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The Covenant Path of the Ancient Temple in 2 Nephi 31:19–20

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Abstract: *In this article, I discuss how the ancient analogue to what President Nelson has called "the covenant path" might be seen in the Book of Mormon and elsewhere in scripture not so much as a journey of covenant-keeping that takes us to the temple but as a journey that takes us through the temple. Throughout the Book of Mormon, observant readers will find not only the general outline of the doctrine of Christ but also corresponding details about the covenant path as represented in temple layout and furnishings. Nowhere is this truth better illustrated than in 2 Nephi 31:19–20 where Nephi summarizes the sequence of priesthood ordinances that prepare disciples to enter God's presence. In doing so, he masterfully weaves in related imagery—guiding readers on an end-to-end tour of the temple while reminding them of the three cardinal virtues of faith, hope, and charity. The doctrinal richness of these two verses is a compelling demonstration of the value of President Nelson's encouragement to study the biblical context of modern temples as a source of enlightenment about the meaning of the ordinances. This essay also suggests that the foundational elements of Latter-day Saint temple rites are ancient and were given to Joseph Smith very early in his ministry as he translated the Book of Mormon. It is hoped that a closer look at the beautiful imagery in 2 Nephi 31 will provide profitable reflection for readers.*

From the time of his first public address to the Church after becoming president of the Church, Russell M. Nelson highlighted the importance of personal progression on the "covenant path."[1] Latter-day Saint temple symbolism reflects the idea that the nature of progress

on the covenant path is incremental. It employs an invariable succession of covenants,[2] names,[3] relationships,[4] roles,[5] virtues,[6] ordinances and priesthoods,[7] and types of clothing[8] as figurative signposts[9] corresponding to different stages of existence and their associated glories. These signposts are accompanied by a series of tokens, signs, names, and key words. Symbolism of this sort is not modern in origin but was once employed in a range of religious settings throughout the ancient Near East and in early Christianity.[10]

President Nelson has also taught that temple worship is ancient. Going further he said that knowing that "temple rites are ancient . . . is thrilling and another evidence of their authenticity." Temple worship is a "sacred and ageless work."[11]

Figure 1 shows, at the left, an illustration of the covenant path from a Church magazine.[12] It represents the path as a modern highway that passes through milestones representing priesthood ordinances. Such illustrations, conveying as they should the central role of ordinances in our progression toward eternal life, can be helpful teaching aids for modern readers. However, since the ordinances go back to the beginning of time, it may be useful to think about how the covenant path was envisioned anciently. The ancient analogue to the covenant path would not have been imagined as something that resembles a modern drive on a highway *to* the temple. Instead, what clues we possess indicate that it was often seen as a walking journey *through* the temple.

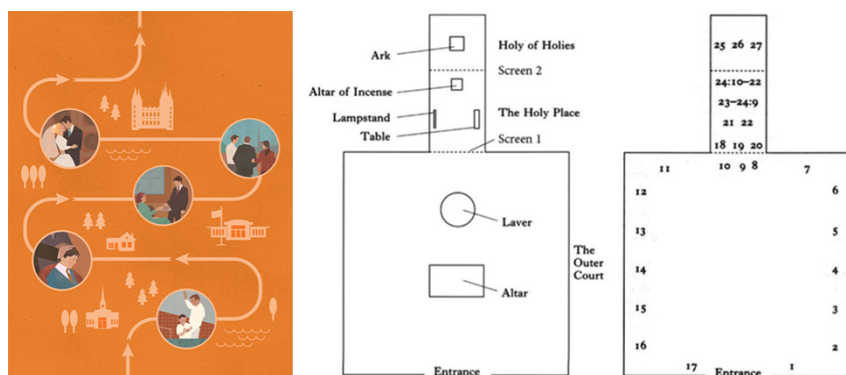For instance, John W. Welch has pointed attention to the research

Figure 1. *Left*: Covenant path as a modern highway *to* the temple, passing through milestones representing required priesthood ordinances. *Center and right*: Mary Douglas's correspondence of chapters in Leviticus to a counterclockwise movement *through* the temple.

of Old Testament scholar Mary Douglas.[13] In a brilliant leap of imagination, Douglas realized that the exposition of the laws contained in the book of Leviticus could be best understood when read as if they provided a tour through the ancient Israelite temple. The tour, illustrated in the center and right portions of figure 1, begins with a counterclockwise movement through the courtyard. Then it is followed by movement through the first veil into the Holy Place and then through the second veil into the Holy of Holies. Through this journey, temple worshippers who study Leviticus are exposed to the setting and context for the laws that were given to God's people anciently. Thus, in this instance, the covenant path leads *through* the temple rather than *to* the temple.

One of the most important features of progress through the different spaces of sacredness in the endowment (whether represented as separate rooms or as different phases of existence within the same room) is that movement from one place to another is carefully controlled. The sequence of movement is always the same and is closely regulated by the temple workers, essentially "human cherubim,"[14] who are assigned to lead temple worshipers in and out of each sacred space.

Following the example of Adam and Eve after the Fall, members of the endowment company are required to make covenants to keep the laws that apply to the next space they are preparing to enter *before* they are allowed to move there. For example, only those who have covenanted to keep the law of obedience and sacrifice are allowed to enter the space representing the mortal world, for those "who cannot abide the law of a telestial kingdom cannot abide a telestial glory" (Doctrine and Covenants 88:24). Likewise, only those who make a covenant to keep the law of the gospel while they are in the space representing the mortal world are allowed to enter the terrestrial world.

The principles of order that govern progress in the endowment are applicable to all ordinances, from baptism to the highest rites of the temple and beyond. Summarizing the progressive nature of the Nauvoo temple ordinances as they were introduced on 4 May 1842, Elder Willard Richards wrote that they included[15]

> washings, anointings, endowments, and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, setting forth the order pertaining to the Ancient of Days, and all those plans and principles by which anyone is enabled

to secure the fulness of those blessings which have been prepared for the Church of the Firstborn, and come up and abide in the presence of the Elohim in the eternal worlds.

Faith, Hope, and Charity as the Principal Rungs on the Ladder of Exaltation

The orderly progression of Saints toward eternal life was often symbolized as a ladder of exaltation, drawn in part from the story of Jacob's ladder in Genesis.[16] Faith, hope, and charity — what eventually came to be known as the three theological virtues — were associated in the writings of early Christian teachers such as John Climacus, Saint Augustine, and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux with the three principal rungs on Jacob's ladder. The ladder was a symbol of the general process of spiritual progression by which the disciple, enabled by the grace of God, climbs to perfection. Depictions such as the one in figure 2 also showed the fate of those who failed to hold firmly to the ladder as they continued their ascent. As in Lehi's vision of the Tree of Life, some, "after they had tasted of the fruit … fell away into forbidden paths and were lost" (1 Nephi 8:28).[17]

Table 1 illustrates how *graphical* depictions of the three principal rungs of the ladder in medieval times correspond to *textual* illustrations in the New Testament and in modern scripture. The table demonstrates that scriptural catalogs of virtues, far from being a randomly assembled laundry list, were usually deliberately structured to form an ordered progression leading to a culminating point.[18] In Greek, Jewish, and Christian literature, this rhetorical device is called *sorites*, *climax*, or *gradatio*.[19] Bible scholar Harold Attridge explained the incremental, ladder-like property of the personal qualities given in such lists:[20]

> In this "ladder" of virtues, each virtue is the means of producing the next (this sense of the Greek is lost in translation). All the virtues grow out of *faith*, and all culminate in *love*.

Though some elements of the four lists differ,[21] the qualities of faith, hope (or its equivalents, *patience* and *endurance*), and charity are always present, forming, as Joseph Neyrey puts it, "the determining framework in which other virtues are inserted."[22] The idea of three key virtues embedded within a varying list of secondary attributes appears to be very old. Although the biblical triad of faith, hope, and charity is, strictly speaking, a New Testament construct, older Old Testament analogues have also been proposed.[23]

Figure 2. *The Ladder of Virtues of St. John Climacus*, north façade detail, Sucevita Monastery, Romania, 1602–1604. (Public domain.) The words above each rung of the ladder refer to Christian virtues. Angels hold a crown above the head of each ascending individual in anticipation of their being crowned as kings. The individual at the top of the ladder has already received his crown. The Lord greets him with a firm clasp of the wrist while displaying a parchment with writing in Old Slavonic that reads: "Come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden."[24]

In each of the instances shown in table 1, the promised reward is the same: personal fellowship with Deity — as also symbolized in the illustrations shown in figures 2, 10, and 11. Specifically, in Romans 5:2 disciples are told that they will "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This means they can look forward with glad confidence, knowing they "will be able to share in the revelation of God — in other words, that [they] will come to know Him as He is."[25]

Similarly, in 2 Peter 1:4, 8, 10, disciples are promised that they will become "partakers of the divine nature" and that they will ultimately be fruitful "in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" — thus, in Joseph Smith's reading, making their "calling and election sure."[26] This is similar to the promise given in 2 Nephi 31:19–20, a passage we will discuss in more detail later below.

Table 1. Table illustrating how faith, hope, and charity — usually listed in this order — form the determining framework in which other personal qualities are inserted within longer lists of scriptural virtues.

Romans 5:1–5	2 Peter 1:5–7	2 Nephi 31:19–20	Doctrine and Covenants 4:6
faith	**faith**	**faith**	**faith**
	virtue		virtue
peace	knowledge		knowledge
	temperance		temperance
hope [patience[27]]	**patience**	**hope**	**patience**
	godliness		
	brotherly kindness		brotherly kindness
			godliness
love	**charity**	**love**	**charity**
			humility
			diligence

Finally, the promise given to faithful Saints in Doctrine and Covenants 4:7 echoes the words of Jesus that outline requirements for entrance into the kingdom of heaven: "Ask, and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"[28] — a threefold promise that Matthew L. Bowen correlates to faith, hope, and charity.[29]

Note that, as discussed in more detail elsewhere,[30] there are exactly ten virtues in the list and that, exceptionally, the last item is *not* charity.

