evil servants are those who abandon their duty because of the delay in the Lord’s return (see 1:51–54). **1:54** Similar language is used in Jewish texts from Jesus’s time to refer to excommunication from the community (compare Galatians 5:11–12). **1:55** NT1 originally read, “. . . and thus cometh the end of the world but the end of the earth is not yet but by and by,” and was revised to replace “world” with “wicked according to the prophcy of Moses saying they should be cut off from among the people,” as reflected in NT2 and the current text. *The prophecy of Moses*. Likely referring to Deuteronomy 18:15–19. The quotation offered in this verse is not present in this passage as preserved in the Hebrew Bible. However, it does feature elsewhere in the books of Moses (see Genesis 17:14; Exodus 12:15, 19; 31:14; Leviticus 7:20–21, 25; 7:27; 17:4, 9, 14; 18:29; 19:8; 20:17–18; 22:3; 23:29; Numbers 9:13; 15:30; 19:13, 20).

JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY

At the organization of the Church of Christ (later The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) on 6 April 1830, a revelation to Joseph Smith directed that “there shall be a record kept among” the Saints (Doctrine and Covenants 21:1). This early catalyst for the Latter-day Saints’ historical enterprise resulted in the composition and publication of several histories of varying intent and scope during the Prophet’s lifetime. Each of these histories (including the Prophet’s unpublished 1832 personal history and the published 1842 “Church History” editorial) preserve important reports of Joseph’s adolescence, the inaugural events of the Restoration, and the early years of the Church. But it is the history begun in the spring of 1838 and resumed in the summer of 1839 that has arguably had the most significant impact on the historical consciousness of the Latter-day Saints. This history, often referred to as the 1838 history and presented to the world as the “History of Joseph Smith,” stands out among the Prophet’s other projects to chronicle his life if for no other reason than it is the only such project to enjoy canonical status within the Church.

The 1838 history was begun in late April of that same year after Joseph Smith and the main body of the Saints had relocated from Kirtland, Ohio, to Far West, Missouri. As recorded in a 27 April 1838, journal entry, the Prophet on that day began “writing a history of this Church from the earliest period of its existence” with the assistance of Sidney Rigdon and George W. Robinson as scribes. Unfortunately, there are no known extant manuscripts of this initial undertaking. The earliest surviving manuscript copies of the 1838 history are two drafts composed by scribe James Mulholland, who began work as one of Joseph’s clerks in September 1838. Because the original manuscript composed in early 1838 is not available, it is impossible to know with absolute certainty the relationship between it and Mulholland’s copies prepared in the spring and summer of 1839 after the forced relocation of the Saints from Missouri to Illinois and the Prophet’s imprisonment in Liberty Jail. Most likely Mulholland’s drafts prepared in 1839 are a continuation or otherwise faithful copy (perhaps with some revision) of the history begun that previous year. After Mulholland’s death in November 1839, supervision of the history fell to clerks including

Robert B. Thompson, William W. Phelps, and Willard Richards, who continued to compose material and make revisions to the history during the Prophet's lifetime.

The 1838 history first appeared in print in the spring of 1842. The first portion of the history appeared in the 15 March 1842, issue of the *Times and Seasons*; the same issue that saw, among other things, the publication of the second installment of the Book of Abraham (Abraham 2:19–5:21 and Facsimile 2). The history would continue to be published serially in the *Times and Seasons* until the Saints' exodus from Illinois in 1846, and by the time of the Prophet's death on 27 June 1844, the *Times and Seasons* had reached December 1831 in the history's narrative. Upon their settlement in Utah, the Saints resumed publishing the history from 1851–1858 in serial installments in the *Deseret News*.

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic in Great Britain, the Church's newspaper *The Latter Day Saints' Millennial Star* had begun republishing the "History of Joseph Smith" as early as June 1842, initially under the editorship of Apostle Parley P. Pratt. This series (a reprinting of the *Times and Seasons*' installments) would run until 1845 and then pick up again between 1852–1863 by reprinting the *Deseret News* run of the series. This web of publications and republications would eventually be stabilized in B. H. Roberts's six-volume *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (published between 1902–1912), which for practically the entirety of the twentieth century would serve as the principal edition of this material.

When Apostle Franklin D. Richards prepared the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price in 1851, he included, with some revision, early installments of the series as "Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith." Unlike some of the other material in succeeding editions, the "Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith" (now Joseph Smith—History) has remained a mainstay of this book of scripture, having been retained in each of the major editions and undergoing comparatively minimal revision.

As Latter-day Saint historical consciousness has expanded with the work of the Joseph Smith Papers Project and other scholarly enterprises, appreciation for the 1838 history has not waned. Beginning in the 1960s, for instance, Latter-day Saints have benefitted from the rediscovery and publication of the Prophet's other histories, which relay different accounts of many of the same foundational events detailed in the canonical version. Instead of seeing these different records as somehow undermining the canonical account, most members of the Church have welcomed these discoveries as contributing to a richer, fuller understanding of the Prophet's story. Still, until such a time when, if ever, any of these other histories are accepted into the canon, Joseph Smith's 1838 history will remain the preeminent retelling of his early life and prophetic calling.

STRUCTURE

As would be expected, Joseph Smith—History is told in the Prophet's autobiographical voice. It is entirely a prose narrative that is recounted, with the exception of one small portion (1:64–65), from the Prophet's own perspective. Although it seeks to "put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts" (1:1), the history is far from a neutral, dispassionate chronicling of the events it describes. The composition of the history began between the bitter apostasies of Kirtland in 1837 and the mounting tensions in Missouri that would explode in late 1838 as the Missouri Mormon War. It was in this hostile, polemical environment that the Prophet opens his history by decrying the "reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons" who wished "to militate against its character as a Church and its progress in the world." Indeed, feeling "induced" to go on the record, Joseph Smith's stated intention with the history was to "disabuse the public mind" that was being excited against the Latter-day Saints with scurrilous claims from dissidents and a less-than-sympathetic national press. This undoubtedly accounts for the defiant tone that runs throughout the history, the negative portrayal of those who opposed Joseph (whose actions are described as "persecution" and "mobbing"), and the sense of persecution Joseph remembered feeling in response to his visionary experiences that frames the opening and closing verses of the canonical text (1:21–26, 61, 74–75).

The canonical 1838 history draws partially from extant records, which it embeds into the narrative. This is seen most clearly with the retelling of Martin Harris's February 1828 visit with Charles Anthon and other scholars, which quotes verbatim an otherwise unattested account from Harris (see 1:64–65). The manuscript version of the history and the early publications of the same also embedded revelations from the Doctrine and Covenants as they were received at key points in the unfolding early events of the Restoration, but these were removed by Franklin D. Richards in the 1851 Pearl of Great Price and so are absent from the canonical text. Biblical citations dot the text, sometimes explicitly quoted and other times silently alluded to or paraphrased. Beginning with the 1851 Pearl of Great Price, Oliver Cowdery's description of the translation of the Book of Mormon and priesthood restoration composed in 1834 has footnoted the Prophet's narrative.

The influence of Joseph's memory in attempting to reconstruct the events of his early life is on display throughout the history, and especially in the portions of the narrative that cover his early life and adolescence. This can be detected in how the Prophet sometimes uses qualifiers or approximations (for example, "I was in my tenth year, or thereabouts . . .," "sometime in the second year after our removal to Manchester . . .," "a little over fourteen years of age . . .," "sometime in this month of February . . .," "in due time [it would] be conferred on us . . .") when giving some dates and details, while at other times providing details that are firm and concrete (see 1:27, 59, 68, 72). This should

come as no surprise, since some of the events the Prophet recounts occurred when he was a young boy and a teenager nearly two decades earlier. It should also come as no surprise that the events of 1837–1838 may well have influenced his memory and how he retold his story, including, as mentioned above, the extreme sense of persecution Joseph remembers feeling as a young man that is not as pronounced or evident in other histories. Rather than being signs of intentional misrepresentation or deceit, however, these features give the history a marked sense of authenticity and sincerity.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

After its canonization with the rest of the Pearl of Great Price on 10 October 1880, the impact (and importance) of the 1838 history on the Latter-day Saints' historical identity grew significantly. Now the Saints had an accessible account of the founding events of their religion that carried with it canonical weight and authority. Sensing its importance, generations of Saints after the history's canonization have endeavored to reproduce, retell, and disseminate its content and message as widely as possible. From the late nineteenth century and into the twenty-first, a veritable avalanche of missionary tracts and pamphlets, articles, books, Sunday School, priesthood quorum, and Relief Society curricula, videos, music, and other media reproduced, retold, and repurposed the canonical text of the 1838 history as the defining institutional and cultural narrative of Joseph Smith's earliest visionary experiences.

Besides serving as the Church's flagship story of its earliest years, Joseph Smith's 1838 history has also served as a deep theological wellspring from which Latter-day Saints draw out significant doctrinal truths. For example, from the Prophet's account of his First Vision (1:14–20) members of the Church have extrapolated important points that touch on the nature of the Godhead (that God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, are two separate, embodied personages) and the reality of modern revelation. Far from treating it as little more than a dry historical report, the Saints have treated the canonical version of Joseph's 1838 history as a sacred repository that has been used to formulate lasting theological paradigms.

But perhaps the most pronounced effect the 1838 history has had on the lives and faith of individual Latter-day Saints can be seen in how so many have deeply internalized the Prophet's story as their own. As they are encouraged to do so from childhood, Latter-day Saints universally personalize Joseph's story of seeking and finding God in a time of confusion and unrest through faith, humility, and prayer. The Prophet's account of approaching God as he sought answers to the deepest concerns of his soul has thus inspired generations of faithful Saints to follow his example. In this way, among others, Joseph Smith's 1838 history serves as both a sacred history that retells the experience of a young boy who encountered the divine and a living history that continues to carry profound spiritual relevance for modern readers.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviated designations for Joseph Smith—History manuscripts and other primary sources used in this study edition correlate to content on the Joseph Smith Papers Project website. The spelling and punctuation of these sources for Joseph Smith—History have been standardized unless otherwise indicated.

JS1832 = Joseph Smith, History, circa Summer 1832.

JS1835 = Joseph Smith, Journal, 1835–1836.

JS1838 = Joseph Smith, History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2] = History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834].

JS1842 = Joseph Smith, “Church History,” 1 March 1842.

OP1842 = Orson Pratt, *A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions*, 1840.

OH1842 = Orson Hyde, *Ein Ruf aus der Wüste* (A Cry out of the Wilderness), 1842, extract, English translation.

LR1843 = Levi Richards, Journal, 11 June 1843, extract.

DNW1843 = David Nye White, Interview, 21 August 1843, extract.

AN1844 = Alexander Neibaur, Journal, 24 May 1844.

OC1834 = Oliver Cowdery, eight letters to the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, 1834–1835 = Joseph Smith, History, 1834–1836, pp. 46–103.

LMS1844 = Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845.

T&S = *Times and Seasons*, “History of Joseph Smith,” 15 March–1 August 1842.

MS = *Millennial Star*, “History of Joseph Smith,” 2 June 1842–9 January 1843.

Text and Commentary

JOSEPH SMITH—HISTORY

AN EXTRACT FROM THE HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH

PROLOGUE: THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE HISTORY

1 Owing to the many reports which have been put in circulation by evil-disposed and designing persons in relation to the rise and progress of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—all of which have been designed by the authors thereof to militate against its character as a Church and its progress in the world—I have been induced to write this history to disabuse the public mind, and put all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts, as they have transpired, in relation both to myself and the Church, so far as I have such

facts in my possession.² In this history I shall present the various events in relation to this Church, in truth and righteousness, as they have transpired, or as they at present exist, being now the eighth year since the organization of the said Church.

