

JOSEPH'S MAGIC HAT: THE REAL SOURCE OF HIS REVELATIONS
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Before getting into Joseph's Magic Hat (below), which will be a chapter from my book, *The Mormon Missionaries*, I want to call your attention to a newsletter I recently received from FAIR (*Foundation for Apologetic Information & Research*). It is a pro-LDS Journal, and although not officially affiliated with the LDS Church, publishes in-depth articles on doctrine, beliefs and practices.

The President of FAIR opened the newsletter with a braggadocious statement based on a U.S. Religious Knowledge Survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, dated September 28, 2010 (See <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1745/religious-knowledge-in-america-survey-atheists-agnostics-score-highest>). He said that "*Mormons know more about the Bible and Christianity than any other group.*"

Here is his full statement:

A new study was completed that showed Mormons know more about the Bible and Christianity than any other group. I'm sure many of our Evangelical Christian friends were shocked, as some have said that if we would become more familiar with the Bible we would leave our faith and join theirs. Turns out we do read the Bible and are more familiar with its teachings than they are. This is no surprise to Latter-day Saints, but it does break some deeply held stereotypes. We are also the group most likely to read religious books and material in general.

The survey contained questions in seven religious categories:

Bible (five questions on Old Testament, two questions on New Testament)

Elements of Christianity (five questions concerning Catholicism, Mother Teresa, Luther, etc.)

Elements of Judaism (two questions on day of the Jewish Sabbath and Maimonides' faith)

Elements of Mormonism (3 questions on when the LDS church was established, Jesus' appearance in America [in the Book of Mormon], and Joseph Smith)

World Religions (9 questions)

Atheism and Agnosticism (one question on each, asking to give definitions)

Religion in Public Life (4 political questions).

Mormons were definitely in the top 10% of the whole survey, which, of course, is commendable.

However, their statement was a little deceptive. The overall conclusion of the study, listed under the heading of "*Religious Knowledge*" that summarized the above seven categories, actually showed that the three highest scorers were:

Atheist/Agnostics (20.9) [*They were considered as one group.*]

Jews (20.5)

Mormons (20.3)

While Mormons came in third, in the subcategory of “*Bible and Christianity*” they fared better. Mormons and white evangelical Protestants came close to tying, with Mormons having a .6 lead over the evangelicals. (*Mormons 7.9; White Protestant evangelicals 7.3.*)

So, Atheists/Agnostics and the Jews actually beat the Mormons overall, except for the category of “*Bible and Christianity*,” where they came in .6 over the evangelicals.

So, considering that Mormons really don’t understand Biblical teachings (*or they wouldn’t believe what they believe*), how did they manage to be up there with the Evangelicals?

This can easily be answered by asking what level of questions the survey asked—in particular, the subcategory of the Bible. When I went to the Pew Forum study and saw the questions, I couldn’t believe how simplistic they were:

- What is the first book of the Bible?
- What are the names of the first four books of the New Testament
- Where was Jesus born? (*multiple choice*)
- Which figure is associated with leading the exodus from Egypt (*multiple choice*)

So, the FAIR President’s statement that they know more about the Bible and Christianity than any other group isn’t saying very much considering the level of questions asked.

Yes, Mormons are to be commended on knowing that Genesis is the first book of the Bible, and that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. But, if they had been asked more specifically about the nitty-gritty core teachings of the Bible about God, salvation and priesthood, they probably would have come out on the bottom of the scoring list.

The reason Mormon polees knew the answers to the survey questions about the Bible is because they are now reading the Bible in their local wards. Why? Certainly, back in the 50s and 60s, they weren’t (*except on Easter and Christmas*). Here is one reason:

The LDS Church, wanting to convince the public and the National Council of Churches that it is “*Christian*,” eventually decided that they would have to include a study of the Bible in their local wards. (*It should go without saying that by studying the Bible, it would also contribute to their success in maintaining converts who come from Christian backgrounds.*)

Now, I would be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge that LDS individuals, in their day-to-day life, honestly try to keep the ten commandments and live the general Biblical teachings of Jesus, such as doing good to others, etc. (*But it’s the church’s theology that is not Biblical, regardless of how much Mormons read the Bible.*)

Another question: What are Mormons getting out of their study of the Bible, since they believe it is so poorly translated that it is unreliable? (*Stated in their 8th Article of Faith.*)

The answer? Because members are taught that their study will confirm to them that Mormonism is true, and their ward leaders will see to this. For example:

- 1) When they read Genesis two, they are told that rather than it being a more detailed summary of what just took place in Chapter one, it confirms that the physical world was made of pre-existent, eternal matter that was co-eternal with God.
- 2) When they read about Moses breaking the first set of stone tablets, they are told the first set contained the higher truths that were revealed to Joseph Smith, but because of Israel's sin Moses broke the first set and only gave them a second set containing only lesser truths.
- 3) When members read about the Old Testament priesthood, parallels are then made to their own church's priesthood, including how Joseph Smith received the Aaronic priesthood from the resurrected John the Baptist; the Melchizedek priesthood from Peter, James and John.
- 4) When they read about Moses' tabernacle in the wilderness and later Solomon's temple, they are told that unbeknown to the Israelites, secret temple rituals were being conducted inside the temple that parallel today's Mormon temple ceremony.
- 5) When they read about the two sticks in Ezek. 37:16-17, their teacher will point out that the stick of Judah means the Bible, and the other stick, the stick of Joseph, means the Book of Mormon. This, of course, is *not* the meaning of the passage when read in proper context.
- 6) When members read Isaiah 29:11-14, they are told that the "sealed book" is the Book of Mormon plates. The "learned" man is Prof. Anthon of New York City to whom Martin Harris took a sample of the hieroglyphics from the gold plates hoping he would verify their genuineness. The "unlearned" man is Joseph Smith. The "marvelous work and a wonder" that God will perform is Joseph Smith's works. And on and on we could go . . .

Well, so much for that subject, and on to others.

I have posted another "*Letters to God*," which demonstrate how personal a relationship one can have with their Father in Heaven. It may inspire you to do the same.

Next, in brief, are some books I'd like to recommend. After that, "*Joseph's Magic Hat*."

Suggested reading:

Steven G. Bushnell is a pastor involved in a teaching and writing ministry in Camarillo, California. He is also known as the Bible Chef (www.biblechef.com), and has written a delightful and spiritually educational series of children's books entitled, "The Big Adventures of Little Church Mouse." Little Church Mouse lives in a church, and is the main character who interacts with other animal friends in a search for answers to his religious questions. I have seen the books, and they are delightful. They are available at the links below, which will also give an overview of what each book is about.

A note about the "Cookbook" listed below: It is not just a straight cookbook. It is about Little Church Mouse who, with his friends Belfries the Bat and Dewdrop the Butterfly, visits the Bible Chef where the story of Esther from the Bible is discussed as they learn how to make cookies.

Ten Commandments: <http://www.authorhouse.com/Bookstore/ItemDetail.aspx?bookid=32538>

Creation: <http://www.authorhouse.com/Bookstore/ItemDetail.aspx?bookid=32628>

Christmas: <http://www.authorhouse.com/Bookstore/ItemDetail.aspx?bookid=41190>

Parables: <http://www.authorhouse.com/Bookstore/ItemDetail.aspx?bookid=41190>

Easter: <http://www.authorhouse.com/Bookstore/ItemDetail.aspx?bookid=63805>

Cookbook: <http://www.authorhouse.com/Bookstore/ItemDetail.aspx?bookid=62064>.

JOSEPH'S MAGIC HAT: THE REAL SOURCE OF HIS REVELATIONS.

The following is Chapter Seven of my book, *The Mormon Missionaries*.

Background: Earlier in the book, two Mormon missionaries bravely ventured onto the campus of a Bible college in San Antonio. Susan, a student, falls for one of them, Elder Black, and takes him up on his invitation to attend their presentations. She thinks she will eventually convert him to Christianity and they will marry. A teacher on campus (a former Mormon) realizes that Susan is in over her head, and insists on attending the presentations with her. She then covers the subject of those presentations in the classroom the day following, not only to teach her students, but to convince Susan the unbiblical facts about Mormonism.

Setting: The classroom.

Characters

Teacher

Susan: student

Matt: student (*he has a crush on Susan and is concerned about her.*)

Ilya: student from Russia

Robert: student

Tia: student of Spanish descent

"Abracadabra!" came the eerie voice from the classroom.

I walked up the steps and paused in the doorway. Matt stood at my desk waving a yardstick over two salad plates—obviously borrowed from the cafeteria. Placing the plates inside an upturned sombrero, he tilted it towards the class.