2 Nephi 31–32 Traces the Covenant Path *Through* the Temple

Joseph Smith's prophetic gifts enabled him to reveal things that were both old (that is, rooted in antiquity) and new (that is, newly revealed). As one of many examples of such revelations, we will now examine 2 Nephi 31–32, where Nephi provides "a few words . . . concerning the doctrine of Christ" (2 Nephi 31:2, 21; 32:6). 2 Nephi 31–32 is part of a set of significant scriptural passages in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon that describes the intimate relationship of the doctrine of Christ to the virtues of faith, hope, and charity (expressed, in this case, using the word *love*). These chapters and related passages are discussed in more detail elsewhere.[31]

In 2 Nephi 31–32, the relationship between the doctrine of Christ and faith, hope, and love is defined as a progression that successively

highlights the different areas of the temple in which the ordinances and covenants relating to the three virtues are introduced:

- *faith* leads to justification through repentance, baptism, and the initial gift of the Holy Ghost in the temple courtyard
- *hope* and a capacity to "endure all things"[32] increases through the enlightening influence of the Spirit until it leads to complete sanctification[33] ("a fulness of the Holy Ghost," Doctrine and Covenants 109:15), symbolized by, among other things, the illumination of the menorah in the Holy Place
- *love* qualifies the disciple for the presence of God in the Holy of Holies and, eventually, exaltation.

Note that faith, hope, and love are similarly highlighted in an exhortation to disciples to approach the temple veil in the book of Hebrews.[34]

To fully grasp Nephi's teachings, we need to understand that the course taken by the Israelite high priest through the temple symbolized the journey of the Fall of Adam and Eve in reverse (see figure 3). Specifically, as BYU professor Donald W. Parry has observed, just as the route of Adam and Eve's departure from Eden led them *eastward* past the cherubim with the flaming swords and out of the sacred garden into the mortal world, so in ancient times the high priest would return *westward*, that is, from the mortal world, past the consuming fire, the cleansing water, the woven images of cherubim on the temple veils, and, finally, back into the presence of God.[35] "Thus," according to Parry, the Israelite high priest has returned "to the original point of creation, where he pours out the atoning blood of the sacrifice, reestablishing the covenant relationship with God."[36]

The Two-Way Temple Journey Reflected in the Layout of Nephite and Modern Temples.[37] Some Book of Mormon scholars believe that Nephite temple activities would have not only included the Aaronic priesthood ordinances of sacrifice just described, but also rites originally associated with Israelite royal priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek."[38] The Melchizedek priesthood rites seem to have differed in at least three respects.

1. Two-Way vs. One-Way Temple Journey. In line with Parry's proposal that Israelite high priest's westward journey of atonement represents a reversal of the Fall of Adam and Eve is evidence from elsewhere in antiquity that a story of creation and of the victory of the god over primordial adversaries (an analogue to the story of the Fall) were standard elements of temple ritual.[39]
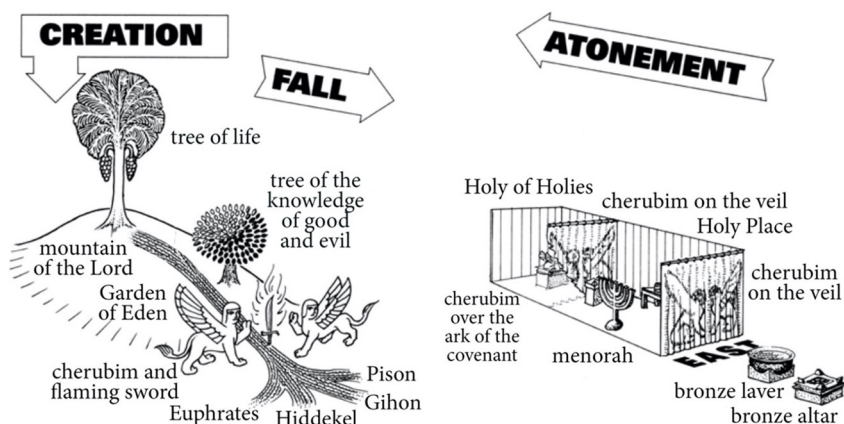
Figure 3. Adapted from Michael P. Lyon, *Sacred Topography of Eden and the Temple*, 1994.[40] The outbound journey of the Creation and the Fall at left is mirrored in the inbound journey of the temple at right. Each major feature of Eden (the river, the cherubim, the tree of knowledge,[41] the tree of life) corresponds to a symbol in the Israelite temple (the bronze laver, the cherubim, the veil, the *menorah*). Likewise, the high priest is "cultic Adam."[42]

Consistent with this idea, both Latter-day Saint and non-Latter-day Saint scholars have proposed that the creation account of Genesis 1 may have been used within Israelite temple ceremonies.[43] Going further, Louis Ginzberg has reconstructed ancient Jewish sources to argue that the results of each day of the Creation are symbolically reflected in temple furnishings.[44] From this perspective, when God finished the Creation, what came of it was an earthly temple that was laid out and furnished in symbolic likeness to the heavenly temple. That earthly temple, the result of Creation, was none other than "Eden." Its Holies of Holies was the celestial top of the figurative mountain of God, and its Holy Place was a Garden of terrestrial glory located on its "eastern" slope.

Carrying this idea forward to a later time, Exodus 40:33 describes how Moses completed the Tabernacle. The Hebrew text exactly parallels the account of how God finished creation (Moses 3:1).[45] *Genesis Rabbah* comments on the significance of this parallel: "It is as if, on that day [on which the Tabernacle was raised in the wilderness], I actually created the world."[46] With this idea in mind, Hugh Nibley famously called the temple "a scale-model of the universe,"[47] a place for taking bearings on the cosmos and finding one's place within it.

The idea that the process of creation provides a model for subsequent temple building and ritual[48] is found elsewhere in the ancient

Near East. For example, this is made explicit in Nibley's reading of the first, second, and sixth lines of the Babylonian creation story, *Enuma Elish*: "At once above when the heavens had not yet received their name and the earth below was not yet named. . . .The most inner sanctuary of the temple . . . had not yet been built."[49] Consistent with this reading, the account goes on to tell how the god Ea founded his sanctuary (1:77),[50] after having "established his dwelling" (1:71, an analogue to the Creation account), "vanquished and trodden down his foes" (1:73, an analogue to God's victory over the devilish serpent after the Fall of Adam and Eve[51]), and "rested" in his "sacred chamber" (1:75, an analogue to the Sabbath).

In the modern endowment—as also, it seems, in Nephite and early Christian equivalents of the temple ordinances—an explicit retelling of the Fall of Adam and Eve was the natural follow-on to the narrative of Creation. One purpose of relating the events of the Fall in modern temple ordinances is to make clear the absolute necessity of the later rites of atonement and investiture that are part of the bestowal of the fulness of the Melchizedek priesthood. However, even in the truncated Aaronic-priesthood version of the Israelite temple rites, the story of Adam and Eve seems to have implicitly informed the understanding of temple worshipers in ancient Israel.

For example, agreeing with Donald Parry's proposal that Israelite temple rites were a reflection and reversal of the Fall, Leviticus scholar L. Michael Morales sees the Day of Atonement as an event that, for the children of Israel, "called upon both memory and faith: memory, a looking back to the first Adam's failure and expulsion from divine Presence in Eden; faith, a looking forward to the remedy for that expulsion."[52]

In summary, while the Old Testament description of the Day of Atonement depicts a *one-way* journey by priests into the temple, the (older) text of the Book of Mormon hints that the Melchizedek priesthood ordinances of the Nephites could have mirrored in a general way the *two-way* journey of modern temple worshipers.

Figure 4 makes it clear how some early Latter-day Saint temples both reflected and adapted the overall layout of Israelite temples. In these temples, the rooms representing "celestial"[53] (Holy of Holies), "terrestrial"[54] (Holy Place), and "telestial" (baptismal) areas of sacredness of the endowment are doubled. This facilitates both the downward, "outward bound" journey of Adam and Eve from the Creation room to the Garden room to the World room (celestial to terrestrial to telestial) and their upward, "inward bound" return to the presence of
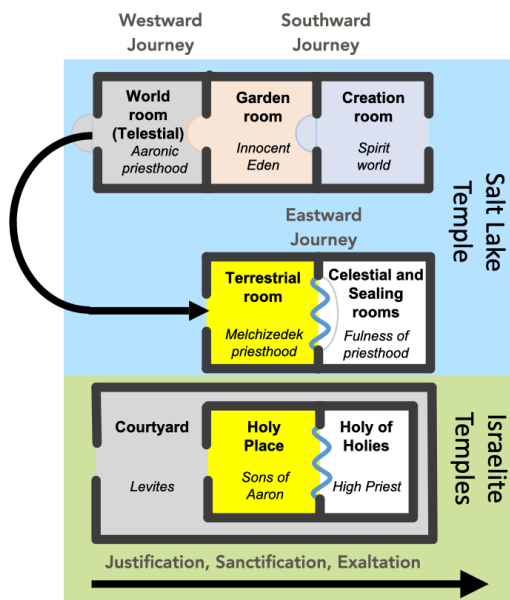
Figure 4. Layout of the Salt Lake Temple and Israelite temples.[55]

God, starting with baptism and the Aaronic priesthood in the telestial or World room, and then progressing from the terrestrial to the celestial areas of the temple.