THE JOSEPH SMITH SR. FAMILY

³ I was born in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and five, on the twenty-third day of December, in the town of Sharon, Windsor county, State of Vermont. My father, Joseph Smith, Sen., left the State of Vermont, and moved to Palmyra, Ontario (now Wayne) county, in the State of New York, when I was

1:1–2 At the outset of this history, the Prophet specifies the purpose behind his writing. Events leading up to the drafting of this history included the tribulations of the Kirtland apostasy of 1837 and the mounting tensions that eventually exploded as the Missouri Mormon War of 1838, which ended with Joseph Smith's incarceration in Liberty Jail that winter. In addition, since the founding of the Church in 1830, publications that sought to discredit Joseph and the Church continued to multiply and circulate (compare Doctrine and Covenants 123:1–6). The intent behind the 1838 history and Joseph Smith's sometimes defensive, even defiant language is made more comprehensible in this historical context. **1:3** *The Joseph and Lucy Mack Smith Family.* Joseph Smith Sr. (1771–1840) and Lucy Mack (1775–1856) were married in Tunbridge, Vermont, on 24 January 1796. Both came from multigenerational New England families. Their first unnamed son died in childbirth in 1797 and is left unmentioned by the Prophet in this brief family history (as is another brother, Ephraim, who died less than two weeks after his birth in 1810). Here the Prophet names his surviving siblings by age starting with his brothers and then his sisters. When left unadjusted for gender and survival into adulthood, the order of the children in the family goes unnamed son (1797), Alvin (1798–1823), Hyrum (1800–1844), Sophronia (1803–1876), Joseph Jr. (1805–1844), Samuel Harrison (1808–1844), Ephraim (1810), William (1811–1893), Katharine (1813–1900), Don Carlos (1816–1841), and Lucy (1821–1882). *Missing content.* An addendum penned by scribe Willard Richards on or before 2 December 1842, recounts episodes from the Prophet's boyhood, such as the harrowing experience of having his leg operated on after contracting typhus fever and the abuse the boy suffered at the hands of a certain Caleb Howard, who had been hired by Joseph Sr. to help move the family to New York. An interlinear note here in the manuscript from Richards alerts readers to this

in my tenth year, or thereabouts. In about four years after my father's arrival in Palmyra, he moved with his family into Manchester in the same county of Ontario, ⁴his family consisting of eleven souls, namely, my father, Joseph Smith; my mother, Lucy Smith (whose name, previous to her marriage, was Mack, daughter of Solomon Mack); my brothers, Alvin (who died November 19th, [1823], in the 26th year of his age), Hyrum, myself, Samuel Harrison, William, Don Carlos; and my sisters, Sophronia, Catherine, and Lucy.

REVIVALISM IN WESTERN NEW YORK

⁵Some time in the second year after

our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country. Indeed, the whole district of country seemed affected by it, and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division amongst the people, some crying, "Lo, here!" and others, "Lo, there!" Some were contending for the Methodist faith, some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist. ⁶For, notwithstanding the great love which the converts to these different faiths expressed at

content, but it appeared too late for the *T&S* and *MS* printings of the history, and consequently the 1851 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*. Another addendum here in the manuscript provides the birth information and paternal genealogy of Joseph Sr. (see also the commentary at 1:20, 27–28). **1:4 *The Year of Alvin Smith's Death***. In the manuscript the date of Alvin's death is provided as 19 November 1823, in an interlinear insertion by Willard Richards. This is the date found on Alvin's tombstone, which is still standing in the Palmyra, New York, cemetery. In the published version of the history in both the *T&S* and the *MS* as well as in the 1851 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*, the date is not provided. In a history prepared between 1834 and 1836, Joseph mistakenly gave the date of Alvin's death as 19 November 1825. The 1902 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price* prepared by James E. Talmage also incorrectly gave the date as 19 November 1824, an error that was perpetuated until the 1981 edition. *The move to Palmyra, New York*. Joseph Sr. moved to Palmyra, New York, in the summer of 1816. Lucy and the children, including Joseph Jr., left for New York to meet Joseph Sr. later that winter. Before moving to Palmyra, Joseph Sr. and Lucy had lived in multiple towns in Vermont and New Hampshire (including Tunbridge, Vermont; Randolph, Vermont; Royalton, Vermont; Sharon, Vermont; Lebanon, New Hampshire; and Norwich, Vermont). *The move to Manchester, New York*. Manchester Township lies just a few miles south of the Palmyra village to which the Smith family relocated between 1816 and 1817. During the winter of 1818–1819 the family moved into a log home that was adjacent to forested land in Manchester. Although the forested land was in Manchester Township, the cabin itself was still in Palmyra Township (but not the village). **1:5 *The timing of the First Vision***. Here the Prophet places the timing of the events leading to the First Vision as beginning "some time in the second year after our removal to Manchester," meaning 1819–1820. In a previous history (JS1832) he specified that he became "seriously impressed" with religious matters and the welfare of his soul "at about the age of twelve years," meaning in 1818. Harmonizing the accounts indicates that the events leading up to the First Vision (Joseph's personal quest for salvation, his concern over the contention he saw between religious denominations and local revivalism) took place between the years 1818 and 1820. *Revivals in the Palmyra, New York, area*. Historians have

the time of their conversion, and the great zeal manifested by the respective clergy, who were active in getting up and promoting this extraordinary scene of religious feeling, in order to have everybody converted, as they were pleased to call it, let them join what sect they pleased. Yet when the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued—priest contending against priest, and convert against convert, so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions.⁷ I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My father's family was proselyted to

the Presbyterian faith, and four of them joined that church, namely, my mother Lucy; my brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison; and my sister Sophronia.

YOUNG JOSEPH'S CONFUSION OVER THE RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENT

⁸During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness. But though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as often as occasion would permit. In process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect, and I felt some desire to be united with them. But so great were the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I

documented religious revivals and camp meetings occurring in the “region of country” or “the whole district of country” near Palmyra (or western New York more generally) beginning in 1818. Although the 1838 history seems to place this activity principally in 1820, it does not confine it to only Palmyra. In light of Joseph's other histories (primarily JS1832), a broader chronological perspective should be kept in mind. *Methodism, Presbyterianism, and Baptists*. In addition to these three branches of Protestantism, the early United States was home to Congregationalists, Quakers, Shakers, Episcopalians, Universalists, and other groups in a diverse religious cultural landscape. Joseph, by his own account, favored Methodism (1:8) but did not join the movement, while his mother, Hyrum, Samuel, and Sophronia joined the Presbyterians (1:7). Joseph Sr. was attracted to Universalism and was otherwise religiously unaffiliated, as were Joseph's brothers Alvin and William. 1:7 Joseph's age at the time of the First Vision is given here as occurring in his “fifteenth year” (meaning when he was fourteen years old). Elsewhere in this account, Joseph gives his age as “between fourteen and fifteen years of age” (1:22) and “a little over fourteen years of age” (1:23) at the time of the event. In other histories Joseph gave his age as “in the 16th year of my age” (JS1832), “about 14 years old” (JS1835), and “about fourteen years of age” (JS1842). The age given in the 1838 history is consistent with the 1835 and 1842 histories and with contemporary secondhand accounts (OP1840, OH1842, DNW1843). Joseph's age in the 1832 history was inserted interlineally by scribe Frederick G. Williams and is off by one year in the other accounts (Joseph would have been fifteen years old in the sixteenth year of his age). Assuming the stated age in the 1832 history came from Joseph and not from Williams, it merely indicates a lapse in memory or poor arithmetic on the Prophet's part. 1:11 The first of many scriptural citations in the 1838 history appears here. The language at 1:5 draws from Luke 17:21

was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong.⁹ My mind at times was greatly excited, the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others.¹⁰ In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself, “What is to be done? Who of all these parties are right, or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?”

JOSEPH TURNS TO THE BIBLE

¹¹ While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, first chapter and fifth verse,

which reads, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”¹² Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man than this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did. For how to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know. For the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible.¹³ At length I came to the conclusion that I must either remain in darkness and confusion, or else I must do as James directs, that is, ask of God. I at length came to the determination to ask of God, concluding that if he gave wisdom to them that lacked wisdom, and would give liberally, and not upbraid, I might venture.

(“Lo, here! Lo, there!”), but this is the first overt scriptural citation. James 1:5, however, was not the only biblical passage that Joseph drew inspiration from as he wrestled with which faith to join. His 1835 account (JS1835) reports that Matthew 7:7 also prompted him to seek God in prayer. Additionally, the 1832 history (JS1832) recounts the influence of Hebrews 13:8 and Psalm 14:1 on young Joseph’s thinking at the time. But as the Prophet indicates here, it was James 1:5 that had the most profound effect on him, as also mentioned in the other contemporary first- and secondhand renditions of the First Vision. **1:13** Joseph’s primary motivation to seek God in prayer in this account is to resolve his confusion over which denomination to join. In the 1832 history (JS1832) the emphasis is on Joseph seeking forgiveness for his sins. These motives are not mutually exclusive. Besides the obvious fact that one of the main reasons people join a particular religious denomination over another is precisely to achieve a sense of salvation and an assurance of eternal security, historians have pointed out how these two categories had conceptual overlap in conversion accounts (especially Methodist accounts) contemporary with the Prophet. Both motivations could be true at the same time: confused and dismayed over the religious divisions of his day (and even in his own family, which was religiously split), Joseph

THE FIRST VISION

¹⁴ So, in accordance with this, my determination to ask of God, I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had made such an attempt, for amidst all my anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally. ¹⁵ After I had retired to the place where I had previously designed to go, having looked around me, and finding myself alone, I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could

not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. ¹⁶ But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. ¹⁷ (It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound.)

felt insecure and unsure about his eternal standing before God and so sought wisdom about which church to join to find some assurance that he would achieve salvation. **1:14–15** *Timing of the vision.* In this history Joseph places the timing of the First Vision “early in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty.” This is the most precise any of the Prophet’s accounts get in timing the vision. *Satan attempts to stop Joseph.* The supernatural opposition that attempted to prevent young Joseph from praying is also mentioned in the Prophet’s 1835 account (JS1835). In this account Joseph describes how his “tongue seemed to be swollen in [his] mouth” so that he was unable to speak, and he writes that he “heard a noise behind [him], like some person walking towards [him].” When he looked around he “saw no person or thing that was calculated to produce the noise of walking.” The language and imagery of Joseph being surrounded by darkness and feeling doomed to destruction but rallying his strength to continue calling on God parallels the experience of Moses described at Moses 1:20. The secondhand account provided by Orson Hyde (OH1842) speaks of this “thick darkness” as a “dark cloud” and mentions the adversary filling Joseph’s mind “with doubts and . . . all manner of inappropriate images.” **1:16** Each of Joseph’s firsthand accounts mentions a bright, fiery light that the boy saw in the vision. In the 1832 history (JS1832) the Prophet described seeing “a pillar of fire” but then crossed out “fire” and substituted it with the word “light.” The 1835 account (JS1835) mentions “a pillar of fire,” or a “pillar of flame which was spread all around and yet nothing consumed.” And the 1842 Wentworth Letter (JS1842) speaks of “a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noon-day.” Contemporary secondhand accounts report the same thing: Orson Pratt (OP1840) described “a very bright and glorious light in the heavens above,” and David Nye White (DNW1843) simply calls it “a light,” while Alexander Neibaur (AN1844) records “a fire towards heaven.” **1:17** *Two Personages.* With one exception, each first- and secondhand account of the First Vision from

When the light rested upon me, I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other, “This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!”¹⁸ My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner, therefore, did I get posses-

sion of myself, so as to be able to speak, than I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light which of all the sects was right [(for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong)] and which I should join.¹⁹ I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors

the Prophet’s lifetime explicitly speaks of young Joseph seeing two heavenly personages. Some of these accounts (JS1835; DNW1843; AN1844) describe one personage appearing before the other, and other accounts (OP1840; OH1842; JS1842) describe the two personages appearing exactly alike in features and likeness. Although Joseph himself did not record a detailed description of the personages he saw, one secondhand account (AN1844) records that Joseph described the personage in the pillar of fire or light as having “light complexion [and] blue eyes” with “a piece of white cloth drawn over his shoulders, his right arm bear.” The exception mentioned above is the 1832 history (JS1832), which does not overtly speak of two personages. It records, “The Lord opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord.” Scholars have proposed various ways to reconcile the 1832 history with the later accounts. The most persuasive is that the title “Lord,” used twice, is referring to God the Father in the first instance and then to the Son in the second. This would harmonize with the accounts that speak of one personage appearing before the other and that claim that the two personages looked exactly alike. “*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*” Two secondhand accounts (DNW1843, AN1844) report that this testimony was given by the Father during the vision. The 1832 and 1835 accounts (JS1832, JS1835) might allude to the Father’s testimony but are not explicit. These two accounts, as well as Orson Pratt’s (OP1842), mention that the Lord forgave Joseph’s sins. 1:18 As noted above (see the commentary at 1:13), in this account the main question Joseph raises is which church he should join. This agrees with many of the other reports of the vision (JS1835; OP1840; OH1842; JS1842; DNW1843; AN1844). In his earliest account (JS1832), the Prophet emphasized his personal search for salvation without explicitly couching this quest in the context of what denomination he should join. *Never entered into my heart.* This phrase (“for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong”) was omitted in the 1902 edition of the Pearl of Great Price and was restored in the 1981 edition. It is present in the manuscript version of this history, in the T&S and MS printings, and in the first two editions of the Pearl of Great Price (1851 and 1878). In another draft of the 1838 history the parenthetical comment reads, “For I supposed that one of them were so,” which suggests some amount of ambivalence was still in Joseph’s mind at the time of the vision. At first glance, this parenthetical remark would appear to contradict 1:10 (“Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together?”) and the 1832 account (JS1832) in which Joseph reports he had “found that mankind did not come unto the Lord, but that they had apostatized from the true and living faith, and there was no society or denomination that [was] built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament.” Scholars have proposed various ways to read these accounts in harmony and stress that minor variations such as these do not suggest calculating attempts to fabricate a story. 1:19 *They were all wrong.* Here and in the next verse Joseph is informed by the Lord that the churches of his day were in

were all corrupt; that they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.

