

## Sacred Ordinances Revealed in Ancient Documents

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Last Updated  
Sept - 2006

(Much of this information was gleaned from the writings of Dr. Hugh Nibley)

### **Clement A First Century Bishop of Rome Tells of Most Sacred Things Taught by Peter**

Peter Said to me, "Let us remember that the Lord commanded us saying : 'Guard those secret things which belong to me and the sons of my house. Keep my secret ye who are kept by it. ' I rebuke you for thinking we can know everything before the proper time. Now Clement you are forcing me with your questions to discuss things that are not allowed to talk about. But I will explain things so far as it is allowed. With the passing of time the more secret things will be disclosed to you. You seem to me not to know what a father and a God is: but I could tell you both whence souls are, and when and how they were made only it is not permitted to me now to disclose these things to you. God has concealed his mind from men and we are under obligation to honor with silence the very highest teachings. Nothing is harder than to reason about the truth in the presence of mixed multitudes of people. I try for the most part by using a certain circumlocution to avoid publishing the chief knowledge concerning the Supreme Divinity to unworthy ears. The teachings of all doctrine has a certain order. There are certain things that must be delivered first, others in second place and others in third place and so on. If they be delivered in their order they become plain, but if they be brought forward out of order they will seem to be spoken against reason. The Lord has commanded us to go forth to preach and to invite you to the supper of the heavenly king and to give you your wedding garments. We shall explain it to you more fully at another time. God has always concealed the kingdom like a rich treasure, yet he has caused the report of it under various names and opinions to be spread abroad through successive generations to the hearing of all. Christ who was from the beginning has visited the righteous of every generation and especially those who have looked forward to his coming to whom he often appeared. ...

Now as Abraham was desiring to know the cause of things and was pondering upon them in his mind, Christ appeared to him as the true prophet even He who knows the hearts of all men and their minds. He taught him the knowledge of the Godhead and he showed him the Origin and the end of the world, the immortality of the spirit and the sacred ordinances that he must live up to please God. He showed him of the resurrection of the dead which is to come and the judgment of all mankind. He then returned to his invisible dwelling place.... The world has existed through the ages so that the spirits destined to come here might fulfill their number and destiny and here make their choice between the upper and lower worlds, both of which are represented here, so that when the bodies of the righteous are resurrected they might go to eternal light."

Clementine Recognitions III (Nibley: The World and the

Prophets p. 32)

Lactantius wrote "We do not make a practice of defending and discussing this thing publicly, because, with the help of God, we quietly keep his secret to ourselves in silence . . . for it is proper to withhold and conceal the mystery with all possible care—especially so for us who bear the name of believers."

Lactantius, Divine Institutes VIII. 26

(Nibley: Since Cumorah p. 111)

says **Clement of Alexandria**

"The Mysteries of the Faith, are not to be disclosed indiscriminately to everyone, since not all are ready to receive the truth."

Clement of Alexandria, Patrologia Graeca VIII, 7 53

(Nibley: Since Cumorah p. 111)



From a third-century papyrus, we see a man, with upturned arms, an image so common in early Christian art that historians have given them the name "praying man," and speculate that they stood in this position in imitation of their crucified Lord.

TEMPLE AND COSMOS



This ancient Christian diptych combines Resurrection and Ascension.

Early Christian Picture of Hand Grip and Robe

The very early Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ opens with the admonition that the document is to come into the hands "only of proven saints who dwell in the third order (or level) next to the mansion of my Father who sent me."

Test. Dom. n. J. Christi, Rahmani, ed. I, xviii (pp.22f.)

(Nibley: Since Cumorah p. 111 )

### **The Secret Gospel of Mark**

As for Mark, then, during Peter's stay in Rome he wrote an account of the lord's doings., not, however, declaring all of them, nor yet hinting at the secret ones, but selecting what he thought most useful for increasing the faith of those Who were being instructed.

Thus he composed a more spiritual Gospel for the use of those who were being instructed. Nevertheless, he yet did not divulge the things not to be uttered, nor did he write down the hierophantic teaching of the Lord, but to the stories already written he added yet others and, moreover, brought in certain sayings of which he knew the interpretation would, as a mystagogue, lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary of that truth hidden by 'even veils.'...being read only to those who are being initiated into the great mysteries.

...For not all truth things are to be said to all men

Again it says, 'from him who has not shall be taken away,' and, "Let the fool walk in darkness." But we are "children of light," having been illuminated by "the dayspring" of the spirit of the Lord from on High.

The Lord spake in parables to his hearers in general; but to his disciples he explained in private the parables and allegories which he spoke in public. The splendor of glory is for those who are early enlightened: obscurity and darkness are the portion of the unbelievers and ignorant. Just so the church discovers its Mysteries to those who have advanced beyond the class of Catechumens: we employ obscure terms with others.

Ignatius wrote to the Saints at Tralles who had asked him for a letter about the mysteries:

"I would like to write to you of heavenly things (or of things more full of mystery), but I fear to do so, lest I should inflict injury on you who are but babes . . . you would be strangled by such things."

Ignatius, Epist. ad Tralles, c. 5.