The two-way journey that involves turning away from the sinful world and back toward one's heavenly origins is mirrored in the layout of ordinance rooms.[56] The process of repentance and return to God is beautifully reflected in the change in physical orientation of movement as the endowment progresses. For example, when we leave the telestial glory of the world room and enter the terrestrial room in the Salt Lake Temple, we make a 180-degree U-turn from west to east. After making the turn, we are no longer moving away from God but instead drawing near to Him again. In other modern temples, the change in orientation after leaving the telestial world is represented symbolically rather than literally.

Figure 5 shows how a "two-way" temple journey in Nephite temples and the temple of Solomon — outward-bound followed by inward-bound — could have been accommodated without requiring a doubling of sacred spaces. In trying to imagine such a scenario, Latter-day Saint scholar David Calabro has argued, speculatively, that specific narrative features of Moses 2–6 could have been linked to architectural features of Solomon's temple (or, for that matter, Nephite temples) in ways that reflect its relevance to the outward-bound sequence of

the endowment.[57] In this con-
ception, something like an ear-
lier version of Moses 2–4, a
narrative relating the Creation
and the Fall, would have been
dramatized as part of an
outward-bound progression
within the temple. Likewise,
something like an earlier ver-
sion of Moses 5 could have
been staged near the altar of
sacrifice, and Moses 6 near

Figure 5. Conjectural layout of Nephite
temples showing outbound and inbound
directions. Nephite temples seem to have
differed from Israelite temples in their two-
way journey (1), Melchizedek priesthood
investiture (2), and meeting at the veil (3).

the laver. Going further, although Calabro did not explicitly discuss the
possibility, it could be easily imagined that an older text roughly analo-
gous to Moses 7 could have been used after that point to accompany
the culminating inward-bound endowment sequence.[58]

The journey of the inward-bound sequence would have begun
with faith and repentance (symbolized at the altar of sacrifice) and
baptism (symbolized by the laver). This prepared worshipers who had
been thus *justified* to enter the temple through its first curtain or "gate."
As they approached the veil by traversing the Holy Place, they would
have encountered symbols of *sanctification* in the light of the lamp-
stand, the temple shewbread, and the incense altar. Finally, having
consecrated their all and called upon the Lord in prayer, worshipers
would have been prepared to figuratively enter the presence of the
Lord and continue their ritual preparations for *exaltation*.

*2. Melchizedek Priesthood Investiture and "Second Sacrifice" at the
Altar of Incense.* While the initial blessing of *justification* comes exclu-
sively by means of a substitutionary offering on the altar of sacrifice
in the temple courtyard — "relying *wholly* upon the merits of him who
is mighty to save" (2 Nephi 31:19) — the culminating step of the pro-
cess of *sanctification* in Melchizedek priesthood temple rites can be
viewed as a joint effort,[59] symbolized by a "second sacrifice"[60] made
on the altar of incense that stands before the veil.[61] While that second
sacrifice is no less dependent on the "merits, and mercy, and grace"
of Christ (2 Nephi 2:8) and the ongoing endowment of His strengthen-
ing power, it requires in addition that individuals grow in their capacity
to meet the stringent measure of *self*-sacrifice[62] enjoined by the law
of consecration as exemplified by Nephi and his companions in their
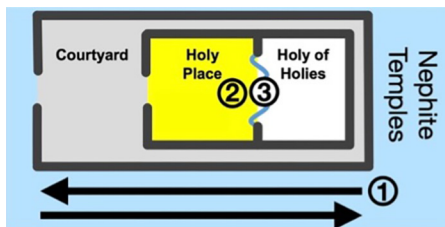soul-saving labor on behalf of their "children" and "brethren" — "for we

know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do*" (2 Nephi 25:23, emphasis added).[63]

3. Conversing with the Lord at the Veil. In Hugh Nibley's interpretation of the Septuagint version of Exodus 29:42, the Lord promises that at the tent of meeting: "I shall make myself known to you that I might converse with you."[64] The mention that God would "converse" with His people is reminiscent of Doctrine and Covenants 124:39, which speaks of similar encounters that were to take place in the Nauvoo Temple. These are described by the Lord as "oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations."[65]

However, as part of the general withdrawal of the Melchizedek priesthood ordinances from Israelite temples that is documented in ancient sources and modern revelation,[66] there was a loss of narrative, signs, and tokens relating to the higher priesthood that included the final atoning rites at the veil. According to Nibley, "the loss of the old ceremonies occurred shortly after Lehi left Jerusalem" and "the ordinances of atonement were, after Lehi's day, supplanted by allegory."[67] By way of contrast, in describing the temples that the Nephites built "after the manner of the temple of Solomon" (2 Nephi 5:16). Nibley wrote,[68]

> Let us recall that Lehi and his people who left Jerusalem in the very last days of Solomon's temple were zealous in erecting altars of sacrifice and building temples of their own. It has often been claimed that the Book of Mormon cannot contain the "fulness of the gospel," since it does not have temple ordinances. As a matter of fact, they are everywhere in the book if we know where to look for them, and the dozen or so discourses on the Atonement in the Book of Mormon are replete with temple imagery.
>
> From all the meanings of *kaphar* and *kippurim*[69] [Hebrew words relating to the atonement in Israelite temples] we concluded that the literal meaning of *kaphar* and *kippurim* is a close and intimate embrace, which took place at the *kapporeth* or the front cover or flap of the Tabernacle or tent ["later the veil of the temple"[70]].[71] The Book of Mormon instances are quite clear, for example, "Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you" (Alma 5:33). "But behold the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled eternally

in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi 1:15). To be redeemed is to be atoned. From this it should be clear what kind of oneness is meant by the Atonement—it is being received in a close embrace of the prodigal son, expressing not only forgiveness but oneness of heart and mind that amounts to identity.

Taken together, the scant, allusive, but suggestive evidence in the Book of Mormon[72] and the book of Hebrews[73] seem to confirm Nibley's description of the older culminating rites of the Melchizedek Priesthood at the veil that symbolized sanctification through the once-and-for-all atonement of Jesus Christ rather than through the annual Day of Atonement rites of the Aaronic priesthood that were performed at the mercy seat. Similar ordinances constitute the ultimate symbolism of atonement we encounter in the culminating rites of the modern temple endowment as well as in some ancient Near East kingship ceremonies that go back four millennia (Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–48).[74]

The relevant imagery in Hebrews 6:18–20, which suggests a literal encounter between the initiate and the Lord at the veil, should also be noted:[75]

> Here, then, are two irrevocable acts . . . to give powerful encouragement to us, who have claimed his protection by grasping the hope set before us. That hope we hold. It is like an anchor for our lives, an anchor safe and sure. It enters in through the veil, where Jesus has entered on our behalf as a forerunner, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

The terse prose of this verse bears some unpacking, in which we will draw largely on commentary from non-Latter-day Saint scholars. Anticipating the blessings described in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood,[76] the author of Hebrews assures the Saints of the firmness and unchangeableness of God's promises. The "two irrevocable acts" mentioned are "God's promise and the oath by which He guarantees that promise,"[77] the latter constituting the means by which one's calling and election is made "sure."[78] In reading verses 18–20, we are meant to understand that so long as we hold fast to the Redeemer, who has entered "through the veil on our behalf . . . as a forerunner," we will remain firmly anchored to our heavenly home, and the eventual realization of the promise "that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3).[79] Undoubtedly, there is also the sense that "Jesus, the high priest,

[stands] behind the veil in the Holy of Holies to assist those who [pass] through."[80] "The anchor would thus constitute the link that 'extends' or 'reaches' to the safe harbor of the divine realms . . . providing a means of access by its entry into God's presence."[81] As Jesus was "exalted" . . . above the entire created order — to the heavenly throne at God's right hand," so "humanity will be elevated to the pinnacle of the created order"[82] as sons and daughters of God.[83] And as the Son received "all the glory of Adam,"[84] so "his followers will also inherit this promise if they endure . . . testing."[85]

It is apparent that Joseph Smith anticipated a conversation of God's elect with the Lord at the "veil" of the "heavenly temple" long before he got to Nauvoo. This heavenly assurance of exaltation, "confirmed . . . by an oath" (Hebrews 6:17), is described in a letter he wrote to his uncle Silas on 26 September 1833:[86]

> Paul said to his Hebrew brethren that God being more abundantly willing to show unto the heirs of his promises the immutability of his council "confirmed it by an oath" (Hebrews 6:17). He also exhorts them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
>
> "Notwithstanding we (said Paul) have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Hebrews 6:18–19). Yet he was careful to press upon them the necessity of continuing on until they as well as those who then inherited the promises might have the assurance of their salvation confirmed to them by an oath from the mouth of Him who could not lie, for that seemed to be the example anciently and Paul holds it out to his brethren as an object attainable in his day.
>
> And why not? I admit that, by reading the scriptures of truth, saints in the days of Paul could learn beyond the power of contradiction that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had the promise of eternal life confirmed to them by an oath of the Lord, but that promise or oath was no assurance to them of their salvation. But they could, by walking in the footsteps and continuing in the faith of their fathers, obtain for themselves an oath for confirmation that they were meet to be partakers of the inheritance with the Saints in light.

