

Scriptural Reference & Exploration Series



VOLUME I

The Foundations of Scriptural Understanding

DANN W HONE

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Why this Scriptural Reference and Exploration Series?

Although numerous books about Bible manners and customs exist, this will be the first series of its type specifically compiled for Latter-day Saints. Many LDS writers have produced Biblical commentaries and other texts to help the student of the scriptures obtain greater insights into gospel principles and teachings. This unique *Scriptural Reference and Explorations Series* has the daunting task of compiling many of the ancient social and religious institutions, customs, and manners of the Old and New Testament eras with the use of all the available LDS and non-LDS resources. Such a task is never ending, as the acquisition of new insights and knowledge is constantly being revealed. Therefore, this work is not totally comprehensive in scope, but merely an addition to the expanding world of scriptural knowledge.

The Lord has taught us that an understanding of the past, and the dealings of His children here upon the earth, can act as a great witness to our faith, prepare us to better serve Him, and, thus, aid us in obtaining our goal of eternal life.

There was a period in early Church history when the School of the Elders in Kirtland, Ohio, had been organized for the purpose of continuing the instructions of the Lord:

“Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand; Of things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms – that ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.”¹

¹ Doctrine and Covenants 88:78-80, Ed. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006.

He further instructed: “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”²

Joseph Smith recorded in his personal history, Wednesday, February 17, 1836:

“My soul delights in reading the word of the Lord in the original, and I am determined to pursue the study of the languages, until I shall become master of them, if I am permitted to live long enough. At any rate, so long as I do live, I am determined to make this my object; and with the blessing of God, I shall succeed to my satisfaction.”³

This first volume serves as a foundation for the scriptural studies and explorations introduced in the succeeding volumes. The purpose of the next two volumes in this series is to provide a resource for Latter-day Saints that will assist them in their scriptural inquiries that focus on the meaning of time and the calendar structured by the Lord as revealed in the Bible. Drawing from “the best books” and other available resources, these words of instruction will help the readers better understand the culture, settings, and customs of those who wrote the scriptures. Such insights gleaned from these resources will inspire continued study, bring about application of gospel principles, and serve as a catalyst for spiritual growth. This pattern will follow in future volumes that examine the social and religious societies, customs, lifestyles, and practices found in the scriptures.

Most importantly, these writings will serve as an additional witness that Jesus is the Christ, the predicted Messiah and Redeemer, as testified by all the scriptural writers. Also, they will attest that the Lord “knows all things” and keeps His promises and covenants, as demonstrated in the events that His established feasts and festivals foreshadow.

Organizing these materials, cataloging them, then presenting them for interesting reading were some of the challenges of producing this work. The addition of appropriate diagrams, pictures and descriptions added to the challenge, but hopefully have increased the value of the

² Ibid.

³ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 Volumes (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News, 1932), B. H. Roberts ed., 2:28:396.

text. The general approach was to provide information in such a way that scholars and laymen alike would be able to use these materials either for research or just for general interest. However great the temptation was to provide comprehensive detail of every subject, this would not be possible in one volume nor even in a multiple volume work completed in one author's lifetime.

Instead, the attempt was to compile and explain the most valuable materials gleaned from the scriptural record that would be useful in gospel study or research by the energetic student in ancient studies. The approach used in this series has been to divide the subject matter into meaningful categories with appropriate indexes (topical, scriptural, and foreign languages used), with additional appendices. Illustrations are provided from the very latest information gleaned from recent archaeological finds, re-constructions based on such research, and the author's own experiences of nearly 50 years of study, travel, and explorations in the Holy Land.



At the left is a representation of the Temple Menorah, a seven branched candelabrum that was in the Mosaic Temple/ Tabernacle. It rested in the Holy Place – the room before the veil's entry into the Holy of Holies – across from the Table of Shew Bread and Wine. This Lamp of the Lord is a symbol of the Spirit of God who brings revelation and understanding to all those who comprehend the light. "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light, and that

*light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day."*⁴ May this Scriptural Reference & Exploration Series be a light of understanding to you in your study of the scriptures; may the words of the ancient and living prophets come alive as you seek the Spirit of the Lord to guide you into His presence. Illustration by Kristeena Hone Ernst.

⁴ Doctrine & Covenants 50:24.

Understanding Our Scriptural Heritage

"If you wish to understand a poet you must know something of his homeland."

This declaration by Goethe is echoed in the words of the Book of Mormon Prophet, Nephi:

I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore *I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father . . .* therefore I make a record of *my proceedings in my days . . .* Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of *the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians*. And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and *I make it according to my knowledge*.¹

Yea, and my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah, for I came out from Jerusalem, and mine eyes hath beheld the things of the Jews, and I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, and *there is none other people that understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews like unto them, save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews*. But behold, I, Nephi... have dwelt at Jerusalem, wherefore I know concerning the regions round about.²

Nephi comprehended that knowledge of the land, culture, manners, and the customs of the people who wrote the scriptural records enables a reader to understand their message more clearly. Such knowledge can be a catalyst for greater spiritual growth and understanding when coupled with the Spirit of God, for "...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."³ Joseph Smith gave a key to his manner of

¹ 1 Nephi 1:1. *Italics mine.*

² 2 Nephi 25:5-6. *Italics mine.*

³ 2 Peter 1:20, King James Version. The study of the manners and customs, lands and languages of the scriptures is not the sole means of understanding the message of the Lord. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, a modern-day apostle of the Lord, has said, "Granted that a knowledge of the language, customs, traditions, and life of those to whom any scripture is addressed will aid in determining the intent and meaning of the message, yet, in the true and full sense of the word, there is only one way to understand the scriptures. That way is by the power of the Holy Ghost. There is in reality no way, absolutely no way, either on earth or in heaven to understand

understanding the words of scripture, "What is the rule of interpretation? Just no interpretation at all. Understand it precisely as it reads. I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable. To ascertain its meaning, we must dig up the root and ascertain what it was that drew the saying out of Jesus."⁴

The materials contained herein will serve the reader in placing the scriptures in a tangible context both in time and cultural settings, helping them to see that the scriptures are made up of real people in real life situations. More importantly, these volumes will show how these witnesses of the gospel and the Atonement of Jesus Christ are so very well preserved, that they are indeed true, and that they can be used as a guide in strengthening testimonies of the reality of the Savior. To accomplish this goal, I have organized the materials into subjects that may be a framework for understanding our scriptural heritage. To keep the length of this work manageable, I have been somewhat selective in what I deemed to be the most valuable content of each topic. The reader may use the many bibliographies and notes in this work to discover more on any of the subjects.

Seven Helpful Keys to Understanding the Scriptures

"But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, 'It is not in me' and the sea saith, 'It is not with me.' It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. . . Whence then cometh wisdom? And where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air. . . God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. For He looketh to

the Bible except by the power of the Spirit" (Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City, Utah 1985), 399-400)

⁴ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 276

Summary of Chapter 1

In this chapter I have outlined the processes and systems that I believe will assist any sincere student of the scriptures to find answers to their searching. The process may be summed up in what some educators call the four “Rs” or “Notebook” method of study: 1) Research, 2) Reason, 3) Relate, and 4) Record. The Notebook Method incorporates and balances four steps of learning¹⁴:

The Notebook Method

Step	Definition	Method
Research	Diligent inquiry, laborious search in the scriptures for principles (Acts 17:11)	Vocabulary research in the scriptures and inquiry into other sources.
Reason	The cause or basis of opinions, that which supports or justifies an opinion; internally digesting material (1 Peter 3:15)	Answer questions and paraphrase facts. Pondering and studying it out in the mind and with the intent to seek answers by faith.
Relate	Handling of information and its application to self, making the material relevant to the inquirer and his world (Luke 24:27, 32)	Seeking and pondering answers to application-type questions which will make the inquiry personally relevant.
Record	A regular, authentic official copy of any writing for preservation (1 John 5:10)	In writing it down, it becomes a permanent part of the individual; these recordings must also be internal as confirmed by the Spirit of the Lord and recorded upon the heart and mind.

This system when applied with the seven key principles outlined in this chapter is an excellent means for finding insights and revelations for personal growth and application of our scriptural heritage. In summary the seven keys are:

¹⁴ This system is adapted and modified from the Notebook Method designed and implemented by the American Heritage School in American Fork, Utah: [http://www.american-heritage.org/\(download\)Parent's+Handbook/](http://www.american-heritage.org/(download)Parent's+Handbook/) (Viewed September 15, 2015).

1. Understand scriptural language. (Read the scriptures in the context in which they are given.)
2. Seek to gain knowledge of the people who wrote the scriptures.
3. Know the purpose and use of scriptural symbols.
4. Use additional scriptures and words of the prophets to interpret scriptural passages, symbols, and parables.
5. Be patient in waiting upon answers from the Lord.
6. Understand and continue to study gospel doctrines.
7. Be guided by the Spirit of God.

As President Ezra Taft Benson has admonished, *“If there is one message, I have repeated to my brethren of the Twelve, it is that it’s the Spirit that counts. It is the Spirit that matters. I do not know how often I have said this, but I never tire of saying it—it is the Spirit that matters most”*.¹¹⁵

After all the preparations for understanding the scriptures, this counsel is the most important. If one seeks to have the Spirit of the Lord in their studies, then their acquisition of knowledge through the other sources will bring an understanding of the scriptures and personal application to one’s life and testimony.

With this encouragement, let us now turn to the scriptural heritage found in biblical man’s perception of the cosmos.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Ezra Taft Benson, “Mission President’s Seminar”, 3 April 1985. Bold mine.

¹¹⁶ Today, the word is used as a synonym of the Latin loan-word “Universe” (considered in its orderly aspect). In the general sense, a “cosmos” is an orderly or harmonious system. The word derives from the Greek term κόσμος (*kosmos*), literally meaning “order” or “ornament” and metaphorically “world”, [Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*] and is antithetical to the concept of chaos. For this volume the word cosmos is understood to mean more than the physical and orderly universe. In this context cosmos applies to man’s perception of his existence (physical and metaphysical); where he originates, who he is, and what his purpose is, both in time and eternity in the universe.

In the Beginning – Biblical Perceptions of the Cosmos

*“In the beginning God created the heaven
and the earth.” – Genesis 1:1*

These are the opening words of the book “Beginnings” or *Beroshit* (בראשית)¹ as recorded in the Hebrew *TaNaKh* (תנך) or the Christian Old

¹ Joseph Smith renders the following translation of the first sentence of the Bible: “*Berosheit baurau Eloheim ait aushamayeen vehau aurait*, rendered by King James’ translators, ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.’ I want to analyze the word *Berosheit*. *Rosh*, the head; *Sheit*, a grammatical termination. The *Baith* was not originally put there when the inspired man wrote it, but it has been since added by an old Jew. *Baurau* signifies to bring forth; *Eloheim* is from the word *Eloi*, God, in the singular number; and by adding the word *heim*, it renders it Gods. It read first, ‘In the beginning the head of the Gods brought forth the Gods,’ or, as others have translated it, ‘The head of the Gods called the Gods together... The head God organized the heaven and the earth... In the beginning the heads of the Gods organized the heavens and the earth.’ [Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 7 Volumes (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News, 1932), B. H. Roberts ed., 6:475.] Sean Gilland in a blog explained this translation very succinctly: “1. The way Joseph Smith explains Hebrew is from Joshua Seixas, and he used his pronunciation system which appears to be *Portegues* Hebrew. There wasn’t a standardized pronunciation system as there is now in modern Israel. 2. *Baith* is a word, it means house and also it is a letter. *Baith* is the primitive form of *bayit*. The Hebrew letters are root words. Thus in order to get a meaning of a word, you have to build it up with letters and that the sum of the letters give the meaning of the words. This only works consistently with really ancient Hebrew however. *Rosh* is in the word and means head, but you have to remember that the primitive form is found in the word *bereshit*. The *ray* is a primitive form of *Rosh*. Thus when you read the sentence *Bereshit, bara Elohim, et-hashamayim ve-et ha-arets* it really says ‘in the head of creation, gods created the heaven and the earth.’ We do know however, that the term *roshit* means in ancient Hebrew ‘in the beginning’. Thus the *b* in *bereshit* is unnecessary and very well could have been added by typists. Also, it is possible that *bereshit* is referring to the beginning of a reign, thus ‘the beginning of the reign of god.’” [Sean Gilland, October 6, 2010 at 9:13 AM blogging to this site: <http://mostlymormon.blogspot.com/2008/04/did-joseph-smith-know-hebrew.html>] Supporting the idea

Testament². To the Christian world it is the Book of Genesis (which title comes from the Latin meaning “beginnings”). The Hebrew *TaNaKh* is an acronym for the three divisions of the Old Testament: 1) the *Torah* (תורה meaning “Law or Instructions”), composed of the five books of Moses; 2) the *Neviim* (נביאים or “Prophets”), a collection of the historical prophetic books; and, 3) the *Ketuvim* (כתובים “Writings”, *hagiographa*) which includes those books of the Old Testament that were considered literary works. This first book defines the origin of man as understood by ancient Israelites.