(Nibley: Since Cumorah p. 111 )

Typical is the newly found Apocryphon of James, which begins: "Since you have asked me to send you a secret book of revelation, which was given to me and to Peter by the Lord, I cannot refuse or be silent.... But I ... send it to you and to you alone.... Take care not to let this book of the Lord be communicated to many. The Savior did not want it transmitted to all the Twelve."

Apocryphon of James, 1:8-25

(Nibley: Since Cumorah p. 112 )

In his book De Mysteriis St. Ambrose wrote:

"All the Mystery should be kept concealed, guarded by faithful silence, lest it should be inconsiderately divulged to the ears of the Profane.... It is not given to all to contemplate the depths of our Mysteries...that they may not be seen by those who ought not to behold them; nor received by those who cannot preserve them.

.. Beware of casting pearls before swine!.... Every Mystery ought to be kept secret; and, as it were, to be covered over by silence, lest it should rashly be divulged to the ears of the Profane. Take heed that you do not incautiously reveal the Mysteries! "

St. Cyril of Alexandria (made bishop in 412 and died in 444) wrote in his seventh book against Julian:

"These Mysteries are so profound and so exalted, that they can be comprehended by those only who are enlightened. I should say much more, if I were not afraid of being heard by those who are uninitiated: because men are apt to deride what they do not understand. The ignorant, still today, not being aware of the weakness of their minds condemn what they ought most to venerate."

Clement of Alexandria wrote:

"The Egyptians neither entrusted their mysteries to everyone nor degraded their secrets of divine matters by disclosing them to the profane; reserving them for the heir apparent to the throne, and to such of the priest who excelled in virtue".

In A.D. 212, Minacius Felix, a Roman lawyer, wrote a defense of Christians and Christianity in which he said:

"Many of them know each other by tokens and signs , and they form a friendship for each other, almost before they become acquainted."

Archelaus, Bishop of Cascara in Mesopotamia, when questioned about the secret mysteries of the early Christian Church, replied:

"These Mysteries the church now communicates to him who has passed through the introductory degree (auditors). They are not explained to the Gentiles at all; nor are they taught openly in the hearing of catechumens; but much that is spoken is in disguised terms, that the faithful, who

possess the knowledge, may be still more informed and those who are not acquainted with it, may suffer no disadvantage."

St. Gregory Nazianzen, Bishop of Constantinople, wrote in A.D. 379:

"You have heard as much of the Mystery as we are allowed to speak openly in the ears of all; the rest will be communicated to you in private; and that you must retain within yourself... Our Mysteries are not to be known to strangers."

About the Oracles of God. The words of Philo, out of the second book of his Questions arising in Genesis.

Page 782. "It is not lawful to divulge the sacred mysteries to the uninitiated until they are purified by a perfect purification or the man who is not initiated, or who is of moderate capacity, being unable either to hear or to see that nature which is incorporeal and appreciable only by the intellect, being deceived by the visible sight, will blame what ought not to be blamed. Now, to divulge sacred mysteries to uninitiated people, is the act of a person who violates the laws of the privileges belonging to the priesthood."

BHM 5:174." [Enoch] said: . . . God made for me a throne modeled after the Throne of Glory, I being clothed upon with glory and Light . . . and beauty and mercy like that of the throne of thy glory.... And he caused me to sit upon it, and a herald proclaimed in all the firmament of firmaments, saying, Enoch is proclaimed as a divine King. I entered into the six temples, room by room. Arriving at the entrance to the seventh, I stood to pray before God; and I lifted up my eyes and said: Lord of Eternity, . grant me in this hour the crown of the priesthood.... and deliver me from Satan."

#### Book of Adam

"The Great Light planted us here and taught us about the prayers which Adam prayed in this world. He said, "Teach the saints these things, give them the grips of the right hand; lead them to the Light. Teach the prayers, the hymns, the order of prayer so that they can behold the Father hereafter."... "when Adam called upon Him for help in his distress, I approached him in Glory, I took him by the palm of the right hand, I calmed him and instructed him. In this manner I visited all his sons. Abel rejoiced in my glory, and Seth called aloud upon the name of his helper, just as Adam had, and after I visited Adam, he comforted Eve... Adam is endowed with the image and likeness of the Lords (above), while Eve is the Queen of this world.... I (God) provided [sent] the three visitors (genies) for their protection, and taught them the holy mysteries ... and the prayers which they must recite . . . and I told them further, "I have provided for you this earth, in a dwelling-place fit for eternity. And then sitting near them I taught them the manner of calling upon the Lords to bless them."

Book of Adam, in Migne, Dictionnaire Apocryphes 1:87-88.

(Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335, 177-205, 91-138  
Mormonism and Early Christianity p.69)

#### Sybilline Oracles

"But the saints will come with the Lord with their garments, who are stored up on high in the seventh heaven, with the Lord they will come, whose spirits are clothed. They will descend and be present in the world, and He will endow those, who have been found in the body, together with the saints, in the garments of the saints, and the Lord will minister to those who have kept watch in this world. And afterwards they will be transformed, in their garments in their body of this world, from above. . and there will be a resurrection and a judgment in their midst in those, days, and the Beloved will cause fire to go forth from Him, and it will consume all the godless, and they will be as though they had not been created."