Later, on 14 May 1843, the Prophet gave a Nauvoo sermon similarly

describing how one's calling and election is made sure. Though more detailed in its descriptions, Joseph Smith's teachings in this sermon are entirely consistent with his 1833 letter to Silas.[87]

The Nephite (and Temple) Manner of Teaching the Plan of Salvation. Throughout the Book of Mormon and in other places in modern scripture the plan of salvation is often taught using the same general three-part outline that is given in the temple endowment, namely Creation, Fall, and the Atonement of Jesus Christ.[88] In describing this teaching approach, Elder Bruce R. McConkie liked to speak of its emphasis on the "three pillars" of eternity.[89] This "Christ-centered" presentation of the plan of salvation is a stark contrast to the "location-centered" diagram that is used widely in classroom settings to illustrate the sequence of events that chart the journey of individuals from premortality to the resurrection. Nathan Richardson observed that in the location-centered diagram there is no mention of Jesus Christ and His role as Savior and Redeemer—thus leaving out the very heart of the Plan.[90]

Going further, in a brilliant article entitled "Lehi's Dream, Nephi's Blueprint,"[91] Noel B. Reynolds argues that Lehi and Nephi received the same vision and that the teachings of what they learned about the covenant path that leads to the tree of life echoed for a thousand years throughout the rest of the Book of Mormon.[92] Building on insights from Reynolds, as well as Joseph Spencer[93] and Neal Rappleye,[94] one might straightforwardly conclude that the elements of the vision constituted a sort of heavenly endowment for Lehi and Nephi—analogous to the experiences of Moses and Abraham at formative junctures in their respective ministries.[95]

Significantly, the three major themes of Lehi's and Nephi's dreams are the "three pillars of eternity" (see figure 6) correspond to the three phases of the modern endowment:

1. the blueprint of Creation revealed in the presence of God and His angels as described in greatest detail in Lehi's dream;[96]
2. a sketch of "salvation history" as acted out in the telestial world—apostasy and dispensational restoration through the labors of God's servants as summarized in Lehi's and Nephi's visions (1 Nephi 12–14)[97] and graphically illustrated in all its phases in Jacob's allegory of the olive tree (Jacob 5);

Figure 6. The three pillars of eternity as reflected in the dream of Lehi and vision of Nephi. Left, Gustave Doré, The Empyrean, 1857.[98] Center, Brad Teare, Allegory of the Olive Tree.[99] Right, Jachoon Choi, Tree of Life.[100]

   3.   the covenant path in the terrestrial world that parallels an iron rod that leads to the Tree of Life in the celestial world. This theme is most thoroughly outlined in Lehi and Nephi's dreams (1 Nephi 8, 11)[101] and the accompanying personal explanations given to him by the Father and the Son.[102]

Mapping the three cardinal virtues, the three degrees of glory, and the three progressive stages of discipleship to the journey through the three areas of the temple. In our scan of 2 Nephi 31:19–20, the first thing we notice is that three important Christlike attributes or virtues — faith, hope, and charity — have been unobtrusively inserted into the text in their natural order, suggesting a progression that can be seen as successively highlighting the different areas of the temple in which the ordinances and covenants relevant to each virtue are introduced.[103]

Going further, Joseph Smith related the three cardinal virtues of the ladder of exaltation to the three different areas of the temple when he taught that "the three principal rounds [or rungs] of Jacob's ladder are the telestial, the terrestrial, and the celestial glories or kingdoms."[104] Because these three kingdoms are represented in the temple, Joseph Smith also equated the symbolism of Jacob's ladder to the "mysteries of godliness."[105]

Finally, the three different areas of ancient temples are symbolized in different kinds of sacrifices that relate to the three progressive

"And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay;

· for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken *faith* in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.
· Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ,
· having a perfect brightness of *hope*
· and a *love* of God and of all men.

Wherefore, if ye shall press forward,
· feasting upon the word of Christ,
· and endure to the end,
· behold, thus saith the Father:
· "Ye shall have eternal life."

Ladder of Virtues

JUSTIFICATION
TELESTIAL
FAITH

SANCTIFICATION
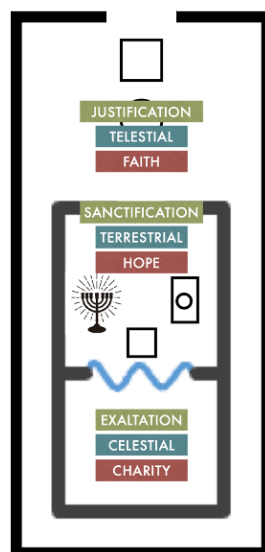TERRESTRIAL
HOPE

EXALTATION
CELESTIAL
CHARITY

Figure 7. The three cardinal virtues, the three degrees of glory, and the three progressive stages of discipleship mapped to the three areas of the temple.

stages of justification, sanctification, and, ultimately, exaltation. This is explained in the following excerpt from the Latter-day Saint Bible Dictionary:[106]

> It is noteworthy that when the three offerings were offered together, the sin always preceded the burnt, and the burnt the peace offerings. Thus, the order of the symbolizing sacrifices was the order of atonement [*justification*], *sanctification* [culminating in complete consecration at the altar of incense in front of the second veil[107]], and fellowship with the Lord [*exaltation*].

Nephi's description of the inbound temple journey. Now let's look at 2 Nephi 31:19–20 in more detail.[108] In prior verses, Nephi has already exhorted his readers to "follow the Son, with full purpose of heart" (2 Nephi 31:13) and to enter the gate of "repentance and baptism by water" (2 Nephi 31:17). The altar of sacrifice and the laver that sit in the courtyard, outside the temple door, evoke these two themes. Nephi teaches that baptism, in turn, prepares his readers to receive "a remission of … sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost" (2 Nephi 31:17). Then, Nephi weaves the single mention of faith, hope, and love within these chapters into a masterful description of the culminating sequence
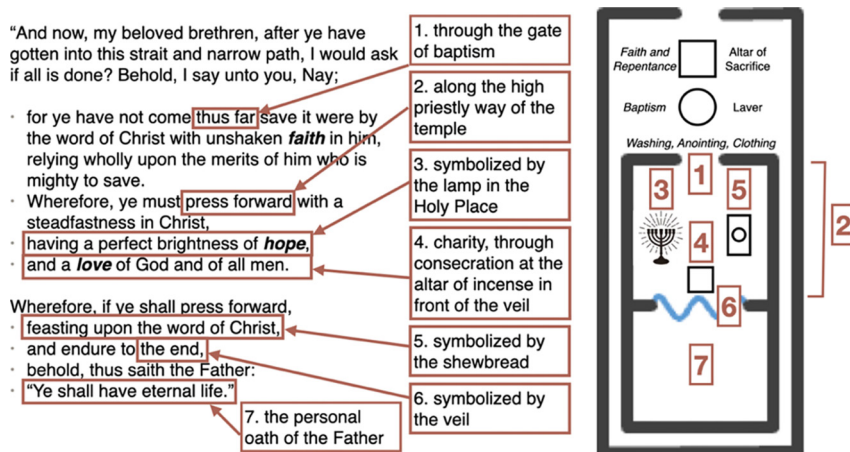
Figure 8. Correlation of faith, hope, and love in 2 Nephi 31:19–20 to the different areas of the temple.

of the pathway to eternal life that leads through the ancient temple (please refer to the numbered annotations in figure 8):

1. Nephi begins with a description of the "gate of baptism" that most of his readers have probably already entered. They have "come thus far" through "unshaken *faith*" in Christ, being justified through "relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save." The gate of baptism, the last requirement governing entrance through the temple door, brings us out of the telestial world (Doctrine and Covenants 76: 81–90, 98–106) and into the terrestrial glory that fills the Holy Place of the temple.

2. Nephi says that we must "press forward"—which evidently means that we are to advance steadfastly along the high priestly way of the Holy Place toward greater light and knowledge. The same phrase about "pressing forward" is used earlier by Nephi's father in his account of the vision of the tree of life (1 Nephi 8:21, 24, 30; see figure 9). He said that "multitudes" were "pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree" (1 Nephi 8:30). Lehi is very particular about his description, writing twice that the people "caught hold of the *end* of the rod of iron" (1 Nephi 8:24,

Figure 9. Jachoon Choi, The Tree of Life.[109]

30). To me, the language about catching hold of the "end" of the rod of iron suggests the necessity of beginning the covenant path by entering in at the gate of baptism. This could be taken as implying that people couldn't begin their journey by grabbing hold of the rod at a random spot in the middle, but instead "caught hold of the *end* of the rod of iron."

3. The lamp in the Holy Place symbolizes our quest to attain a "perfect brightness of *hope*," the culmination of a lifelong increase of the enlightening and sanctifying influence of the Spirit that culminates in "a fulness of the Holy Ghost" (Doctrine and Covenants 109:15).

4. Faithfulness to the last and most difficult law of consecration, symbolized by the incense offering at the altar in front of the second veil,[110] requires the development of charity, "a love of God and of all men."

5. The complete sanctification that is required of all who would enter the kingdom of heaven requires "feasting upon the word of Christ" and is symbolized by the temple shewbread that was eaten by the temple priests and their

family each week. Non-Latter-day Saint scholars have compared this symbol to the eucharist (the counterpart to the Latter-day Saint sacrament of bread and water)[111] a "repeated maintenance ritual"[112] associated symbolically with the bread and wine of the table of shewbread.