Unfortunately, the original writings have been altered and copied over the centuries and now represent the historical beliefs following the 6th Century B. C. Babylonian dispersion of the remaining tribes of Israel, mostly from the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Over the centuries scribes would hand-copy manuscripts and, as they were also considered masters of the *TaNaKh*, created Aramaic interpretations (*Targum*) that changed some passages from the

earlier versions to adjust to their then-current religious practices and beliefs. For example, anthropomorphic descriptions of God that attribute to Him human form or emotions are often (but not consistently) avoided or ameliorated.³ As a result, the Lord provided additional witnesses in the latter-day restoration of these early writings, including, revelatory revisions of the texts as found in the Joseph Smith Translation and the Pearl of Great Price. These clarifications are useful in providing a greater understanding of the beliefs and impressions of those living in the biblical age.

of changes to this verse by Rabbinic scholars may also be found in class summary given October 27, 2005, by Rabbi Yitzhha Ginsburgh, “A Time to Create and the Creation of Time” (page 3; last viewed May 18, 2022), located in pdf format at http://www.inner.org/Nav_classes/class.php?class=660124B.

² For the composition of the *TaNaKh* refer to the chart at the beginning of this chapter titled, “Books of the Hebrew Old Testament [*TaNaKh* תנך] by Dann W Hone”.

³ “Targum”, *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*, ed. Geoffrey Widoger (Jerusalem, Israel: The Jerusalem Publishing House, Ltd., 1989), 689-690.



In the conception of the universe in the book of Enoch, the sun emerges from six eastern gates, moves in the six months between the winter and summer solstices, and sets in the western gates. the seven great mountains are based on the ancient Babylonian conception of the universe.

Adapted from Milik's reconstruction.⁴

Biblical people's perceptions of the heavens, and their conception of humankind's origins and purpose, are at the foundation of our ability to understand the world of which the biblical peoples wrote. Their lives centered on understanding the purpose of existence and humankind's relationship to the earth, sky, sun, moon, and stars. Today our linear Western orientation of the cosmos and perception of humanity's actuality, "being" in the universe, sometimes clouds our understanding of the highly symbolic Eastern philosophies of these ancient people. To many of them the universe was a reflection of the earthly self and the government of the heavens. Human beings were viewed, even among the most diverse schisms of antique cultures, as the offspring and creation of deity; these gods or god were the governing power that

⁴ Nibley, Hugh, Michael D. Rhodes, and Michael P. Lyon. 2010. *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, vol. 16 *One Eternal Round*. 1st. Vol 16. 19 vols (Salt Lake City, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies. Kindle Version accessed January 15, 2021) from Chapter "Ascension Dramas: Ascension of Moses", Fig. 43.

created and sustained the life of the universe. The gods were “the self-existing ones”, or “the life-givers”. The basic word that forms the essence of such concepts is constructed around the intransitive verb “to be”. The Semitic languages express this infinitive in three consonantal root letters *he-yod-he* (יהי, pronounced *ha-yah*). When Moses was given the name of God in Midian⁵, it was expressed in the Hebrew consonants *yod-he-wav-he* [יהוה, probably pronounced *Yah-weh*.] meaning “the self-existing one” or “the one who brings about life” or “the giver of life”.⁶ We have come to know this word from its German form, *Jehovah*. And through the restored Gospel we know the personage of this God as the pre-mortal name of Jesus Christ in His role as the Creator of heaven and earth and all life therein.⁷

⁵ See Exodus 3:14.

⁶ יהוה [*YHWH* or *Jah-ho-eh*] is probably the *hiphil* or causative form of the verbal root הוה (Strong’s #1933; or, היה, Strong’s #1961) which is the verb “to be” and in this causative form would translate “the one bringing into being, life-giver, creator, and giver of existence,” BDB. 218a, Strong’s #3068, #3069. In the Book of Abraham Facsimile 2, note 1, Joseph Smith identifies the earth as *Jah-ho-eh* to the Egyptians. This is an obvious word transliteration of the Hebrew *Yahweh* or the German equivalent “Jehovah” (contains the equivalent 4 consonants, J=y, h, v=w, h). As mentioned, the causative form would translate as “to cause to be or exist” and the noun form would be “the provider of existence.” Considering the role of the earth as the provider of human existence this is an appropriate word to define the name of the earth. There is also evidence presented by Michael Rhodes that an Egyptian connection to this word *Jah-ho-eh* renders the same meaning. For a pdf version refer to:

<http://home.comcast.net/~michael.rhodes/JosephSmithHypocephalus.pdf>. (Viewed March 2013).

Yahweh [יהוה] was pronounced verbally until about the 3rd Century BC when the use of it was only in written form and to avoid taking the sacred name of deity in vain (violation of 3rd commandment of the Decalogue), a substitute word is pronounced, *adonai* [אדוני] literally meaning “Lord”, or *HaShem* [השם] “the Name”. This has been adapted into the English written translations for *Yahweh* [יהוה] using the word “LORD” (with capitalization) in the biblical texts. When the entire word is not capitalized then it is not a translation of *Yahweh*. A shortened form of *Yahweh* to avoid using the entire sacred name is *Jah* [יה] (appears in Psalms 68:4).

⁷ See “Appendix 2: Some Linguistic Remarks on Abraham 3 and Facsimile No. 2” for more proposed translations of other foreign words in the Book of Abraham.

Latter-day revelation has shown that Adam and Eve had a true knowledge of their relationship to God, to the Creation, and to the Fall. They were taught the ordinances of salvation and they taught them to their children. However, it also teaches us that, save for a comparatively few descendants, the majority of Adam and Eve's progeny rebelled against or rejected Adam's instructions and devised their own answers to life's origins and purpose.⁸ Such creative myths and philosophical fantasies, which bore a particle of truth but denied the power of God, formed the basis of the apostate religions and dogmas of these antediluvian "children of men". This was also the pattern for the postdiluvian descendants of Ham, Shem, and Japheth, sons of Noah and the patriarchs of all the nations of the ancient world. These apostate forms were so widespread that, save for a few righteous, they became the basis for societal development and culture. The singularity of pure truth should maintain societal and religious unity. However, when it is splintered by the philosophies of uninspired human ideologues, power-hungry potentates, prideful priests, and wicked men, such as in the days of Peleg (when "...the nations [of the earth] were divided,"⁹), it causes the heavens to withdraw themselves, the creations to groan under darkness, and the masses to be lost in ignorance. Repetition and pride often form the basis of tradition, which then influences culture and individual and societal perceptions. An understanding of the existence of these archaic and divergent ideologies which are based on uninspired precepts of men mingled with truth, will aid us in our quest to better understand the context in which the scriptures were written. The purpose of this chapter is to examine what we know of how the ancient biblical societies perceived the universe and their relationship to God and His creations. Understanding the ancient people's perceptions of the universe and the practice and purpose of covenant-making with its attendant rituals and ordinances are essential in understanding the feasts and festivals of the Lord. This is especially true of those recorded through Moses in the *Torah*, (specifically, the Sabbath; the three temple pilgrimage feasts – consisting of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles – and the Day of Atonement)

⁸ Refer to Moses 6.

⁹ This patriarch's name in Hebrew means "divide"; Genesis 10:25; 11:16-19.

each of which is referred to as “an ordinance.”¹⁰ In this context the word “ordinance” denotes celebrations of the Lord as memorials, types and shadows, statutes or commandments, and performances expected of Israel by God. Observers of these feasts demonstrated their remembrance of Israel’s commitment to their covenants, served as a sign of their covenant-making, and acted as a means of teaching these covenants to future generations. These, as well as other holiday observances, are discussed in greater detail in the future chapters of Volumes 2 and 3 of this *Scriptural Reference and Exploration Series*.

The Universe and Biblical Humanity

Although the message of the gospel has been upon the earth since the time of Adam, it has generally been rejected from the beginning.¹¹ It was the gospel plan that God’s children would be preserved in their agency. By faith they would regain the presence of deity and metaphorically return to the Garden of Eden from which they fell through transgression. This motif of creation; fall from paradise; journey through a world of toil, sorrow and temptation; eventual death, judgment, resurrection and restoration to a celestial state; and dwelling in the “rest” of the gods through one’s knowledge and righteousness is a theme which predominates nearly all ancient religions. Even in the more secular descriptions of evolutionary man, it is interpreted that the very primitive cultures with all their basic needs of hunting and survival are thought to have asked, “Why? Who? When?” of their existence, turning to the heavenly bodies for their relationship to all that is. The much published and cited LDS scholar, Dr. Hugh Nibley has pointed out:

Here is a very important statement. It pretty well sums up everything...a large handbook titled *Prehistoric Germanic Europe* [1983] ...and this is the very interesting conclusion these people draw at the end of their book....‘From the material evidence surveyed, culture appears to be a collective attempt at providing answers to the questions posed by man...’ About what? About his economic survival; about his

¹⁰ Exodus 12:14, 17, 24, 43; 13:10; Numbers 9:12, 14; 15:15; 2 Chronicles 2:4; 35:13.

¹¹ Moses 5:4-15; 6:58-66.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCRIPTURAL UNDERSTANDING

dominance; about sex, or something like that? Not at all. That's not what keeps it going at all. Of course, we, being a materialistic society, have always given a materialistic interpretation of it. Naturally, what primitive man was after was to save his life, to avoid wild beasts, to bash his neighbor over the head and all this sort of thing (always for survival). That was always the first rule. But that isn't the point at all, as he says here. From all this evidence culture appears as what? Not from that but from a 'collective attempt to provide answers to the questions about his position in this life and the next life.' That's the thing.¹²

This seeking for "identity", questioning of "origin", and contemplation of "existence" is the unique distinction that separates man from all other creatures in mortality. The answers to these queries were only to be found by revelation from the Creator, as "purpose" and "being" could not be ascertained by simple self-introspection. The divine endowment of knowledge upon mortal man was first dispensed in the pre-mortal paradisiacal earth at the time of the creation of Adam and his eternal companion Eve, who were to "multiply and replenish the earth" and find "joy" in their posterity. Commandments were given that these children of the gods would be able to live without death and misery, for "men are that they might have joy."¹³ However, this paradisiacal existence was not without agency or temptation.

Lucifer¹⁴, a rebellious son of God, had also been cast into this pre-

¹² Hugh W. Nibley, *Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*. "Lecture 26: Joseph Smith". Transcript of 26 Lectures given in an Honors Class on The Pearl of Great Price at Brigham Young University, Winter Semester 1986. Edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe. n.p. [FARMS], n. d. Page 1 of Lecture 26.

¹³ 2 Nephi 2:25.