“Now you see them . . .”

Pausing mid-sentence he covered the hat with his jacket, his hands fumbling beneath. Then, with an elegant flourish, he flipped his jacket off exhibiting the empty sombrero.

“. . . now you don’t!” he said triumphantly.

Suddenly, a plate slipped out of the hood of his jacket and went clattering to the floor. His sleight-of-hand discovered, Matt nevertheless took his bows graciously while the class applauded. Then, noticing me, he gave a sheepish grin.

“What on earth is going on?” I asked as I walked to the front of the room.

The class snickered while Matt proceeded to explain.

“I’m demonstrating our lesson for today,” he said.

“I’m afraid you’ve lost me, Matt,” I said, laying my briefcase on the desk.

“Can’t you guess?” He grinned. “I’m Joseph Smith!” “I miraculously produced the plates then made them disappear. You said he had a magic hat. Isn’t that the way he did it?”

Matt cockily swaggered back to his seat, and I smiled. “Matt, you know Joseph Smith didn’t pull the plates out of a hat--although,” I hesitated, “now that I think about it, maybe he did.”¹ The class looked alert. xx

“Smith, instead of translating directly from the plates, looked into a seer-stone placed inside his hat.² It was a practice,” I explained, “known as crystal-gazing or scrying. And although Smith didn’t say, *abracadabra*, his mother admitted the family practiced this magic incantation. Here’s what Smith’s mother says.” I reached into my briefcase, pulled out a book, and began reading:

Let not the reader suppose that . . . we stopped our labor and went at trying to win the faculty of *Abrac*, drawing magic circles, or soothsaying, to the neglect of all kinds of business. We never during our lives suffered one important interest to swallow up every other obligation.³

“What exactly is the *faculty of Abrac*?” Matt interrupted.

“*Abrac*,” I continued, “is a Jewish Kabbalistic word. It comes from *Abracadabra* and *Abraxis*, a word used on amulets to work magic.⁴ The first four letters, *A-b-r-a*, are acrostics⁵ taken from the first letter of four Hebrew words, *Ab* which means Father; *Ben* which means Son, and *Ruach Adsch* which means Holy Spirit. When written in a triangular form on parchment and hung around the neck, it acted as a charm to heal toothaches and other ailments.⁶

“Since Smith’s brother was a Mason, the family probably learned about it from him, although they could have picked it up from any of the available books on magic.⁷ But, we need to move on.

“In yesterday’s lesson, I told you how magic and metaphysical teachings were popularized in 15th century Europe and later transferred to New England.

“Today, we’re going to see what kind of magic and Masonic practices were prevalent in Joseph Smith’s time. More especially, the role they played in his story about the Book of Mormon plates.”

Looking purposely at Matt I smiled. “While we may view Joseph Smith’s fascination with magic and the occult as humorous, we do need to understand the climate of his culture. Belief in magic was not unusual.

“Mormon Historian, B.H. Roberts, while acknowledging that Smith’s family believed in ‘fortune telling . . . warlocks and witches,’ added that ‘to be credulous in such things was to be normal people.’⁸

“The family’s involvement in witchcraft was confirmed by Fayette Lapham who, after visiting the Smiths, wrote:

[Joseph’s father] was a firm believer in witchcraft and other supernatural things; and had brought up his family in the same belief.⁹

“In addition,” I said, “Joseph’s father also used seeing-stones. Placing them in a hat, he received revelation on the location of buried treasure. Known as a money-digger, Smith’s father hired out to locate these caches. An affidavit by David Stafford confirmed that ‘the general employment of the Smith family was money digging and fortune telling.’¹⁰

“Since Joseph naturally followed in his father’s footsteps, he also used peep stones.¹¹ Even before he claimed to translate the Book of Mormon, he was finding buried treasure and deciphering ancient writings. In one instance, he gazed into his stone and translated an unknown language supposedly telling where Captain Kidd buried two pots of gold and silver.¹²

“Trained by his father, Joseph also learned how to use a divining rod to detect metals. Often called a mineral rod, it was similar to dozing for water with a hazel branch. This practice, we’ll eventually see, was carried into Smith’s religion and later used in the Mormon temple.

“Smith, however, used peep stones more often than the divining rod. It was through a peep stone according to Brigham Young and Martin Harris that Smith located the gold plates using a stone found in the well of a Mason Chase. This particular stone in Mormon history is referred to as the *brown* stone as opposed to the *white* stone called the Urim and Thummin.¹³ This is, of course, contrary to the later story Smith told, that an *angel* told him where to find the gold plates.

“Joseph also used his peep stones to read palms.¹⁴ I believe the Mormon practice of giving patriarchal blessings today, is an outgrowth of Smith’s fortune telling practice.”¹⁵

Susan, who I hoped was taking this all in, interrupted. “Don’t you think Smith gave all that up after he started his church?”

“I’m afraid the answer is, no. The use of divining rods and peep stones continued after the Mormon Church was established.

“According to James Collin Brewster, the Smith family ‘anointed the mineral rods and seer stones with consecrated oil, and prayed over them in the house of the Lord in Kirtland.’¹⁶ The ritual consisted of putting on temple robes and asking yes or no questions of the rod. If the rod moved, it meant yes. If there was no movement, it meant no.¹⁷

“To validate the church’s continued use of a divining rod, Joseph produced a revelation for Oliver Cowdery:¹⁸

Now this is not all, for you have another gift, which is the *gift of working with the rod: behold it has told you things*: behold there is no other power save God, that can cause this rod of nature, to work in your hands.¹⁹

“Since this later proved embarrassing to the church, the revelation was changed to read: ‘You have another gift, which is the *gift of Aaron*.’ Nevertheless, the new phrase was still an occult term, since a divining rod was also known as a *Rod of Aaron*.²⁰

“Robert?”

“Smith’s mother mentioned magic circles along with the faculty of Abrac. Did she mean the same kind witches use?”

“I’m afraid so,” I replied. “Here’s an example.

“Joseph said there was a buried chest of gold watches guarded by an evil spirit. To appease the spirit, he ordered stakes set up in the form of a circle. He then sent a man to obtain a long knife, or sword, and to march around the spot with drawn weapon to guard against any satanic assaults.²¹

“Joseph and his father worked in conjunction. Often, while his father was performing the same activity for customers, Joseph would be in the house using his peep stone to keep track of what the evil spirit was doing. William Stafford gives an account:

Joseph, Sr. first made a circle, twelve or fourteen feet in diameter. This circle, said he, contains the treasure. He then stuck a row of witch hazel sticks, around the said circles, for the purpose of keeping off the evil spirits. Within this circle he made another, of about eight or ten feet in diameter. He walked around three times on the periphery of this last circle, muttering to himself something which I could not understand. . . . [He then] asked leave of absence, and went to the house to inquire of young Joseph the cause of our disappointment. He soon returned and said, that Joseph had remained all this time in the house, looking in his stone and watching the motion of the evil spirit - that he saw the spirit come up to the ring and as soon as it beheld the cone which we had formed around the rod, it caused the money to sink.²²

“Tia raised her hand. “You said something about animal sacrifice. Did Smith really do that?”

“Yes. Animal sacrifice was part of the treasure divining business. It was understood at that time that there were both good and bad spirits who guarded treasures. According to magic books, ‘white animals [were] sacrificed to the good Spirits and black to the evil.’²³

“Therefore, in one instance, Smith procured a black sheep, claiming it was the only way to appease the evil spirit of a particular treasure. They were to cut its throat and lead it around in a circle while bleeding.²⁴ Smith even sacrificed a dog on one occasion.²⁵

“Mr. Stafford, the owner of the sheep, was later asked by M. Wilford Poulson if Smith stole a black sheep from him. Stafford’s response was:

No, not exactly . . . he did miss a black sheep, but soon Joseph came and admitted he took it for sacrifice but he was willing to work for it. He made wooden sap buckets to fully pay for it.²⁶

“Smith carried this ritual magic into his new religion. For example, he refused to let a man be ordained an apostle unless a lamb was first sacrificed in the temple.²⁷

“Joseph’s preoccupation with animal sacrifice led him to make the statement I read to you in a previous class--that animal sacrifice in connection with priesthood duties would be reinstated.²⁸

“Did Smith use tea leaves and Tarot cards,” Matt grinned.

“No, Matt, not that I know of. However, he did use magic medallions.