6. In scripture, "the end" usually refers to the end of one's probation, the moment when Saints will have been prepared to meet God at the veil.[113]

7. In a divine face-to-face encounter at the heavenly veil, those who have endured faithfully to the end of their probation will receive the sure oath of the Father: "Ye shall have eternal life." An essay analyzing Joseph Smith's 21 May 1843 discourse on 2 Peter 1 — the context in which the Prophet's mention of the three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder appeared — identifies the oath described in 2 Nephi 31:20 ("Ye shall have eternal life"; compare Psalm 110:4[114]) as the "more sure word of prophecy" (defined in the discourse as being "the voice of Jesus saying my beloved thou shalt have eternal life").[115] By equating these concepts, the teachings of Joseph Smith confirm that not only sacred *gestures* (such as those shown in figure 10 and described in Hebrews 6:18–20[116]) but also sacred *words* are exchanged at the top of the ladder of exaltation. Thus, the Prophet endowed ritual teachings of temple ordinances with literal significance in the context of actual heavenly ascent.[117] With the ritual atonement being symbolically represented at the veil rather than in the Holy of Holies, the symbolism of the celestial room of modern temples is transformed from the solemn, solitary locus of annually repeated atoning ritual described in the Old Testament into a joyful meeting place that represents eternal "fellowship with the Lord."[118]

Nephi paints a stunning word picture of exactly what this moment looks like in his anguished psalm of deliverance: "O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!" (2 Nephi 4:33). The moment suggests the loving embrace of the prodigal son, illustrated in figure 11. In the words of his plea for deliverance, Nephi drew on the culture of the desert. Fleeing to the tent of a sheikh who will defend him against his enemies, the weary fugitive humbly kneels and tells his would be protector, "I am your suppliant." Honor impels the

Figure 10. Three mutually illuminating images shed light on the significance of Christian conceptions of the culminating step of ritual ascent and its counterpart in actual heavenly ascent. *Left*: Greek Orthodox icon depicting the ladder of virtues.[119] In many depictions of the ladder of virtues, Christ is positioned at the top of the ladder taking the ascending disciple by the wrist. *Center*: *The Woman at the Tomb and the Ascension*, ca. 400. (Public domain.) A similar grasping gesture is shown where Christ is welcomed to heaven after his ascension. *Right*: *Anastasis*, Daphni Monastery, near Athens, Greece, ca. 1080–1100.[120] Nicoletta Isar brilliantly concludes that the gesture of the hand of Christ grasping the wrist of Adam, "an anchor . . . sure and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19) that binds them together in unbreakable fashion, represents not only the "meeting ground of both life and death," but also serves as a "visual metaphor of the . . . nuptial bond,"[121] an equally indissoluble union, "the conjugal harness by which both parts are yoked together."[122] This metaphor is visually highlighted by the stigma on the hand of the Savior that is carefully positioned at the center of the image to overlay both the cross of Christ and the wrist of Adam.[123]

sheikh to put the hem of his great hooded robe over the suppliant's shoulder with a promise of protection, "This is your tent, this is your family. We'll make a place for you."[124]

Nephi's eloquent two-verse exposition in 2 Nephi 31:19–20 provides strong support for the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and the idea that it contains the fulness of what Jacob 7:6 calls "the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ," including detailed descriptions of the significance and sequence of temple ordinances. These teachings were not withheld until Joseph Smith and the Saints arrived in Nauvoo but rather were made available the Prophet very early in his ministry as he translated the Book of Mormon.[125]

Figure 11. Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787): *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, 1773.[126]

[**Author's Note:** *This essay expands on an earlier version of this paper that was published in Meridian Magazine (https://latterday saintmag.com/the-covenant-path-in-2-nephi-3119-20/) as well as*

material from my book on Freemasonry and the Origins of Latter-day Saint Temple Ordinances. Thanks to the many friends, both explicitly mentioned below and unnamed, who made helpful suggestions on earlier versions of some of this material, including Rebecca Lambert, who offered many helpful comments and shepherded final changes to this version for journal publication.]

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Notes

1. "A Message from the First Presidency (16 January 2018)," churchofjesuschrist .org/bc/content/ldsorg/church/news/2018/01/19/2018-01-1000-a-message -from-the-first-presidency.pdf. See also, more recently, a message on the same general theme from Elder David A. Bednar in David A. Bednar, "Temple Ordinances: Preparing to Return to God's Presence," *Liahona*, July 2022. Much of this section has been adapted from Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Freemasonry and the Origins of Latter-Day Saint Temple Ordinances* (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2022), 157–59.

2. See "The Book of Moses as a Temple Text," in *Tracing Ancient Threads in the Book of Moses: Inspired Origins, Temple Contexts, and Literary Qualities*, ed. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw et al. (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation: Springville, UT: Book of Mormon Central; Redding, CA: Faithful Answers, Informed Response [FAIR]; Tooele, UT: Eborn Books, 2021).

3. For example, Truman G. Madsen, "'Putting on the Names': A Jewish-Christian Legacy," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990); Bruce H. Porter and Stephen D. Ricks, "Names in Antiquity: Old, New, and Hidden," in *By Study and Also by Faith*; Jeffrey Bradshaw and Matthew L. Bowen, "'Made Stronger Than Many Waters': The Names of Moses as Keywords in the Heavenly Ascent of Moses," in *Tracing Ancient Threads in the Book of Moses*, 239–96.

4. To paraphrase C. S. Lewis, "God turns tools into servants, [servants into friends,] and [friends] into sons" (C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* [New York: Touchstone, 1996], Preface, 9). Lewis's original statement reads: "God turns tools into servants and servants into sons, so that they may be at last reunited to Him in the perfect freedom of a love offered from the height of the utter individualities which he has liberated them to be." For more on this topic, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 75–79.

5. See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Matthew L. Bowen, "'By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified': The Symbolic, Salvific, Interrelated, Additive, Retrospective, and Anticipatory Nature of the Ordinances of Spiritual Rebirth in John 3 and Moses 6," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 24 (2017): journal.interpreter foundation.org/by-the-blood-ye-are-san0ctified-the-symbolic-salvific -interrelated-additive-retrospective-and-anticipatory-nature-of-the -ordinances-of-spiritual-rebirth-in-john-3-and-moses-6/.

6. See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Faith, Hope, and Charity: The 'Three Principal Rounds' of the Ladder of Heavenly Ascent," in *"To Seek the Law of the Lord": Essays in Honor of John W. Welch*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation, 2017), 60–61, journal.interpreterfoundation .org/faith-hope-and-charity-the-three-principal-rounds-of-the-ladder-of -heavenly-ascent/.

7. Doctrine and Covenants 84:33–34. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*; Bradshaw and Bowen, "By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified."

8. See Bradshaw, "Book of Moses as a Temple Text."

9. These signposts might aptly be described with the term *hermae*. "Foreword," in *Name as Key-Word: Collected Essays on Onomastic Wordplay and the Temple in Mormon Scripture*, ed. Matthew L. Bowen (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2018), xiiˆ.

10. See, for example, "What Did Joseph Smith Know About Modern Temple Ordinances by 1836?," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored, Proceedings of the 2014 Temple on Mount Zion Symposium*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2016); Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ronan J. Head, "The Investiture Panel at Mari and Rituals of Divine Kingship in the Ancient near East," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 4 (2012); Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "The Ezekiel Mural at Dura Europos: A Tangible Witness of Philo's Jewish Mysteries?," *BYU Studies* 49, no. 1 (2010), scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol49/iss1/2/; Hugh W. Nibley, *The Message*

of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005).

11. Russell M. Nelson, "Becoming Exemplary Latter-Day Saints," *Ensign*, November 2018, 113, churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2018/11/sunday -afternoon-session/becoming-exemplary-latter-day-saints.

12. "Your Covenant Path," *New Era*, March 2015, 12, churchofjesuschrist.org/study /new-era/2015/03/be-a-missionary-now/your-covenant-path.

13. John W. Welch, "Experiencing the Presence of the Lord: The Temple Program of Leviticus," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Space, and Sacred Meaning, Proceedings of the Third Interpreter Foundation Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, 5 November 2016*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2020). See Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 221–23.

14. See the comparison to human temple workers and cherubim in Avram R. Shannon, "'Come near Unto Me': Guarded Space and Its Mediators in the Jerusalem Temple," in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, ed. David Rolph Seely, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, and Matthew J. Grey (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 67

15. Joseph Smith, Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 237. For the original of the description by Elder Richards, see Joseph Smith, Jr. et al., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Journals: December 1841-April 1843*, ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2011), 54n198, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume -c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/502.

16. For a more extensive discussion of the ladder of exaltation in ancient thought and the teaching of Joseph Smith, see Bradshaw, "Faith, Hope, and Charity"; Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "Understanding the doctrine of election: A closer look at Joseph Smith's 21 May 1843 discourse on the 'more sure word of prophecy'" in *Joseph Smith: A Life Lived in Crescendo,* ed. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2024), 173–83; Bradshaw, *Freemasonry and the Origins of Latter-Day Saint Temple Ordinances*, 71–88.

17. Thanks to Steve Whitlock for this reference.

18. Bradshaw, "Revelatory Origins," 371–78s.

19. Henry A. Fischel, "The Uses of Sorites (Climax, Gradatio) in the Tannaitic Period," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44 (1973). An earlier, Israelite form of *sorites* was used, for example, in Joel 1:3; Genesis 36:31–43; 1 Chronicles 1 and 2. Matthew 1:1–17 and Moshe Lieber, *The Pirkei Avos Treasury: Ethics of the Fathers. The Sages' Guide to Living, with an Anthologized Commentary and Anecdotes*, Artscroll Mesorah Series (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1995), 1:1, 6–11 are famous examples of the classic form of *sorites* in use during the Hellenistic period as applied to lists of genealogy and transmission of authority. As to

the use of ethical or ethico-metaphysical *sorites* similar to Romans 5:3–5 and 2 Peter 1:5–7 in Jewish and Roman literature, see Herbert Marks, Gerald Hammond, and Austin Busch, *The English Bible: King James Version, a Norton Critical Edition*, 2 vols. (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton, 2012), Wisdom 6:17–20, 2:739; Jacob Neusner, ed. *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (London: Yale University Press, 1988), Sotah, 9:15:III:MM, 466; Lucius Annaeus (the younger) (ca. 5 BCE-65 CE) Seneca, *Ad Lucilium, Epistulae Morales*, trans. Richard M. Gummere, vol. 2, The Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann, 1962), 85:2, 286–87; Marcus Tullius (106–43 BCE) Cicero, "De Legibus," in *On the Republic; on the Laws*, *The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928), 1:7:22–23, 320–23. For an example of *sorites* in modern revelation, see Doctrine and Covenants 84:6–17. *Sorites* arguments have been studied extensively by philosophers since the late nineteenth century because of logical paradoxes that can arise in some formulations. See Dominic Hyde, "Sorites Paradox," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Archive*, 6 December 2011, plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/sorites-paradox/.