. Apocalypse of Abraham "Abraham, on Mt. Horab, had his people stand around in a ring to learn the ordinances and to sacrifice unto the Lord. They were taught to stand in a ring and were instructed in the proper manner of sacrifice." Charlesworth: Old Testament Apocryphal Writings

#### Apocryphon of John

"The first man was the third of the Sent Ones -- the Father, the Son, and Adam. As he left Heaven to come down and undergo his earthly trials, Adam received affectionate farewell embraces from all his faithful children. He put on his physical body and went forth to oppose the primal enemy. Before the creation of this world, the third Sent One came into the free space and began to organize this world. This third Sent One was Christ's great co-worker in the Plan of Salvation, but in all things he has precedence. At their new birth Adam and Eve received the seals and the tokens. As Adam stood praying and supplicating, God sent someone who came and gave him a greeting of peace, embraced him, and preached the Gospel to him... After the physical Adam was created, a messenger was sent to the head of all creations, Adam, and at his call Adam awoke and said, 'How the precious, beautiful life has been planted in this place. But it is hard on me down here.' Then the Sent One reminded Adam and said, 'But your beautiful throne awaits you, Adam. Why then do you, the image of God, sit here complaining? All this is being done for your good. I have been sent to teach you, Adam, and to free you from this world. Listen and return to the light.' Hither a messenger from the house of light was sent to fetch Adam farther when he was ready." (Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335)

#### Kephalaia

"These five things you have asked me about appear very small and unimportant to the world, but they are really a very great and holy thing. I will teach you the mysteries now. These tokens, go back to the ordinances of the first man, Adam himself. He brought them with him when he came out of the garden of Eden, and having completed his struggle upon the earth, he mounted up by these very same signs, and was received again into the Aeons of Light. "The person who receives these becomes a Son. He both gives and receives the signs and the tokens of the God of truth, while demonstrating the same to the Church all in hopes that some day these things may become a reality. For us they may only be symbols, but they must be done here. They may be but symbols here, but they are indispensable steps to the attainment of real power. By means of these good signs and tokens, such shall enter into the light and shall become perfect men, and give honor and praise to the God of truth."

(Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 306)

The Askew Manuscript says,

"There are many mansions, many regions, degrees, worlds, spaces, and heavens, but all have but one law. If you keep that law, you, too, can become creators of worlds." (Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335)

#### Mandaean Writings of Southern Mesopotamia

"Before this world, there had already been a thousand thousand mysteries and a myriad myriad of planets each with their own mysteries or ordinances. He who has fulfilled all the ordinances and has done good work cannot be held back. We are taught the principles of salvation, so that we cannot be held back in this world...'Go down into the world, Adam, and grow up in the body, in that garment which has been assigned to you. Go down and grow up in the ordinances, that the ordinances may be magnified by you, that your progeny may thereby be firmly established. The Man that taught the elect righteous and the Nazoreans, who were to exist upon the earth in the preexistence, said, 'When you beget generations, and when you teach them their knowledge,

explain to them, show them, and tell them about the rites which you have performed.' The wholesome things were transplanted from the world above'

When Adam stood praying for light and knowledge, a helper came to him and gave to him a garment and told him 'Those men who gave you the garment will assist you throughout your life until you are ready to leave earth'...When Adam was created, he was found in a deep sleep, from which he was awakened by the helper who forthwith began to instruct him. And at his death also, the Sent Ones came to take Adam back to the great first Paternal House and to the place in which he formerly dwelt..

Second when Adam awoke, he faced the light and called for help. The Lord Himself approached him, in glory, and took him by the palm of the right hand instructed him and calmed him and Then he comforted Eve.' In this way, I have brought joy and aid to his descendants.

When Adam called upon God, the Great Spirit sent them from the land brightness, those who would belong to the twelve... The Lord and two companions taught Adam and Eve all the ordinances and blessed them. 'The Great Light planted us here and gave us helpers who taught us the prayer of Adam in the world.' Three angels were sent to teach Adam and Eve the law of chastity, and to instruct them to be true and faithful when misfortune came upon them, and to dedicate all of their property to the needy and the poor -- the rule which is binding upon all the elect. They were to call upon God without ceasing, In the name of the Son, and not to trust In the things of this world. "

(Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335, 491-528)

Old Testament and Related Studies- (Unrolling the Scrolls pp. 115-170 )

Prayerbook of the Mandaeans

"When Adam was placed on earth, three messengers were sent to oversee him with myself at their head I taught Adam and Eve the hymns, and the order of prayer, and the ordinances by which would now help one to return to the presence of the Father. In sending three, God says to them, giving them instructions. He said to the pure sent one, His Son, 'Go call Adam and Eve and all their posterity and teach them concerning everything about the Kingdom of Light and the Worlds of Light. Be friendly with Adam and keep him company, you and the two angels which will be with. you. Warn them against Satan; and, teach them chastity'.

The helper came and awakened the Lord of Mysteries, who is Adam. For Adam went through all the ordinances including baptism, washings, and anointings."

(Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335)

### Books of Jeu

"I will teach you all of the ordinances necessary, that you might be purged by degrees and progress in the next life. These things make it possible for you to achieve other places , but they must be performed in this life. Unless one performs them here, he cannot become a 'Son of Light' By very definition, the "Sons of Light" are those that are perfect in the ordinances...these ordinances are very secret" . "Sons of Light" in whatever age they lived, and they receive whatever they desire. They are those upon the right hand of the Father, for it is by their faithfulness in these things that they show they are worthy to return and inherit the kingdom. Without the ordinances, therefore, there is no foothold or foundation to anything in this life. If you want to go to the Father you must pass through the veil....

Before forming the circle, the Lord has them sing a hymn, and, when It was finished, the apostles and their wives all form the circle standing around the Lord, who tells them that He will lead them through the ordinances of eternal progression. Clothed in their holy garments, they form a circle, foot to foot, arm resting upon arm and Jesus said that he would take the part of Adam and lead them all. They were to say 'Amen' to each of the phrases of the prayer, then he gave the Prayer.... (At every station, inspectors) prove the soul and find together their signs in it, and their seals and their baptisms, and their anointing, (whereupon they put their seal on the soul and send it forward to the next inspection point. This goes on to the highest levels). The Assistants of the Light hand over the soul to the Great Sabaoth the Good, who is at the Gate of Life, . . who is called Fathcr, who gives the soul his seals . . . and Melchizedek seals that soul and all the

Assistants of Melchizedek seal that soul and lead it into the Treasury of Light (where it is again sealed, and so) goes over into the realm of its Inheritance.

They who are still in this place of testing, in the condition of "in between" should perform the ordinances for those dead who did not have the opportunity in life, baptizing them and) giving them the spiritual anointing, and sealing them with the seals of their mysteries, so that they can pass through every level , passing by the nine guards (watchmen), each of whom gives them his .seal so that they can pass on to the next. (Workers for the dead must labor to see to it that they are passed on from order to order with the slightest possible delay) so that . . . they can go on higher and higher in the inheritance of the Light-Kingdom."

(Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335)

(Mormonism and Early Christianity p. 51)

From The Pistis Sophia (The Pistis Sophia is a third-century Christian work from Egypt, written in the Coptic dialect of Thebes)

“Until Christ came, no soul had gone through the ordinances in their completeness. It was He who opened the gates and the way of life ... In fact without the mysteries one loses one's power. Without the ordinances, one has no way of controlling matter, for such control begins with the control of one's self. The ordinances provide the very means and the discipline by which light operates on material things. You don't understand this now, but your level, or taxis, in the next world will depend on the ordinances you receive in this world. Whoever receives the highest here will understand the whys and the wherefores of the great plan. You can't understand it now, but you will. Your faith is being tested here. You cannot hope to understand it here, but it is through the ordinances that one makes this progress in knowledge, so that those who receive all available ordinances and teachings here shall pass by all the intermediate topol and shall not have to give the answers and signs, nor stand certain tests hereafter.... John the Baptist, who performed the ordinances with which he was entrusted, foretold in a special language that Christ would bring the ordinances of the higher priesthood after him, because John the Baptist had only the ordinances of the Aaronic, or lesser priesthood....The disciples and their wives, stood around behind Jesus, who himself stood at the altar, thus facing, as it were, the four corners of the world, with his disciples who were all clothed in garments of linen. ... 'I found an ordinance inscribed upon my garment, written in five words. It is the garment which belonged to you in the preexistence, from the beginning, and when your time is come on the earth, you will remove it and return home to us...In this garment, it had the five marks, which he calls xeragme, meaning 'cuts' or 'marks'... For this purpose I (Jesus) have brought the key of the mysteries of the heavens, without which no flesh on earth could be saved, since without an ordinance no one, whether righteous or unrighteous, shall enter into the kingdom of the Light. Wherefore I have in this wise brought the keys of the mysteries to earth that I might deliver those sinners who shall believe on me and obey me; that I might deliver them from the bonds and seals of the Rulers (of this world) and bind them in the sealings and garments and degrees of Light. . . All who receive the Mystery of the Kingdom of Light shall go individually to receive that inheritance which corresponds to the degree to which one has attained (received) in the world. He who accepts less will inherit the lesser mystery and he who receives the higher mystery will inherit a higher place (topos). And everyone will remain in his place . . . and have authority over those orders (taxis) that are below him, but not over the degrees which are above him.. . . before I (Jesus) came into the world, no soul entered into the Light.... I have opened the gates ... and the ways that lead to the Light. Now, therefore, whoever is worthy . . . let him receive the mysteries and enter into the Light.... (Mary asks):' My Lord, if a good man who has carried out all the ordinances has an unrighteous (male) relative ... who has died ... what can we do to deliver him from the punishment of the dragon of outer darkness . . . so that ,he can find the mysteries of the Kingdom of Light? The Saviour answered Mary, saying, '. . Perform these same ordinances of the Unutterable One for him,...Every man who comes to you (the

Apostles) believing and . . . worthy, give them the mysteries of the light and conceal them not. And give the higher mysteries to whoever is worthy of them and the lower mysteries to whomever is worthy of them."

( Nibley: Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335, p.87)

(The Message of The Joseph Smith Papyri p. 273-298)

Old Testament and Related Studies 115-214

### From the Gospel of Philip

The Gospel of Philip is one of the Coptic Christian documents discovered at Nag Hamadi in Upper Egypt in 1945. Its date is uncertain (the original usually assigned to the early 2nd century A.D.).