“When Smith was murdered, a *Jupiter talisman* was found on his body.²⁹ The talisman was shaped like a silver dollar and made of silver or tin and carried the sign of the spirit of Jupiter. It contained mostly Hebrew characters.³⁰ Former director of the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Utah, Dr. Reed C. Durham, Jr.³¹ identified it from a magic book available in Smith’s time.³²

“Since, astrologically speaking, Jupiter stood for many of Smith’s personal ambitions, he probably selected it for that reason. It consisted of ‘high positions, [having] one’s own way,’ achieving status and acquiring the ‘dignity of a natural ruler.’³³

“Dr. Durham tried to lessen the negative impact of Joseph having it, by confirming its appropriateness:

It carries the sign and image of Jupiter . . . And in some very real and quite mysterious sense, this particular Table of Jupiter was the most appropriate talisman for Joseph Smith to possess. Indeed, it seemed meant for him, because on all levels of interpretation: planetary, mythological, numerological, astrological, mystical cabalism, and talismatic magic, the Prophet was, in every case, appropriately described.³⁴

“Dr. Durham further explains that the magical ‘purpose of the Table of Jupiter . . . was to be able to call upon the celestial intelligences, assigned to the particular talisman [and] to assist one in all endeavors.’³⁵ By invoking the names of these inscribed gods, he said, it guaranteed the possessor of ‘riches and favor, and power, and love and peace . . . honors, and dignities, and councils . . . [and to] obtain the power of stimulating anyone to offer his love to the possessor of the talisman.’³⁶

“Certainly, he would need this kind of help in his money-digging ventures, not to mention his spiritual wifery doctrine where he had to convince a woman to become his plural wife while she was still married to her husband.³⁷

“Smith’s brother, Hyrum, also practiced magic.³⁸ He possessed parchments containing pentagrams and pentacles, used in gaining power over spirits.³⁹ He also had a Masonic pouch to hold these parchments, as well as a dagger with the Seal of Mars.

“Yes, Robert?”

“After Smith died,” he asked, “did succeeding church presidents continue in occult practices?”

“Some of them did. Brigham Young wore a chained bloodstone about his neck for those occasions ‘when [he went] into unknown or dangerous places.’⁴⁰ He also used Oliver Cowdery’s divining rod to decide where the Salt Lake Temple should be built.⁴¹

“In addition, when Young and Taylor supervised the making of a woodcut seal for the twelve apostles, they copied occult symbols from Jacob Boehme’s *Theosophical Works*--a book used for two hundred years by Christian Kabbalists and Rosicrucians.”⁴²

Susan raised her hand. “How do present day leaders respond to all this?”

“Well,” I said, “they mostly try to suppress incriminating evidence. But when it does leak out, the rationale is to justify it as Arturo de Hoyos did. He writes:

One cannot help but wonder the reason why the Prophet Joseph Smith, and his brother, Hyrum, the Patriarch would possess articles such as they did unless they actually believed that these items did possess some sort of supernatural power, or that they were a “key” to receiving power or protection. *Is it possible that just as the Masonic ritual, which Joseph termed the “apostate endowment”⁴³ retained*

*principles of truth, that these Pentacles which have come down through the ages to be associated [sic] with witchcraft, black magic, and the occult as a whole yet contain elements of truth which were recognized by the Prophet?*⁴⁴

“Not a bad rationalization for a Mormon.” I smiled.

Matt impatiently called out, “I heard there was a *bloody ghost* in Smith’s story. Let’s hear about it!”

The class laughed, but perked up with interest even more.

“The bloody ghost,” I began, “was a Spanish spirit who guarded the Book of Mormon plates. Treasure spirits were usually considered evil and were thought to have the power to kill a person unless appeased by magic circles and blood sacrifices. So, here’s the story.

“Smith said he had a dream in which he was shown the location of an iron box containing gold plates.⁴⁵ He went there, found the spot, but claimed he was knocked down three times attempting to remove the stone covering the treasure.⁴⁶ He described his experience to two individuals who later published it in the *Amboy Journal*. Quoting what Smith told them, the article describes Smith’s frustration:

“Why can’t I get it?” . . . and then he saw a man standing over the spot, which to him appeared like a Spaniard, having a long beard coming down over his breast to about here. [sic](Smith putting his hand to the pit of his stomach) with his (the ghost’s) throat cut from ear to ear, and the blood streaming down, who told him that he could not get it alone; that another person whom he, Smith, would know at first sight, must come with him, and then he could get it.⁴⁷

“Smith also told the same story to his father. He related how the ghost told him the valuable treasure contained information soon to be revealed to the world.⁴⁸

“As the story advanced, however, the bloody ghost soon became a nameless angel. Soon, it developed into an angel called Nephi, then finally, Moroni.”⁴⁹

“Where does Masonry fit into all this?” Susan inquired.

“As Smith learned more about Masonic beliefs,” I replied, “he began to weave them into his buried treasure tale. He borrowed heavily from a Masonic myth called the *Legend of Enoch*.⁵⁰ The parallels are unquestionable.⁵¹

“But first, who can recall Smith’s story as told by the church today?”

Ilya raised her hand.

“He was told that buried in the hill Cumorah was a box covered by stone. In the box were gold plates with engraved characters. Also the Urim and Thummin and breast plate of the High Priest of Israel. He was told that more plates were in an underground cavern in a hill. On the plates was story of a migration from the Tower of Babel. The other migration came from Jerusalem, guided by a metal ball as compass.”

“Good, Ilya. “Now class, remembering what she said, listen to the Masonic *Legend of Enoch*.⁵²

“The lore begins with God giving a secret doctrine to Adam in a dream. He is shown a gold plate engraved with unknown characters. Among these characters is the tetragrammaton, the holy name of God. Adam makes a similar plate of gold and copies the sacred characters on to it. He hands it down to his son, Seth, who guards it carefully and then passes it on. Finally, it reaches Enoch.⁵³

“Enoch then receives a vision of the future. He foresees a world-destroying flood and that the holy treasure will eventually be kept in a secret *cavern* inside Mount Moriah. Therefore, he proceeds to build an underground cavern to preserve the treasure from the flood. He places a stone door over the cavern and erects two pillars, one of marble the other of brass. Upon the marble pillar he engraves the story of the treasure and the history of the Tower of Babel in Egyptian hieroglyphics.

“On the second pillar of brass, he engraves the history of creation and the principles of Masonry. Upon the top of the brass pillar he places a metal ball that miraculously solves problems and gives direction. The legend concludes by stating that the treasure will be found by one of Enoch’s Israelitish descendants.

“Now, we need to jump from Enoch to the future King Solomon--after the flood.

“Solomon’s masons, while building the King’s temple on the hill Moriah, come across pieces of the treasure, although not yet the gold plate. They turn their findings over to the King. Solomon then places the treasure in a secret underground vault beneath the temple, just as Enoch saw in his vision. Solomon instructs the three men to go back to the ruins and see if they can find more treasure.

“Upon doing so, they come across the stone covering Enoch’s cave. After three attempts to descend into the cave, they finally obtain the gold plate, noticing that ‘the brilliancy of the plate and jewels are of themselves sufficient to give light to the cavern.’⁵⁴

“Delivering the gold plate to the King, Solomon places it in his underground vault along with the breastplate of the High Priest of Israel and the Urim and Thummin. Solomon then changes the status of the vault from *secret to sacred* and allows only a few to see the plate.

“Now,” I said in conclusion, “who can see similarities between this legend and Joseph Smith’s story?”

“Easy,” Matt offered. “Enoch’s gold plate was found inside a hill and so were the gold plates of the Book of Mormon.”

“Very good. Yes, Tia?”

“Enoch’s cavern was covered with a stone and so was Smith’s box of gold plates. In addition, both Enoch and Smith claimed their treasure contained the Breastplate of the High Priest of Israel and the Urim and Thummin.”

“Right. Joseph Smith also considered himself the predicted Israelitish descendant who would find the treasure, which idea he incorporated into the Book of Mormon. He even went so far as to give himself the code name of Enoch in revelations.”⁵⁵

“But now, let’s look at the parallels on the overhead:

Masonic Legend of Enoch

Enoch is shown the hill Moriah in a vision

Enoch is shown a hidden treasure.

Enoch’s treasure includes a gold plate with engravings.

Enoch’s marble pillar is carved with Egyptian hieroglyphics

Joseph Smith’s Story

Smith shown the hill Cumorah in a vision.

Smith is shown the gold plates.

Smith’s gold plates are engraved.

Smith’s plates are engraved in reformed Egyptian.

Enoch's marble pillar tells the story of the treasure.

Enoch erects a brass pillar which tells the history of creation.

Enoch writes the history of the Tower of Babel on the marble pillar

Enoch's brass pillar has a metal ball on top which has the power to direct.

Enoch predicts that after the flood, an Israelitish descendant will find the treasure.