20. Harold W. Attridge et al., eds., *The Harpercollins Study Bible*, rev. ed. (New York City: HarperOne, 2006), 2068n1:5–7.

21. Joseph Neyrey points out that 2 Peter 1:5–7, unlike Romans 5:1–5, supplements the group-specific qualities of faith, hope, and charity with more properly Greco-Roman virtues. He compares the combination of vertically and horizontally oriented virtues within the list to the division in the Ten Commandments between the laws that govern relationship with God and fellow man. Moreover, citing Philo, "On the Special Laws (De Specialibus Legibus)," in *Philo*, ed. F. H. Colson, *The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 2:211–13, 438–41, he sees the numerical count of eight virtues as "suggesting a certain wholeness or completeness. . . . All of the specifically Christian virtues are joined with the more popular ones to suggest a completeness of moral response. . . . Wholeness, moreover, is found in attention to virtues in regard to body (self-control) and spirit, as well as thought and action. In this wholeness, then, holiness is urged, a completeness of moral excellence to all" (see Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, ed. William F. Albright and David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible* [New York City: Doubleday, 1993], 154–55).

22. *2 Peter, Jude*, 155. I have substituted the King James Bible terms for these virtues where they differ from Neyrey's list. I have also corrected the ordering of these lists where it differed from scripture.

23. See Bradshaw, "Faith, Hope, and Charity," 226–28.

24. Matthew 11:28. Thanks to Samuel Zinner for his translation of the parchment. Zinner notes that there are seven words shown and that "it may be significant for some reason that the scroll text omits the final clause of Matthew 11:28, 'and I will give you rest'" (Samuel Zinner, Personal communication, 7 August 2022.).

25. James E. Faulconer, *The Life of Holiness: Notes and Reflections on Romans 1, 5–8* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, 2012), 209. See 1 John 3:2; Doctrine and Covenants 38:8; 50:45; 76:94; 93:1. Faulconer continues: "Since the word 'glory' can also be taken to mean 'perfection,' as in Romans 3:23, Jesus Christ has brought us into

a place where we can rejoice in a hope that we will see the perfection of the Father in its brightness and majesty. We will see the Father in the Son, and we will see Him by being in His presence."

26. See Bradshaw, "Understanding the doctrine of election."

27. The relationship between hope and patience is complex and multivalent. Matthew L. Bowen observed that the Hebrew word for hope (*tiqvah*), often equated with "patience" in the New Testament, comes from a root that means to "wait" (Matthew L. Bowen, E-mail message, 7 March 2016.). He suggested that this may reflect the process of approaching the veil and being prepared in all things into enter the presence of the Lord (compare Doctrine and Covenants 136:31). Romans 5:3–4 defines hope as the result of patience/endurance (= steadfastness; Greek *hupomene*) and experience (= character, proof, testing; Greek *dokime*), developed in tribulation. See also 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 3:10; Titus 2:2; Hebrews 6:12; 2 Peter 1:6; Revelation 2:19; Alma 7:23; Doctrine and Covenants 4:6; 6:19; 107:30 where *patience* either complements or replaces *hope* in the list. Bailey writes the following with respect to the Greek verb for *endure*: "Paul uses a compound word. In this case the term he chooses is *hupo-meno*. *Hupo* has to do with 'under' and *meno* means 'to remain.' As a compound, this word describes 'the affliction under which one remains steadfast.' If *makrothumia* is the patience of the powerful, *hupomene* is the patience of the weak who unflinchingly endure suffering. The example of Mary standing silently at the foot of the cross is a matchless demonstration for every Christian of this crucial form of patient love. Mary can do nothing to change the horrible events taking place around her. Her only choice is to exercise *hupomene* and at great cost remain rather than depart that scene of suffering. Jesus Himself is the supreme example of the same virtue (Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011], 368). Elsewhere in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, the similar quality of "longsuffering" (Greek *makrothymia*) is mentioned, often in conjunction with patience. See Ephesians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 13:4; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 1:11; 3:12; 2 Timothy 3:10; Alma 7:23; 13:28; 17:11; 38:3; Moroni 7:45; Doctrine and Covenants 107:30; 118:3; 121:41.

28. Matthew 7:7. Just as the verse in the 1833 Book of Commandments corresponding to Doctrine and Covenants 4:6 originally contained a truncated version of the list of virtues from 2 Peter 1:5–7 (see Joseph Smith Jr., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Vol. 2: Revelations and Translations, Published Revelations*, ed. Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., Riley M. Lorimer [Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2011], 2:2, 21, 9), so Doctrine and Covenants 4:7 contains a truncated version of Matthew 7:7 (compare Luke 11:9; 3 Nephi 14:7; 3 Nephi 27:29).

29. See Matthew L. Bowen, "'Thy Will Be Done': The Savior's Use of the Divine Passive," in *The Sermon on the Mount in Latter-Day Scripture: The 39th Annual Brigham Young University Sidney B. Sperry Symposium*, ed. Gaye Strathearn, Thomas A. Wayment, and Daniel L. Belnap (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 243.

30. The verse in the 1833 *Book of Commandments* corresponding to Doctrine and

Covenants 4:6 originally contained a truncated version of the list of virtues from 2 Peter 1:5–7 (Smith, *Published Revelations*, 3:2, 21, 9). Later, it was expanded to ten virtues with a reversal in the order of "brotherly kindness" and "godliness." Rather than ending with "charity," the list ends with "humility" and "diligence." For Latter-day Saint views on the idea of ten degrees of holiness, see John W. Welch, "Counting to Ten," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 2 (2003), scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol12/iss2/6/; Bradshaw, "Faith, Hope, and Charity," 74–75. See also Marc-Alain Ouaknin and Éric Smilévitch, eds., *Chapitres De Rabbi Éliézer (Pirqé De Rabbi Éliézer): Midrach Sur Genèse, Exode, Nombres, Esther*, Les Dix Paroles (Lagrasse, FR: Éditions Verdier, 1992), 3, 33–34 and n20.

31. Some of the ideas and wording in the remainder of this paper have been adapted and expanded from Bradshaw, *Freemasonry and the Origins of Latter-Day Saint Temple Ordinances*, 78–87. For an extended discussion of scripture passages about the Doctrine of Christ and their implications, see "Faith, Hope, and Charity", 81–90. David Calabro has suggested that it may be fruitful to look at the first part of 2 Nephi 31 "as Nephi listening to the '*sod*' (divine council), perhaps even words spoken in the premortal council in heaven. Also, 2 Nephi 32, with the integration of the language (or speech) of angels teaching people to pray and access the Holy Ghost, could be seen as Nephi's teachings about angelic ministry as reenacted in a Nephite endowment. Nephi is here expanding on what he lays out in chapter 31, and we do get a sense that Nephi is cautious about sharing too much, and even frustrated with his (future) audience not 'getting it,' which they would if they thought to 'knock,' ask for knowledge, or 'search/understand great knowledge'" (David Calabro, e-mail message, 2 July 2022.).

32. Articles of Faith 1:13. See note 32. Bradshaw, "Faith, Hope, and Charity," 111:

    In his careful paraphrase of Paul's description of faith, hope, and charity within the thirteenth Article of Faith, Joseph Smith pointedly distinguished between the early Saints' previous attainments with respect to the first ladder rungs of faith ("We believe *all things*") and hope ("we hope *all things*"), and their unfulfilled aspirations as they climbed toward the last, hardest rung of charity: "we have endured *many* things, and *hope to be able to endure all things*." With happy anticipation, the last Article of Faith looks forward to the brighter day when the Saints will be able to endure *all things*—to complete the climb of the ladder of heavenly ascent "by the patience of hope and the labor of love" ("Come, Let Us Anew," *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), 217, stanza 1. See 1 Thessalonians 1:3).

33. The hope experienced in the terrestrial state of existence is not a "natural hope" for "bodily and worldly matters—the hope that our job will be rewarding, that our children will do well in school, that we will get a raise. Christian hope is the hope for salvation" (Faulconer, *Life of Holiness*, 207). Moreover, Christian hope is a palpable divine gift, not simply a vague and wistful longing. Those who have proven faithful are chosen or elected to inherit the kingdom "according to a preparatory redemption" (Alma 13:3; Bradshaw and Bowen, "By

the Blood Ye Are Sanctified", 158–59, 172–73, 268–69n260) and obtain an initial *hope* of attaining it when God grants them the "earnest of the Spirit in [their] hearts" (2 Corinthians 1:22). By receiving and keeping all the laws and ordinances of the Gospel, this first, dim hope will be replaced by a "*perfect brightness of hope*" (as described by Nephi, 2 Nephi 31:20), "*a more excellent hope*" (as described by Mormon, Ether 12:32), or "*the full assurance of hope*" (as described in Hebrews 6:11). Thus, step by step, disciples are brought "unto the *end*" (Hebrews 6:11), at which point, according to Moroni, they "receive an inheritance in the place which [the Lord has] prepared" (Ether 12:32).