¹⁴ The name Lucifer appears only once in the King James Version of the Bible, Isaiah 14:12. In the Hebrew the actual word is *Hillel* (הילל) which has been interpreted as "Bright or brilliant star, day-star, light bearer". As in the verse, this interpretation has reference to the "star of the morning or morning star", referring to the planet Venus which is the brightest orb that appears in the morning dawn hours before the rising of the sun. In Babylonian astrology the planet Venus represented "the heavenly prince of Babylon." Most non-LDS commentators have concluded that while there may be a mystical reference to Satan or the Devil created in later times after Isaiah, the verses have reference to one of the kings of Assyria or Babylon and not necessarily to Satan. However, latter-day revelation once again solves this confusion for the identity of Lucifer. The only other time

mortal world without a corporeal body. Accompanied by his rebellious spirit minions, he swore to destroy the plan of God and all creatures that he could subject to his deceptive will.¹⁵ As a narcissistic being he sought to claim power and dominance over Adam and Eve by deception and priestcraft. In other words, he was acting and dispensing knowledge without the authority to do so for personal gain. He was thereby setting himself “up for a light unto the world” to “get gain and praise of the world” but seeking “...not the welfare of Zion.”¹⁶) His deceptive actions, when discovered in the heavenly councils, also gained him the epithet “Satan”, meaning “to be an adversary or opposer” (deriving from the Hebrew noun *satan* שָׂטָן)¹⁷, Devil (from the Greek *diabolon* [διάβολον] meaning “accuser or slandered”)¹⁸, *Abaddon* (meaning “destroyer” with its Greek translation used in the New Testament *Apollyon*)¹⁹, and other appellations of derision.

Like a theatrical performance, the stage and characters were set for the drama that would, in holy places throughout the ages, unfold the plan of Elohim²⁰, instruct Adam’s family in the way of life and happiness,

in the Canon of scripture this name appears is in D&C 76:25-49. These verses give not only the description of Lucifer but also the fate of all those who are overcome by his deceit and allurements.

¹⁵ Moses 4:1-6.

¹⁶ 2 Nephi 26:29.

¹⁷ In the Hebrew Masoretic text of the Bible the Hebrew word שָׂטָן appears 23 times, 13 of them with the definite article *He* (ה) prefixed, indicating the appellation for a specific being (the devil), where the other ten appearances are translated as an adversary, such as, an object, individual, or angel. The 13 with the definite article appear in two books, Job chapters 1-2 (10 times) and Zechariah 3:1-3 (3 times).

¹⁸ In the King James Version of the Old Testament the word “devil” is from the Hebrew word *sa’ir* שָׁעִיר with meanings of “hairy bristling”, “he-goat” and is associated with “satyr,” referring to the half-man-half-goat of Semitic and European mythology. The Roman god Pan was a satyr that caused fear in the hearts of shepherds. The English word “panic” comes from this Latin noun. The same Hebrew root letters שָׁעִר carries the meaning “to bristle with horror.”

¹⁹ The Hebrew term has also been applied to the place of death as in Psalms 88:12.

²⁰ The original Semitic root for the title *Elohim* [אֱלֹהִים] is debated; however, the meaning in the scriptures is not questioned when used in the contextual title of God. The word is plural and when used in the singular *el* [אֵל] is known to be

impress upon the mind and spirit the import and sacredness of such an endowment of knowledge. Furthermore, this divine drama would commit through covenant, the initiates of sacred rites, to a charge to abide in the path that will lead them back to the tree of life and into the presence of God, all the while preserving their agency. Partaking of the tree of knowledge of good and evil would cast them out of the presence of God, and place them in a telestial sphere where death, pain, misery, and sorrow, coupled with the emotional and physical experiences of procreation, pleasure, happiness, and joy, would be present. Without such opposites man would not acquire the essential faith²¹ to become

defined as “god”, however this use may be in reference to any god – pagan or Israelite. *El* may be derived from the Akkadian root *yl* or *wl* meaning “to be powerful”; however, the meaning may just be “power”. *El* is used in names as a prefix (i.e. Elijah, Elisha, Elihu, etc.), or as a suffix (i.e. Samuel, Ishmael, Israel, etc.), and attributes or locations of God are often associated with *El* (*El Shaddai* [“God, the Omnipotent”], *El Elyon* [“God of Glory”], *El Barit* [“God of the Covenant”], *El Olam* [“God Eternal”], or *El Bethel* [“God of Bethel”], etc.) Latter-day revelation has identified *Elohim* as God the Father, but a less ambiguous term for God the Father in LDS parlance might be “Ahman” (cf. D&C 78:15, 20), which, according to Elder Orson Pratt, is a name of the Father (*Journal of Discourses* 2:342).

²¹ Faith, in this instance, should be understood as outlined in the *Lectures on Faith*, “Faith being the first principle in revealed religion, and the foundation of all righteousness... it is faith, and faith only, which is the moving cause of all action in them [man]; that without it both mind and body would be in a state of inactivity, and all their exertions would cease, both physical and mental. And as faith is the moving cause of all action in temporal concerns, so it is in spiritual... But faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings, whether in heaven or on earth. ... Let us here observe, that three things are necessary in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. First, the idea that he actually exists. Secondly, a correct idea of his character, perfections, and attributes. Thirdly, an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to his will. For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness, unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ ... Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation; for, from the first existence of man, the

as the gods. Thus, trials and temptations, toil and effort would work together to exalt man as he mastered the spiritual and physical body by submitting his will to the will of the Father. This would require not only obedience, but sacrifice, commitment, and consecration to a moral and virtuous life, and dedicated service to man and God. Justice would require that consequences be associated with every action and decision. Righteousness and sin could not be realized without opposition and judgment. Judgment could only be rendered by application of fixed laws that did not change with imperfect judges; otherwise, there could be no faith, hope or charity. Mercy and atonement also would be necessary. Without such, all mankind would be lost from the presence of God, for “no unclean thing can dwell... in God’s presence.”²² Humanity, by their very fallen nature, would be unwise and sinful, even though they would have a desire for righteousness. Mortal experience was to be a lab of not only testing, but also of learning.

Covenants and Ordinances

The process of soul sanctification would require outward and inward commitments. These commitments would be based on contractual arrangements (when made between God and his people they are referred

faith necessary unto the enjoyment of life and salvation never could be obtained without the sacrifice of all earthly things. It was through this sacrifice, and this only, that God has ordained that men should enjoy eternal life; and it is through the medium of the sacrifice of all earthly things that men do actually know that they are doing the things that are well pleasing in the sight of God. When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for the truth’s sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life. (1:1, 10-13; 3:3-5; 6:7. *Lectures on Faith*, delivered to a school of the elders, Kirtland, December 1834. Although the *Lectures on Faith* were not written only by Joseph Smith, he reviewed them carefully and prepared them for publication (see Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective* [Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1990].)

²² Moses 6:57.

Just as the fullness of the covenants and ordinances of the priesthood are found in the temples, so the perception of biblical people's relationship to the cosmos and their path to final exaltation are represented in the temples. These temples served as portals to the divine presence of deity, acted as windows into the eternal realms, and schools of the mysteries of godliness, teaching the initiates the purpose and pathway to eternal life. Both the true temple worship and the aberrations in apostate forms contain many of the same elements in signs, tokens, and instructions as evidenced in archaeological and historical sources. Understanding of biblical man's perceptions of the universe must include a knowledge of temple worship. The most sacred feasts and festivals were to be performed "at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in."¹⁰³

The Meaning of Sanctuaries, Tabernacles, and Temples

The three words, "sanctuaries", "tabernacles", and "temples" are generally considered synonymous in English. However, they differ in

age of the world?...The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose. It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world. Jesus did everything to gather the people, and they would not be gathered, and He therefore poured out curses upon them. Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles. It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc. One of the ordinances of the house of the Lord is baptism for the dead. God decreed before the foundation of the world that that ordinance should be administered in a font prepared for that purpose in the house of the Lord." (pp. 423-424.)

¹⁰³ Deuteronomy 16:2, 6-7, 15-16.

degrees when examined more closely in the light of ancient studies. Since the mid-14th Century A.D. the word “sanctuary” has come to mean “a building set apart for holy worship,” coming from the Old Latin root *sanctus* meaning “holy.” It was used in reference to a holy place in its nominal form as *sanctum*. The “holy of holies” of temples and other edifices is called in the Latin *sanctum sanctorum*.

The *sanctum* was also considered “a place of refuge or protection.”¹⁰⁴ In the Mosaic Code the Levitical Cities of Refuge were designated as places of asylum for individuals who had committed accidental or acts of unintentional homicide (non-premeditated death) to avoid the custom of blood feuds.¹⁰⁵ Sanctuaries were located in every one of these

¹⁰⁴ “Sanctuary,” *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <http://www.etymonline.com/>.

¹⁰⁵ “Blood feuds” or vendettas are cycles of provocation and retaliation, fuelled by a burning desire for revenge and carried out over long periods of time by familial or tribal groups. Several instances in the Bible show the custom to exist. For example, see the instance of Jacob’s sons Simeon and Levi taking revenge on Shechem, Hamor and their community for defiling their sister Dinah. Jacob feared the Canaanite revenge upon his family for their act (Genesis 34). Vendettas still persist in some areas, notably in Albania with its tradition of *gjakmarrja* or “blood feuds.” During the Middle Ages, most would not regard an insult or injury as settled until it was avenged, or, at the least, paid for — hence, the extensive Anglo-Saxon system of *wergild* (literally, “man-price”) payments, which placed a certain monetary value upon certain acts of violence in an attempt to limit the spiral of revenge by codifying the responsibility of a malefactor. In Japan’s feudal past, the Samurai class upheld the honor of their family, clan, or lord through the practice of revenge killings (敵討ち *katakiuchi*). These killings could also involve the relatives of an offender. Today, *katakiuchi* is most often pursued by peaceful means, but revenge remains an important part of Japanese culture. The motto of Scotland is *Nemo Me Impune Lacessit*, Latin for “None shall provoke/injure me with impunity”. The origin of the motto reflects the feudal clan system of ancient Scotland, particularly the Highlands. The goal of some legal systems is limited to “just” revenge. In the fashion of the *contrapasso* punishments awaiting those consigned to Dante’s Inferno, some have attempted to turn the crime against the criminal in clever and often gruesome ways. To avoid the injustice and endless feud that can result from these vendettas, the mosaic code established a strict law of justice where “an eye for an eye” or the Latin legal term *lex talionis* (literally means “law of retaliation”) was instituted. These laws were to provide equitable retribution so that a person who has been injured by another person returns the offending action to the originator in compensation, or that an authority does so on

ancient cities.¹⁰⁶ In later medieval times the custom to provide asylum in churches was utilized by individuals actually declaring the words “Sanctuary!” at the steps of the cathedral.

The main purpose of a sanctuary was to set space apart as holy, or “to make a separation between the [sacred] and the profane place.”¹⁰⁷ Characteristic of the ancient and modern Semitic religions, a sanctuary is not merely a precise spot but includes the extended area around the altar or buildings. A sanctuary as a “holy place of worship” was applied to cult locations whether it was a vast stretch of land, an entire mountain, a grove of trees, a high place, a burial site, an altar, a *mastaba* or stone stele, a well or spring, a tent, a room, or the more elaborate buildings such as a temple complex.¹⁰⁸ Catholic Father Père Roland de Vaux describes this cult worship:

Cult is the outward homage paid to a god. Since the god is thought of as receiving this homage and listening to the prayer of his suppliant in the place where this worship is offered, the god is considered to be

behalf of the injured person. In the context of homicide it generally only applies to murder or intentional killings, despite the fact that a negligent homicide also results in the loss of a person’s life. This application implicitly recognizes that the *mens rea* element of the crime rather than the *actus reus*, or actual harm, to the victim will ultimately determine the application of an eye for eye justice. Modern Western legal systems usually state as their goal the reform or re-education of a convicted criminal. Even in these systems, however, society is conceived of as the victim of a criminal’s actions, and the notion of vengeance for such acts is an important part of the concept of justice — a criminal “pays his debt to society”.

¹⁰⁶ Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel, Volume 1: Social Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), 160-161, 163; also, *Ancient Israel, Volume 2: Religious Institutions*, 276.

¹⁰⁷ Ezekiel 42:20.