Three masons obtain the treasure after three attempts.

Three masons are witnesses to the treasure.

Solomon's treasure contained the gold plate, a brass pillar/record, the High Priest's breastplate, the Urim and Thummin and a metal ball. It also contained the Tetragrammaton, the name of God.

The three masons note that the gold plate gives off enough light to illuminate the cavern.

Enoch's treasure is first hidden in his own cavern, then later transferred to the hill Moriah.

King Solomon allows only a few to see the treasure.

Smith's Book of Mormon tells the story of the gold plates.

The Book of Mormon includes brass plates containing the five books of Moses. (55)

The Book of Mormon contains the Book of Ether, a history of a migration from the Tower of Babel.

The Book of Mormon tells of a brass ball, the *Liahona*, which acts as a compass.

The Book of Mormon foretells an Israelitish descendant having the same name as Joseph of Egypt who will find the treasure.

Smith tries to take the plates and is only successful after three attempts.

Smith also arranges for three witnesses: Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer.

Smith's treasure consisted of the brass plates, gold plates, the Urim and Thummin, the breastplate, and a metal Ball called the Liahona. The plates were claimed to be from God.

Smith claims the Book of Mormon plates light up the cavern in the hill Cumorah.

The Book of Mormon plates are first kept in a hill called Shim, then transferred to the hill Cumorah.

Smith allows only a few to see the plates.

Enoch's cavern is covered by a large stone with an iron ring.

Smith earlier claimed the plates were in an iron box, but later said it was stone.

Enoch is called by God to preserve the knowledge of the treasure.

Smith is called by God to preserve the knowledge of his treasure.

King Solomon changes the status of his underground cavern from *secret* to *sacred*.

Mormon leaders claim the temple ceremony is not *secret* but *sacred*.

A student's hand shot up. "Was Smith's only objective in producing the Book of Mormon, to promote the Legend of Enoch?"

"No," I said. "I believe he had three other motives.

"The first . . . Smith simply loved to con people and took advantage of his imaginative powers. His mother told how Smith would often entertain the family for hours relating stories of how the ancient Americans dressed and acted, about their cities, warfare and religion long before he came up with the idea of writing the Book of Mormon.⁵⁶

"Further, affidavits by Smith's contemporaries report how Smith enjoyed fooling people. For example, after a rain shower, Smith discovered some white sand. He 'tied up several quarts of it [in his 'frock'] and then went home.' His family was eager to know what he had. Smith later told Peter Ingersol about his response:

At that moment I happened to think about a history found in Canada, called the Golden Bible; so I very gravely told them it was the Golden Bible. To my surprise they were credulous enough to believe what I said.⁵⁷

"The second motive? He wanted to answer the big question of the day--are the Indians transplanted Israelites?"

"This was a hot topic. As early as 1634, Joseph Mede was questioning the origin of the Indians. By 1650 writer Thomas Thorowgood decided they were the Lost Tribes of Israel. In 1775 and 1816 Elias Boudinot and James Adair brought the idea to the forefront again.⁵⁸ Newspapers in Smith's locale also speculated on the origin of the Indians. Then, in 1823, Ethan Smith wrote, *View of the Hebrews*, in an attempt to handle the absence of a recorded history for the American Indians.

"Although Smith borrowed much from Ethan Smith's book, his idea for the Book of Mormon in the first place, was probably triggered by a magician named Walters:

[Walters] had an old copy of Cicero's Orations, in the Latin language, out of which he read [in] an unintelligible jargon, which he would afterwards pretend to interpret, and explain, as a record of the former inhabitants of America, and a particular account of the numerous situations where they deposited their treasures previous to their final [destruction].⁵⁹

"Joseph, therefore, influenced by Walters and using Ethan Smith's book, hit on the idea that he would be the one to provide the recorded history.

"But, this required some thought. If his story was going to cover Lamanite settlements in South America and Nephites in Central America, how was he going to get

their sacred records to New York, three thousand miles away where he lived, for him to find? Obviously, he had to invent a character who would carry them there.

“Common sense, however, asks why the character Mormon or his son Moroni would travel three thousand miles *on foot*, when they could have buried the plates closer to home. In addition, how could they have transported as many heavy gold plates as Smith described?

“The third motive. The Book of Mormon provided Smith with an outlet for his fascination with Masonic mysteries.

“However, it was more than just fascination. Smith admits, in a letter to John Hull, that he really wanted to produce a truer and higher level of Masonry.⁶⁰ Not just for the United States, but *world-wide*.⁶¹ Intrigued with the concept, he began using Masonic vocabulary in his sermons, such as the *nail in a sure place*, later to become part of his temple ceremony, and also interjected the motif of sun, moon, planets and stars. However, while the sun and moon came from Masonry, you must remember that Masonry was a blend of Rosicrucian, Alchemic, Kabbalistic and Hermetic symbols of which the sun and moon were part.⁶²

“He also took from Masonry the idea of the political Kingdom, consisting of a Council of Fifty, a Constitution--even the crowning of himself as King.⁶³

“Someone told me,” Robert interrupted, “that there are Masonic emblems on the temple in Salt Lake City.”

“Yes,” I replied, quickly pulling pictures from my briefcase. “These large conference rooms,” I said, pointing to a picture of the temple’s interior, “are fashioned like Masonic Lodges and temples.⁶⁴ Smith also believed ‘the whole earth was compared symbolically to a Grand Masonic Lodge, the counterpart of which was the Grand Lodge in the eternal regions of Glory.’⁶⁵

“There is also the Masonic All-seeing Eye. However, occult literature reveals it as the *Diva*, or the *Cyclopean Eye*, the ancient *third eye* of spiritual insight used by the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks and other pagan religions.

“It was adopted by Hermetic philosophers as ‘the sacred emblem of a perpetual divine and uncreated intelligence,’⁶⁶ changed later into the Christian context to mean the eye of Jehovah. Today’s Mormons assume the latter.⁶⁷

“On the temple walls one can also see the phrase, *Holiness to the Lord*.⁶⁸ the compass and clasped hands. Even the weathervane of the Nauvoo temple with its small angel exhibited the square and compass.⁶⁹

“The Beehive can also be seen. It was a Masonic emblem used as a symbol by Brigham Young for the Mormon State. It was also used in earlier centuries by Christian Hermetics where it later entered Freemasonry. It didn’t represent physical industry as so many think. Metaphor-ically, it represented one’s inner soul, with the industry of the bee illustrative of the spiritual labor required for the alchemic transmutation of the individual, or dark matter, into gold.⁷⁰

“In the St. George, Utah Tabernacle (not the temple), there still remains, on a mock fireplace, a round circle resting on the horizontal arm of a cross. Occult writer Madame Blavatsky explains, in her *Secret Doctrine* that this is the ‘Venus’ looking-glass,’ a symbol of human procreation and also the ‘sacred cross of Egypt’ as carried in the hands of the gods, the Pharaohs and the mummified dead.⁷¹

“In the Mormon temple ceremony itself,⁷² there is the apron, special handshakes,⁷³ penalties, five points of fellowship,⁷⁴ special garments with markings of the square and compass, and the giving of a new name--all taken from Masonry.⁷⁵

“Probably the most astounding admission on the subject by a Mormon, was by Dr. Durham:

The Mormon ceremony which came to be known as the Endowment, introduced by Joseph Smith to Mormon Masons, had an immediate inspiration from Masonry. This is not to suggest that no other source of inspiration could have been involved, but the similarities between the two ceremonies are so apparent and overwhelming that some dependent relationship cannot be denied. They are so similar, in fact, that one writer was led to refer to the Endowment as Celestial Masonry.⁷⁶

“While members of the Mormon Church believe every jot and tittle of Mormonism was received by revelation, including the temple ceremony, one is reminded of Dr. Durham’s admission about the similarities: ‘To explain them only as coincidence would be ridiculous.’⁷⁷

“Smith, to disguise any Masonic connection to his new religion, used *clangs*. These are word-inventions intended to mask other words.