34. After explaining that because of the blood of Jesus they now have reason to enter with "boldness . . . through the veil, that is . . . his flesh" (Hebrews 10:19–20), the author exhorts the Saints to "approach . . . in an abundance of *faith*" (v. 22), "hold fast to the confession of . . . *hope*" (v. 23), with an "aim of provoking *love*" (v. 24). Harold W. Attridge and Helmut Koester, eds., *Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 283. The development of the themes of faith, hope, and love is taken up more extensively in Hebrews 11–13.

   Note that Joseph Smith could not have been aware of the triad of virtues that appeared in Hebrews 10:22–24, as the King James Bible, unlike most modern translations, uses "faith" in place of "hope" in v. 23.

35. See Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 135. Compare L. Michael Morales, *Exodus Old and New: A Biblical Theology of Redemption*, ed. Benjamin L. Gladd, Essential Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, InterVarsity Press, 2020), 99–101.

36. Parry, "Garden," 135. See also Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 175–78.

37. Though the upward journey of individuals and families along the covenant path comports well with the imagery of a *two-way journey* or a *ladder*, Elder Dale G. Renlund has provided a different and seemingly richer perspective by comparing lifelong conversion to a *spiral ascent* that leads to the top of a mountain. Each time a round of the upward spiral is repeated, individuals ascend by building on preceding steps (Dale G. Renlund, "Lifelong Conversion," BYU Devotional, 14 September 2021, speeches.byu.edu/talks/dale-g-renlund/life long-conversion/). For more on this topic, see Bradshaw, "Revelatory Origins," 371–78.

38. See, for example, Don Bradley, *The Lost 116 Pages: Reconstructing the Book of Mormon's Missing Stories* (Draper, UT: Greg Kofford Books, 2019), 199. See also 2 Nephi 5:16 referring to Nephite temples being patterned after Solomon's temple.

39. For example, Nicolas Wyatt, "Arms and the King: The Earliest Allusions to the *Chaoskampf* Motif and Their Implications for the Interpretation of the Ugaritic and Biblical Traditions," in *'There's Such Divinity Doth Hedge a King': Selected Essays of Nicolas Wyatt on Royal Ideology in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature*, ed. Nicolas Wyatt (Aldershot, GB: Ashgate, 2005).

40. Published in Parry, "Garden," 134–35. I have modified Lyon's original drawing by moving the Tree of Life to the top of the mountain. It was originally placed slightly

downhill. For the rationale of this modification, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "The Tree of Knowledge as the Veil of the Sanctuary," in *Ascending the Mountain of the Lord: Temple, Praise, and Worship in the Old Testament*, ed. David Rolph Seely, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, and Matthew J. Grey (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City; Deseret Book, 2013).

41. For correspondences between the Tree of Knowledge and the veil, see Bradshaw, "Tree of Knowledge"

42. L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: Apollos, InterVarsity Press, 2015), 175.

43. For example, Moshe Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of Sitz Im Leben of Genesis 1:1–2:3," in *Mélanges Bibliques Et Orientaux En L'honneur De M. Henri Cazelles*, ed. André Caquot and Mathias Delcor, *Alter Orient Und Altes Testament* (Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1981), 508–10; Stephen D. Ricks, "Liturgy and Cosmogony: The Ritual Use of Creation Accounts in the Ancient near East," in *Temples of the Ancient World*; Peter J. Kearney, "Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Exodus 25–40," *Zeitschrift fu"r die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89, no. 3 (1977); Jeff Morrow, "Creation as Temple-Building and Work as Liturgy in Genesis 1–3," *Journal of the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies (JOCABS)* 2, no. 1 (2009).

44. Louis Ginzberg, ed. *The Legends of the Jews* (1909; repr., Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 1:51. See also William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 40–41; Kearney, "Creation"; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Cosmology of P and Theological Anthropology in the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira," marquette.edu/maqom/Sirach1.pdf, marquette.edu/maqom/Sirach2.pdf, 10–11. According to Walton, "the courtyard represented the cosmic spheres outside of the organized cosmos (sea and pillars). The antechamber held the representations of lights and food. The veil separated the heavens and earth—the place of God's presence from the place of human habitation" (John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009], 82).

Note that in this conception of creation the focus is not on the origins of the raw materials used to make the universe, but rather their fashioning into a structure providing a useful purpose. The key insight, according to Walton, is that: "people in the ancient world believed that something existed not by virtue of its material proportion, but by virtue of its having a function in an ordered system . . . Consequently, something could be manufactured physically but still not 'exist' if it has not become functional. . . . The ancient world viewed the cosmos more like a company or kingdom" that comes into existence at the moment it is organized, not when the people who participate it are created materially (Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*, 26, 35. See Smith, *Teachings*, 181, Abraham 4:1).

Walton continues:

It has long been observed that in the contexts of bara' [the Hebrew term translated "create"] no materials for the creative act are ever mentioned, and an investigation of all the passages mentioned above substantiate that claim. How interesting it is that these scholars then draw the conclusion that bara' implies creation out of nothing (ex nihilo). One can see with a moment of thought that such a conclusion assumes that "create" is a material activity. To expand their reasoning for clarity's sake here: Since "create" is a material activity (assumed on their part), and since the contexts never mention the materials used (as demonstrated by the evidence), then the material object must have been brought into existence without using other materials (that is, out of nothing). But one can see that the whole line of reasoning only works if one can assume that bara' is a material activity. In contrast, if, as the analysis of objects presented above suggests, bara' is a functional activity, it would be ludicrous to expect that materials are being used in the activity. In other words, the absence of reference to materials, rather than suggesting material creation out of nothing, is better explained as indication that bara' is not a material activity but a functional one (Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*, pp. 43–44).

In summary, the evidence . . . from the Old Testament as well as from the ancient Near East suggests that both defined the pre-creation state in similar terms and as featuring an absence of functions rather than an absence of material. Such information supports the idea that their concept of existence was linked to functionality and that creation was an activity of bringing functionality to a nonfunctional condition rather than bringing material substance to a situation in which matter was absent. The evidence of matter (the waters of the deep in Genesis 1:2) in the precreation state then supports this view" (Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*, p. 53).

45. See Jon D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," *The Journal of Religion* 64, no. 3 (1984), 287; Arie C. Leder, "The Coherenece of Exodus: Narrative Unity and Meaning," *Calvin Theological Journal* 36(2001), 267; Morrow, "Creation." Levenson also cites Blenkinsopp's thesis of a triadic structure in the priestly concept of world history that described the "creation of the world," the "construction of the sanctuary," and "the establishment of the sanctuary in the land and the distribution of the land among the tribes" in similar, and sometimes identical language. Thus, as Polen reminds us, "the purpose of the Exodus from Egypt is not so that the Israelites could enter the Promised Land, as many other biblical passages have it. Rather it is theocentric: so that God might abide with Israel. . . . This limns a narrative arc whose apogee is reached not in the entry into Canaan at the end of Deuteronomy and the beginning of Joshua but in the dedication day of the Tabernacle (Leviticus 9–10) when God's Glory—manifest Presence—makes an eruptive appearance to the people (Leviticus 9:23–24)" (Nehemia Polen, "Leviticus and Hebrews . . . and Leviticus," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009], 216).

In another correspondence between these events, Mark Smith notes a

variation on the first Hebrew word of Genesis (*bere'shit*) and the description used in Ezekiel 45:18 for the first month of a priestly offering (*bari'shon*): "'Thus said the Lord: 'In the beginning (month) on the first (day) of the month, you shall take a bull of the herd without blemish, and you shall cleanse the sanctuary.' What makes this verse particularly relevant for our discussion of *bere'shit* is that *ri'shon* occurs near *'ehad*, which contextually designates '(day) one' that is 'the first day' of the month. This combination of 'in the beginning' (*bari'shon*) with '(day) one' (*yom 'ehad*) is reminiscent of 'in beginning of' (*bere'shit*) in Genesis 1:1 and 'day one' (*yom 'ehad*) in Genesis 1:5" (Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010], 47).

Hahn notes the same correspondences to the creation of the cosmos in the building of Solomon's Temple (Scott W. Hahn, "Christ, Kingdom, and Creation: Davidic Christology and Ecclesiology in Luke-Acts," *Letter and Spirit* 3 [2007], 176–77. See Morrow, "Creation"; Levenson, "Temple and World", 283–84; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* [Leiden, NL: Brill, 2002], 62–65; Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of Sitz Im Leben of Genesis 1:1–2:3," 506, 508):

> As creation takes seven days, the Temple takes seven years to build (1 Kings 6:38). It is dedicated during the seven-day Feast of Tabernacles (1 Kings 8:2), and Solomon's solemn dedication speech is built on seven petitions (1 Kings 8:31–53). As God capped creation by "resting" on the seventh day, the Temple is built by a "man of rest" (1 Chronicles 22:9) to be a "house of rest" for the Ark, the presence of the Lord (1 Chronicles 28:2; 2 Chronicles 6:41; Psalm 132:8, 13–14; Isaiah 66:1).

> When the Temple is consecrated, the furnishings of the older Tabernacle are brought inside it. (R. E. Friedman suggests the entire Tabernacle was brought inside). This represents the fact that all the Tabernacle was, the Temple has become. Just as the construction of the Tabernacle of the Sinai covenant had once recapitulated creation, now the Temple of the Davidic covenant recapitulated the same. The Temple is a microcosm of creation, the creation a macro-temple.

46. Jacob Neusner, ed. *Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis, a New American Translation*, vol. 1: Parashiyyot One through Thirty-Three on Genesis 1:1 to 8:14, Brown Judaic Studies (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985), 35.