²⁰ He again forbade me to join with any of them, and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time. When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had

no strength. But soon recovering in some degree, I went home. And as I leaned up to the fireplace, mother inquired what the matter was. I replied, “Never mind, all is well—I am well enough off.” I then said to my mother, “I have learned for myself that Presbyterianism is not true.” It seems as though the adversary was aware, at a very early period of my life, that I was destined to prove a disturber and an annoyer of his kingdom, else why should the powers of darkness

apostasy and that he should join none of them. This point is captured in all the extant accounts of the vision from the Prophet’s lifetime except one (JS1835). Joseph’s choice to report the Lord’s rather blunt and sweeping condemnations in this account (for example, “they were all wrong . . .,” “all their creeds were an abomination . . .,” “those professors were all corrupt . . .”) may be at least partially in response to the recent opposition and hostility in Kirtland and Missouri that were fresh on the Prophet’s mind (see also the discussion at 1:1, 22–23). Another one of Joseph’s firsthand accounts (JS1842) uses much softer language than is used in this verse. It should also be kept in mind that this is Joseph’s paraphrasing of what the Lord told him, not necessarily a direct quotation, so it is uncertain how much of the language is specifically from the Lord and how much was shaped by Joseph himself. *They draw near . . . the power thereof.* Quotations or paraphrases of Isaiah 29:13 and 2 Timothy 3:5. According to two accounts (JS1832 and AN1844) the Lord also drew from the language of Psalm 14:3 (“there is none that doeth good, no, not one”). The language in Psalm 14:3 is congruent with the Lord’s sweeping condemnations in 1:19. **1:20** Joseph indicates that he deliberately left out some of the Lord’s words to him in the vision. From details in the other extant accounts of the vision, it most likely included matters related to the apostasy, the forthcoming restoration of the gospel, and Joseph’s personal standing before God. *Angels.* In the 1835 account (JS1835) the Prophet indicates that he saw “many angels” in the vision. The number and identity of these angels and whether they too related anything to Joseph in the vision is unknown. Joseph also fails to describe how long the vision lasted. Since he was told “many other things” during the vision that are not recorded and since, as he says next, when he came to himself he was lying on his back and physically exhausted (see also DWN1843), it might be supposed that the vision lasted some time. *Joseph’s reply to his mother.* When asked by his mother what was on his mind, young Joseph refrained from telling her what he had just experienced. Instead, he provides a roundabout and ironic way of informing her of what the Lord had just told him about not joining any church, including her own (recalling that earlier at 1:7 he specifies that his mother and some siblings had joined the local Presbyterian church). *When the light . . . almost in my infancy.* This portion of the narrative was inserted into the text as an addendum by Willard Richards on 2 December 1842, probably at the time Joseph related the incident to him. **1:21–23** *The Methodist preacher.* The identity of this preacher is unknown. One candidate is Reverend George Lane (1784–1859). Lane was active as an itinerant minister in northern Pennsylvania and western New York between 1819 and 1825. Secondhand sources (for example, OC1834) identify Lane as being one of the ministers who had a pronounced influence on young Joseph in prompting him to seek God in prayer. But there are problems with accepting Lane as this minister, not the least being that the Prophet himself does not positively

combine against me? Why the opposition and persecution that arose against me, almost in my infancy?

THE AFTERMATH OF THE VISION

²¹ Some few days after I had this vision, I happened to be in company with one of the Methodist preachers, who was very active in the before mentioned religious excitement. And, conversing with him on the subject of religion, I took occasion to give him an account of the vision which I had had. I was greatly surprised at his behavior. He treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days, that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them. ²² I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase. And though I was an obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in

life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution. And this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me.

²³ It caused me serious reflection then, and often has since, how very strange it was that an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor, should be thought a character of sufficient importance to attract the attention of the great ones of the most popular sects of the day, and in a manner to create in them a spirit of the most bitter persecution and reviling. But strange or not, so it was, and it was often the cause of great sorrow to myself.

JOSEPH AFFIRMS THE REALITY OF HIS VISION

²⁴ However, it was nevertheless a fact that I had beheld a vision. I have thought since, that I felt much like Paul, when he made his defense before

identify him. *The preacher's reaction.* Joseph remembers how shocked he was at how contemptuously the preacher treated the account of his vision. The reaction obviously made enough of an impression that eighteen years later the Prophet still remembered it. This negative first reaction to Joseph telling others about his vision may account, in part, for why the Prophet was generally reluctant to publicly report his visionary experiences. *Persecution.* Here the theme of persecution against the Prophet appears at its strongest. Joseph mentions the negative, skeptical reaction he received when he told others about his vision in some of his other accounts (for example, JS1832), but it is in this retelling that the language is most potent. It is very likely that Joseph's recollection of the degree and severity of this opposition, as well as the language he chose to describe it, was influenced by the recent persecutions of Kirtland and Missouri. **1:24–26** *Joseph compares himself to the Apostle Paul.* See Acts 26. Joseph uses the defense Paul offered before Herod Agrippa II as a comparable example to his own feelings and experience as he affirmed the reality of his vision before a skeptical public. Joseph's biblical-minded audience would have immediately understood the significance of this comparison. *What Joseph learned from the vision.* Latter-day Saints today have extrapolated several important truths from the First Vision,

King Agrippa, and related the account of the vision he had when he saw a light, and heard a voice, but still there were but few who believed him. Some said he was dishonest, others said he was mad, and he was ridiculed and reviled. But all this did not destroy the reality of his vision. He had seen a vision, he knew he had, and all the persecution under heaven could not make it otherwise. And though they should persecute him unto death, yet he knew, and would know to his latest breath, that he had both seen a light and heard a voice speaking unto him, and all the world could not make him think or believe otherwise.

²⁵ So it was with me. I had actually seen a light, and in the midst of that light I saw two Personages, and they did in reality speak to me, and though I was hated and persecuted for saying that I had seen a vision, yet it was true. And while they were persecuting me, reviling me, and speaking all manner of evil against me falsely for so saying, I was led to say in my heart, “Why persecute me for telling the truth?” I have actually seen a vision, and who am I that I can withstand God, or why does the world think to make me deny what I have actually seen? For I had

seen a vision. I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it. At least I knew that by so doing I would offend God and come under condemnation.

²⁶ I had now got my mind satisfied so far as the sectarian world was concerned—that it was not my duty to join with any of them, but to continue as I was until further directed. I had found the testimony of James to be true—that a man who lacked wisdom might ask of God, and obtain, and not be upbraided.

JOSEPH FALLS INTO YOUTHFUL ERRORS

²⁷ I continued to pursue my common vocations in life until the twenty-first of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three, all the time suffering severe persecution at the hands of all classes of men, both religious and irreligious, because I continued to affirm that I had seen a vision. ²⁸ During the space of time which intervened between the time I had the vision and the year eighteen hundred and twenty-three—having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day, and being of very tender years, and persecuted by those who ought to have been my

including points that touch on the nature of the Godhead and the reality of modern revelation. Per his own account (see 1:26), Joseph himself walked away from the First Vision with two primary truths in mind: that he was not to join any of the churches of his day and that God does in fact answer prayers. **1:27–28** This portion of the history transitions the narrative from the Prophet’s early life and the First Vision to the first appearance of Moroni on the night of 21 September 1823. This sequence (early life > First Vision > appearance of Moroni) can be found in both earlier and later histories prepared by the Prophet (JS1832; JS1835; JS1842) and in histories prepared by contemporaries (OP1840). The First Vision and the appearance of Moroni were thus two of the pivotal early events of the unfolding Restoration as narrated by the Prophet himself. *Youthful errors.* The Prophet’s 1832 history (JS1832) also mentions how young Joseph

friends and to have treated me kindly, and if they supposed me to be deluded to have endeavored in a proper and affectionate manner to have reclaimed me—I was left to all kinds of temptations. And, mingling with all kinds of society, I frequently fell into many foolish errors, and displayed the weakness of youth, and the foibles of human nature, which, I am sorry to say, led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God.

In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But I was guilty of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to anyone who recollects my youth and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament.

THE FIRST APPEARANCE OF MORONI

²⁹ In consequence of these things, I often felt condemned for my weak-

ness and imperfections, when, on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him. For I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one.³⁰ While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.³¹ He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness beyond anything earthly I had ever seen, nor do I believe that any earthly thing could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His hands were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist. So, also, were his feet naked, as were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck

“fell into transgressions and sinned in many things” in the intervening years between the First Vision and the appearance of Moroni. The 1835 history (JS1835) likewise describes how Joseph “had not kept the commandments” during this time. However, here the Prophet insists that he is not guilty “of any great or malignant sins.” (This qualifier was likely added both to prevent the wrong impression and to rebut public accusations of Joseph’s alleged deplorable behavior.) In these accounts, as in the 1838 history, Joseph is quick to also describe how he repented of his youthful sins and that it was during his penance that Moroni made his first appearance. *In making this confession . . . cheery temperament.* This portion of text was added to the history in an addendum penned by Willard Richards on 2 December 1842 (see also the commentary at 1:1, 20). **1:30–32** The appearance of Moroni is retold in other firsthand and contemporary secondhand reports (see JS1832, JS1835, JS1842, OC1834, OP1840, OH1842, LMS1844). *Description of the messenger.* In an earlier history (JS1835) the Prophet described how with the angel’s appearance “the room was illuminated above the brightness of the sun.” According to this account, Moroni’s features were “naked, pure, and white,” and the personage was “clothed with purity inexpressible.” Oliver Cowdery (OC1834) similarly reported “a light like that of day,

were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom.³² Not only was his robe exceedingly white, but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. The room was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately around his person. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the fear soon left me.³³ He called me by name and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me, and that his name was Moroni; that God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

MORONI TELLS JOSEPH OF THE BOOK OF MORMON AND QUOTES PROPHECY

³⁴He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an

account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.³⁵ Also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted “seers” in ancient or former times, and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

³⁶After telling me these things, he commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles. Instead of quoting the first verse as it reads in our books, he quoted it thus,³⁷ “For behold, the

only of a purer and far more glorious appearance and brightness” filling the room during the angelic visitation. Cowdery described the angel as having a “countenance [like] lightning” and wearing a “garment [that] was perfectly white.” 1:33 In the extant manuscript copy, the name of the angel is given here as Nephi. This was almost certainly a clerical or scribal error. Sources from both before and after the 1838 history, including those from Joseph himself, identify the messenger as Moroni. The error in the manuscript, however, was not caught until decades after its composition, and so the mistaken identity of the angel was perpetuated in print, including in the *T&S* and *MS* printings of the history in the 1840s and in the 1851 first edition of the Pearl of Great Price. 1:34 Here the Book of Mormon, including its origin and contents, is referenced for the first time in this history. Joseph’s narrative about bringing forth and translating the record will occupy the next thirty-four verses. As with the First Vision, the Prophet gave multiple accounts of the coming forth and translation of the Book of Mormon. Many of these accounts, in fact, were retold right alongside his other renditions of the First Vision (see JS1832; JS1835; JS1842). Clearly in Joseph’s mind the two events were linked and were considered foundational to his prophetic calling. *Written upon gold plates*. Joseph and other witnesses to the plates, or those who otherwise handled them in some capacity, described them as being gold or having “the appearance of gold”; weighing between forty to sixty pounds; measuring about six or seven inches wide, eight inches long, and four to six inches thick; having individual plates as thick as

day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble. For they that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

³⁸ And again, he quoted the fifth verse thus, “Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah

the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

³⁹ He also quoted the next verse differently, “And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.”