“For example, according to the Tanners, it is believed he incorporated ‘the first three letters of Moriah (*M-O-Riah*) . . . and the last three letters of Solomon (Solo*M-O-N*)’,⁷⁸ to come up with *Mor-mon*, which is both the name of his sacred book and the name of its main character.⁷⁹

“Another clang is *Mahonri Moriancumer*, the name of another Book of Mormon character. According to Dr. Durham, the last name, Moriancumer, could easily be ‘a compound of “Moriah,” the sacred hill where Solomon stored Enoch’s treasure--and “Cumorah,” the sacred hill where the new Enoch [Smith] found his treasure plates.’⁸⁰

“Moriancumer’s first name, Mahonri, according to Walter F. Prince, is ‘clang’ for Masonry.⁸¹ This is achieved by replacing the *g* in Masonry with an *h* and changing the *y* to *i*. Therefore, Mahonri Moriancumer, ‘divested of “clang” is *Masonry Moriah Cumorah*.’⁸²

“Robert raised his hand. “Why do you think Joseph was so caught up with Masonry?” “Because,” I replied, “Joseph believed the Masonic ceremony contained ancient rituals practiced by the ancient Eleusinians and the Greek mystery religions. The reason he was attracted to them was because he was convinced they contained secrets handed down from Adam.⁸³ Dr. Durham also acknowledged this by saying that Joseph Smith accepted Masonry because ‘he recognized true Ancient Mysteries contained therein.’⁸⁴

“If Smith was so sold on Masonry,” Robert continued, “why didn’t he simply stick with the Masonic Lodge instead of trying to start his own?”

“He became convinced,” I said, “that Masonry’s teachings, handed down from the Hermetic Magi, Babylon, Chaldea, Egypt and the Kabbalah, had been distorted over time.⁸⁵ He felt that further back there was a *purser Masonry*. Open to the Kabbalistic concept that sacred revelation was progressive and open-ended, he felt he could receive a purer revelation. Dr. Durham further confirmed this by saying that Smith ‘believed he was restoring Masonry’s original pristine brilliancy, and re-creating the original Mysteries of the ancient Priesthood.’⁸⁶

“I think Joseph’s objective was to get to the very root of things, and have a religion he could claim contained the most primordial doctrines--ones that originated as close to the beginning of time as possible. He therefore, incorporated ideas from the ancient Eleusinian mysteries, gleaned from the *Encyclopaedia Britannia* and other available sources in 1837.⁸⁷

“These cultic mysteries claimed to be rituals handed down from the beginning of the world and revealed only in secret ceremonies. Believed to be revelations from God, the rites could only be passed on to those made worthy through the ritualistic ceremony.

“The rituals included washings and anointings, oaths and penalties, a new name, special garments, covenants of chastity, achieving godhood, and special passwords to pass by the sentries who guard the gates of heaven.

In addition, most of the ceremony was taken up with initiates watching actors in a drama.⁸⁸ Not much different from the original Mormon temple ceremony. Participants in the temple now view most of the drama through movies.

“In a way it was a noble endeavor,” I said, “however, as I mentioned in a previous lesson, the deceit of the whole matter was that Smith passed these ideas off as revelation from the Holy Ghost.”⁸⁹

“The following concepts, for example, are believed by members to have been received by revelation:

[In the beginning] the head God called together the Gods and sat in grand council to bring forth the world . . . The mind or the intelligence which man possesses is [co-eternal] with God himself . . . God . . . is an exalted man . . . we have got to learn how to be gods . . . the same as all gods have done before.⁹⁰

“These new insights were first declared at the funeral of a man named King Follett. But Smith’s diary admits that a year before the funeral, he studied with a Jewish convert, Alexander Neibauer, who had an extensive library on the Jewish Kabbalah.⁹¹ Smith gleaned many of his complex ideas from him.”⁹²

“I thought,” Robert mused, “that Joseph Smith was supposed to be uneducated?”

“Smith’s uneducated background,” I said, “is often promoted by LDS leaders. But, he was no dummy. He may have been illiterate in the beginning, but he was an avid learner, tutored by Neibaur.⁹³ He had Latin, Hebrew, German and Greek New Testaments. Whether he could read them all is debatable; however, LDS history says he could read the German New Testament.”⁹⁴

“Yes, Susan?”

“All this may be true about Joseph Smith. But look at the LDS Church today--it doesn’t believe all that superstitious stuff now. They have high morals, excellent ethics . . .”

“That’s all true, Susan. No one knows that better than I. But, you’re missing an important point. For example, will you please read Deuteronomy 18:9-14 to the class.” Susan reluctantly flipped the pages of her Bible and began reading in a monotone:

Let no one be found among you . . . who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord.

“Well,” Susan said defiantly, “Mormons *do* believe in Christ!”

At the tone of her voice, the students stared in surprise. Susan became flustered.

“Well, I mean,” she said with a nervous laugh, “don’t they believe in Christ?”

“Even the most radical cults preach Christ,” I responded. “Therefore, it’s always important to examine the foundation. The foundation in this instance is Joseph Smith.

“Susan, one could easily be tempted to say, ‘Well, let’s not hold Joseph Smith against the Mormon Church--look how far they’ve come. And they no longer believe in divining rods, and present day leaders don’t engage in occult practices. But the issue is not that they don’t practice them anymore. The issue is--*that* is what their church was built upon!

“A true church,” I said, “ must line up with *all* of God’s Word. In particular, God’s true prophet must live a godly life.

“Can you imagine God allowing his Old Testament prophets to indulge in occult activities? Smith’s reputation was so bad in this respect that he was refused membership in the Methodist Church.

“When Joseph Smith asked to join, the Methodist preacher at first was unaware of his occult activities and put his name on the rolls.⁹⁵ Eventually, a board member, Joseph Lewis, heard about it and objected. He said, ‘Joseph’s manner of life rendered him unfit to be a member,’ and Smith was asked to withdraw unless he wanted to recant, confess, and reform himself. He refused.⁹⁶ Later, in the *Amboy* paper, Lewis, along with a local preacher, Joshua McKune, explained:

We thought it was a disgrace to the church to have a practicing necromancer, a dealer in enchantments and bleeding ghosts . . . his occupation, habits and moral character were at variance with the discipline [and] his name would be a disgrace to the church.⁹⁷

“Susan, It makes no difference whether Mormons have high ethics or profess a belief in Christ. If the foundation is not what it claims to be, it’s a lie.”

“Well,” Susan said, somewhat more subdued, “you’ve made your point. But, I wonder why Mormon leaders don’t wipe the slate clean, tell the truth to their members, gradually get rid of their weird beliefs, and continue to build their church around their ethics and belief in Jesus?”

“Mormon leaders,” I replied, “find themselves between a rock and a hard place. Knowing, as they do, the facts about Joseph Smith, they realize that if they admit to them, they chance destroying the faith of the members. Therefore, out of necessity they have to continue white-washing the image of Joseph Smith and extolling the divine foundation of the church.

“As a result, Mormons continue to be deceived. No individual who knows the truth about the Mormon Church’s occult background could possibly follow Joseph Smith as a prophet nor embrace his teachings. It would be a futile faith--like trying to build a house on a foundation of shifting sand.

“But, now,” I said, “Our time is running out, so let’s quickly run over what we’ve covered.

“Today, we learned four ways Smith was directed to the gold plates. His associates said Joseph found them through a brown seer stone. Smith, however, claimed a Spanish ghost first, second, a dream, and then finally, an angel.

“In addition, he was involved in ritual magic, the occult, blood sacrifices, divining rods and peep stones. He also incorporated Masonic rituals and ancient religious

ceremonies into his new church, passing them off as revelation. He then conned people into believing they were requirements for salvation.”

“Do you think,” Susan interrupted, “that Smith really had any gold plates?”

“Well, if he had any,” I replied, “they couldn’t possibly have been gold. With the measurements being 7” x 8” x 6” and gold weighing 1.5 pounds per cubic inch, if solid they would have weighed nearly *200 pounds*. Even allowing that they weren’t solid and deducting some of the weight to allow for spaces between sheets and the hollowed-out engravings, it isn’t possible. There is no way Joseph, according to his mother’s story, could have tucked them beneath one arm, walked home, jumped over a log and ran a mile from would-be attackers.⁹⁸ Neither could his Book of Mormon characters carry them on foot 3,000 miles from Central America to New York.”

Suddenly Matt changed the subject, “When are you and Susan meeting with the Mormon Elders again?”

“Tomorrow night,” I said. “Their lesson will be on the Book of Mormon. They’ll no doubt quote Isaiah 29:14 and Ezekiel 37, and probably throw in MesoAmerican archaeology for good measure.

“But, don’t worry,” I laughed, “Susan and I will report, so you won’t miss out on anything.”

With a few minutes to spare I quickly gave the class their assignment and dismissed them. Susan, for some reason, hurried out of the classroom before I could talk to her. Tia, I noticed, hung back.

Fussing with papers on my desk, I gave her an opening. When the classroom emptied, she walked over.

“Interesting lesson,” she said. “I’m looking forward to hearing about South American ruins--I’m sure it’s something I’ll have to deal with when I become a missionary.” Then her face clouded.