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"Until Christ opened the way, it was impossible to go from one level to another [death and resurrection]. He is the great opener of the way because He gave us the plan by which we can progress. He is the way. That's why we call Him 'the way, the road, or the gate

It was by establishing ordinances that Christ completed what Adam began. Adam and others prayed to God and asked him to give them the rules to attain the promises

So He gave them ordinances, decrees, commandments, instructions, establishing places of preparation and transition...The ordinances are indeed but types and images but if you do not receive them here you will lose them. They are the steps of salvation. The Lord required each of the apostles to go through them all....Above all, if you do not receive them in this life, you will never receive them at all. Here is where all of the work must be done. In short, you must be perfect in this life, for if you have not mastered the places in this world, you will not be able to master them in the next world, but must settle for the middle kingdom....

The Bridal-chamber is higher than the other mysteries. The veil parted the bridal chamber. but without the imagery....The parting of the veil makes it possible for some to, pass from the lower to the higher... clothing themselves in perfect light... in the Ordinances of the uniting .

since it was the separation of the woman and the man, that brought death... Christ came for the express purpose of . . . bringing them together again in eternal life; thanks to him those who are united in the Bridal-chamber will never more be separated ...

and we. are a special species, true man and son of man sons of the Bridal-chamber... in this world... The mating in the next world is an entirely different nature than this one, though we use earthly vocabulary in speaking of them.. there are other forms of union that transcend all description Indeed it is not needful that they who have all these things know absolutely everything; let them enjoy what they have. The telios (initiate) cannot be held back being clothed in the garment of perfect light... even before he leaves this world.... If earthly procreation is an intimate and secret thing,...how much more concealed is the undefiled marriage, a true mystery? It is not carnal but pure, having nothing of lust and darkness. The marriage relationship should be ever modest, discreet, and withdrawn.

As truth is revealed step by step, it makes us free. We must become united to the truth, receiving a fullness; not despising things because they are hidden, . for they are mysteries of truth manifested in types and images. The veil concealed in the beginning how God carried out the Creation... But if the Veil is parted (rent) and the things behind the Veil become known, the House is destroyed and left desolate or rather destroyed. and the Godhead utterly desert that place, the Holy of Holies, which can no longer be related to the unconstrained light and the immensity of undefiled pleroma. Instead, it will come under the wing of the cross and under its arms. This ark (of the Covenant, the original Holy of Holies) will become for us a wall when the Flood overwhelms them". Nibley: (Temple and Cosmos – Apocryphal Writings pp. 264-335) ( The Message of the J. Smith Papyri pp. 284- 286)

### **An Egyptian Endowment**

A Summary of Hugh Nibley's The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri :  
An Egyptian Endowment by Dr. Kelly Ogden, Professor of the Jerusalem Center, Israel

Perhaps the greatest assistance received by Joseph Smith in re-instituting the temple ordinances on the earth was the papyrus scrolls, containing the Book of Abraham. These scrolls may have contained, in addition to that portion recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, information on the endowments. Facsimile number 2 strongly indicates a direct connection. Figure seven states: "Represents God sitting upon his throne, revealing through the heavens the grand key words of the Priesthood." The next figure is interpreted but Joseph Smith refused to reveal that interpretation, noting instead, "(it) contains writings that cannot be revealed unto the world; but is to be had in the Holy Temple of God." Obviously the Pearl of Great Price only contains part of the original translation: additional parts are found in the Temple.

But what was information on the endowment doing in the scrolls in the first place? To answer it should be remembered that this material was Abraham's in origin. The most important thing in his life was his initiation into the Priesthood and receiving a fullness of the endowment. This came as no accident. Abraham tells us, "I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same." (P. of G. P. Abr. 1:2) This is an interesting point for it shows that even among the apostate idle worshippers (which Abraham's father was) there was knowledge about Priesthood, and Abraham deliberately set out to get it, following the prescribed requirements. This special knowledge had direct temple bearing, for Abraham states that through it one could become 'a father of many nations.' Further he says, "I sought mine fathers concerning the seed." (Abraham 1:3, 4) This all ties into the eternal marriage covenants, the crowning ordinance of the temple rite.

The Egyptians were highly interested in Abraham and his record because Abraham had everything they wanted and could not get---viz, the Priesthood. It is not surprising they would cherish any information they could get from or about Abraham, the Priesthood and endowment. The papyrus' important to the Egyptian priest (whose copy it was) can be seen from the fact that it was placed in his sarcophagus. Only the most important things to the individual were packed there. Since there is not a lot of room in there, he had to be very selective about what he chose to have the mortician pack. One can understand that the priest wanted to hang on to (even in death) the sacred truths he believed he had found. What can be said of this priest's intelligence can be said of the Egyptian Intelligence in general.

The Egyptians were some of the most realistic and practical people that ever lived on the earth. If something worked, and worked well, they continued to use it for centuries. Their engineering ability was perfected very early in their culture and then used over and over with only slight modification or alteration. The best evidence of their practicality is their art forms which were made to last. Statues never have arms out-stretched: they are held rigidly to the side with the stone between the arm and the body left in place. This assured strength and permanency. All relief work is cut deep to last. Of course, that is what they had in mind. It was supposed to endure for eons and it has.