“common tin” or parchment; having three D-shaped rings binding the plates; a portion being sealed; and being “engraved” on both sides with “characters” or “hieroglyphics.” *An account of the former inhabitants of this continent*. Although on occasion the Prophet appealed to artifacts from both North and Central America as evidence for the antiquity of the Book of Mormon, he never gave a detailed description of the geography or of the ancient setting of the events recorded in the text. During the Prophet’s lifetime, readers of the book began formulating geography theories to situate the text in a real-world setting, but none of these nor any subsequent theories have ever arisen to the level of revealed authority for the Church as a whole. In her memoirs (LMS1844), Joseph’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, related how Moroni instructed young Joseph about the ancient inhabitants of America as the boy prepared for the recovery and translation of the record, a detail the Prophet also reported in another history (JS1842). 1:35 Joseph’s use of the term “Urim and Thummim” to describe the instrument he recovered with the plates (compare JS1835) likely takes its lead from early Church leaders W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery (OC1834, including the excerpted passage below), who both had previously drawn a connection between the biblical instrument and the Nephite “interpreters” (see Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21; Mosiah 8:13; 28:11, 13) in Church publications. In his earliest account of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (JS1832), the Prophet described this instrument as a set of “spectacles” that had been prepared to translate the book without giving it the name Urim and Thummim. Besides attesting to the use of the Nephite interpreters that were deposited with the plates, eyewitnesses to the translation of the Book of Mormon also described Joseph placing another seer stone in his possession in the bottom of a hat, drawing the brim of the hat over his face to block out external light, and then reading off the translated words as they appeared in the stone. It is unclear precisely when in the course of translation the Prophet used the Nephite interpreters and when he used his personal seer stone. Part of this confusion is because the term “Urim and Thummim” was eventually used to describe both the Nephite interpreters and the seer stone. In any case, the overriding theme that is emphasized in these and other accounts of the translation of the record is the miraculous nature of the work that was beyond Joseph’s natural abilities. 1:36–41 Toward the end of his life, nearly twenty years after Moroni’s appearance, Joseph would return to Malachi 3–4 in his exposition on the doctrine of sealing and of baptism for the dead (See Doctrine and Covenants 128:17–18; compare Doctrine and Covenants 2; 27:9; 110:13–16). *That prophet was Christ*. Moroni’s quotation of Acts 3:22–23 in turn draws from Deuteronomy 18:15, 19 and Leviticus 23:29 (compare 1 Nephi 10:4; 22:20). *The fulness of the Gentiles*. Perhaps alluding to Romans 11:25 (compare Luke 21:24; Doctrine and Covenants 45:24–30). 1:42 The Book of Mormon foretold that special witnesses would be selected to view the plates “by the power of God” and bear testimony to the world (see 2 Nephi 27:12–13; Ether 5). These special witnesses (Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, and David Whitmer) were selected by revelation (see Doctrine and Covenants 5:11–18; 17). Other men and women had tactile encounters with the plates in various indirect ways (for instance, hefting the plates as they were

⁴⁰In addition to these, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled. He quoted also the third chapter of Acts, twenty-second and twenty-third verses, precisely as they stand in our New Testament. He said that that prophet was Christ, but the day had not yet come when they who would not hear his voice should be cut off from among the people, but soon would come. ⁴¹He also quoted the second chapter of Joel, from the twenty-eighth verse to the last. He also said that this was not yet fulfilled, but was soon to be. And he further stated that the fulness of the Gentiles was soon to come in. He quoted many other passages of scripture and offered many explanations which cannot be mentioned here. ⁴²Again, he told me, that when I got those plates of which he had spoken—for the time that they should be obtained was not yet fulfilled—I should not show them to any person, neither the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim, only to those to whom I should be commanded to show them. If I did, I should be destroyed. While he was conversing with me about the plates, the vision was opened to my

mind that I could see the place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

THE SECOND APPEARANCE OF MORONI

⁴³After this communication, I saw the light in the room begin to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so until the room was again left dark, except just around him. When, instantly I saw, as it were, a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended till he entirely disappeared, and the room was left as it had been before this heavenly light had made its appearance. ⁴⁴I lay musing on the singularity of the scene and marveling greatly at what had been told to me by this extraordinary messenger. When, in the midst of my meditation, I suddenly discovered that my room was again beginning to get lighted, and in an instant, as it were, the same heavenly messenger was again by my bedside. ⁴⁵He commenced and again related the very same things which he had done at his first visit, without the least variation. Which having done, he informed me

wrapped in a tow frock or tracing them with a finger as they were left covered on a table). The testimony of the Eight Witnesses complements the testimony of the Three by describing their experience of having been shown the plates and handling them directly without any supernatural or visionary experience. **1:45** Moroni's apocalyptic warnings during his second visit are consonant with the scriptures the angel cited during the first visit, particularly with Joel 2:28–32. **1:46** Moroni's warning was prescient since according to Joseph in his 1832 history (JS1832) and Oliver Cowdery (OC1834), upon his first encounter with the plates Joseph was tempted by their monetary value. For this he earned the angel's censure. **1:48–50** Lucy Mack Smith recounts (in LMS1844) how Joseph was initially reluctant to tell his father about his encounter with the angel out of fear that his father would not believe him. On the contrary, however, as related here and in another history (JS1835), Joseph Sr. not only believed the boy's account but "wept" and assured Joseph that "it was a vision from God." **1:51** The "hill of considerable size" where the plates lay

of great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence, and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation. Having related these things, he again ascended as he had done before.

THE THIRD APPEARANCE OF MORONI

⁴⁶ By this time, so deep were the impressions made on my mind, that sleep had fled from my eyes, and I lay overwhelmed in astonishment at what I had both seen and heard. But what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before, and added a caution to me, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family) to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom. Otherwise, I could not get them. ⁴⁷ After this third visit, he again ascended into heaven as before, and I was again left to ponder on the strangeness of what I had just experienced. When almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had

ascended from me for the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching, so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night.

THE FOURTH APPEARANCE OF MORONI

⁴⁸ I shortly after arose from my bed, and, as usual, went to the necessary labors of the day. But, in attempting to work as at other times, I found my strength so exhausted as to render me entirely unable. My father, who was laboring along with me, discovered something to be wrong with me, and told me to go home. I started with the intention of going to the house. But, in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything. ⁴⁹ The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received. ⁵⁰ I obeyed. I returned to my father in the field and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me

deposited goes unnamed in this history, as it does in Joseph's other firsthand accounts of the recovery of the plates. During the Prophet's lifetime, Latter-day Saints began identifying this hill as Cumorah, the same hill mentioned in the Book of Mormon as the location of the final Nephite destruction. Joseph appears to have accepted this identification but did not explicitly make the connection until the end of his life (see Doctrine and Covenants 128:20). Whether the Prophet

that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger. I left the field and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited, and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there.

JOSEPH DISCOVERS THE PLATES

⁵¹ Convenient to the village of Manchester, Ontario county, New York, stands a hill of considerable size, and the most elevated of any in the neighborhood. On the west side of this hill, not far from the top, under a stone of considerable size, lay the plates, deposited in a stone box. This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all around was covered with earth. ⁵² Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and there indeed did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of

cement. In the bottom of the box were laid two stones crossways of the box, and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them.

⁵³ I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time. But he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates. ⁵⁴ Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews, respecting what the Lord was going to do, and how and in what manner his kingdom was to be conducted in the last days.

JOSEPH IS HIRED BY JOSIAH STOAL AND MARRIES EMMA HALE

⁵⁵ As my father's worldly circumstances were very limited, we were under the necessity of laboring with our hands, hiring out by day's work and otherwise, as we could get

arrived at this identification by revelation or simply adopted a usage that was already common among members of the Church is unknown. *Convenient to . . . the top.* This block of text was inserted into the manuscript of the 1838 history by scribe James Mulholland on a loose slip of paper pinned to the manuscript and marked with an asterisk. A brief note from Mulholland on the slip of paper explains that this text was included at his (Mulholland's) recommendation "in order that the history be satisfactory." **1:53** Unmentioned here (see commentary at 1:46) is the rebuke Joseph received from the angel after being tempted by the monetary value of the gold plates. Also unmentioned here is the detail preserved in the recollection offered by Joseph Knight (an early supporter of the Prophet) that the Prophet was instructed to bring his older brother Alvin with him to the hill the next year. **1:56** *Date of Alvin's death.* The year of Alvin's death was

opportunity. Sometimes we were at home, and sometimes abroad, and by continuous labor were enabled to get a comfortable maintenance.⁵⁶ In the year [1823] my father's family met with a great affliction by the death of my eldest brother, Alvin. In the month of October, 1825, I hired with an old gentleman by the name of Josiah Staal, who lived in Chenango county, State of New York. He had heard something of a silver mine having been opened by the Spaniards in Harmony, Susquehanna county, State of Pennsylvania, and had, previous to my hiring to him, been digging in order, if possible, to discover the mine.

After I went to live with him, he took me, with the rest of his hands, to dig for the silver mine, at which I continued to work for nearly a month, without success in our undertaking, and finally I prevailed with the old

gentleman to cease digging after it. Hence arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger.⁵⁷ During the time that I was thus employed, I was put to board with a Mr. Isaac Hale, of that place. It was there I first saw my wife (his daughter), Emma Hale. On the 18th of January, 1827, we were married, while I was yet employed in the service of Mr. Staal.

⁵⁸Owing to my continuing to assert that I had seen a vision, persecution still followed me, and my wife's father's family were very much opposed to our being married. I was, therefore, under the necessity of taking her elsewhere. So we went and were married at the house of Squire Tarbill, in South Bainbridge, Chenango county, New York. Immediately after my marriage, I left Mr. Staal's, and went to my father's, and farmed with him that season.

erroneously given as 1824 in the manuscript of the 1838 history and the *T&S* and *MS* printings. This error was not corrected until the 1981 edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*. In fact, Alvin died on 19 November 1823. (See also the commentary at 1:4.) *Josiah Staal*. Josiah Staal (or Stowell; 1770–1844) was a farmer and sawmill owner and early supporter of the Prophet, acting as a witness for the defense when in 1826 Joseph was brought before a court in South Bainbridge, New York, on charges of being a “disorderly person” because of his money digging. Staal was also present in the Smith home in New York when Joseph received the plates in 1827, and he joined the Church in 1830. *Money digging*. Searching for lost items and purported lost treasure through “magical” means such as seer stones or divining rods was practiced by some in Joseph's day. The Smith family participated, to some extent, in this “magical” culture, which they and other devout Christians of the time did not necessarily see as incompatible with their faith in biblical miracles. Joseph himself had a local reputation for being someone who could be consulted to locate lost objects with a seer stone, which is probably why Staal hired him in the first place. The Prophet never denied his youthful forays into money digging, but he later did distance himself from these activities and downplayed the influence “folk magic” had on his early upbringing. 1:57–58 Isaac Hale (1763–1839), his wife, and their daughter Emma (1804–1879) were living in Harmony, Pennsylvania, at the time of the 1825 digging excursion. Isaac was a farmer, hunter, innkeeper and, along with his daughter, active in the Methodist church in Harmony. He was skeptical of his son-in-law's claims to having seen visions (as mentioned here and confirmed by other sources), which led to increased tensions between the two and likely influenced Joseph's memory of having felt persecuted during this time.

JOSEPH OBTAINS THE PLATES

⁵⁹ At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them, that if I should let them go carelessly, or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off, but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected.

⁶⁰ I soon found out the reason why I had received such strict charges to keep them safe, and why it was that the messenger had said that when I had done what was required at my hand, he would call for them. For no sooner was it known that I had them, than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me. Every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to for that purpose. The persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me if possible.

But by the wisdom of God, they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him. And he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight. ⁶¹ The excitement, however, still continued, and rumor with her thousand tongues was all the time employed in circulating falsehoods about my father's family, and about myself. If I were to relate a thousandth part of them, it would fill up volumes. The persecution, however, became so intolerable that I was under the necessity of leaving Manchester, and going with my wife to Susquehanna county, in the State of Pennsylvania. While preparing to start—being very poor, and the persecution so heavy upon us that there was no probability that we would ever be otherwise—in the midst of our afflictions we found a friend in a gentleman by the name of Martin Harris, who came to us and gave me fifty dollars to assist us on our journey. Mr. Harris was a resident of Palmyra township, Wayne county, in the State of New York, and a farmer of respectability.