¹⁰⁸ Semitic religions are those ancient and modern ethnic groups that are of Semite origins versus that of Indo European or Hamitic origin. In Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel, Volume 2: Religious Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), 274-344, archaeological examples with scriptural passages are presented for each of the types of sanctuaries mentioned. While Semitic religions have a special importance placed on the areas encompassing the altars and temples designating them as “holy”, they are not the only group with such practices. The Greeks had a *terminus* [τέρμα] around the temple, as did the Chinese and numerous other ancient and modern cultures.

present there in some way or other, at least while the act of worship is being performed. This notion is common to all religions... A place of worship was sacred, i.e. withdrawn from profane use: this is the ultimate meaning of “sacred”. The 500 cubits around the temple of Ezekiel were there “to separate the sacred from the profane” (Ezekiel 42:20). There were two possible reasons for setting apart a space which was held to be sacred: men may have decided to cut out a definite portion of land from their own territory in order to consecrate it to God, as a kind of tithe on the earth; by paying this tithe, they could then make free use of the rest; alternatively, they may have put a stop to profane activity because the mysterious and fearful presence of a divinity in his sanctuary radiated around the place of worship, and this second reason is more in conformity with the texts, the rites and the spirit of Semitic religion. But whichever view be correct, the consequences are the same: the sacred territory was reserved, and characterized by certain prohibitions and privileges... Before entering it, everyone must perform certain sacral rites, and put on special clothes; at least one part of this territory is a place of asylum.¹⁰⁹

This institution of prohibitions to separate the sacred spaces is found throughout the scriptures.¹¹⁰ When the children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai, they were to approach the Lord and receive a new Law, being brought into His presence to converse with Him directly as Moses had. To prepare for this event, the Lord commanded through Moses:

Go unto the people, and **sanctify them** today and tomorrow, and **let them wash their clothes**, and be ready against the third day: for the third

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Some examples include: Moses before the burning bush was told by God to remove his sandals (Exodus 3:2-4); Jacob traveling to sanctuary in Bethel commanded his household to put away idols, cleanse themselves and dress in new garments (Genesis 35:1-5); the Israelite high priest may only enter the Holy of Holies of the temple once a year on the Day of Atonement after cleansing, offering sacrifice, and meeting other requirements (Leviticus 16:15; Hebrews 9:12); a Psalm of David asks rhetorically, “Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?” and then declares the answer to be “he who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Psalms 24:2-5); The children of Israel are prohibited from approaching the Tabernacle (Numbers 18:22); Paul warns of defiling the temple (1 Corinthians 3:17); The Mosaic Code proscribes means of becoming clean for worship (Numbers 19); The Lord will not enter defiled temples (D&C 97:15-17); Ezra purges the priests for acceptance before the Lord (Ezra 10); and others.

day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai. And **thou shalt set bounds unto the people** round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye go not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: **when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.**¹¹¹

Additionally, the selection of these portals to heaven are not solely designated by man but generally are the result of revelation either by divine decree or by divine approbation. Among the designated sanctuaries of the Lord was the Tabernacle or Tent of Israel. The word “tabernacle” is from the Latin *tabernaculum* meaning “tent”, and its diminutive *taberna* means “hut, cabin, booth”.¹¹² The annual Jewish Feast of Tabernacles may also be referred to as the Feast of Booths, for unlike our definition of a tent today, the booths of this feast are to be made square with palm branches used as a roof open to the stars and with sidewalls of interwoven green branches that can house the family for the eight days of celebration.¹¹³

The Hebrew words used to describe the wilderness tabernacles are *Ohel* (אהל) and *Mishkan* (משכן). *Ohel* (אהל) which is literally used to mean a “covering”, also connotes a place of dwelling or habitation, like the nomadic tents for family dwelling, where the family congregates or gathers for communion and safety. Descriptive phrases were added to this designation, i.e. Tent of Meeting or Tent of the Congregation¹¹⁴ (אהל

¹¹¹ Exodus 19:10-13. (**Bold mine.**)

¹¹² Search “tabernacle” in the *Online Etymology Dictionary* at <http://www.etymonline.com/>

¹¹³ The Hebrew word used for these structures is סוכה (*sukkah*), although in English we use the same term as the tent or tabernacle. In the *Scriptural Manners and Customs Series, Biblical Feasts and Festivals: The Signs and Seasons of Jesus Christ, Volume 3, The Civil New Year* (by this author) a chapter is focused in detail on this particular feast of the Lord.

¹¹⁴ The common Hebrew word for Tent of the Congregation is אהל מועד (*Ohel Mo'ed*), however, the Hebrew word קהל (*kahal*) is also used for “congregation” as noted in Psalms 22:22. The Septuagint uses Ἐκκλησία (*ek-klay-si-a*), for the Hebrew קהל (*kahal*) which has the same meaning, namely, assembly, congregation, or a called or invited gathering. Samuel Fallows explains, “The original Greek

מִוֶּעַד *Ohel Mo'ed*, used some 125 times in the Old Testament, emphasizing that the tabernacle was the place where God and His people could meet and have communion through sacrificial offerings and receiving revelations); and, the Tent of the Testimony (הַאֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת *Ha Ohel Ha 'Adet*). This Tent of Testimony should be distinguished from the "Testimony" first mentioned when Israel departed Egypt,¹¹⁵ before Moses received the revelation to construct the elaborate Tabernacle of the Lord. He was then commanded to place the "Testimony" into the Ark of the Covenant (also referred to as the Ark of the Testimony). Another distinction should be noted between what might be called the

word [Ἐκκλησία, *ek-klay-si-a*, assembly], in its larger signification, denotes a number of persons called together for any purpose, an assembly of any kind, civil or religious. As, however, it is usually applied in the New Testament to religious assemblages, it is very properly translated by 'assembly,' in the few instances in which it occurs in the civil sense (Acts 19:32, 39, 41). It is, however, well to note that the word rendered 'assembly' in these verses is the same, which is elsewhere rendered 'church.' In a few places the word occurs in the Jewish sense, of a congregation, an assembly of the people for worship, either in a synagogue (Matthew 18:17) or generally of the Jews regarded as a religious body (Acts 7:38; Hebrews 2:12). The text last cited is quoted from Psalms 22:22, where the Septuagint uses Ἐκκλησία (*ek-klay-si-a*), for the Hebrew קהל (*kahal*) which has the same meaning, namely, assembly, congregation, or a *called or invited gathering*. Elsewhere also this word, which we render 'church' in the New Testament, is used by the Septuagint for the Hebrew word, which we render 'congregation' in the Old Testament. However, the word most frequently occurs in the Christian sense of an assemblage (of Christians) generally (1 Corinthians 11:18). Hence, it denotes a church, the Christian church, in which, however, we distinguish certain shades of meaning, viz. - 1. A particular church, a church in a certain place, as in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1; 11:22, etc.), in Antioch (Acts 11:26; 13:1, etc.), in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1), etc. 2. Churches of (Gentile) Christians, without distinguishing place (Romans 16:4). 3. An assembly of Christians which meets anywhere, as in the house of any one (Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Philemon 2). The Church universal—the whole body of Christian believers (Matthew 16:18; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Galatians 1:13; Ephesians 1:22; 3:10; Hebrews 12:23, etc.)." Samuel Fallows, "Church," *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia and Scriptural Dictionary* (Chicago: Howard-Severance Company, 1910), Samuel Fallows, ed., 1:426.

¹¹⁵ Exodus 16:32-33; 25:16, 21; 30:6. See James E. Talmage, *House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1971), 16.

“Provisional Tabernacle” and the later more elaborate Tabernacle constructed under the direction of the Lord. We read concerning this “Provisional Tabernacle”:

And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that everyone which sought the Lord went out into the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle. And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.¹¹⁶

James E. Talmage identifies this tabernacle as a “Provisional Tabernacle” before the creation of the Lord’s more elaborate structure, which design was yet to be received by Moses:

That the tent here called the Tabernacle of the Congregation is not the elaborate and costly structure specially built as the Lord directed, is evident from the fact that the greater and more enduring Tabernacle had not been constructed at the time referred to in the scripture last cited. Unlike the later Tabernacle, which was set up in the center of the camp with the tribes massed about it in specified order, this Provisional Tabernacle was pitched outside the camp — afar off — perhaps as an indication of the Lord’s withdrawal following Israel’s idolatrous turning away from Him. That the Provisional Tabernacle was, however, a holy sanctuary is attested by the personal communion therein between Jehovah and His servant Moses.¹¹⁷

The second Hebrew word appearing in the scriptures for the tabernacle, *mishkan* (מִשְׁכָּן) whose root is *sheken* (שָׁכַן), carries the idea

¹¹⁶ Exodus 33:7-15.

¹¹⁷ James E. Talmage, *House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1971), 17-18.

of an established dwelling place that has a divine presence (the Jewish concept of the ever-present Spirit of God known as the *shekinah* or presence of the Lord) which has the glory of God upon it. The idea of “established” in this context means “firmly planted within the structure”, not that the structure itself is immobile. *Mishkan* is used in the priestly realm for the concept of the Tabernacle as a temple where sacred ordinances and ceremonies are performed, contrasted with the concept of a tabernacle for assembly as in the case of the *ohel*. *Mishkan* is used more prominently than *ohel* in the Book of Leviticus where *ohel* appears in more use in the other books of the Pentateuch. In some verses the two are used together to emphasize the dual nature of the Tabernacle of the Lord. The *mishkan* is indeed the mobile temple concept where priesthood ordinances are performed with the cloud of God’s glory ever present. The *ohel* is the covering of the Lord that provides the instruction and safety for His family. The combination of these concepts helps describe the purposes of this mobile structure for the House of Israel.

The word “temple” comes from the Latin *templum* with possible roots from *tem*, “to cut or cut out” (associated with sacrifice, or with the idea of separation or the intersection terminus of the north-south *cardo* and the east-west *decumanus* in Roman cities); or, *temp*, “to stretch” (associated with the idea of the cleared space before a sacrificial altar).¹¹⁸ This last Latin root *temp* is interesting as it can have a profound connotation regarding the purpose of a temple. This root serves also for the word “template”. Hugh Nibley considers this usage in one of his assigned functions of the temple:

Of course, the word for temple in Latin, *templum*, means the same thing as “template”: a plan marked out on the ground by the augur’s staff, to help him determine the exact direction of the prophetic flight of birds. He sat at the *cardo*, the hinge or pivot around which all things turn, where the north-south line crossed the east-west line or *decumanus*. The person who was going to receive divination either by the birds or by the heavens, would sit in the center and take his bearings with regard to his carefully laid-out observatory. This was represented in the ancient stone circles. You find most of them to be of great antiquity- there are

¹¹⁸ Search “temple” in the *Online Etymology Dictionary* at <http://www.etymonline.com/>

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over 200 of them in England and in France, in the form and model of the ancient Egyptian temple. The temple is also an observatory. That is what a *templeion* is – a place where you take your bearings on things. More than that, it is a working model, a laboratory for demonstrating basic principles by use of figures and symbols, which convey to finite minds things beyond their immediate experience.”¹¹⁹



Diagram 1: A model of a temple, made of the same material as the temple itself, showing the structure of the temple and the way in which it is used to demonstrate basic principles by use of figures and symbols, which convey to finite minds things beyond their immediate experience.

No special word for a temple seems to exist in the older Semitic languages. The biblical scholar and archaeologist Father Perè Roland de Vaux gives a Semitic linguistic etymology for the words translated in the Bible for “temple” as follows:

In Akkadian, it is called simply the “house” (*bītu*) or the “palace” (*ekallu*; from the Sumerian *E-KAL*, meaning “Big House”) of the god; another Akkadian word is *ekurru*, which is also borrowed from the Sumerian *E-KUR*, meaning “House of the Mountain”. In Phoenician, the Ras Shamra texts give us the word *bt* (house) and *hkl* (“palace”, from the Akkadian *ekallu*); both are equally common. In Hebrew too, the temple is a “house” (בית *bet*) or a “palace” (הקל *hekal*, from the Akkadian, via the Phoenician). In the later books of the Bible, especially Ezekiel, the Temple is often called *mqdash* (מקדש), which, strictly speaking, means “a holy place” or “sanctuary”, and not a building which is used as a temple. In older texts, the word stands parallel with “high places” (Isaiah 16:12; Amos 7:9), and it is used for the open-air sanctuary under the Oak of Shechem (Joshua 24:26). In Akkadian, Phoenician, and Hebrew, then, the same words are used for the “house” or “palace” of a god and for the

¹¹⁹ Hugh Nibley, *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley: Volume 12, Ancient History: Temples and Cosmos, Beyond This Ignorant Present*, edited by Don Norton (Salt Lake City Utah: Deseret Book Company and the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies in Provo, Utah, 1992), 19.

“house” or “palace” of a king. And in fact, every temple was built as a home for divinity.