“I thought maybe you ought to know something,” she hesitantly began. “Wendy, daughter of that fellowshipping family where the missionaries hold their meetings, called Susan up and invited her to a Ward basketball game tonight.”

“Did she accept?” I asked, already surmising the answer.

“Yeah, that’s why she left so quickly. I tried to talk her out of it,” Tia said defensively. “But, she said there was nothing wrong with going to a simple basketball game. But, I know she’s hoping Elder Black will be there.”

My heart sank as I plopped down into my chair. “She still doesn’t know what she’s getting into,” I sighed.

“Well,” Tia continued, “I’m concerned over something else. She’s really got it bad for Elder Black--I mean, he’s all she talks about. She’s convinced that because Elder Black loves the Lord, he’ll give up his religion for her.

“I’m not supposed to tell you this, but she received a letter from him. It was a real nice letter, talking about how he loved Jesus and the Mormon Gospel. He also said he only has a few months before his mission is over and hopes to see her after that.”

I shook my head disapprovingly. “Has Susan talked at all about the Biblical errors the missionaries have made in their lessons? Has she indicated that *anything* we’ve discussed in class is changing her mind?”

“Yes,” Tia replied, “and she has times when she really gets down in the dumps over it. I’ve even heard her crying at night.”

“Well,” I said, “Elder Black may be interested in her, but if she thinks he’s going to give up Mormonism,” I shook my head sadly, “she’s in for a hard blow. I wish you could have tried harder to talk her out of going.”

“I tried, but you know Susan--she even invited me to come along.”

“Tia, you’re her best friend--you’ve got to do what you can. Try to make her see that Wendy’s friendship has only one purpose--to convert her to Mormonism. Elder Black’s objective is the same.

“If Elder Black pursues a romantic relationship with her after he’s released, he’ll insist on a temple marriage. Then, Susan is going to be faced with a heavy dilemma. She’ll have to choose between the Bible and a false faith. Will she be strong, or will she give up her faith in Jesus for faith in Joseph Smith? Not an easy decision when one is young and emotions are involved.” I smiled grimly.

We walked out of the classroom together and paused beneath a large mesquite tree. For another fifteen minutes I continued talking, trying to provide Tia with ways to help Susan.

When we parted, I wondered if my efforts with Susan were really doing any good. Maybe I’d made a terrible mistake by not reporting her to the Girls Dean in the beginning. But, knowing how headstrong Susan was, she would have sneaked and gone anyway. But at least she wasn’t attending the missionaries’ lessons alone.

Walking towards my car, I contemplated the next missionary meeting. If I was going to get through to Susan, I’d have to quit being so polite with the Elders and confront them head on.

Perhaps, by challenging them more, Susan would see the fallacy of their beliefs. More importantly, see where Elder Black truly stood and the futility of pursuing a relationship.

“Lord--don’t let Elder Black pluck her out of your hand!”

ENDNOTES

¹Smith claimed that by putting his face into the darkness of a hat containing a seer stone, “spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and beneath it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear.” (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, by David Whitmer, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, p. 12.) Cited in *Mormonism, Magic and Masonry* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner (Salt Lake City, Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1983), 26. [Hereinafter, *Magic*.]

²According to Mormon scholars, Richard Van Wagoner and Steve, the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon claimed to have been translated by switching between the Urim and Thummin and the peep stone. Walker (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1982, p. 53.) See *Magic*, 27.) Smith’s mother described the Urim and Thummin as consisting “of two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, and the glasses were set in silver bows, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old fashioned spectacles.” (*Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith*, p. 101.)

³Wesley P. Walters, “From Occult to Cult with Joseph Smith, Jr.” Cited in *Magic*, 20. (Italics, mine.) Tanners note that Lucy Smith’s statement appears on page 77 of the preliminary draft of her history which is located in the Historical Department of the LDS Church. (See *Magic*, 20.)

⁴*Mormon Answers to Skepticism*, St. Louis, Missouri, 1980, p. 105. Cited in *Magic*, 20-21. According to an article by John E. Thompson entitled, “The Faculty of Abrac,” the faculty of Abrac dated to the 17th century and was known in Smith’s time and neighborhood.

⁵Acrostics were used by the Hebrews to aid in memorization. “Hebrew poem[s] of which the initial letters of the lines or stanzas formed the alphabet in order. Twelve of the Psalms are of this character, of which Psalm cxix. is the best example.” (*Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*. Deluxe second edition (Dorset & Baber, 1979), 19.

⁶Robert Hendrickson, *Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins* (Fact on File Pub., 1987) 2-3.

⁷Ibid. Masons claimed to be able to obtain the faculty of Abrac.

⁸*A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:26-27. (Italics mine.) Cited in *Magic*, 18.

⁹*Historical Magazine*, May 1870, 306.

¹⁰*Mormonism Unveiled*, 249. Cited in *Magic*, 26.

¹¹When Smith translated the plates they were, at the time, in a location elsewhere--hidden in the woods. (See David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of the Book of Mormon* (N.C., McFarland & Co. 1985), 73. Therefore, he did not literally translate the plates, but divined their message, supernaturally.

¹²*Naked Truths About Mormonism*, January 1888, cited in *Mormon Answer to Skepticism*, p. 104. “He said he saw Captain Kidd sailing on the Susquehanna River during a freshet, and that he buried two pots of gold and silver. He claimed he saw writing cut on the rocks in an unknown language telling where Kidd buried it, and he translated it through his peep-stone.” Cited in *Magic*, 27.

¹³Joel Tiffany, “Mormonism-No. II,” *Tiffany’s Monthly* 5 (August 1859): 163-170, quoted in H. Michael Marquardt and Wesley P. Walters, *Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record* (N.p., Smith Research Associates, 1994), 205-6. See also Tanner and Tanner, *Magic*, 25. This (brown) stone was found in the well at a depth of “twenty or twenty-two feet. After this, Joseph spent about two years looking into this stone, telling fortunes, where to find lost things, and where to dig for money and other hidden treasure.” (*Historical Magazine*, May 1870, p. 306.) Smith also had a *white* stone which is the one usually referred to as the Urim and Thummin. He claimed to have translated the Book of Abraham with this white seer stone, rather than the brown one. (See *Mormon Hierarchy* by D. Michael Quinn, pp. 616-623.) The brown stone used to translate the Book of Mormon, was the stone Smith first used during his occupation as a money-digger. (See Quinn, 4.)

¹⁴C.M. Stafford claimed that Joseph Smith studied the palm of his hand and told his fortune. (*Naked Truths About Mormonism*, April 1888.) Cited in *Magic*, 26. See also Tanner, *Magic*, 18.

¹⁵A Patriarchal blessing is pronounced by an authorized Patriarch. His job is to declare which tribe one descends from and often tells the individual’s future.

¹⁶James Collin Brewster, *Very Important! To the Mormon Money Diggers. Why do the Mormons rage and the people imagine a vain thing?* (March 20, 1843, Springfield, IL.) Cited in *Magic*, 19.

¹⁷See *The Mormon Hierarchy* by D. Michael Quinn, 1994, p. 645.

¹⁸This revelation appeared in the 1833 Book of Commandments, predecessor to the Doctrine & Covenants.

¹⁹*Book of Commandments* 7:3. (Italic, mine.) Cited in *Magic*, 29. See actual photograph of the original revelation contained in the Book of Commandments, in Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality?*, p. 19. Joseph Smith’s divining rod was given to Oliver Cowdery’s brother-in-law, Phineas Young. Young was also brother to Brigham Young and gave it to the latter. The rod, or cane Brigham Young was often seen with after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley and with which he pointed out where the Salt Lake Temple would be, was the same rod. (See *Brigham Young University Studies*, Fall 1978, p. 82, in article by D. Michael Quinn. Cited in *Magic*, 30.) Presently, Doctrine & Covenants 8:6 reads “gift of Aaron”.

²⁰*The Encyclopedia of Occult Sciences*, 322. Cited in *Magic*, 29. Calling a divining rod as a Rod of Aaron can also be verified in *The Divining Rod*, published in 1894, p. 1.

²¹This instance was related by William Stafford, contemporary of Smith’s. The procedure of using a sword is found in the magic book, *The Greater Key of Solomon*, p. 26. Cited in *Magic*, 32. See also, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 237-239. Cited in *Magic*, 31.

²²*Mormonism Unveiled*, 237-239. Cited in *Magic*, 32.

²³*The Greater Key of Solomon*, 122. Cited in *Magic*, 33.

²⁴See Tanner, *Magic*, 32-33.

²⁵*Mormonism: or Life Among the Mormons*, 1882, as cited by Wesley P. Walters in *Joseph Smith’s Bainbridge, N.Y., Court Trials*, Part 2, p. 125. Cited in *Magic*, 34.