1:59–60 Reminiscences from sources both hostile and friendly toward Joseph confirm that some local Palmyra residents took his claims to having golden plates seriously enough that they attempted to steal them on multiple occasions. **1:61–62** Joseph and Emma moved to Harmony, Pennsylvania, in December 1827 with the financial assistance of Martin Harris (1783–1875), a prosperous and well-regarded Palmyra farmer. They lived at first with Emma's parents but shortly thereafter moved into their own small home near her parents' house. **1:63** According to Joseph's 1832 history (JS1832) the decision to send Martin to New York with a copy of the characters from the Book of Mormon plates came at the prompting of a revelation. Some sources (including LMS1844) indicate that Joseph was at first unsure precisely how to accomplish the

TRANSLATION OF THE
RECORD BEGINS

⁶² By this timely aid was I enabled to reach the place of my destination in Pennsylvania, and immediately after my arrival there I commenced copying the characters off the plates. I copied a considerable number of them, and by means of the Urim and Thummim I translated some of them, which I did between the time I arrived at the house of my wife's father, in the month of December, and the February following. ⁶³ Sometime in this month of February, the aforementioned Mr. Martin Harris came to our place, got the characters which I had drawn off the plates, and started with them to the city of New York. For what took place relative to him and the characters, I refer to his own account of the circumstances, as he related them to me after his return, which was as follows:

THE VISIT WITH CHARLES ANTHON

⁶⁴ "I went to the city of New York, and presented the characters which had been translated, with the translation thereof, to Professor Charles Anthon, a gentleman celebrated for his liter-

ary attainments. Professor Anthon stated that the translation was correct, more so than any he had before seen translated from the Egyptian. I then showed him those which were not yet translated, and he said that they were Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic, and he said they were true characters. He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house, when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him. ⁶⁵ He then said to me, 'Let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden

translation, and so the decision to consult with scholars arose, in part, to help get some initial assistance or bearing. *His own account*. It is unknown when Harris penned this first-person account of his visit with Charles Anthon (1797–1867), a renowned scholar of ancient cultures and languages in his day. It is only preserved here in the 1838 history and was likely drafted sometime before his excommunication from the Church in December 1837 (in any event, it must have been drafted before the commencement of the composition of this history in the spring of 1838). **1:64–65** Besides Charles Anthon, Harris also visited with and consulted the linguist and diplomat Luther Bradish (1783–1863) and the scholar Samuel Mitchell (1764–1831). The details and outcome of Harris's visit with Bradish are unknown. Historical sources are not clear whether Harris visited Mitchell before or after Anthon. By his account, Harris makes it sound as though he visited Anthon and then Mitchell (1:65), but other sources reverse the order. In either case, these are the three known contacts Harris made as he consulted with scholars. *Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyriac, and Arabic*. At the time of the composition of this report

to bring them. He replied, 'I cannot read a sealed book.' I left him and went to Dr. Mitchell, who sanctioned what Professor Anthon had said respecting both the characters and the translation."

OLIVER COWDERY SERVES
AS SCRIBE

"On the 5th day of April, 1829, Oliver Cowdery came to my house, until which time I had never seen him. He stated to me that having been teaching school in the neighborhood where my father resided, and my father being one of those who sent to the school, he went to board for a season at his house, and while there the family related to him the circumstances of my having received the plates, and accordingly he had come to make inquiries of me. ⁶⁷Two days after the arrival of Mr. Cowdery (being the 7th of April) I commenced to translate the Book of Mormon, and he began to write for me.

THE RESTORATION OF THE
AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

⁶⁸We still continued the work of translation, when, in the ensuing month (May, 1829), we on a certain day went into the woods to pray and inquire of the Lord respecting baptism for the remission of sins, that we found mentioned in the translation of the plates. While we were thus employed, praying and calling upon the Lord, a messenger from heaven descended in a cloud of light, and having laid his hands upon us, he ordained us, saying, ⁶⁹"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. And this shall never be taken again from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness." ⁷⁰He said this Aaronic Priesthood had not

"Chaldaic" or "Chaldean" was used to designate Aramaic, and "Assyriac" to designate cuneiform (that is, the script of ancient Assyria). *Anthon's account of the meeting*. Anthon left three known accounts describing this encounter. In each of them, he indicates that he expressed skepticism that the characters were authentic and claimed that he warned Harris that he was being conned. Anthon's own version of this episode thus differs dramatically from Harris's. Anthon's accounts are not entirely free from problems, however, because he contradicts himself in some key details. Whatever exactly was said in their meeting, Harris left convinced Joseph had an ancient record in his possession and was a lifelong supporter of the Book of Mormon. *'I cannot read a sealed book.'* Paraphrase of Isaiah 29:11. Anthon may have uttered this line sarcastically, but Martin and Joseph took it as a sign that the biblical prophecy in Isaiah 29:11–12 had been fulfilled (see JS1832). **1:66 Chronological jump**. Martin Harris's consultation with scholars occurred in February 1828. As it appears in the canonical text, the narrative skips ahead a year to April 1829, leaving out significant events like the birth (and soon death) of Joseph and Emma's first-born child (a son) and the loss of the 116 pages of the translated Book of Mormon manuscript in the summer of 1828. An account of the loss of the 116 pages had previously been recorded in Joseph's 1832 history (JS1832), and in fact, the manuscript version of this history as well as the *T&S* and *MS* publications contain an account of the loss of the 116 pages and reproduce the revelations that are now sections 3, 4, 5, and 10 of the Doctrine and Covenants. For reasons

the power of laying on hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but that this should be conferred on us hereafter. And he commanded us to go and be baptized, and gave us directions that I should baptize Oliver Cowdery, and that afterwards he should baptize me.

**JOSEPH AND OLIVER ARE
BAPTIZED; PROMISED
MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD**

⁷¹ Accordingly we went and were baptized. I baptized him first, and afterwards he baptized me, after which I laid my hands upon his head and ordained him to the Aaronic Priesthood, and afterwards he laid his hands on me and ordained me to the same Priesthood, for so we were commanded.† ⁷² The messen-

ger who visited us on this occasion and conferred this Priesthood upon us, said that his name was John, the same that is called John the Baptist in the New Testament, and that he acted under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek, which Priesthood, he said, would in due time be conferred on us, and that I should be called the first Elder of the Church, and he (Oliver Cowdery) the second. It was on the fifteenth day of May, 1829, that we were ordained under the hand of this messenger, and baptized.

⁷³ Immediately on our coming up out of the water after we had been baptized, we experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly

unknown Franklin D. Richards opted to drop this content from the 1851 Pearl of Great Price. *Oliver Cowdery*. Oliver Cowdery (1806–1850) served as the principal scribe in the translation of the Book of Mormon from April 1829 to its completion in mid- or late-June of that year. With some assistance, he also prepared a copy of the original manuscript of the book for publication. Besides being informed of Joseph's divine calling by the Smith family (as mentioned in this verse), according to Joseph's 1832 history (JS1832) Oliver also had a vision of the plates and felt a confirming witness from God that he should assist in the work (compare Doctrine and Covenants 6:22–23). *Omitted material*. The manuscript version of the history and the T&S and MS versions reproduce sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the Doctrine and Covenants along with additional narrative about Joseph's work of translating with Oliver, which was omitted in the 1851 edition of the Pearl of Great Price. **1:68–70 Priesthood restoration accounts**. The restoration of the priesthood is mentioned briefly in Joseph's 1832 history (JS1832), which speaks of "the reception of the holy priesthood by the ministering of angels." From this it seems that the 1832 history was going to give a fuller account of the priesthood restoration, but the text ends abruptly with Joseph narrating his time in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Over his lifetime Joseph only gradually divulged the details about the priesthood restoration, partly because of "a spirit of persecution" which obliged him to keep the details private at first (1:74). First- and secondhand accounts of the priesthood restoration were recorded in scattered reports. Some contemporary hostile sources from the early 1830s indicate that Oliver Cowdery and other early Latter-day Saints were claiming divine commission and the visitation of angels connected to their ecclesiastical authority. *Until the sons of Levi . . . righteousness*. Paraphrase of Malachi 3:3. **1:72** Joseph reports that the Aaronic Priesthood was restored on 15 May 1829. He does not, however, in either this history or in any other known firsthand account, record the date of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood (compare Doctrine and Covenants 128:20). Rather, he only indicated vaguely in this verse that the angelic messenger promised him and Oliver that the higher priesthood would "in due time be conferred on [them]." The precise date of the restoration of the Melchizedek

Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things connected with the Church, and this generation of the children of men. We were filled with the Holy Ghost, and rejoiced in the God of our salvation.

THE AFTERMATH OF THE RESTORATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

⁷⁴Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our understandings, and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of. In the meantime, we were forced to keep secret the circumstances of having received the Priesthood and our having been baptized, owing to a spirit of persecution which had already manifested itself in the neighborhood. ⁷⁵We had been threatened with being mobbed, from time to time, and this, too, by professors of religion. And their

intentions of mobbing us were only counteracted by the influence of my wife's father's family (under Divine providence), who had become very friendly to me, and who were opposed to mobs, and were willing that I should be allowed to continue the work of translation without interruption, and therefore offered and promised us protection from all unlawful proceedings, as far as in them lay.

OLIVER COWDERY'S ACCOUNT

† Oliver Cowdery describes these events thus: "These were days never to be forgotten—to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom! Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, 'Interpreters,' the history or record called 'The Book of Mormon.'

"To notice, in even few words, the interesting account given by Mormon and his faithful son, Moroni, of a people once beloved and favored of heaven, would supersede my present design; I shall therefore defer this to a future period, and, as I said in the introduction, pass more directly to some few incidents immedi-

Priesthood is thus unknown, and historians have offered different possibilities ranging from May 1829 to the summer of 1830. Although a later date cannot be rule out, an earlier date seems more likely. In any case, later reports of the priesthood restoration are broadly corroborated by earlier accounts that refer to Joseph and Oliver's receiving a divine commission from God through the ministry of angels. 1:75 As with the opening verses, the concluding verse in the canonized version of this history ends on a note of defiance in the face of persecution. As so presented in its canonized form, this serves as a sort of narrative envelope that frames the entire history. The 1838 history itself continues well past where it concludes here in the canonized text. **Oliver Cowdery's Account** This account first appeared in the *Messenger and Advocate* in October 1834 in the first of a series of eight letters to William W. Phelps (OC1834). It has appended the

ately connected with the rise of this Church, which may be entertaining to some thousands who have stepped forward, amid the frowns of bigots and the calumny of hypocrites, and embraced the Gospel of Christ.

“No men, in their sober senses, could translate and write the directions given to the Nephites from the mouth of the Savior, of the precise manner in which men should build up His Church, and especially when corruption had spread an uncertainty over all forms and systems practiced among men, without desiring a privilege of showing the willingness of the heart by being buried in the liquid grave, to answer a ‘good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’

“After writing the account given of the Savior’s ministry to the remnant of the seed of Jacob, upon this continent, it was easy to be seen, as the prophet said it would be, that darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people. On reflecting further it was as easy to be seen that amid the great strife and noise concerning religion, none had authority from God to administer the ordinances of the Gospel. For the question might be asked, have men authority to administer in the name of Christ, who deny revelations, when His testimony is no less than the spirit of prophecy, and His religion based, built, and sustained by immediate revelations,

in all ages of the world when He has had a people on earth? If these facts were buried, and carefully concealed by men whose craft would have been in danger if once permitted to shine in the faces of men, they were no longer to us; and we only waited for the commandment to be given ‘Arise and be baptized.’

“This was not long desired before it was realized. The Lord, who is rich in mercy, and ever willing to answer the consistent prayer of the humble, after we had called upon Him in a fervent manner, aside from the abodes of men, condescended to manifest to us His will. On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world was racked and distracted—while millions were groping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld, our ears heard, as in the ‘blaze of day’; yes, more—above the glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, ‘I am thy fellow-servant,’ dispelled every fear. We listened, we

Prophet’s own narrative as published in the Pearl of Great Price in each edition of the book since the 1851 first edition.

gazed, we admired! 'Twas the voice of an angel from glory, 'twas a message from the Most High! And as we heard we rejoiced, while His love enkindled upon our souls, and we were wrapped in the vision of the Almighty! Where was room for doubt? Nowhere; uncertainty had fled, doubt had sunk no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever!