... in them [Mesopotamian temples] the daily routine of the god was the same as the king's: the statue was first dressed, then had meals served to it, and was taken for walks with a sumptuous escort. This daily ritual meant that the temple had to be surrounded with a great many dependent buildings, such as lodgings for the priests and the servants, stores, kitchens and stables, all of which emphasized still more the similarity between the god's temple and the king's palace. Even in Mesopotamia, however, the god did not live only in the temple, in the sense that his presence and his activity were restricted to this building. Some of his devotees may have thought so, but this was not the real meaning of their religion. The statue or sacred symbol was not the god himself, but only a visible sign and tangible embodiment of his presence. The temple was, of course, his dwelling-place, but he could have several temples in the same country, or even in the same town, and the great gods, whether their name was Marduk or Assur or Baal, could act throughout the length and breadth of the universe. The purpose of ziggurats was... to meet the god half-way when he was coming down from heaven to his temple... Though the lawful worship of Yahweh forbade images, the [Jerusalem] Temple was still referred to as the “house of Yahweh” and the place of which he had said: “My Name shall be there” (1 Kings 8:29)¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel, Volume 2: Religious Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965), 282-283. Father de Vaux further points out: “Mesopotamian temples usually followed the same plan as a large house or palace; and the god, represented by his statue, was held to dwell there. But the plans of Assyrian temples are not the same as those in Babylonia, except where Babylonian influence was felt; and the reason is that the two nations built their houses in different ways. In Babylonia, the worshippers entered a courtyard flanked by buildings to pray in front of the rooms where the service was conducted; they were not allowed into these rooms, but a door in the middle gave them a straight view of the divine image which stood in the *cella* at the back. Those Assyrian temples which were untouched by Babylonian influence had no courtyard; instead, an open door led into one of the longer sides of the temple, and you had to turn to see the statue, which stood at the back of the room where the services were held: the statue stood where the fireplace was in ordinary houses. Thus the approach to the divinity was both closer and more mysterious than in Babylonia, and this fact corresponds to a difference of religious feeling between the two peoples.”

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCRIPTURAL UNDERSTANDING

families, and congregations of the past have been but means to that end. All individuals, families, and organizations of the future who wish to be chosen may come into that fold by faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus the Messiah, repentance, baptism by those in authority, and confirmation by those having power to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Summary: In summary then, it is evident that God did not intend that any one individual, family, or nation would be chosen for salvation to the neglect of all others; it is evident, rather, that He chose such individuals to be His servants, His emissaries, His missionaries, to carry the message of salvation to all others. It is further evident that all who now accept salvation through the anointed Savior are in as good a status as those formerly called. As in Jesus' time, it ill behooves anyone to boast of being the seed of any chosen people, especially when not doing the deeds or mission of the chosen. It is joining the Kingdom and doing the work that counts.¹⁶⁵

The people in biblical times who accepted the fullness of the gospel, viewed the world as God's creation and saw themselves as the children of God, chosen to carry the message of God to all people. But like today, many did not accept their faith and belief but sought to find purposes that would justify their unbelief or carnal desires. They imitated true worship with modifications that satisfied their natures. When reading and understanding the scriptures, one must understand this perspective to understand the intent of the scriptures that are revealed and preserved for this day. They were intended to be a witness or testimony of the message of the gospel to their generations and future posterity.

Chapter 2 Summary

The purpose of this volume is to have foundational understanding of the scriptures that will aid in the study of the other volumes of this series. In this chapter, the focus was on man's understanding of the

¹⁶⁵ Unpublished handout prepared by Ellis T. Rasmussen for students attending the Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies (BYU): used by permission with some augmentation by Dann W Hone. For a copy of this statement see Appendices 4 in this volume. "Appendices 4: Who Are the Chosen People? & What Are They Chosen to Do?" in this volume.

cosmos and his relationship to it. Biblical people's perceptions of the heavens, and their conception of human kind's origins and purpose, are at the foundation of our ability to understand the world of which the biblical peoples wrote. Their lives centered on understanding the object of existence and human kind's relationship to the earth, sky, sun, moon, stars, seasons, and their connection to God, His purposes, and their future association with Him. Today our linear Western orientation of the cosmos and perception of humanity's actuality, "being" in the universe, sometimes clouds our understanding of the highly symbolic Eastern philosophies of these ancient people. These relationships are best understood through the ancient practices and perceptions of ordinances, covenants, temple worship, family ties, and the Abrahamic Covenant. The next chapters in this volume continues the essential witnesses born in the scriptures, beginning with the belief and mission of the Messiah, followed by an explanation of the Law of Moses, its origin and the Higher Law.

The next two volumes focus on the feasts and festivals of the Lord and their foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus Christ. Much more detail and description of ancient scriptural holy places, sanctuaries, and temple worship with its deeper symbolism and impact on understanding the scriptural message will be provided in a future volume. Also, the family, lifestyles, practices and social/governmental institutions of biblical society will be addressed in greater detail in another set of volumes. Understanding the function of temples and sanctuaries as sacred places where God reveals the most important saving knowledge, divine covenants, and priesthood ordinances of exaltation, suggests a singular emphasis on the prominence of the Lord's revealed feasts and festivals. It suffices in this volume to note that some feasts and festivals could only be performed in righteousness in sanctuaries set apart for that purpose – their function was to help fulfill God's stated purpose and work "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of [humankind] man".¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ Moses 1:39.

Moses and the Promised Messiah

The study of history, like the study of a landscape, should begin with the most conspicuous features. Not until these have been fixed in memory will the lesser features fall into their appropriate places and assume their right proportions.

The famous men of ancient and modern times are the mountain peaks of history. It is logical then that the study of history should begin with the biographies of these men.

— John H. Haaran¹

Few men have had a greater impact on the history and cultures of this world than Moses. Even more significant is the life of the Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ. In this chapter a brief examination illustrates how Moses' life and works pre-figured the mission and ministry of the Promised Messiah, Jesus the Christ. The Lord said of Moses, "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 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."² Years later in speaking to Israel, Moses prophesied, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, *like unto me*; unto him ye shall hearken."³ Nearly a millennia after this prophecy the prophet Nephi states: "And now I, Nephi, declare unto you, that this prophet of whom Moses spake was the Holy One of Israel; wherefore, he shall execute judgment in righteousness."⁴ The word "similitude" implies "likeness or form", meaning not an exact image but "similar" or "patterned after". Truly, Moses' life and his works reflect the image of the life and ministry of Jesus, the Messiah. This word "Messiah" should first be understood before considering the comparisons of these sons of God.

¹ In "preface" to *Famous Men of the Middle Ages* (New York: American Book Company, 1904), (co-author A. B. Poland), 3.

² Moses 1:6.

³ Deuteronomy 18:15

⁴ 1 Nephi 22:21.

The Promise of a Messiah

The word “Messiah” originates from the Semitic root מָשַׁח (*mashakh*) meaning “to rub, smear, anoint, consecrate or set apart with oils or ointments” and the noun form of this word, “anointed”, is מָשִׁיחַ (*meshiyakh*). Referring to this Hebrew root word, the *Zondervan Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* points out:

The word is used sixty-nine times in the OT and means ‘to apply oil’ by pouring or spreading. The practice was common in many cultures of the ancient Middle East. We see it first in scripture when Jacob anointed a pillar he had set up as a memorial of his meeting with God at Bethel (Genesis 28:18). The practice is linked ritually with the worship of Israel at the tabernacle, where priests (Exodus 28:41; 30:30; Leviticus 8:12) and the altar (Exodus 29:36; 40:10; Leviticus 8:10) were anointed with a specially prepared sacred oil (Exodus 35:8, 28). Later, anointing with oil was extended to kings (e.g., Judges 9:8,15; 1 Samuel 9:16; 15:1; 16:3, 12; 1 Kings 1:34) and at times to prophets (1 Kings 19:16). Anointing was also associated with hospitality and the treatment accorded an honored guest (Psalms 23:5; Luke 7:46; John 11:2).⁵

BYU Professor Dana M. Pike in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion* also points to its use in the scriptures:

“Messiah” occurs thirty-two times in the Book of Mormon; all but three are in 1 and 2 Nephi. In contrast to the preserved biblical text, Nephi indicated that when Lehi preached repentance in Jerusalem he taught “plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world” (1 Nephi 1:19). The Jews’ angry response to Lehi’s preaching could indicate their sense of guilt and/or an apostate notion that Lehi was in some way teaching false doctrine. Nephi did not relate that Lehi taught the identity of the future Messiah to the Jews, but does report that Lehi later taught his family many details concerning the (first) coming of the Messiah, including that this “Savior of the world” was the “Redeemer” who would be baptized, killed, and “should rise from the dead” (1 Nephi 10:4-11; cf. 2 Nephi 2:6, 8, 26). Similarly, Nephi observed that “the Son

⁵ In Lawrence O. Richards, *Zondervan Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, under the topic “Anointing, Anointed,” (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 54-55.

of God was the Messiah who should come” (1 Nephi 10:17), and an angel taught him that “the Messiah . . . is the Lamb of God” (1 Nephi 12:18). Lehi also prophesied that as part of the great latter-day gathering “remnants of the house of Israel” would “come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer” (1 Nephi 10:14; cf. 1 Nephi 15:13-14). Furthermore, both Lehi and Jacob taught that the Messiah would gather the remnants of latter-day Israel (1 Nephi 10:14; 15:13; 2 Nephi 3:5; 6:13-14).⁶

In addition to anointing in order to consecrate objects, to set individuals apart for special missions (i.e. prophets, priests, and kings), or to perform hospitality functions, olive oil was used for anointing the sick⁷ as part of a priesthood comforting and healing ordinance. The dead were also anointed as part of the burial practices to perfume the body and as part of a symbolic cleansing ordinance that is still recognized in Orthodox Judaism today.⁸

⁶ Dana M. Pike, “Messiah” in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 2003), 536-537. Professor Pike further points out, “Latter-day Saint scripture indicates that prophets who lived before Jesus’ birth understood and taught that Jehovah/Jesus was the Messiah who would come (Moses 7:50, 53; 1 Nephi 10:5; Mosiah 13:33; Helaman 8:13-20; Jacob 2 teaches the same thing, but uses the term “Christ” in Jacob 4:4-5). Even the lesser Law of Moses was given to persuade Israelites “to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was” (Jarom 1:11). Because the term *mashiach* is not clearly preserved as a title for Jehovah in the Hebrew Bible nor in the minimal corpus of Israelite inscriptions, it is not possible to determine how many Israelites in Jerusalem at the time of Jeremiah and Lehi (ca. 600 BC.) knew or believed that Jehovah himself would come to earth as the anointed Son of God, the Messiah.”

⁷ Mark 6:13; James 5:14.

⁸ The following is a statement attributed to Rabbi Akiva in the 2nd Century A.D. and translated by Raphael Patai which refers to the redemption of the dead left in Gehenna at the end of times: “Instantly Michael and Gabriel go and open the forty thousand gates of Gehenna, and bring them up from Gehenna. And how do they bring them up from Gehenna? It teaches us that each Gehenna has a length of three hundred parasangs and a width of three hundred parasangs, and its thickness is a thousand parasangs, and its depth is a thousand parasangs, and none of the wicked who fall into it can get out of it. What, then, do Michael and Gabriel do? In that hour they get hold of the hand of each one of the wicked and pull them up, like a man who raises his fellow man and pulls him up from a pit, . . . And Gabriel

An Ancient Egyptian Anointing Motif



This illustration is a depiction of the anointing and anointment ceremony of pharaohs. Carving out of the Anu, held by the gods Thot and Hnum, are two symbols:



the Ankh symbol—signifying eternal life—

the Was symbol—signifying dominion, power, and authority.

In this picture, Pharaoh is washed and anointed with eternal life, power, dominion, and authority.