Being realists, the Egyptians recognized that mankind faces only two main problems. Once these two were solved, all other difficulties could be easily surmounted. What were these two problems? First, how to stop dying. The Egyptians were really bothered by the fact that people kept dying no matter how much they wanted or how hard they tried to stay alive. The Egyptians were intensely interested in how to gain immortality.

The second problem was closely related to it, and that was: once you are dead, what are you going to do? Sitting around on clouds strumming harps did not appeal to them. Nor did a continual repetition of the vicissitudes and sorrows of earth life hold any attraction. They felt the only way to be was as God--grand, powerful, majestic. So they set out to find out how to do it. Their ancient legends told of men who had been able to hold in abeyance the forces of physical death, gain control over the earth, and build a city in which the gods came down and dwelt. This, of course, was a historical corruption of the achievements of Enoch and the people of Zion.

One of the major reasons the Egyptians failed was because they would not recognize no God but their own and no priesthood but their own--and they had neither, so they kept falling. Their Pharaohs, who supposedly held the key of life, kept right on dying. Nevertheless, the Egyptians kept right on trying the old worn-out ways, believing if they used what they had, more would eventually be given.

So Egyptian life revolved around the temple, for there, it was believed, the secret to eternal life was held. Their concern for the after-life and ideas of eternal progression make their theology closer to Mormonism than any other ancient people except the Hebrews. But this is as it should be, considering that the very first Pharaoh knew the truth and sought, "to imitate that order established by the fathers in the first generations (after Noah)." (Abraham 1:26) He could not hold the Priesthood, being Negro, but he and subsequent priests feigned claim to it through Ham and deliberately set up a copy as closely as they could to the Priesthood order of government and temple worship. The Egyptians realized the key to eternal life was in the temple. There it was that man could find God, be taught His ways, and learn the key-words which would break the bands of mortality and give eternal life. The Pharaoh was supposed to know the divine incantation by which he and, after him, his people could overcome death and ascend to the gods.

Unfortunately, the Pharaohs kept dying just like everyone else. The Egyptians, however, had no alternative plan except, of course, accepting the truth from the Hebrew prophets. But, then, who wants to do that. So, they kept shoving their Pharaohs through the temple hoping each time it would do some good.

The priests were the guardians of the keywords and other formulas, as well as the ritual by which these were learned by the Pharaohs. The Pharaoh could receive them only in the temple, and it was his job to learn them so well he could put the divine incantation together at the veil and say the words which would bring life to all Egypt.

The following "Egyptian endowments" come from the Egyptian sacred writings known to us as the "Book of Breathings." Professor *Hugh W. Nibley* of Brigham Young University has studied this book and associated material in depth. He has concluded that, "If the Egyptian endowment was but an imitation, it was still a good one, and we *may* be able to learn much from it. . . (Hugh Nibley, The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment (Deseret Book Co., Salt Lake City, 1975, p. xiii.)) The material below is extracted and condensed from his work. For the convenience of the students who would like to pursue this information further, this writer has noted the page numbers in parentheses where the material is located in Dr. Nibley's work.

The Egyptians understood the true purpose of temples. They were the University of God in which men could be schooled in eternal principles. Their early temples were the center of the study of the cosmos and the relationship of mankind thereto. It was at the temple that the heavens were closest to the earth. The temple was an earthly sanctuary but carefully oriented to the celestial order, thereby becoming the connecting link between man and deity. The two stately pylons which stood at the front of each temple were so arranged that the sun would rise exactly between them at the equinoxes. By this means the rites of the temple were timed in perfect coordination with the motions of the cosmos and at a set moment each year the temple basked in the full splendor of the Sun's celestial glory.

The purpose of the temple was to capture the Sun's light which the Egyptians believed was a source of knowledge and power. So their structures were designed as scale models of the universe and the pylons were made in such a way as to direct the light inward and downward into the depths of the building. Stone slabs were placed in such a way as to form narrow apertures through which the sunlight would pass along the walls of the otherwise dark interior, in brilliant contrast of light and darkness; illuminating marked off areas at set times, suggesting god's presence in a fallen world. (154) The Egyptians, being Sun worshippers, believed that the Sun's light was a source of knowledge and power which, once understood, the initiate could use to become deified. These universal principles by which godhood would be obtained were revealed through the temple ritual. (104, 153-54, 157)

Therefore, the Egyptians felt that the temple held the keys by which they could learn the secrets of obtaining eternal life and permanently secure it for themselves. However, it was not on a merely individual basis. Their idea of progression after earth life included the family and so provision was made to have the initiate's family sealed to him in the next world. (15-16, 88, 142)

In order to receive these blessings, the initiate had to obey certain laws such as renouncing all bad passions and desires, consecrating himself to the work and show willingness to sacrifice all things necessary. (124, 214) In this way, his own desires and deeds would be increasingly identified with that of god and godhood. All movement in the temple is toward this goal. The closer one approaches deity by penetrating deeper and deeper into the temple, the higher the law he must be willing to live. Thus, there is a continual narrowing of the gap between his nature and that of god until in the holy of holies they actually merge. (92, 161) The one word which most nearly expressed what the temple was about was "sensen" (~~) i.e. breathing. But the Egyptian verb "to breathe" meant much more than merely taking a breath. It was indicative of the most intimate and close association between parties--e.g. to join the company of and become one with the gods, i.e. to fuse or have an indwelling relationship with them. (9, 92) Thus the temple was the house of power and life. Knowledge was the secret of controlling the power and gaining eternal life. (155)