“But, dear brother, think, further think for a moment, what joy filled our hearts, and with what surprise we must have bowed, (for who would not have bowed the knee for such a blessing?) when we received under his hand the Holy Priesthood as he said, ‘Upon you my fellow-servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer this Priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon earth, that the Sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness!’

“I shall not attempt to paint to you the feelings of this heart, nor the majestic beauty and glory which surrounded us on this occasion; but you will believe me when I say, that earth, nor men, with the eloquence of time, cannot begin to clothe language in as interesting and sublime a manner as this holy personage. No; nor has this earth power to give the joy, to bestow the peace, or comprehend the wisdom which was contained in each sentence as they were delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit!

Man may deceive his fellow-men, deception may follow deception, and the children of the wicked one may have power to seduce the foolish and untaught, till naught but fiction feeds the many, and the fruit of falsehood carries in its current the giddy to the grave; but one touch with the finger of his love, yes, one ray of glory from the upper world, or one word from the mouth of the Savior, from the bosom of eternity, strikes it all into insignificance, and blots it forever from the mind. The assurance that we were in the presence of an angel, the certainty that we heard the voice of Jesus, and the truth unsullied as it flowed from a pure personage, dictated by the will of God, is to me past description, and I shall ever look upon this expression of the Savior’s goodness with wonder and thanksgiving while I am permitted to tarry; and in those mansions where perfection dwells and sin never comes, I hope to adore in that day which shall never cease.”

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY

In early 1842, at the solicitation of John Wentworth, the editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, Joseph Smith composed a “sketch of the rise, progress, persecution, and faith of the Latter-Day Saints.” Although this sketch went unpublished by Wentworth, it did see the light of day on 1 March 1842, in the pages of the *Times and Seasons*. Titled “Church History” at the time of its first appearance in print, this composition has been enshrined in Latter-day Saint historical consciousness and vernacular as the Wentworth Letter after the name of its intended recipient. In fact, though, Wentworth had requested a statement from Joseph not for himself but for his friend, the Boston lawyer George Barstow, who was then preparing a history of the state of New Hampshire. Sensing an opportune time to capitalize on the growing national interest in the Church, the Prophet composed this history with the express desire that it be published “ungarnished, and without misrepresentation” for the general reading public.

In this history, Joseph narrated his early life, provided one of the few first-hand accounts of his First Vision, the appearance of Moroni, and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and retold the history of the Church from its founding on 6 April 1830 to its rise and progress up to the point of the history’s composition (with emphasis on the persecution the Saints had suffered in Missouri). After providing this history and extolling the growing missionary work of the Church, the Prophet concluded with thirteen declarations of faith, twelve of which began with “We believe.” It was in this context that Joseph provided what are now known as the Articles of Faith.

This was not, however, the first time Latter-day Saints had attempted to provide a synopsis of their beliefs in a way similar to the 1842 Articles of Faith. In 1834, Oliver Cowdery, then acting as editor of *The Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, published some of the Church’s foundational doctrines that each began with the declaration “We believe.” These points touched on the Saints’ belief in the Godhead, continuing revelation, religious liberty, and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. In 1840, Apostles (and brothers) Parley and Orson Pratt both published their own formulations of the essentials of Latter-day Saint doctrine. Orson Pratt’s tract *A[n] Interesting*

Account of Several Remarkable Visions, in which his version appeared, was so influential, in fact, that Joseph himself appropriated some of its language when composing “Church History” and the Articles of Faith.

The Articles of Faith have been present in every major edition of the Pearl of Great Price since the 1851 first edition. They were first left unnamed, only being called “Articles of our Faith” in the 1878 Salt Lake edition prepared by Orson Pratt. The name the articles are known by today (“The Articles of Faith of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints”) was first given to them in the 1902 edition prepared by James E. Talmage. Ironically, despite Joseph’s desire that the articles not be separated from the rest of the “Church History” editorial, they have always appeared in the Pearl of Great Price separated from the historical content in which the Prophet couched them, which has never enjoyed the same canonical status.

STRUCTURE

The Articles of Faith are short, declarative statements of belief. Although authored by Joseph Smith, they are made with first-person plural pronouns, thereby signaling their significance for the Latter-day Saints as a faith community. As mentioned, they were originally composed to be the culmination of a longer historical narrative, but as encountered by most Latter-day Saints today they are isolated from this historical and narrative context. Although they may appear random at first glance, the Articles of Faith in fact can be classified into distinct, purposeful theological categories. The first and second articles elucidate the Latter-day Saint view of the nature of God and humanity, thus answering what is arguably the most important metaphysical groundwork that must be laid in any discussion of theology. The third and fourth articles touch on soteriology, or the theology of salvation. The fifth, sixth, and seventh articles overview the ecclesiastical structure of the Church of Jesus Christ and the spiritual gifts that accompany the offices of the Church. The eighth and ninth articles declare the nature of the canon and ongoing revelation. The tenth article touches on eschatology, or the theology of the culmination of the earth’s and humanity’s destined future. And the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth articles encapsulate matters of practical religious living and morality.

In addition to being logically ordered, the Articles of Faith are also progressive in nature in that they build upon each other in a progressive unfolding of their full significance. For example, the third article affirms that humanity can only be saved by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the fourth article then expounds on what these laws and ordinances are. The fifth article clarifies that proper ordination to ecclesiastical office comes by prophecy and the laying on of hands by one in authority, then the sixth explains what those offices are, and the seventh names the spiritual gifts that operate in those offices. The eighth article affirms the canonical authority of the scriptural record, while the ninth adds to it by explaining that

the canon remains open because revelation continues in the Church of Jesus Christ. The articles' progressive nature and logical ordering invites readers to ponder on their relationship to each other and their significance within this broader schema.

Joseph Smith's signature has appeared at the end of the Articles of Faith since they were first published in 1842 and in each edition of the Pearl of Great Price since 1851. This fulfills the practical need of identifying the author and reinforces their prophetic weight and authority.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Whether the Nicene Creed of the fourth century AD or the Westminster Confession of the seventeenth, Latter-day Saints are characteristically suspicious of the classical Christian creeds that, in their view, impose restrictive theological boundaries that stifle the unfolding process of revelation and restoration. In a discourse delivered on 15 October 1843, Joseph Smith, drawing from the language of Job 38:11, voiced his frustration with creeds that "set up stakes and say 'hitherto shalt thou come, and no further.'" But the Articles of Faith can arguably be viewed as a set of *de facto* creeds for the Latter-day Saints. (The very word *creed* comes from the Latin *credo*, meaning "I believe.") This apparent paradox highlights the tension inherent between the efforts of Latter-day Saints beginning with Joseph Smith to codify and systematize their theology on the one hand and the progressive nature of revelation in the Church of Jesus Christ on the other.

The solution to this paradox would be, it seems, to view the Articles of Faith not as strict demarcations of religious identity to which the faithful must strictly adhere but rather as an executive summary of just some of the fundamental doctrines underpinning the Restoration. This, indeed, is how Joseph Smith treated them in the context of his letter to John Wentworth and is how Latter-day Saints have typically approached them. That the Articles of Faith were likely not intended to function in the same way as the classical Christian creeds can further be seen in what they leave out. Absent from these articles is any mention of the premortal life, the three degrees of glory, posthumous salvation for the dead, eternal marriage, the doctrine of exaltation, and humanity's potential to become like God. Surely these and other points of Latter-day Saint doctrine not mentioned in the articles are not unimportant. But they were also not included in the Articles of Faith precisely because the Prophet did not intend the articles to be exhaustive, authoritative mandates of everything those wishing to call themselves Latter-day Saints must unhesitatingly believe. The Articles of Faith thus represent the ground floor of Latter-day Saint theology, not the ceiling.

Since their canonization in 1880, the Articles of Faith have served as an important springboard for Latter-day Saint theological exposition. In 1899 James E. Talmage, before his call to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1911,

published an influential treatise that used the articles as his reference point in systematizing the core doctrines of the Church. This volume—titled, appropriately, *The Articles of Faith*—proved so influential that it has been translated into multiple languages and remains in print after over a century. Appearing the same year as his death in 1985, the book *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* by Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles sought, like Talmage’s work, to illuminate and explore the theological richness of the Restoration by using the Articles of Faith as its conceptual framework.

While providing authors with abundant material for deep theological explication, the Articles of Faith have also proven to be useful pedagogical tools for instructing children, youth, and new converts in the foundational tenets of the Church. On any given Sunday in any given Church building around the world, members can be seen committing the articles to memory in Sunday School and quorum meetings, singing them in Primary, and reciting them in talks and lessons. Missionaries, too, are encouraged to use the articles in proselytizing efforts as a quick, accessible way to clarify the basic principles of the gospel. In this way they are following in the footsteps of Joseph Smith, who in 1842 used a valuable missionary opportunity to formulate these statements of faith that are cherished by Saints across the globe nearly two centuries later.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviated designations for the Articles of Faith used in this study edition correlate to content on the Joseph Smith Papers Project website.

T&S = *Times and Seasons*, "Church History," 1 March 1842.

Text and Commentary

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

1 We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

2 We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

1 The first article affirms the Latter-day Saints' faith in the Godhead. The existence of a Heavenly Father who is concerned with the lives and salvation of His children underpins the Saints' worldview and sense of purpose. Of equal importance to this worldview and sense of purpose is the divine sonship of Jesus Christ, who performed an infinite atonement to draw the Father's children back into His presence. Finally, the Father's means of communicating with His children and of revealing to them light and truth is accomplished through the Holy Ghost, who stands next to the Father and the Son as the third member of the Godhead. *Joseph Smith's teachings on the Godhead.* In a discourse delivered around May 1841, the Prophet taught that an "everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organizations of the earth, and relates to their dispensation of things to men on the earth. These personages, according to Abraham's record, are called God the First, the Creator; God the Second, the Redeemer; and God the Third, the Witness or Testator." This detail is missing from the extant text of the Book of Abraham (suggesting that the Prophet had translated or revealed more material than is presently published). In any case, it demonstrates the influence the Prophet's scriptural translations and revelations had on his theological thought as it developed line upon line. On 15 June 1844, in one of his last public discourses before his death, the Prophet told his audience, "I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit; and that these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods." Though not explicitly detailed in the first article of faith, this teaching and the Prophet's revelations on God's corporeality and humankind's potential for divinization and exaltation (articulated most forcefully in the 7 April 1844, King Follet Sermon) are the most radical departures from classical Christian thought on the nature of God.

2 Latter-day Saints challenge the Christian teaching of original sin and what it theologically implies about the inherently sinful, depraved state of humanity. First formulated by St. Augustine in the fourth century AD, the doctrine of original sin posits that humanity inherited both the consequences and *culpability* of Adam's sin. The full nature and scope of original sin has been debated among Christian theologians since Augustine's day. Latter-day Saints do not deny humanity's need for redemption nor the negative affects the Fall on humanity, but they do deny the total depravity and culpability of humanity for Adam and Eve's transgression. A revelation given to Joseph Smith on 6 May 1833, affirms that "every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God" (Doctrine and Covenants 93:38).

3 We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

4 We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

3 Closely related to the belief in the Fall of Adam and Eve is Latter-day Saints' belief in the need for a Savior to achieve an infinite atonement that will redeem humanity (compare 2 Nephi 9:7). Without a Fall, there is no need for a Redemption. Soteriology, or the theology of salvation, concerns itself with attempting to understand and formulate how men and women achieve salvation and overcome the effects of the Fall. The two crucial questions underlying any discussion of soteriology are how salvation is achieved and who can attain it. The first question asks what the relationship is between faith, grace, and works, while the second questions the scope of Christ's Atonement. Answers to these questions varied greatly in the Christian world of Joseph Smith's day, with Calvinists and other Reformed Christians on the one end teaching a limited atonement for only those God had predestined to be saved and Universalists on the other side teaching unconditional universal salvation for all humanity. Many Christians likewise disagree over the proper role between faith and works in salvation. Latter-day Saints reject the soteriological extremes of Reformed Protestantism on the one hand and Universalism on the other and insist that *all* men and women may be saved (thus denying limited atonement) while also affirming that it can only be achieved through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel (thus denying unconditional salvation).