²⁶Richard L. Anderson, *Brigham Young University Studies*, Spring 1970, p. 294. A nephew of William Stafford testified: “Jo Smith, the prophet, told my uncle, William Stafford, he wanted a fat, black sheep. He said he wanted to cut its throat and make it walk in a circle three times around and it would prevent a pot of money from leaving.” *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, Jan. 1888, p. 3, as cited in Anderson’s article. See also *Magic*, 33.

²⁷Wandle Mace records this event in his journal: “Joseph told them to go to Kirtland, and cleanse and purify a certain room in the Temple, that they must kill a lamb and offer a sacrifice unto the Lord which should prepare them to ordain Willard Richards a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.” (Journal of Wandle Mace, p. 32, microfilmed copy at Brigham Young University.) See also *Magic*, 34.

²⁸See Chapter 1 for full quotation.

²⁹According to Dr. Reed C. Durham, Jr., Jupiter was known to the Egyptians as Ammon; Zeus to the Greeks. Jupiter, in the presence of his priest, supposedly performed the most ancient form of marriage, marriage for time and for eternity. (See *Mormon Miscellaneous*, 15. The Masonic Order also endorsed the magic Table of Jupiter.

³⁰One phrase was in Latin.

³¹Dr. Durham was chastised by Mormon leaders after he revealed the Masonic and magic connection of Joseph Smith and was made to sign a “test oath,” a statement swearing allegiance to the divine mission of Joseph Smith.

³²*The Magus*, by Francis Barrett. Printed in England in 1801, published in American in 1804, it was available in Smith’s time. Dr. Durham traced it to Manchester and to New York. See also *Magic*, 2.

³³*Mormon Miscellaneous*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Oct. 1975, 14-15. Cited in *Magic*, 2.

³⁴*Mormon Miscellaneous*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1975, 14-15. See also *Magic*, 2-3.

³⁵*Mormon Miscellaneous*, 1:1, Oct. 1975, 14-15.

³⁶*Ibid.* For a picture of the talisman, see *Magic*, 3. Interestingly, in astrology, Thursday is Jupiter’s day and for sixty years Mormon fast meetings were on Thursdays. So also were the Lodge meetings of the Mormon Masons.

³⁷Michael W. Homer, “Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,” 27, no. 3 *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Fall 1994): 24.

³⁸*Hyrum Smith-Patriarch* by Pearson H. Corbett, describes these objects. See *Magic*, 5ff.

³⁹*The Discovery of Witchcraft* by Reginald Scot. First printed in 1584, photographically reprinted in 1971. See *Magic*, 12. (The Tanners’ book also contains pictures.)

⁴⁰*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Summer 1982, p. 66.

⁴¹See D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy* (Salt Lake City, 1994), 659. Also, Anthon H. Lund Journal for July 5, 1901. Also cited in *Magic*, 30.

⁴²See *Mormon Hierarchy*, 649.

⁴³Joseph Smith’s use of the term “apostate endowment” meant that the Masons originally had the true temple ceremony but, through time, it degenerated and many truths were lost.

⁴⁴“The Masonic Emblems & Parchments of Joseph & Hyrum Smith,” compiled by Arturo de Hoyos, 1982, pp. 1-2. (Italics, mine.) See also *Magic*, 17.

⁴⁵Witnesses say he used a stone to locate the box. Smith, upon looking into his stone, may have interpreted the psychic vision as a dream, making it sound more Biblical.

⁴⁶The sequence of events is reminiscent of the Masonic Legend of Enoch. Although Joseph Smith was not inducted into the Masonic Lodge until March 15, 1842, after his Book of Mormon story, his knowledge of Masonic lore could have been acquired earlier from his brother Hyrum who was a Mason. Books were also in print containing Masonic stories.

⁴⁷Article published in the *Amboy Journal*, April 30, 1879, by Joseph and Hiel Lewis. (Parenthetical phrases are part of the quote.) See also *Magic*, 41.

⁴⁸*Historical Magazine*, May 1870, pp. 306-307. See also *Magic*, 40.

⁴⁹The name of “Nephi” as the angel, appeared in the following publications: The 1851 edition of the Pearl of Great Price; *Millennial Star*, Lucy Mack Smith’s biography on Joseph Smith; and *Times and Seasons*, dated April 15, 1842, 3:753. Joseph Smith was editor of the *Times and Seasons* at the time the account of his story was published. The full quote of the angel appearing in Smith’s room, can be found in Bill McKeever’s *Answering Mormons’ Questions* (Minneapolis, Bethany House, 1991), 96-97. For a more detailed account of the angel’s name-change, see Tanner’s *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality?*, 136-137, 1972 edition. It has also been suggested that Smith could have been influenced by a story contained in Draper’s *Intellectual Development of Europe*, p. 382 which reads: “About the close of the twelfth century appeared among the mendicant friars that ominous work, which, under the title of ‘The Everlasting Gospel,’ struck terror into the Latin hierarchy. It was affirmed that an angel had brought it from heaven, engraven on copper plates, and had given it to a priest named Cyril, who delivered it to the Abbot Joachim.” Cited in James H. Snowden’s *The Truth About Mormonism* (New York, George H. Doran Co., 1926), 108.

⁵⁰Derived from Kabbalistic lore.

⁵¹ According to Dr. Reed Durham, Jr., the *Legend of Enoch* was refined and incorporated into modern Masonry in France 1740-1760. By 1802, American Masonry had it in print and by Smith's time was available in bookstores. See *Magic*, 47.

⁵² *Mormon Miscellaneous*, 15. This legend given in the 13th, 14th and 21st degree of Masonry.

⁵³ Michael W. Homer, "Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry," 27, no. 3 *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Fall 1994): 17.

⁵⁴ *The Freemason's Monitor or Illustrations of Masonry* by Thomas S. Webb (New York, Southwick and Crooker, 1802), 256.

⁵⁵ See *Doctrine & Covenants*, sections 78, 92, 96 and 104.

⁵⁶ The Book of Mormon index says: "contain[s] five books of Moses, history of Jews to reign of Zedekiah, genealogy. See *Plates, Brass*."

⁵⁷ Wesley P. Walters, *The Human Origins of the Book of Mormon* (Ex-Mormons for Jesus, Clearwater, FL), 24.

⁵⁸ *Palmyra Reflector*, February 28, 1831. See also James H. Snowden, *The Truth About Mormonism*, 57, citing an affidavit given in *Mormonism Unveiled* by Howe, 235-36.

⁵⁹ *A Star in the West, or an Attempt to Discover the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel*.

⁶⁰ *Palmyra Reflector*, Feb. 28, 1831, as cited in *Magic*, 2.

⁶¹ A Mormon writer, Lance S. Owens, in an article for *Diallogue* "Joseph Smith and Kabbalah: The Occult Connection", p. 171, claims the letter is a forgery.

⁶² A letter of Joseph Smith to Mr. John Hull of Lempster, New Hampshire, as cited in *Mormon Miscellaneous*, p. 13. According to Reed C. Durham, Jr., Joseph makes it "clear in the letter that the Kingdom of God was thought to be the true masonry which, when ultimately established with a king and a president, would abolish all earthly confusion and evil and usher in the Millennium. The whole earth was compared symbolically to a Grand Masonic Lodge, the counterpart of which was the Grand Lodge in the eternal regions of Glory." After a lengthy description of Masonic related descriptions, Joseph concludes, "This is my present survey of Masonry in this world."

⁶³ In Hermetic books of Christian philosophers during the 17th century, the idea of opposites seeking union was conveyed by the symbols of sun and moon. The sacred wedding of King and Queen Rex and Regina picture them with the sun and moon.

⁶⁴ *Mormon Miscellaneous*, 13. Dr. Durham admits that "the Kingdom of God doctrine was masonically inspired. The Masonic Constitution is called the *Ahiman Rezon*."

⁶⁵ A typical Masonic Lodge is a room in the shape of a rectangle, having an altar in the center. At the east end, the Worshipful Master sits on a platform. The Senior Warden sits on the west, the Junior Warden on the south. Similarities can be seen in pictures of the Mormon temple assembly rooms.

⁶⁶ *Mormon Miscellaneous*, 13.

⁶⁷ Owens, 145.

⁶⁸ See Owen, 145-146.