Before the initiate could enter the temple he had to go through a purification ritual in an annex outside of the temple. This ritual consisted of two parts. (98-99) First, the ceremonial cleansing from abominations so the initiate would not pollute the temple. (93) Further, the ceremony insured that each part of the body, by virtue of remaining 1) pure and 2) intact, would never again lose its proper function. (106) The areas washed and blessed were: the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the mouth to speak, the legs to walk, the mind to think and remember, and the groin to procreate. (111) The whole was symbolic of a rebirth and a partaking of godly power or a reuniting of the body with power forever. (67, 106)

The second part of the ritual was the coronation by which one was anointed a priest and king. This was a very sacred part of the ceremony. (98-99) Again various parts of the body were particularly noted. Oil or ointment were placed on the head, cranium, eye brows, ears, lips,

shoulders, arms, heart (breast), stomach, buttocks, thighs, legs, feet and toes, in that order. (112) Once this was complete the candidate received a white ceremonial garment, thus showing he was properly cleansed and empowered to be instructed in the mysteries of becoming a god. (93) Along with this he received a new name. This he had to remember in order to live hereafter. The name was guarded, for to possess knowledge of another's name was to have some power over him. This applied even to the gods, for to grasp the meaning of the name was to understand the nature of the being. (141)

Once this was accomplished, the initiate entered into the temple proper. The ceremony was not static but progressed from room to room, the order being ever deeper penetration into the temple and its teachings. (115) The first area of the temple was the hall of the two Ma'ats. Ma'at was a female deity who symbolized every principle of social order and the entire concept of godhead. The presence of Ma'at is necessary at the moment one enters the temple to guarantee that one is a bona-fide candidate for eternal glory and is qualified to enter the holy place. For Ma'at's presence signifies all is correct and in order, the equivalent of a temple recommend. (116-17)

The first part of the temple ritual took the form of a mystery play complete with stage, props and actors. In the hall of Geb and Shu the creation of earth and man was enacted. (126) The characters involved in the creation were Thoth and Atum but these are working under the direction of a higher god to whom they must continually report their progress. (132) It is Atum who has the key role in the play. In the heavens he is known as the god Re, but when he descends to Earth his name is changed. Its meaning is: Creator, collective sum of all other beings, all embracing. More extended it means: sum, totality--the combining of all preexistent beings into one archetype who then represents all beings who come after. Scholars have noted his close identity with Adam. (133-34)

The creator of the man Atum is Ptah but again he is only an agent working under the direction of an even greater god known as Amon. He is the supreme god, source of all power. He is also the hidden one, the one with whom the fallen world cannot associate. (134) Atum is created asleep, Ptah and Amon awaken him by giving him the breath of life. (148) He is instructed then introduced to the lady whom he calls the mother of all. (151)

The next stage of the ritual takes place in a beautiful garden. Here they pause and partake of refreshments. The garden is the home of the Ished tree. When they eat of its fruit their nature is changed. Things are not as they were before. (176) To further complicate things the female companion has altercations with a serpent. It represents corruption and destruction. For its deeds in trying to defeat the woman by preaching false doctrine, it is deprived of its arms and legs symbolizing that it will never be able to rise in full power and might again and its vulnerable head is made easy prey for the foot of man. (179-80)

All parties are then forced to take a long and dangerous journey. Fire and sword keep the serpent from the Garden but not the man. He must eventually overcome all things and return to that blissful state and when he does return there will be no serpent to ruin the tranquility. (181-98)

As the party passes from room to room they symbolically undergo a change of nature. This is dramatized by changing the costume along the way. (165) As the initiate and his company begin the long and dangerous journey back to glory they don special clothing for protection for their eternal life is in danger. Knowledge is revealed to them along the way by divine beings sent from the gods. Atum becomes the guide and all must follow him. (190, 194) The purpose is to overcome the adversary which is done by escaping his power and by cleansing themselves of all legal and moral problems. (209-10)

Transition from one stage to another is done by passing through narrow gates which represent rebirth. Also the progression was shown by mounting steps, thus symbolically going from a lower level of order to a higher. However, the initiate was not allowed to go through the gate unless certain formulas, creeds, and pass-words were known. (212) The initiate was able to escape the power of evil by using different names along the way which act as code word. (215-17) It is during this stage of the endowment that a puzzling practice was engaged in. This was the ritual wounding or blows struck upon the body of the candidate. These served to remind him that he was in real danger of losing his life unless he was careful. However, so sacred was this that what goes along with it, and to promise that he would not do certain things. These were: not to be light-minded, speak evil, steal, be contentious, hard hearted, or impure, etc. (218-220)

The climax of the ritual was the divine embrace when the initiate was clasped to the breast of Amon. This part of the ceremony was weighed with meaning and was the goal of all the consecration. (241) It represented the acceptance back of the candidate and through it there was an infusing of power by which he was joined to the sun-god Re and received everlasting dominion. (243-44) It was not a sign of affection but of communion between two beings. (243) It symbolized indissoluble togetherness, an enduring relationship between god and man and the actual binding of the two (244)

The embrace also had the feature of being a recognition rite. The candidate was expected to

give to the priest certain passwords in response to certain questions put to him. In part of the ritual a certain formula was exchanged which had to be repeated back exactly. This formula is not written out anywhere but it is shown by use of three symbols: Ankh , Was , and Djed . These however do give a clue to what it was all about. Ankh is the navel string and is associated with health and life. Was represents power, dominion, and lordship while Djed is associated with the backbone and represents life, durability, stability and protection.