4 The fourth article develops the third by clarifying the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ to which men and women must be obedient to be saved. *Ordinances*. The *T&S* rendition of the first line of this article read, "We believe these ordinances are . . .," with the antecedent to "these ordinances" being "the laws and ordinances of the Gospel" of the third article. This reading was retained until the 1902 edition of the Pearl of Great Price, where it was changed to its current reading on the recommendation of James E. Talmage. The primary definition of *ordinance* in Joseph Smith's day was "a rule established by authority; a permanent rule of action" (Noah Webster's 1828 dictionary). In this regard, faith and repentance can indeed be seen as ordinances as well as principles of the gospel. Although they are not rituals or sacraments (which is typically what Latter-day Saints today mean by the word "ordinances"), they are indeed rules of authority that regulate the conduct of those who accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Additional principles of the gospel*. In a discourse delivered between 26 June and 2 July 1839, Joseph Smith indicated that "the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgement are necessary to preach among the first principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Joseph also taught in the King Follett Sermon that one of the "simple and first principles of the gospel" is "to know for a certainty the character of God."

5 We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

6 We believe in the same organization that existed in the primitive church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

7 We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

5 Here the Prophet identifies three components that go into qualifying those who preach the gospel and administer its ordinances: first, being called by the spirit of revelation; second, being set apart by the laying on of hands; and third, being set apart by those in authority. This article addresses concerns the Christian world has historically had over the question of authority: where does it derive, and how does it operate? The Latter-day Saint emphasis on priesthood ordination to qualify those who administer the ordinances of the gospel diverges from Protestantism and aligns itself more closely with Catholic and Orthodox understanding.

6 Just as the fourth article builds on the third, so the sixth builds on the fifth by enumerating the offices that comprise the ecclesiastical structure of the Church of Jesus Christ. The fifth article describes how an individual attains an office in the Church, while the sixth lists what some of those offices are. *The primitive church*. Here the adjective “primitive” should not be taken to mean “simple or unsophisticated” but rather “earlier, ancient, or primeval.” The primitive church in this context thus refers to the church established by Jesus during His mortal ministry. The five offices listed by the Prophet are attested in the New Testament as having been operative during the first century church (compare Ephesians 4:11). Although Joseph Smith taught that the offices of the modern Church of Jesus Christ represent a restoration of those offices in the primitive church of the first century, it should not be assumed that the organizational structure of the Church today represents a static, one-for-one replica of the apostolic church.

7 Along with the restoration of the offices of the church comes the restoration of its gifts and powers. The seventh article enumerates some of these gifts, which are described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 (compare Moroni 10:8–18; Doctrine and Covenants 46:13–26). *Gift of tongues . . . interpretation of tongues*. There are two manifestations of these gifts. The first, termed *glossolalia*, is the speaking or singing in an unknown (heavenly) language. The manifestation of this gift is documented in the early days of the Restoration, and early Latter-day Saints, including Joseph Smith, were interested in attempting to recover the primordial language of Eden and the heavenly language spoken by God and other divine beings. The second form of this gift, *xenoglossia*, is the gift of being able to communicate and interpret foreign earthly languages, as exemplified in the account of the apostles miraculously speaking in foreign languages on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). This second form of the gift of tongues is more frequently emphasized in the contemporary Church.

8 We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

9 We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10 We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the ten tribes; that Zion [(the New Jerusalem)] will be built upon [the American] continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

8 In 1842, when these articles were written, the Church accepted three books as scripture: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants. In the Wentworth Letter the Prophet emphasized that the Book of Mormon was to “be united with the Bible for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the last days.” Although not mentioned in this article, the Doctrine and Covenants as a book of living scripture—a book of current, ongoing revelation—is implicitly assumed in the next article. By naming the Book of Mormon alongside the Bible as the word of God, Joseph affirmed that the canon of scripture was open and that he was in a position by virtue of his prophetic office to produce new scripture. *As far as it is translated correctly.* This article rejects the Protestant doctrine of *sola scriptura*, or the belief that scripture alone is sufficient for establishing doctrine and authority in the church. One of the truths the Prophet learned through his revelations and his work on the “new translation” or revision of the Bible from 1830 to 1833 is that the Bible suffered from errors of translation, transmission, and interpretation (all three of these categories are implicitly assumed by the Prophet’s use of the word “translation” in this article and elsewhere). As Joseph taught in a 15 October 1843, discourse, “I believe the Bible as it ought to be, as it came from the pen of the original writers.”

9 Once again, as with articles four and three and six and five, this article builds on the one that immediately precedes it by confirming that with an open canon of scripture comes also continuing revelation. This principle is foundational to the faith of the Latter-day Saints, who maintain that God continues to reveal light and truth pertaining to the operation of His kingdom and the things of eternity. The canonical book of Doctrine and Covenants serves as the scriptural repository of the revelations of Joseph Smith and his prophetic successors.

10 The tenth article encapsulates the Latter-day Saints’ eschatology, or the theology of the ultimate destiny of humanity, the end times, the Millennium, and Final Judgment. The components that constitute Joseph Smith’s eschatology as defined in this article are scattered throughout Restoration scripture and are the literal gathering of Israel (3 Nephi 20–22; Doctrine and Covenants 110:11), the building up of Zion (Doctrine and Covenants 6:6; 11:6; 12:6; 14:6; 45:66–67; 57:1–3), Christ’s return to rule on earth (Doctrine and Covenants 29:11; 45:55–59; 101:22–34; 133:25, 42–52), and the regeneration of the earth into celestial glory (Doctrine and Covenants 29:23–25; 43:32; 77:1; 88:17–20; 130:8–11). *Glosses.* The T&S version of this article simply read, “Zion will be built upon this continent.” The 1851 Pearl of Great Price printed in England adds the gloss “(American)” after the demonstrative article to avoid confusing

11 We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

12 We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13 We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

— Joseph Smith

European readers. Orson Pratt dropped the gloss in the 1878 Salt Lake City edition. It was picked up again in the 1902 edition, where it was offset in brackets with the definite article (“[the American]”). The 1976 edition added “(the New Jerusalem)” after “Zion” and incorporated “(American)” into the text, so that the verse now reads, “That Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent.”

11 Latter-day Saints greatly value religious freedom for all men and women. The urgency they have attached this universal right originates, in part, from their own history of persecution because of their faith. In 1841, the Nauvoo city council passed an ordinance declaring that “the Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Latter-day Saints, Quakers, Episcopalians Universalist Unitarians, Mahommedans [Muslims], and all other religious sects and denominations whatever, shall have free toleration and equal privileges in this city.” Doctrine and Covenants 134:1–4 outlines the Saints’ belief that one of the roles of government is to ensure the protection of religious freedom.

12 In principle, Latter-day Saints affirm the importance of submitting to the law and being conscientious citizens of their respective nations (see Doctrine and Covenants 134:5–8). However, there have been instances when the Saints have practiced civil disobedience when they felt laws were unjustly encroaching on their rights. The most notable example of this was their opposition to the anti-polygamy laws enacted by the United States federal government in the late nineteenth century. These extraordinary exceptions, however, do not otherwise justify the flaunting of laws or government authority based on personal whim or preference.

13 The final article lists just a few of the virtues that Latter-day Saints strive to emulate: honesty, loyalty, chastity, and benevolence. These virtues are promoted elsewhere in modern revelation (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:22–23; 51:9; 64:10; 82:1; 97:8). *The admonition of Paul*. Paraphrasing Philippians 4:8. The T&S version of this article sets off “we believe all things, we hope all things” in quotation marks, indicating a purposeful reference to 1 Corinthians 13:7.

APPENDIX I

PREFACE TO THE 1851 FIRST EDITION OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

The following compilation has been induced by the repeated solicitations of several friends of the publisher, who are desirous to be put in possession of the very important articles contained therein. Most of the Revelations composing this work were published at early periods of the Church, when the circulation of its journals was so very limited as to render them comparatively unknown at present, except to a few who have treasured up the productions of the Church with great care from the beginning. A smaller portion of this work has never before appeared in print; and altogether it is presumed, that the true believers in the Divine mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, will appreciate this little collection of precious truths as a *Pearl of Great Price* that will increase their ability to maintain and to defend the holy faith by becoming possessors of it.

Although not adapted, nor designed, as a pioneer of the faith among unbelievers, still it will commend itself to all careful students of the scriptures, as detailing many important facts which are therein only alluded to, or entirely unmentioned, but consonant with the whole tenor of the revealed will of God; and, to the beginner in the Gospel, will add confirmatory evidence of the rectitude of his faith, by showing him that the doctrines and ordinances thereof are the same as were revealed to Adam for his salvation after his expulsion from the garden, and the same that he handed down and caused to be taught to his generations after him, as the only means appointed of God by which the generations of men may again regain His presence.

Nor do we conceive it possible for any unprejudiced person to arise from a careful perusal of this work, without being deeply impressed with a sense of the Divine calling, and holy ordination, of the man by whom these revelations, translations, and narrations have been communicated to us. As impervious as the minds of men may be at present to these convictions, the day is not far

distant when sinners, as well as Saints, will know that Joseph Smith was one of the greatest men that ever lived upon the earth, and that under God he was the Prophet and founder of the dispensation of the fulness of times, in which will be gathered together into one all things which are in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.

Franklin D. Richards.

15, *Wilton Street, Liverpool,*
July 11th, 1851.

APPENDIX II

LIST OF CONTENT IN PAST EDITIONS OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

THE 1851 FIRST (LIVERPOOL) EDITION

Content	Modern Reference 1981 Edition
Preface by Franklin D. Richards	N/A
Extracts from the Prophecy of Enoch	Moses 6:43–7:69
The Words of God, which He spake unto Moses	Moses 1:3–4:25; 5:1–16; 5:19–40; 8:13–30
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 1	Facsimile 1
The Book of Abraham	Abraham 1–5
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 2	Facsimile 2
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 3	Facsimile 3
An Extract from a Translation of the Bible	Joseph Smith—Matthew
A Key to the Revelations of St. John	Doctrine and Covenants 77

Content	Modern Reference 1981 Edition
A Revelation and Prophecy	Doctrine and Covenants 87
Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith	Joseph Smith—History
From the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church	N/A
Commandment to the Church concerning Baptism	Doctrine and Covenants 20:71, 37, 72–74
The Duties of the Members after they are received by Baptism	Doctrine and Covenants 20:68–69
Method of administering the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper	Doctrine and Covenants 20:75–79
The Duties of the Elders, Priests, Teachers, Deacons, and Members of the Church of Christ	Doctrine and Covenants 20:38–59, 70, 80
On Priesthood	Doctrine and Covenants 107:1–20
The Calling and Duties of the Twelve Apostles	Doctrine and Covenants 107:23, 33
The Calling and Duties of the Seventy	Doctrine and Covenants 107:34, 93–100
Extracts from a Revelation given July, 1830	Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–18
Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–36
“Times and Seasons,” Vol. III page 709.	Articles of Faith
Truth	Oh Say, What Is Truth? (Hymn no. 272)

THE 1878 SECOND (SALT LAKE CITY) EDITION

Content	Modern Reference 1981 Edition
The Visions of Moses	Moses 1
The Writings of Moses	Moses 2–8
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 1	Facsimile 1
The Book of Abraham	Abraham 1–5
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 2	Facsimile 2
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 3	Facsimile 3
An Extract from a Translation of the Bible	Joseph Smith—Matthew
A Key to the Revelations of St. John	Doctrine and Covenants 77
A Revelation and Prophecy on War	Doctrine and Covenants 87
Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith	Joseph Smith—History
From the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church	N/A
Commandment to the Church concerning Baptism	Doctrine and Covenants 20:71, 37, 72–74
The Duties of the Members after they are received by Baptism	Doctrine and Covenants 20:68–69

Content	Modern Reference 1981 Edition
Method of administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper	Doctrine and Covenants 20:75–79
The Duties of the Elders, Priests, Teachers, Deacons, and Members of the Church of Christ	Doctrine and Covenants 20:38–59, 70, 80
Extracts from a Revelation given July, 1830	Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–18
Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–36
Articles of our Faith	Articles of Faith
A Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, Including Plurality of Wives	Doctrine and Covenants 132
Truth	Oh Say, What Is Truth? (Hymn no. 272)

THE 1902 THIRD (TALMAGE) EDITION

Content	Modern Reference 1981 Edition
The Book of Moses	Moses 1–8
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 1	Facsimile 1
The Book of Abraham	Abraham 1–5
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 2	Facsimile 2
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 3	Facsimile 3
Writings of Joseph Smith	N/A
I. An Extract from a Translation of the Bible	Joseph Smith—Matthew
II. Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith	Joseph Smith—History
III. Articles of Faith	Articles of Faith