The anointing was a sacred rite in other ancient traditions with which the Israelites were very familiar—those of ancient Egypt. Several of the key patriarchs of Israel were intimately connected with the land and ways of Egypt. Abraham, Joseph, and Moses spent much time and held influential positions in Egypt. The Egyptians themselves may have even remembered connections to Noah and Enoch (who were very influential for the temple rituals). In short, there is evidence for Egyptian influence on Israel (and vice versa). There were many shared understandings regarding divine ascent and related doctrines. In the illustration to the left copied from the walls of the Temple of Amun in Karnak, Egypt, part of the ancient Egyptian anointing ceremony is depicted. Ritual anointing with sacred oil is documented as fulfilling

and Michael stand over them in that hour, and wash them, and anoint them with oil, and heal them of the wounds of Gehenna, and clothe them in beautiful and good garments, and take them by their hand, and bring them before the Holy One, blessed be He, and before all the pious, all spruced and cleaned up...” [Mid. Alpha Beta di R. Akiba, BbM 3:2729, translated by Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts* (New York: Avon Books, 1979), 252-3, *Italics mine.*] In remembrance of these cleansing ordinances, orthodox Jews have the *chevra kedisha* (חברת קדשה; holy company, friends, companions, or association—*chevr* [חבר] is the Hebrew root meaning “to unite or join together”) This association is a company of those especially called by the Jewish leadership or local rabbis to prepare *meit* (מת, corpse) for burial... For more detailed explanation refer to the section of this chapter under the title “Targum on the Future Messiah Directing the Salvation of the Repentant Dead from Gehenna.”

an important role in the religious ceremonial of Egypt. From Pyramid texts of the early third millennium B.C., to Gnostic documents of the Christian era found at Nag Hammadi, anointing can be shown to provide sanctification and give authorization for ascent to the gods and inclusion in their company. It took place on the Egyptian New Year when the longest day with the greatest light of the year (summer solstice) occurred. Like other Near Eastern New Year rites, it represented the new coronation, death, resurrection, and ascension of the king to the gods. It was performed in a temple. Similar themes are found in other Egyptian temple rituals, including the ordinance known as the “opening of the mouth.” Although some scholars see this as a rite performed only on the dead, there is evidence that it was part of an initiation into the temple mysteries for the living. There was a similar ritual among the Greeks. There is also evidence that this ritual was not only for royalty, but could be performed on deserving commoners, as well (e.g., Imhotep and Amenhotep, important ancient Egyptian architects — human beings who were believed to have been deified through this process). BYU Professor John F. Hall has pointed out:

The resurrection is a necessary part of the at-one-ment with God, in which the individual obtains exaltation through a heavenly ascent to the throne of God, where he/she is permitted to see God face-to-face. These elements are all connected to the anointing in the temple setting. The anointing, then, has to do with: 1) a representation of the process of sanctification; 2) authorization to be sealed unto eternal life; 3) enabling the ascent to heaven to see the face of God (resurrection). Perhaps not surprisingly, similarity of purpose and procedure can be noted among temple rituals designed to secure return to the very presence of the Divine along with admission to the hosts of heaven as sons of God, whether in Hebrew, early Christian, or even ancient Egyptian rites and ceremonies.⁹

⁹ Information from: Dr. John F. Hall, “The Anointing of the Gods: Sanctification and Authority from Egyptian Pharaohs to Hebrew Priest Kings and Beyond,” a presentation at the Temple Studies Symposium III (October 31, 2009 at the Temple Church in London), published as “Notes” by David Larsen on November 7, 2009 at the following WWW site:

<http://www.heavenlyascents.com/2009/11/07/professor-john-f-hall-notes-from-the-temple-studies-symposium-iii/>.

Other cultures also followed these anointing practices, and Moses would have been aware of them when he was in the royal Egyptian household. While the variety of temple ordinances were familiar to Moses, his instructions on restoring these ceremonies was given by revelation from the Lord, such as in the case of the washings and anointings of Aaron and the Levitical priests.¹⁰

Before proceeding further, a clarification on the importance of Egyptian temple rites and their relationship to LDS temple ceremonies needs to be explained. Professor Hugh Nibley provides some clarification in his work, *Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*:

Latter-day Saints believe that their temple ordinances are as old as the human race and represent a primordial revealed religion that has passed through alternate phases of apostasy and restoration which have left the world littered with the scattered fragments of the original structure, some more and some less recognizable, but all badly damaged and out of proper context. The early fathers of the Church gave such an explanation for the disturbingly close resemblances between Christianity and other, notably Egyptian, beliefs and practices—all are the remnants of another age. In the present century, an army of scholars, following the lead of Sir James Frazer, have been diligently at work first collecting thousands of scattered pieces of earlier customs and folktales, and then trying to put them together like the pieces of jig-saw puzzles, to see whether they all come from a few basic systems or even go back to a single all-embracing “pattern.” Whatever the end result may be, it is perfectly clear by now that the same sort of thing has been going on for a very long time and in virtually all parts of the World.

But what about the Egyptian rites? What are they to us? They are a parody, an imitation, but as such not to be despised. For all the great age and consistency of their rites and teachings, which certainly command respect, the Egyptians did not have the real thing, and they knew it. They were, as I. E. S. Edwards puts it, “like a people searching in the dark for a key to truth; and having found not one but many keys...retaining all lest

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¹⁰ Exodus 40:12-16.

perchance the appropriate one should be discarded” (*The Pyramids of Egypt*, pp. 27f). Or, in the words of Abraham, Pharaoh, “being a righteous man,” was ever “seeking earnestly to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign” (Abraham 1:26), for he “would fain claim [the priesthood]” (1:27). If the Egyptian endowment was but an imitation, it was still a good one, and we may be able to learn much from it, just as we may learn much about the early church from the vagaries of the Gnostics. But it is not for a moment to be equated with the true and celestial order of things.

The Church of Jesus Christ endowment, like the Egyptian, is frankly a model, a presentation in figurative terms. As such it is flexible and adjustable; for example, it may be presented in more languages than one and in more than one medium of communication. But since it does not attempt to be a picture of reality, but only a model or analog to show how things work, setting forth the pattern of man’s life on earth with its fundamental whys and wherefores, it does not need to be changed or adapted greatly through the years; it is a remarkably stable model, which makes its comparison with other forms and traditions, including the more ancient ones, quite valid and instructive.¹¹

The idea of “anointed ones” usually refers to those set apart for specific missions or callings by use of specially prepared consecrated olive oil.¹² When the article ה (*ha*) is prefixed to the Hebrew word it is more specific and would translate “the Anointed One” or the transliterated form of *haMeshiyakh* (המשיח), “the Messiah,” thus, designating a specific individual of this title. The Greek form of this

¹¹ Hugh Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1976), pp. xii-xiii.

¹² The washing with water was always followed by the anointing of oil. The water was to cleanse, purify, and sanctify the individual. S. Bjerke notes that while washing prepared one to receive an office, the authority of the same was bestowed by anointing: purifications “are only creating the capacity to hold office, the anointing, on the other hand, is part of the ritual which installs the object in his office.” [Svein Bjerke, “Remarks on the Egyptian Ritual of ‘Opening the Mouth’ and Its Interpretation,” *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* (Leiden, Belgium: Brill, 1965) 12: 211. (Accessed June 24, 2020).]

same word is Χριστός (*Christos*)¹³ which is the word used to designate Jesus as the Promised Messiah.

The post Babylonian-exiled Jewish remnants interpreted the Messianic tradition into varied functions and roles. Types and shadows of what the Messiah would accomplish were applied to prophets, priests, and kings, but the foundation of these interpretations were based on prophecy. These interpretations (pre-Christian era) assigned identities to the varied roles of the Messiah and the messianic type that would precede His advent. Among these are the prophetic traditions of:

1. The Messiah ben¹⁴ Judah or Son of David
2. The Messiah ben Joseph, descendant of the ancient Patriarch Joseph
3. The Messiah ben Levi, a son of Moses and Aaron and rightful heir of the Priesthood
4. Other Messianic types (i.e., Moses, David, Hezekiah, Melchizedek, Elijah, Jeremiah, etc.)
5. The Messiah, who comes down from Heaven and establishes a Millennial Kingdom.

¹³ From the Greek root verb χρίω (*chrio*) meaning “to anoint by way of instituting to a dignity, function or privilege.” *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised*, edited by Harold K. Moulton (Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 439. Professor Dana Pike also mentions the use of this term in the Book of Mormon: “Jacob was the first to use the title ‘Christ’ in the Book of Mormon (2 Nephi 10:3), indicating that an angel taught him this ‘name,’ presumably meaning the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew title Messiah by which Jesus would come to be commonly designated (cf. 2 Nephi 25:19). Subsequently, Nephi regularly used ‘Christ’ instead of ‘Messiah’ in his record, except in 2 Nephi 26:3 and 2 Nephi 25 (eight times), where he stated in his message to the Jews (2 Nephi 25:9-20) that Jesus Christ is the ‘name’ of the Messiah (2 Nephi 25:19). In 2 Nephi 25:16, Nephi used ‘Messiah’ and ‘Christ’ interchangeably. ‘Christ’ is regularly used in the translated text of the Book of Mormon from this point onwards (with the exception of Jarom 1:11; Mosiah 13:33; Helaman 8:13), apparently indicating the preference of the Nephite prophets for that revealed form over the Hebrew form ‘Messiah.’” See Dana M. Pike, “Messiah” in *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, ed. Dennis L. Largey (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 2003), 537.

¹⁴ “Ben” (Hebrew בן) is the word “son” and in this context means “son of –”.

A closer general study of each one of these traditions will help us better understand the anticipated tasks and commissions of the Promised Messiah.

The attributes of each of these messiahs also relate to the etymological meanings of their names¹⁵:

1. When Leah had her fourth born son she said, “Now will I *praise the Lord*: therefore, she called his name Judah.”¹⁶ The Semitic root word for “Judah” is *יָדָה* (*yadah*) which in its *Hophal*¹⁷ verbal form means “to be praised” and the same root is the foundation of the words meaning “thanksgiving” and “confess”, all associated generally with deity. In *The Soncino Chumash*, making a commentary on the name “Judah” as it appears in Hebrew for Genesis 29:35, the editor Dr. A. Cohen points out that the Hebrew letters in this name carry the same letters that form the words “praise” and “Lord”.¹⁸ Jacob or Israel in delivering his patriarchal blessing to Judah pronounces, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of

¹⁵ The scriptural use of names to indicate missions or attributes of individuals is extensive. In some instances, names were changed to symbolize covenants or promises. In ancient Egypt, the first given name of a Pharaoh was so significant that it was considered part of the living essence or soul of an individual. The Egyptian word for name was *Ren*. Egyptians believed that it would live for as long as that name was spoken, which explains why efforts were made to protect it and the practice of placing it in numerous writings. For example, part of the Book of Breathings, a derivative of the Book of the Dead (which reveals names, signs, and tokens that the deceased must remember and always keep sacred for passing beyond the guardians to enter the presence of the god of resurrection, Osiris), was a means to ensure the survival of the name.

¹⁶ Genesis 29:35. *Italics* mine.

¹⁷ The *Hophal* verb form is used to express the passive form of the active causative form (*Hiphal*) of the verb. In English, passive voice is expressed using the helping verb “to be.” In Biblical Hebrew, the passive nature of the verbal action is expressed by the *Hophal* form of the verb itself without any helping verbs.

¹⁸ Dr. A. Cohen (ed.), *Soncino Books of the Bible* (Brooklyn, New York: The Soncino Press, 1983), *The Soncino Chumash: The Five Books of Moses with Haphtaroth*, 173, note 35, “Judah”.

the people be.”¹⁹ This statement is the foundation of the future role of this Messiah ben Judah.