This last ceremony took place at a veil. Not a small one but a large theatrical type. It symbolized the separation between time and eternity and was believed to open up on an uninterrupted passage devoid of all obstacles--eternal progression. (245) The veil had four elements associated with it which are also on the garments worn by the initiate and both followed the same pattern. (246-47)

Once the candidate had received the embrace he could be united with the gods in their realm. So the veil was parted and he stepped through. The ceremony ended in a blaze of glory. for the candidate stepped out into a court onto which was reflected from a pyramid the full power of the sun thus symbolizing the joining of the candidate with Re. (147, 253)

Perhaps one last point should here be noted for the consideration of the reader. No one actually went through the temple in the sense of going in one door and out another for all leave by the same door they entered. The ancients realized there was only one path but it lead in two directions--forward or backward. The temple stood on the path, gave knowledge, strength and power by which one could face the trials back in the real world and eventually gain exaltation. (258)

#### Statements by LDS Leaders on Sacred Ordinances

For Joseph Smith there were modes of light and truth—"necessary instruction" —which could be manifest only by participation in ordinances in a sacred place. These, he said, were "things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritual minded."

Joseph Smith would say, "The Church is not fully organized, in its proper order, and cannot be until the Temple is completed, where places will be provided for the administration of the ordinances of the Priesthood."

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

In sum, Joseph Smith affirmed, "We need the temple more than anything else."

Joseph Smith taught that for the ordinances of the temple there were eternal sanctions. These were instituted, set, prepared "before the foundation of the world. "

"Being born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances,"

Joseph Smith's reply:

"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....

The main object [of gathering] 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. "

#### Temples To Dot The Earth (By Richard O. Cowan) p 224-225

"At the heart of our temple experience is the holy endowment. The term endowment commonly refers to a substantial gift of money which is given to a university or charitable institution in such a way as to have continuing benefit. The temple endowment is a spiritual gift from God, and its benefits continue eternally. "To endow is to enrich," taught Elder Boyd K. Packer, "to give to another something long lasting and of much worth." He explained that temple ordinances endow one with divine power, with eternally significant knowledge, and with marvelous promises and challenges. On the occasion when the Prophet Joseph Smith gave the first endowment, he stated

that he had spent the day with a group of trusted associates "instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood," communicating priesthood keys "and all those plans and principles by which any one is enabled to secure the fullness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the First Born, and come up and abide in the presence of the Eloheim in the eternal worlds." Elder James E. Talmage's description of the endowment as a course of instruction setting forth the high standards by which we may return to the presence of God was echoed by Elder John A. Widtsoe: "The temple endowment relates the story of man's eternal journey; sets forth the conditions upon which progress in the eternal world depends; requires covenants or agreements of those participating, to accept and use the laws of progress; gives tests by which our willingness" and fitness for righteousness may be known: and finally points out the ultimate destiny of those who love truth and live by it."

Elder Widtsoe regarded this broadened vision as one of the greatest gifts we receive in the endowment: ".The mighty perspective of eternity is unraveled before us in the holy temples; we see time from its infinite beginning to its endless end." We are able to see ourselves in relation to the universe and God's purposes for us We are therefore "better able to value and to weigh, to separate and to organize the common, ordinary duties of . . . life, so that the little things shall not oppress [us] or take away [our] vision of the greater things that God has given us.'

"The endowment is a concept of glory that is to be had from no other source," testified Elder Stephen L Richards. "It is by and through this endowment that man shall attain to that status of glory that God has set for him."

Like the children of Israel, explained President George Q. Cannon, the Latter-day Saints have been anxious to build temples. In them "we have received promises, endowments and keys by which we can go to God as the ancients did, exercise faith before Him' and obtain the promises they received. It is for this purpose that temples have been built."

Thus the object of the temple endowment is to help us attain our eternal potential. Elder Harold B. Lee testified that "the temple ceremonies are designed by a wise Heavenly Father who has revealed them to us in these last days as a guide and a protection throughout our lives, that you and I might not fail to merit exaltation in the celestial kingdom where God and Christ dwell" President Brigham Young identified how temple instructions can assist us in reaching the celestial kingdom: "Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the house of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, . . . and gain your eternal exaltation."

And finally, Joseph Smith taught: "Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves. and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power.... Jesus said:

"My Father worked out his kingdom with fear and trembling, and I must do the same; and when I get my kingdom. I shall present it to my Father, so that he may obtain kingdom upon kingdom, and it will exalt him in glory. He will then take a higher exaltation, and I will take his place, and thereby become exalted myself,".... When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave. ( TPJS, pp.346-348 )