THE 1921 FOURTH (TALMAGE) EDITION

Content	Modern Reference 1981 Edition
The Book of Moses	Moses 1–8
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 1	Facsimile 1
The Book of Abraham	Abraham 1–5
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 2	Facsimile 2
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 3	Facsimile 3
Writings of Joseph Smith	N/A
1. An Extract from a Translation of the Bible	Joseph Smith—Matthew
2. Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith	Joseph Smith—History
Articles of Faith	Articles of Faith

THE 1976 FIFTH EDITION

Content	Modern Reference 1981 Edition
The Book of Moses	Moses 1–8
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 1	Facsimile 1
The Book of Abraham	Abraham 1–5
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 2	Facsimile 2
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 3	Facsimile 3
Writings of Joseph Smith	N/A
1. An Extract from a Translation of the Bible	Joseph Smith—Matthew
2. Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith	Joseph Smith—History
Joseph Smith—Vision of the Celestial Kingdom	Doctrine and Covenants 137
Joseph F. Smith—Vision of the Redemption of the Dead	Doctrine and Covenants 138
Articles of Faith	Articles of Faith

THE 1981 SIXTH (CURRENT) EDITION
(REV. 2013)

Content

Introduction

Selections from the Book of Moses

A Facsimile from the Book of Abraham No. 1

The Book of Abraham

A Facsimile from the Book of Abraham No. 2

A Facsimile from the Book of Abraham No. 3

Joseph Smith—Matthew

Joseph Smith—History

Articles of Faith

CONTENTS OF ALL EDITIONS

Content	Modern Reference	1851	1878	1902	1921	1976	1981
Preface by Franklin D. Richards	N/A	✓					
Extracts from the Prophecy of Enoch	Moses 6:43–7:69	✓					
The Words of God, which He spake unto Moses	Moses 1:3–4:25; 5:1–16; 5:19–40; 8:13–30	✓					
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 1	Facsimile 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Book of Abraham	Abraham 1–5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 2	Facsimile 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A Fac-Simile from the Book of Abraham No. 3	Facsimile 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
An Extract from a Translation of the Bible	Joseph Smith—Matthew	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A Key to the Revelations of St. John	Doctrine and Covenants 77	✓	✓				
A Revelation and Prophecy	Doctrine and Covenants 87	✓	✓				
Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith	Joseph Smith—History	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Content	Modern Reference	1851	1878	1902	1921	1976	1981
From the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church	N/A	✓	✓				
Commandment to the Church concerning Baptism	Doctrine and Covenants 20:71, 37, 72–74	✓	✓				
The Duties of the Members after they are received by Baptism	Doctrine and Covenants 20:68–69	✓	✓				
Method of administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper	Doctrine and Covenants 20:75–79	✓	✓				
The Duties of the Elders, Priests, Teachers, Deacons, and Members of the Church of Christ	Doctrine and Covenants 20:38–59, 70, 80	✓	✓				
On Priesthood	Doctrine and Covenants 107:1–20	✓					
The Calling and Duties of the Twelve Apostles	Doctrine and Covenants 107:23, 33	✓					
The Calling and Duties of the Seventy	Doctrine and Covenants 107:34, 93–100	✓					
Extracts from a Revelation given July, 1830	Doctrine and Covenants 27:5–18	✓	✓				

Content	Modern Reference	1851	1878	1902	1921	1976	1981
Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	Doctrine and Covenants 20:1–36	✓	✓				
“Times and Seasons,” Vol. III page 709.	Articles of Faith	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Truth	Oh Say What is Truth (Hymn no. 272)	✓	✓				
Visions of Moses	Moses 1		✓				
Writings of Moses	Moses 2–8		✓				
A Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant Including Plurality of Wives	Doctrine and Covenants 132		✓				
(Selections From) The Book of Moses	Moses 1–8			✓	✓	✓	✓
Joseph Smith—Vision of the Celestial Kingdom	Doctrine and Covenants 137					✓	
Joseph F. Smith—Vision of the Redemption of the Dead	Doctrine and Covenants 138					✓	
Introduction	Introduction						✓

APPENDIX III

ELDER BRUCE R. MCCONKIE'S PROPOSED ADDITIONS TO THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

In the 1970s, leading up to the publication of the current official edition of the scriptures used in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles submitted additional content to the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve for consideration to be canonized in the forthcoming new edition of the Pearl of Great Price. His proposals were reviewed but ultimately rejected. The content proposed by Elder McConkie for canonization in the Pearl of Great Price is reproduced here to highlight Elder McConkie's expansive vision of the canon and also raise awareness of some interesting content that was considered.

“SELECTIONS FROM THE BOOK OF MOSES”

In addition to the current eight chapters of the Book of Moses, Elder McConkie proposed the inclusion of additional content from the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis touching on Methuselah, Noah, Enoch, Melchizedek, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph. The column on the left is the versification of this content as proposed by Elder McConkie. The column on the right correlates Elder McConkie's proposed versification with the current versification of the 1981 Book of Moses and the 1944 edition of the Inspired Version (Joseph Smith Translation) of the Bible published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing), which appears to be the version Elder McConkie was drawing from. (Compare *Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible* [Independence, MO: Herald Publishing, 1970].)

Proposed Versification	Source
Moses 1:1–54	Moses 1:1–42
Moses 2:1–33	Moses 2:1–31
Moses 3:1–36	Moses 3:1–25
Moses 4:1–35	Moses 4:1–32
Moses 5:1–68	Moses 5:1–59
Moses 6:1–96	Moses 6:1–68
Moses 7:1–115	Moses 7:1–69
Moses 8:1–31	Moses 8:1–30; JST Genesis 8:23
Moses 9:1–15	JST Genesis 9:15–25
Moses 10:1–20	JST Genesis 14:26–40
Moses 11:1–27	JST Genesis 15:5, 7b, 8–12; 17:1–14
Moses 12:1–16	JST Genesis 48:3–11
Moses 13:1–38	JST Genesis 50:24–38

“SELECTIONS FROM THE PSALMS AS REVEALED
TO JOSEPH SMITH”

Elder McConkie proposed that the following psalms from the Joseph Smith Translation be canonized. As above, the column on the left is the versification of this content as proposed by Elder McConkie. The column on the right correlates with the 1944 Inspired Version (Joseph Smith Translation).

Proposed Versification	Source
David 1:1–10	JST Psalm 11
David 2:1–11	JST Psalm 12
David 3:1–12	JST Psalm 14
David 4:1–10	JST Psalm 24

“SELECTIONS FROM THE GOSPELS AS REVEALED TO JOSEPH SMITH”

Besides retaining the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 24 (Joseph Smith—Matthew in the 1981 Pearl of Great Price), Elder McConkie proposed the inclusion of additional Joseph Smith Translation material from the Gospels. As above, the column on the left is the versification of this content as proposed by Elder McConkie. The column on the right correlates with the 1944 Inspired Version (Joseph Smith Translation) and the 1981 designation for Joseph Smith—Matthew.

Proposed Versification	Source
Matthew 2:1–9	JST Matthew 3:19–28
Matthew 5:1–56	JST Matthew 5:1–50
Matthew 6:1–39	JST Matthew 6:1–39
Matthew 7:1–40	JST Matthew 7:1–37
Matthew 21:1–24	JST Matthew 21:34b–56
Matthew 24:1–63	Joseph Smith—Matthew
Luke 3:1–26	JST Luke 3:1–20
Luke 12:1–23	JST Luke 12:40–58
Luke 17:1–8	JST Luke 17:34–40
John 1:1–40	JST John 1:1–34

“THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM”

In Elder McConkie’s proposal, the text of the Book of Abraham was to remain essentially the same as in previous editions of the Pearl of Great Price but with new versification. The column on the left gives Elder McConkie’s proposed new versification. The column on the right is the current 1981 versification.

Proposed Versification	Source
Abraham 1:1–47	Abraham 1:1–31
Abraham 2:1–33	Abraham 2:1–25
Abraham 3:1–41	Abraham 3:1–28

Proposed Versification	Source
Abraham 4:1–38	Abraham 4:1–31
Abraham 5:1–26	Abraham 5:1–21

“THE TESTIMONY OF JOSEPH SMITH”

In Elder McConkie’s proposal, Joseph Smith’s 1838 history was to remain canonized but with new versification. As above, the column on the left gives Elder McConkie’s proposed new versification. The column on the right is the current 1981 versification of Joseph Smith—History.

Proposed Versification	Source
Joseph Smith 1:1–47	Joseph Smith—History 1:1–20a
Joseph Smith 2:1–20	Joseph Smith—History 1:20b–26
Joseph Smith 3:1–65	Joseph Smith—History 1:27–54
Joseph Smith 4:1–40	Joseph Smith—History 1:55–65
Joseph Smith 5:1–22	Joseph Smith—History 1:66–75

“THE WENTWORTH LETTER”

Joseph Smith’s 1842 letter to John Wentworth, published on 1 March 1842, in the *Times and Seasons* as “Church History,” was considered for canonization in Elder McConkie’s proposed revisions. Had his proposal been accepted and sustained, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would have two canonical accounts of the First Vision and the recovery of the Book of Mormon as opposed to having only the one currently canonized in Joseph Smith—History.

Proposed Versification	Source
Wentworth 1:1–14	“Church History,” <i>Times and Seasons</i> , 1 March 1842.
Wentworth 2:1–29	Ibid.
Wentworth 3:1–38	Ibid.

“THE ARTICLES OF FAITH”

The thirteen Articles of Faith (which originally appeared in the 1842 Wentworth Letter) were to be retained in Elder McConkie’s proposed Pearl of Great Price but with two additional articles penned by Elder McConkie. The fourteenth article read, “We believe that God has restored in these last days the fulness of his Everlasting Gospel to prepare a people for the coming of the Son of Man, and that this Gospel shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all people, and then shall the end come.” The fifteenth article read, “We believe in a premortal life, in eternal marriage, salvation for the dead, the resurrection of the just and of the unjust, eternal judgment, and kingdoms of glory in the eternal worlds.” These two articles were repurposed by Elder McConkie in his 1985 book *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book), wherein he stated “we might with utmost propriety adopt such declarations.”

Proposed Versification	Source
Articles 1–13	Articles of Faith 1–13
Articles 14–15	Composed by Elder McConkie

“THE LECTURES ON FAITH”

Elder McConkie proposed that the Lectures on Faith (which had been canonized in 1835 with the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants but decanonized and removed from the Doctrine and Covenants with the 1921 edition) be included in the Pearl of Great Price with revisions. The catechisms at the end of each lecture in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants were omitted in Elder McConkie’s proposed edition.

Proposed Versification	Source
Lecture 1 (25 verses)	1835 Doctrine and Covenants (Lecture First, Section I)
Lecture 2 (62 verses)	Ibid. (Lecture Second, Section II)
Lecture 3 (47 verses)	Ibid. (Lecture Third, Section III)
Lecture 4 (67 verses)	Ibid. (Lecture Fourth, Section IV)
Lecture 5 (35 verses)	Ibid. (Lecture Fifth, Section V)
Lecture 6 (50 verses)	Ibid. (Lecture Sixth, Section VI)
Lecture 7 (152 verses)	Ibid. (Lecture Seventh, Section VII)

“DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS”

Besides proposing the addition of new content to the Pearl of Great Price, Elder McConkie proposed that the Doctrine and Covenants be expanded by two new sections (sections 137 and 138 in the 1981 edition). These two sections had been canonized as part of the Pearl of Great Price in April 1976 as “Joseph Smith—Vision of the Celestial Kingdom” and “Joseph F. Smith—Vision of the Redemption of the Dead,” respectively. They were moved to the Doctrine and Covenants in 1979 by action of the First Presidency.

Proposed Versification	Source
Section 137 (10 verses)	1981 Doctrine and Covenants (section 137) = 1976 Pearl of Great Price (“Joseph Smith—Vision of the Celestial Kingdom”)
Section 138 (sixty verses)	Ibid. (section 138) = 1976 Pearl of Great Price (“Joseph F. Smith—Vision of the Redemption of the Dead”)

APPENDIX IV

PEARL OF GREAT PRICE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Selected bibliographies pertaining to each book in the Pearl of Great Price can be found in their respective introductions.

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