2. When Rachel gave birth to her firstborn son she proclaimed: “God hath *taken away* my reproach...The Lord shall *add to me* another²⁰ son.”²¹ The name “Joseph” combines one verbal Semitic root, אסף (*asaph* meaning “to collect; to gather; to take to one’s self; to receive, especially to one’s hospitality and protection; to take back or away, especially that which one has formerly given”)²², to form two thoughts: a) “the Lord taketh away”; and, b) by adding the י (*yod*) to the beginning changes

¹⁹ Genesis 49:10. The Masoretic text reads, לא יסור שבט מיהודה, ומחזקת מביין רגליו, עד, כִּי-יבא שִׁילֹה, וְלוֹ יָקֵהָ עֲמִים and is translated, “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, *as long as men come to Shiloh; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be.*” (*Italics mine.*) The Hebrew שִׁילֹה (*Shiloh*) has been variously translated to mean “he whose it is”, “that which belongs to him”, “his son”, “whose is the kingdom”, and “whose it is”. In Jewish texts it is assumed it refers to the Messiah which is verified by the Joseph Smith Translation, JST Genesis 50:24. For various translations see Francis Brown *et al*, *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 7886 “1010, שִׁילֹה. The following internet sites provide summations (all last viewed July 4, 2020): <http://kingjamesbibledictionary.com/Dictionary/Shiloh>; <https://ulpan.com/what-the-hebrew-name-shiloh-means/>; <https://biblehub.com/topical/s/shiloh.htm>; <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Shiloh.html#XwDZ6ihKiw4>

²⁰ Through the handmaid of Rachel, Bilhah, bore two sons (Dan and Naphtali) unto Rachel w/hich were symbolically passed between the legs of Rachel to show that, as she was barren to her husband, children could be born to her through her property – her handmaiden. To accomplish this she gave Bilhah to be Jacob’s third wife. After Leah had born four sons (Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah) to Jacob, she also gave her handmaid, Zilpah, to be Jacob’s fourth wife. Leah had Zilpah’s two sons (Gad and Asher) pass between her legs to show the sons’ rights to her inheritance. Leah would have two more sons (Zebulon and Isachaar) before Joseph is born to Rachel, and Rachel would have one last son, *Ben-oni* (meaning “son of my sorrow”). Because Rachel was dying as she gave birth to him, Jacob changed this son’s name to Benjamin (meaning “son of my right hand”). Each of the son’s names were defined by their birth and by prophecy. See Genesis 29, 30 and 35:16-20, for these births and names.

²¹ Genesis 30:23-24. *Italics mine.*

²² “Take,” *Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*, 434.

the word to a prayer, “God adds or gathers”.²³ Thus, the messianic mission was to gather and protect the House of Israel by the Messiah ben Joseph, who the Lord would take away from his brethren and show himself later for their salvation.

3. When Leah gave birth to her third born son she declared, “Now this time will my husband be *joined* unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.”²⁴ The Hebrew name “Levi” (לֵוִי) comes from the root לָוָה (*l-v-h*) meaning “to join or bind [or seal] together,” as a wreath is intertwined together. The implication is that Levi was to join or bind the bride to the groom so as not to be separated. The sons of Levi included Moses and Aaron, and they were granted the leadership of the Melchizedek and Aaronic/Levitical Priesthoods. One significant function of the Messiah ben Levi is to administer the ordinances of salvation and exaltation (including sealings) for all Adam’s progeny (living and dead).²⁵

Moses²⁶, descendent of Levi and who served as the similitude of “The Anointed One”, will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, however we will consider his name at this point. The old Egyptian *mes*, *mesu* means “child, son” and the Hebrew root מָשָׁה (*mosheh*) means “to draw (out of water)”. As Moses obtained his name from Pharaoh’s daughter, it is most likely an Egyptian name. One suggestion for the Egyptian naming of Moses was that “Moses” was only part of his fuller Egyptian name and as a prince in Egypt he would have been given five other names.²⁷ The same commentators, while recognizing that

²³ Dr. A. Cohen (ed.), *Soncino Books of the Bible* (Brooklyn, New York: The Soncino Press, 1983), *The Soncino Chumash: The Five Books of Moses with Haphtaroth*, 176, note 24, “Joseph”.

²⁴ Genesis 29:34. *Italics* mine.

²⁵ D& C 84.

²⁶ The final “s” in *Moses* was added by the Greek *Septuagint* (Greek lacks the “sh” sound, and male personal names generally end in “-s”).

²⁷ Marie Parsons states: “From around 2500 BCE, the King had up to five names. The five royal titles consist of four names, which the King assumed on the day of his accession, along with a fifth name, given to him at birth. Three of the names stress the king’s role as god, two emphasize the perceived division of Egypt into

the name “Moses” could stand alone, felt it was more likely that a god’s name was attached to it but this attachment was purposely left off. The reasoning behind this is that just as the pharaoh of the Exodus’s name is not given in order to prevent repetition of a name considered blasphemous, so the name of an Egyptian God would also not be repeated or recorded as it gave life and continuance to the named individual. This was a common Egyptian practice during the New Kingdom period of Egyptian history.²⁸

Another definition is given in *Jones’ Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names* which derives it from the Egyptian word for “water”, *mo*, and the verb “to save out of water”, *’uses*’.²⁹ The Hebrew root מֹשֶׁה (*mosheh*) has a Semitic etymology that suggests that it has to do with “water and cleansing” also.³⁰ However, the Semitic name etymology has some problems – the form of the name מֹשֶׁה (*mosheh*) would be an active participle “the one who draws,” and not the passive contemplated by the etymology, “the drawn one.” Additionally, a suggestion by some commentators is that the name Moses is a play on words related to a similarly pronounced word מוֹשִׁיעַ (*mosheey’a*), but having a different root יָשַׁע (*yasha*’).³¹ This word means “savior or liberator” with the root word meaning “to deliver or save”.

two lands, both under his control.” (“Egypt: Royal Titles for Kings of Egypt, A Feature Tour Egypt Story,” viewed June 18, 2013 at <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/titles.htm#ixzz2WXLagLuF>). The Appendices 3 section in this volume, “Naming in Ancient Egypt”, reviews the important process of “naming” that would have been understood by Moses in his day since he was raised in the royal courts of Pharaoh.

²⁸ Douglas Petrovich, “Amenhotep II and the Historicity of the Exodus-Pharaoh,” (June 18, 2013) www.tms.edu/tmsj/17f.pdf), pp.3-4.

²⁹ Alfred Jones, *Jones’ Dictionary of Old Testament Proper Names* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1990), 259.

³⁰ Francis Brown et al, *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB)*, 602a.

³¹ See number 5 in this listing for a greater definition of this Hebrew root. This word appears in the Hebrew verse Deuteronomy 22:27. Also see *BDB, op. cit.*, 446b.

Whatever the actual origin of the name, it suited this messianic type who recognized that he was “a son of God” after the “similitude of the Only Begotten;” the one who would draw water from the stones, part the waters of the seas, change water to blood and, in the eyes of the Egyptians, conquer all the Egyptian gods³² and be a liberator or savior to the House of Israel, freeing them from bondage.

4. As a result of individuals who performed significant activities in restoring or protecting Israel, lesser messianic types were identified (mainly by post Babylonian exiled Jews), i.e. Hezekiah, Cyrus of Persia, Zerubbabel, Judas Hasmon (Maccabee), and others.³³ Apparently, after the many miracles of Jesus were publicly known, much speculation was offered as to which Messiah Jesus of Nazareth might be. The responses included Elias, Elijah, Moses, Jeremiah, and one called “that Prophet”.³⁴ Some of these individuals figure prominently in the post-Biblical Jewish feasts and festivals (i.e., Elijah, Moses, Abraham, etc.) Each of these preparatory messiahs mentioned in the New Testament were individuals having already lived on the earth who were expected to have additional appearances before the Messiah, or a Messianic Age comes. Joseph Smith also pointed to preparatory Messianic appearances as he revealed the doctrines of Elias, Elijah, and Messiah:

³² See Dann W Hone, *Scriptural Reference and Exploration Serie, Biblical Feasts & Festivals: Signs & Seasons of Jesus Christ* Volume 2: *The Religious Year, Months 1-6*, “Appendicies 2, The Mosaic Plagues – Their Symbolic Offenses Against the Gods of Egypt.”

³³ It is not the purpose of this volume to cover all of the descriptions and Messianic hopes of the Jewish tradition, which date as early as the Babylonian captivity.

³⁴ Matthew 16:14; Mark 8: 28; Luke 9:19; John 1:21-28 (particularly Joseph Smith Translation). The one called “that Prophet” appears to be a reference to “the prophet like unto Moses” spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:15-22 and also referenced in John 7:40-41. Those who appeared at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-13) and also at the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110) fulfill the ancient prophecies of forerunners who restore “all things” before the coming of the Messiah. The JST is helpful in the account of the Transfiguration and suggests that another prophet of restoration will also come (JST Matthew 17:10-14).

There is a difference between the spirit and office of Elias and Elijah ...The spirit of Elias is to prepare the way for a greater revelation of God, which is the Priesthood of Elias, or the Priesthood that Aaron was ordained unto. And when God sends a man into the world to prepare for a greater work, holding the keys of the power of Elias, it was called the doctrine of Elias, even from the early ages of the world....We find the apostles endowed with greater power than John: their office was more under the spirit and power of Elijah than EliasThat person who holds the keys of Elias hath a preparatory work ...What you seal on earth, by the keys of Elijah, is sealed in heaven; and this is the power of Elijah, and this is the difference between the spirit and power of Elias and Elijah; for while the spirit of Elias is a forerunner, the power of Elijah is sufficient to make our calling and election sureThe spirit of Elias is first, Elijah second, and Messiah last. Elias is a forerunner to prepare the way, and the spirit and power of Elijah is to come after, holding the keys of power, building the Temple to the capstone, placing the seals of the Melchizedek Priesthood upon the house of Israel, and making all things ready; then Messiah comes to His Temple, which is last of all. Messiah is above the spirit and power of Elijah, for He made the world, and was that spiritual rock unto Moses in the wilderness. Elijah was to come and prepare the way and build up the kingdom before the coming of the great day of the Lord, although the spirit of Elias might begin it.³⁵

The institution of the “Dispensation of the Fulness of Times”³⁶ in which all knowledge, priesthood powers, and former

³⁵ Excerpt from Sabbath Address, Nauvoo, 10 March 1844; materials contained in Donald Cannon and Larry Dahl (editors), *The Teachings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1997) 208-209. Also, see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, selected and arranged by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976], 341.

³⁶ Ephesians 1:10; D&C 27:13. After speaking of Malachi 4:5-6, predicting the latter-day revelation of Elijah who held the keys of the priesthood sealing power, Joseph Smith writes of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times: “for it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories

dispensations are to be gathered to this final dispensation before the coming of Jesus Christ included, as prophesied by numerous other ancient prophets, the return of heavenly messengers who would dispense or deliver their priesthood keys and powers to the rightful earthly heirs of the Kingdom of God in preparation for the Promised Messiah's Millennial rule.³⁷ The latter-day appearance of the Father and Son, Moroni, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Elias, Elijah, Moses and others of the prophets are a partial fulfillment of this covenant.³⁸ The mission

should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time. And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times." (D&C 128:18). See also a description of the dispensation by Joseph Smith in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 231-232; *Documentary History of the Church* 4:608-610.

³⁷ For prophetic utterances concerning the Restoration, see the following topics in the *LDS Edition of the Scriptures Topical Guide*: "Dispensations"; "Restoration of the Gospel"; "Millennium, Preparing a People for."

³⁸ D&C 128: 20-21, "And again, what do we hear? Glad tidings from Cumorah! Moroni, an angel from heaven, declaring the fulfilment of the prophets—the book to be revealed. A voice of the Lord in the wilderness of Fayette, Seneca County, declaring the three witnesses to bear record of the book! The voice of Michael on the banks of the Susquehanna, detecting the devil when he appeared as an angel of light! The voice of Peter, James, and John in the wilderness between Harmony, Susquehanna County, and Colesville, Broome County, on the Susquehanna River, declaring themselves as possessing the keys of the kingdom, and of the dispensation of the fulness of times! And again, the voice of God in the chamber of old Father Whitmer, in Fayette, Seneca County, and at sundry times, and in divers places through all the travels and tribulations of this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints! And the voice of Michael, the archangel; the voice of Gabriel, and of Raphael, and of divers angels, from Michael or Adam down to the present time, all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little; giving us consolation by holding forth that which is to come, confirming our hope!"

and life of Joseph Smith are among those who fulfilled this preparatory phase of the coming of the Promised Messiah.³⁹

5. The last to be considered is the Promised Messiah himself – Jesus the immortal son of Elohim and the mortal son of Mary of the prophetic lines of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In him would all the prophecies pertaining to the covenants and promises of the Godhead be fulfilled. His name was chosen before the foundations of the earth to be “Jesus” with each attached appellation pronouncing prophetic fulfillment of His promised mission.⁴⁰ The etymology of His name, Jesus, derives from the Semitic verb **יָשַׁע** (*Yasha'*) meaning “to deliver, save or liberate (giving freedom of breadth and depth to).” The Hebrew has an expanded meaning, as expressed in *Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*:

...to save, implying in the largest sense, deliverance, help, and victory; it comprehends either the removal of evil and misery, or the restoration of good and former happiness. It is most commonly used of God, sometimes of men, and also of the Messiah; hence it has reference to that deliverance, spiritually, which he was to effect, having paid the price of our redemption...⁴¹

Names and words from the scriptures that have the same Hebrew root include: Joshua (“Jehovah Saves”; the same equivalent name in Aramaic is “Jesus”, and the Greek equivalent is “Jason”), Isaiah (“Salvation of Jehovah”), Hosea (Salvation), and Hosanna! (“Bring salvation!”). The word for “savior” is **מוֹשִׁיעַ** (*mosheey’a*), the pronunciation being very similar to that of the words *messiah* and *moshe* (Moses) which have different Semitic roots. Symbolically, His name, Jesus Christ, means “The Anointed Savior, Deliverer”, and those who

³⁹ D&C 135:3, “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it...”