⁶⁹ Of interest is the similarity between the Temple Mormon's "first token of the Melchizedek Priesthood or sign of the nail," and that of the Masonic honorary degree of *Secret Monitor*, the latter conferred only upon approved Master Masons. Whereas other Masonic degrees are based upon the story of Solomon, Hyrum Abiff, and Enoch's treasure, this degree revolves around 1 Samuel 20, David and Jonathan's interview of concern about King Saul. A Masonic brother of this degree learns, through a special handgrip how to caution (or encourage) another brother in public. In the Mormon temple the token is not a handgrip, *per se*. Rather, the individual receiving the token holds his hand out in the attitude of preparing to shake hands. The person giving the token, presses the point of his forefinger in the center of the receiver's palm, with his thumb on the opposite side of the hand. The *Secret Monitor* grip "is [also] given in the palm of the hand, with one finger, or two, impressing the palm, according to the necessity of caution, or to the occasion for encouragement." (*Antimasonic Review, and Magazine* by Henry Dana Ward, II:67.) In another order of Masonry, a Knight of Malta is told to "force the first finger into the centre of the [other's] palm." (*Richardson's Monitor of Free Masonry*, 126.) Cited in Tanner, *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality?* (1972), 488.

⁷⁰ *Mormon Miscellaneous*, 12.

⁷¹ See Owen, 143-145. The Beehive, in Freemasonry, was one of the ten emblems given to a Master Mason. Those who interpreted industry as seeking for physical gold, called "vulgar gold" were considered "drones". (See Owens, 143.)

⁷² According to Madam Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, the circle sitting on a straight horizontal line . . . comes from the Aryans, Egyptians, and Chaldeans, representing hidden deity, creative power, and divine thought

versus creation.” In another place she says the circle’s name is Ru; that “it sits upon the head of the vertical beam of the cross, across which is a horizontal beam, thus forming the cross, called the Sau-Cross.” According to Blavatsky, this Ru/Sau cross was one time on the back of a Phoenician coin. This was also called “Venus’ looking-glass,” a symbol of human procreation.

⁷³Brigham Young gave this purpose for the temple endowment: “Your endowment is to receive all those ordinances in the House of the Lord, which are necessary for you, after you have departed this life, to enable you to walk back to the presence of the Father, passing the angels who stand as sentinels, being enabled to give them the key words, the signs and tokens, pertaining to the Holy Priesthood, and gain you eternal exaltation in spite of earth and hell.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 2:31-32.)

⁷⁴Joseph Smith taught that the angels in heaven used Masonic handgrips. According to E. Cecil McGavin: “There is best evidence for believing that Joseph taught that Masonic principles and practices operated among the gods as well as on earth. His followers in Utah were taught, that there is a sort of divine Masonry among the angels who hold the priesthood, by which they can detect those who do not belong to their order. Those who cannot give the signs correctly are supposed to be impostors . . .” (*Mormonism and Masonry*, Salt Lake City, Bookcraft, 1949, 6.) See also Homer, “Similary in Priesthood in Masonry,” 64.

⁷⁵The five points of fellowship given in the LDS Temple, is never explained in detail. Members believe it is a ritualistic act which they must know to pass by the angels in heaven. Since Joseph Smith took it from Masonry, here is the Masonic understanding: “Foot to foot (teaches) that we will not hesitate to go on foot and out of our way to aid and succor a needy Brother; knee to knee, that we will ever remember a Brother’s welfare, in all our applications to Deity; breast to breast, that we will ever keep, in our breast, a Brother’s secrets, when communicated to us as such, murder and treason excepted; hand to back, that we will ever be ready to stretch forth our hand to aid and support a falling Brother; cheek to cheek, or mouth to ear, that we will ever whisper good counsel in the ear of a Brother, and in the most tender manner remind him of his faults, and endeavor to aid his reformation . . .” (McGavin, *Mormonism and Masonry*, 11.)

⁷⁶Early Mormons, believed the “temple garment represented the ‘white stone’ or new name given to each candidate.” Michael W. Homer, “Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,” 27, no. 3 *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Fall 1994): 40.

⁷⁷*Mormon Miscellaneous*, 12.

⁷⁸*Mormon Miscellaneous*, 16. (Italics, mine.)

⁷⁹Tanner, *Magic*, 50.

⁸⁰The Tanners also note that the last part of the word “Cu-*morah*” reminds one of the hill, *Mo-riah*. For other examples, as well as Biblical sources for the names of the books within the Book of Mormon, see *Mormonism-Shadow or Reality?*, 94-95.

⁸¹*Mormon Miscellaneous*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October 1975, p. 5.

⁸²Walter F. Prince, “Tests for the Authorship of the Book of Mormon,” *American Journal of Psychology*, XXVIII, July, 1917. As cited in *Mormon Miscellaneous*, 6.

⁸³According to Dr. Durham. (Italics, mine.)

⁸⁴In June 1837, the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, along with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, mention that the Eleusianian mysteries were rituals passed down from the beginning of the world, but revealed only to special initiates and enumerated the various rituals, e.g., washings and anointings, a oaths and penalties, a new name, etc. The Mormon temple ceremony comprises the same. See *A Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, edited by Shailer Mathews and Gerald Birney Smith, (N.Y., Macmillan, 1921), 300. See also *Mormon Hierarchy* by D. Michael Quinn, 626.

⁸⁵*Mormon Miscellaneous*, 14. *The Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*, in June of 1837 recognized this resemblance between the mystery religions of New Testament times. There were also books on these subjects.

⁸⁶“Freemasonry adopted portions of the Kabbalah into its third degree, the Royal Arch, and into some of the higher grades.” (Home, “Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry,” 108.

⁸⁷*Mormon Miscellaneous*, 14. Smith was unaware that Masonry did not actually have an ancient origin, but began in A.D. 1717. After the last leader of the Rosicrucians died, the Masons adopted their mystery teachings, then burned the written evidence so as to destroy any connection with Rosicrucianism and instigate the idea that the contents of their organization descended directly from the ancients. See *The Antimasonic Review and Magazine* by Henry Dana Ward, 1828, 1:194.

⁸⁸The availability of these sources were mentioned in June 1837 in the *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*.

⁸⁹The idea of the drama as originally used in the Rosicrucian order, was incorporated into French Masonry in 1750. As allegorical “mystery plays”, they taught their rituals which were “fundamentally Hermetic-Kabbalistic.” (Owens, 151.) Of further interest is the 28th Degree of the Scottish rite, also known as “the Rite de Perfection,” which “is to be administered in a room painted like a vast garden, with open fields, forests, and mountains.” (Owens, 168.)

⁹⁰Joseph Smith said, “Now, I ask all who hear me, why the learned men who are preaching salvation, say that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing? The reason is, that they are unlearned in the things of God, and have not the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . But I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and he is within me, and comprehends more than all the world; and I will associate myself with him.” History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Period 1. History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet by Himself. (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1978), 6:309.

⁹¹History of the Church, 6:305-312. In one part of the sermon, in discussing Genesis, Smith states, “I will go to the old Bible”. Owens states that “he really means the Zohar, since in Kabbalistic lore, it was seen as such.” (Owens, 183.)

⁹²For an impressive list, see Owens, 191-192. Included was the Yalqut Khadash a 17th century Kabbalistic text which interestingly contained information “on the mystical and salvific intention of sexual union between male and female.” (Owen, 191.)

⁹³Neibauer published a Kabbalist treatise in a Mormon publication covering the Zohar, a famous text of the Jewish Kabbalah which spoke of sacred sexual unions. Joseph Smith’s diary states he was studying with Neibauer in 1844. This is also confirmed by former LDS Historian, D. Michael Quinn in Mormon Hierarchy, 643. Smith, in turn, taught this to his key people, for in the Millennial Star, Orson Hyde drew an illustration of the Kingdom of God which resembled the Kabbalistic Tree of Life symbolizing the “mystical shape of the Godhead” which was illustrated in Fludd’s 1621 Rosicrucian work. (See Owens, 186-187.)

⁹⁴Neibaur was fluent in French, German, Hebrew and was able to read Latin and Greek. (See Owens, 174.)

⁹⁵History of the Church, 4:307. Smith said the German was the most correct translation because it corresponded closest to the revelations God had given him.

⁹⁶His request to join the Methodist church is believed by some to be due to the death of his first born child.

⁹⁷Utah Christian Tract Society, newsletter July-August, 1971. Cited in Tanner, Magic, 54-55. See also, Mormon Claims Answered by Marvin W. Cowan, 9.

⁹⁸The Amboy Journal, June 11, 1879, p. 1. Cited in Magic, 55.

⁹⁹“Non-gold plates,” The Evangel, November 1994, p. 6. See also, “Joseph Smith’s Gold Plates,” Utah Christian Tract Society, p. 5. This tract cites Joseph Smith’s History By His Mother, 104-105.