⁴⁰ One of these prophetic appellations “Jesus of Nazareth”. This appellation has significance in several ways. See Chart included in this chapter titled “Jesus, the Root and Branch of Jesse.”

⁴¹ “Save,” *Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*, 367.

follow as His disciples are called “Christians” or “individuals anointed/ consecrated for holy purposes,” or simply the word “Saints.”⁴²

Attached on the next pages are inserts titled “Jesus, the Root and Branch of Jesse” and “Jesus, The Messianic Son of David”. These are examples of the prophetic nature of the names attached to Jesus which indicated that many of the contemporary Jews looked to Him as the expected Messiah ben David, who would be the civil or political savior to liberate them from their enemies.⁴³

Jesus, the Root and Branch of Jesse

And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene. (Matthew 2:23)

Father Bargil Pixner, a Catholic Priest and well-known Biblical archaeologist, has found the following⁴⁴:

⁴² “The usage of the term follows biblical precedents in which ‘saints’ refers to Israelites as the chosen people of God—that is, as a community of believers set apart from nonbelievers (cf., ‘the congregation of the saints,’ Psalms 89:5). The Hebrew and Aramaic usage of the term in the Old Testament and in the writings of the Essene community is *qudosh* (קדוש) and *qaddish* (קדיש), respectively, meaning ‘separate, set apart, holy.’ Paul used the term ‘saints’ (Greek [ἅγιος] *hagios* also denotes ‘set apart, separate, holy’) in referring to baptized members of the Church of his day (e.g. in Philippians 1:1). The Book of Mormon also designates ‘saints of God’ as all those who belong to the ‘church of the Lamb’ (1 Nephi 14:12). Used this way, the term today denotes all members of Christ’s Church, who, through baptism, have expressed a desire to follow the Savior’s counsel to become more Godlike, toward the ideal to be ‘even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect’ (Matthew 5:48), and who, though imperfect, strive in a manner that will lead them to that goal.” James K. Lyon, “Saints” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, Daniel H. Ludlow (ed.) (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1992), pp.1249-1250. Internet site (viewed June 24, 2013) <http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Saints>

⁴³ For more information on the Messiah ben David see the section in this chapter on “The Mission of the Messiah ben Judah or the Son of David”.

⁴⁴ Bargil Pixner, *With Jesus in Galilee, According to the Fifth Gospel*, (Rosh Pina, Israel: Corazin Publishing, 1992), pp. 14-16.

- Luke 24:6; John 20:20; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Corinthians 15:4; D&C 20:23)
- d. Messiah redeems all from temporal death (*Prophecy*: Deuteronomy 32:39; Job 14:14; 19:25-26; Isaiah 25:8; 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14; 2 Nephi 9:4-22; Alma 11:42; *Fulfilled*: Luke 24:39; John 21:1; Acts 2:24; Mormon 7:5)
 - e. After resurrection Messiah ascend to heaven (*Prophecy*: 3 Nephi 11:12; *Fulfilled*: Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; 3 Nephi 18:39.)

The foregoing, although not a complete listing, is sufficient to bear witness of the reality of the coming of Jesus Christ as the true Messiah in His first advent to the earth.²⁵⁷

Chapter 3 Summary

This chapter presented the LDS, traditional Christian, Jewish and Moslem expectations of the Promised Messiah. The cataloguing of those commonalities between the lives and works of Moses and Jesus Christ is by no means a complete list, nor is the listing of those fulfilled prophecies of Jesus' first coming comprehensive. As one develops an understanding of the expectations of the Promised Messiah, then the Law of Moses and the institution of the feasts and festivals, their symbolic nature, and the meaning of their signs and tokens become predictive and faith-building. These festive performances were intended to foreshadow the Messianic prophecies so that Israel might know the true Messiah, his mission and role. Moses, under the direction of Jehovah, instituted

²⁵⁷ Following the days of the early apostles, referred to as the Meridian of Time, numerous other fulfilled prophecies pertaining to the persecution and death of the apostles, the great apostasy, the discovery of the New World, and the rise of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times are additional testimonies that will be discussed in another volume of this series. For further explanation of the phrase "Meridian of Time" please refer to Volume 2, Chapter 5, "Pesach (Passover)...", under the subtopic "Symbolism in the Seder Account of the Exodus" in this *Scriptural Reference and Exploration Series*.

the feasts and festivals to guide Israel to the fullness of the doctrines of the true Messiah and prepare them to recognize the times and seasons of His appearance. The next chapter will discuss the Mosaic Law's relationship to the Law of Christ, and why the feasts and festivals of the Lord were instituted. Included will be those laws that are fulfilled in the coming of the true Messiah, as well as those that may be restored or renewed in the latter-days with His Second Coming.



The Lord Reveals the Mosaic Law

“Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ; for, for this end hath the Law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him.” 2 Nephi 11:14

The biblical holy days were instituted “for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.”¹ The ordinances and performances were “a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father,”² “a shadow of things to come,”³ and “the law [of Moses] was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.”⁴ The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi wrote, “Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ; for, for this end hath the Law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him.”⁵ The LORD [Jehovah or the pre-mortal Jesus Christ⁶] has also testified, as recorded by Moses, “And behold, all things have their likeness, and all things are created and made to bear record of me, both things which are 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.”⁷ These statements taken literally indicate that the holy days, as part of the Mosaic Law, should typify the coming of Christ in all of their performances and ordinances.

¹ Genesis 1:14.

² Moses 5:7.

³ Mosiah 16:14. Refer also to Alma 25:15: “...they did look forward to the coming of Christ, considering that the Law of Moses was a type of his coming, and believing that they must keep those outward performances until the time that he should be revealed unto them.”

⁴ Galatians 3:24.

⁵ 2 Nephi 11:14.

⁶ From Chapter 2, “In the Beginning—Biblical Man’s Perceptions of the Cosmos,” see footnote 5 and the associated body of text which references it.

⁷ Moses 6:63.

Chapter Four Summary

The feasts and festivals, and other performances of the Mosaic Law went through adaptations, augmentations, and changes as did the scriptures and the foundation ordinances of the gospel. As has been counselled by the Lord concerning study of the *Apocrypha*⁹⁹, Latter-day Saints need to be cautious about symbolic applications to the present Jewish practices. The Lord has instructed:

There are many things contained therein that are true, and it is mostly translated correctly; There are many things contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men.... Therefore, whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth; And whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom; And whoso receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefited...¹⁰⁰

When the Law of Moses was revealed, Israel had left pagan Egypt but the lust for the practices of Egypt had not been removed from their hearts. They were slow to remember all the miracles the Lord had provided in their freedom from bondage; and, when the Lord offered to bring them into His presence, they feared that they could not endure His glory. The Children of Israel asked to have Moses be their mediator of the new and everlasting covenant which the Lord had promised to establish with them. Even as Moses received the celestial law upon the mount, the children of Israel lost faith and fell into worship of the false gods of Egypt. Upon Moses' return from the mount, Israel was found breaking the commandments of God. Moses in his anger cast the tablets of the celestial law, written by the finger of the Lord, to the ground, shattering them – symbolic of Israel's covenant breaking.

⁹⁹ *Apocrypha* literally means “hidden or secret” in the Greek from which it comes. *The LDS Bible Dictionary* explains, “By this word is generally meant those sacred books of the Jewish people that were not included in the Hebrew Bible. They are valuable as forming a link connecting the Old and New Testaments and are regarded in the Church as useful reading, although not all the books are of equal value. They are the subject of a revelation recorded in D&C 91, in which it is stated that the contents are mostly correct but with many interpolations by man.” (p. 610).

¹⁰⁰ D&C 91.

After Israel's repentance, Moses returned to the mount and the Lord revealed anew the Law of the Lord. However, it was patterned after a carnal commandment that would serve as a daily reminder and pedagogue to lead them back to the presence of the Lord, and to the fulness of the original celestial law. Based upon past patriarchal covenants and ordinances which pointed the way to their redemption through the true Messiah, these judgments, statutes, ordinances, and performances, including feasts and festivals of this Mosaic Code, served as memorials and predictive foreshadows of the promised redemptive blessings through the Atonement. The Congregation of Israel would be cursed with this Mosaic schoolmaster until Jehovah himself, the pre-mortal Christ, would teach them a new Torah when He came upon the earth as a mortal Messiah. As foreshadowed in the feasts, festivals and ordinances of the Mosaic Law, Jesus Christ did come in the dispensation of the Meridian of Time. John, called the Baptist, served as the last prophet and holder of the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood of the Mosaic Dispensation. Through the direction of the Lord, he served as the predicted "forerunner" of the Promised Messiah.¹⁰¹

Jesus Christ taught that his mission included fulfilling the Law of Moses and restoring the promised higher law to Israel. For Israel to continue practice of the Law of Moses after the completion of the atoning sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ would repudiate the very intention of their prophetic and symbolic purpose. New ordinances in this new gospel dispensation were instituted by God himself who had given the Law of Moses in the former dispensation to prepare Israel for the coming of the true Messiah. This subsequent higher law was provided to prepare Israel for the final accomplishment of all the divine promises, serve as a memorial of the covenants the Lord fulfilled through the Atonement, and enable the new Israel to eventually enter into God's presence.

As was predicted by the Savior and His apostles, shortly after the Meridian of Time the apostolic priesthood with its authoritative keys

¹⁰¹ JST Matthew 11:13–15, JST Matthew 17:10–14, and JST John 1:20–28. He was a child of promise, with prophecies of his mission having been given by Isaiah (Isa. 40:3) and Malachi (Malachi 3:1; see also 1 Nephi 10:7–10; 2 Nephi 31:4–8). See also D&C 84:27–28.

and divine revelations was driven from the earth. The interpolations and philosophies of men replaced divine authoritative guidance both publicly and in the written scriptures for nearly two millennia. Then, also as promised, the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times burst upon the world bringing with it the clarity and witness of the fulness of the gospel through restored ancient scripture; latter-day prophets and apostles were given priesthood keys to institute the new and everlasting covenant with its authoritative ordinances. This restoration of all former dispensations was instituted to complete the covenants promised from before the foundation of the earth and prepare for: “the literal gathering of Israel”, “the restoration of the Ten Tribes”, “Zion (the New Jerusalem) [to] be built upon the American continent”, “Christ [to] reign personally upon the earth”, and “the earth to be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.”¹⁰²

The study of the Law of Moses enables one to understand the importance of the institution of the biblical feasts and festivals, and the associated ordinances, statutes, and performances in the pronouncements of the Lord. These Mosaic functions serve as an additional witness showing “what great things the Lord hath done... and that...the covenants of the Lord...” are fulfilled; and also “...that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God...”¹⁰³ To further understand the symbolic nature of the Mosaic Code, one must first understand the ancient Israelite calendars which served to predict the times and seasons of the prophetic feasts, as the Lord has affirmed, “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 years...”¹⁰⁴ This examination will be the purpose of Volume 2, Chapter 1, “Israel’s Calendar: Years, Months, Weeks, and Days”.

¹⁰² Article of Faith 1:10, *The Pearl of Great Price*.

¹⁰³ Title Page to the *Book of Mormon – Another Testament of Jesus Christ*.

¹⁰⁴ Genesis 1:14.