47. Hugh W. Nibley, "The Meaning of the Temple," in *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 14–15. See "The Greatness of Egypt," in *Eloquent Witness: Nibley on Himself, Others, and the Temple*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 301; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2008), 37–42. Speaking of the temple and its furnishings, Josephus wrote that each item was "made in way of imitation and representation of the universe" (Flavius Josephus, "The Antiquities of the Jews," in *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus, the Jewish Historian, Translated from the Original Greek,*

According to Havercamp's Accurate Edition [1737; repr, Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1980], 3:7:7, 75). Levenson has suggested that the temple in Jerusalem may have been called by the name "Heaven and Earth," paralleling similar names given to other Near East temples (see Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*, 180–81n12).

48. Nibley, "Return to the Temple", 71–73. See also John H. Walton, *Ancient near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 123–27; Hugh W. Nibley, "Meanings and Functions of Temples," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York City: Macmillan, 1992), 1460–61; S. D. Ricks, *Liturgy.* For more on the structure and function of the story of Creation found in Genesis 1 and arguably used in Israelite temple liturgy, see Walton, *Lost World of Genesis One*; Smith, *Priestly Vision*. Brown, *Seven Pillars* provides perspectives on other biblical accounts of creation. See John H. Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 17–22 for a useful table that highlights similarities and differences among creation accounts in the ancient Near East. See Brown, *Seven Pillars*, 21–32.

49. Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Pearl of Great Price* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS], 2004), 122. The term *giparu*, rendered by Nibley as "inner sanctuary" (*Teachings of the Pgp*, 122; compare Ephraim A. Speiser, "The Creation Epic [Enuma Elish]," in *Ancient near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. James B. Pritchard [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972], 1:1, 2 6b, 60–61), has been translated variously in this context by others as "bog," "marsh," or "reed hut." The latter term more accurately conveys the idea of an enclosure housing the sanctuary or residence of the *en(t)u* priest(ess) of the temple. For more about the temple connotation of the Babylonian reed hut and its significance for the story of the flood in the Bible and other ancient flood accounts, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and David J. Larsen*, In God's Image and Likeness 2: Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel* (Salt Lake City: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2014), 216–21.

50. See Speiser, "Creation Epic", 61n4.

51. See, for example, Wyatt, "Arms."

52. Morales, *Who Shall Ascend*, 184. For Christians, of course, a complete and permanent remedy to the consequences of the Fall could be made possible only through "the last Adam's [that is, Jesus's] re-entry into God's abode with His own blood for Atonement" (*Who Shall Ascend*, 184).

53. See Doctrine and Covenants 76: 51–76, 92–95.

54. See Doctrine and Covenants 76: 71–80, 97.

55. Image adapted from Nathan Richardson, "Six doctrines taught in the five temple rooms (Temples and the Atonement, Part 3)," (presentation, BYU-Idaho Education Week, Rexburg, ID, 2019), unpublished presentation in the possession of the author.

56. For a more detailed discussion of the processes of repentance and homecoming, as reflected in ancient sources, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Matthew

L. Bowen, "Jacob's Temple Journey to Haran and Back," in *The Temple: Plates, Patterns, & Patriarchs, Proceedings of the Sixth Interpreter Foundation Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, 4–5 November 2022*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2024), 179–82.

57. See David Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored, Proceedings of the 2014 Temple on Mount Zion Symposium*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Orem, UT: The Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2016). For more on the general idea of the Book of Moses as a temple text, see Bradshaw, "Book of Moses as a Temple Text."

Narrative features of the Book of Moses described by Calabro that would have been relevant to its use as a temple text include lamination of discourse frames; verbs of motion, repeated themes, and wordplays that relate to temple architecture; and narrative displacement.

As a specific example, consider that the mention that "the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam" occurs in Moses 5:9, while the story of his baptism is "put in the mouth of Enoch, several pages later" (Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture," 173). Calabro hypothesizes that its "position in chapter 6 conforms to the setting of the ritual, near the laver, where instruction about baptism is appropriate." Similarly, Adam and Eve are taught the law of sacrifice only after they have been driven out of the Garden, allowing those who, according to Calabro's conjecture, were participating in temple ritual to be situated near the altar of sacrifice before the presentation of that law.

58. Complicating the picture somewhat, Calabro has argued eloquently (primarily on the basis of New Testament ideas and language in the Book of Moses) for the intriguing suggestion that the Book of Moses, as we have it today, may be rooted in a first- or second-century Christian baptismal liturgy (David Calabro, "An Early Christian Context for the Book of Moses," in *Tracing Ancient Threads in the Book of Moses*, 505). Going further, however, Calabro suggests that the early Christian source for our modern Book of Moses may have been adapted from even more ancient sources that could have been used in a different performative context— for example, within early Israelite temples. In brief, the idea is that just as Joseph Smith restored the text in modern times, an early Christian text may also have been a restoration of an earlier temple text, although reformulated in language appropriate to its use in a later setting. Calabro's intriguing hypothesis still leaves open the possibility that the Book of Moses, in an earlier form could be conceived as a temple text for ritual use in royal investiture, analogous to temple rites restored by the Prophet Joseph Smith (Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, David J. Larsen, and Stephen T. Whitlock, "Moses 1 and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: Twin Sons of Different Mothers?," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 38 (2020), 2:861n52, journal.interpreterfoundation.org/moses-1-and-the-apocalypse-of-abraham-twin-sons-of-different-mothers/).

59. Although we enter the gate of repentance and baptism by exercising "unshaken faith," "relying wholly upon the merits" of Christ (2 Nephi 31:19), it is intended that we grow spiritually through a combination of our efforts and His strengthening

power in gradual fashion until, someday, we come to "be like him" (1 John 3:2; Moroni 7:48). Certainly, there is truth in Stephen Robinson's emphasis on the difference in magnitude between the "61 cents" we contribute toward our salvation and the unfathomably costly contribution that Jesus Christ made on our behalf (Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992], 31–34). However, there are major differences between Latter-day Saint beliefs and extreme versions of "grace-alone oriented" theologies—as exemplified by Charles Spurgeon's famous line: "If there be but one stitch in the celestial garment of our righteousness which we ourselves are to put in, we are lost" (cited in Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation: Five Lectures Delivered at the Princeton Summer School of Theology, June 1914*, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1915], 59, archive.org/details /planofsalvation00warf/mode/2up.)

Just as Jesus Christ will put all enemies beneath his feet (1 Corinthians 15:25–26), so Joseph Smith taught that each person who would be saved must also, with His essential help, gain the power needed to "triumph over all [their] enemies and put them under [their] feet" (Smith, *Teachings*, 297. See also 301, 305), possessing the "glory, authority, majesty, power, and dominion which Jehovah possesses" (Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate, Jr., eds., *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective*, Religious Studies Specialized Monograph Series [Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990], 7:9, 98. See 7:16—note that it is not certain whether Joseph Smith authored these lectures).

As Chauncey Riddle explains (Chauncey C. Riddle, "The New and Everlasting Covenant," in *Doctrines for Exaltation: The 1989 Sperry Symposium on the Doctrine and Covenants* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989], 228), "the covenant of baptism is [not only] our pledge to seek after good and to eliminate all choosing and doing of evil in our lives, [but] also our receiving the power to keep that promise," that is, through the gift of the Holy Ghost. For Latter-day Saints, Jesus Christ is not only their Redeemer but also their literal prototype, the One who demonstrates the process of probation that all people must pass through as they follow Him (Matthew 4:19; 8:22; 9:9; 16:24; 19:21; Mark 2:14; 8:24; 10:21; Luke 5:27; 9:23, 59, 61; 18:22; John 1:43; 10:27; 12:26; 13:36; 21:19, 22).

60. Bruce C. Hafen, *Spiritually Anchored in Unsettled Times* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 22. On the idea of the "second sacrifice" that is represented in a later part of the temple endowment, Elder Hafen writes in "A Disciple's Journey," in *Brigham Young University 2007–2008 Speeches* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2008), speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-c-hafen /disciples-journey/ (See also *Anchored*, 22–23, 82):

> As we approach the second barrier of sacrifice, we move symbolically from the moon to the sun. All of the moon's light is reflected from the sun—it is borrowed light [See Book of Abraham, explanation of Facsimile 2, Figure 5].
>
> Heber C. Kimball used to say that when life's greatest tests come, those who are living on borrowed light—the testimonies of others—will not be able to stand (Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake City: Stevens & Wallis, 1945], pp. 446,

449–50; J. Golden Kimball, "Discourse, 8 April 1906, Overflow Meeting in the Assembly Hall," in *Seventy-Sixth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, ed. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [Salt Lake City: *The Deseret News*, 1906], pp. 76–77; "Discourse, 4 October 1930," in *One-Hundred and First Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*, ed. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1930], pp. 59–60; Harold B. Lee, "Watch! Be Ye Therefore Ready," *Improvement Era* 68, no. 12 [1965]: 1152. Compare Brigham Young, "Necessity for a Reformation a Disgrace; Intelligence a Gift, Increased by Imparting; Spirit of God; Variety in Spiritual as Well as Natural Organizations; God the Father of the Spirits of All Mankind, Etc. [Discourse Delivered in Great Salt Lake City, 8 March 1857]," in *Journal of Discourses* [repr. 1853–1886; Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 265–66; Amasa M. Lyman, "Mormonism and Its Results; Internal Light and Development; Decrease of Evil; the Fountain of Light [a Discourse by Elder Amasa Lyman, Delivered in the Bowery, Great Salt Lake City, July 12, 1857]," in *Journal of Discourses,* 36–38; Orson Hyde, "The Way to Eaternal Life; Practical Religion; All Are Not Saints Who Profess to Be; Prison-House of Disobedient Spirits [a Discourse by Elder Orson Hyde, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Great Salt Lake City, March 8, 1857]," in *Journal of Discourses,* 71–72; Charles W. Penrose, "Sincerity Alone Not Sufficient; the Gathering Foretold; Inspired Writings Not All Contained in the Bible; Province of the Holy Ghost; the Reformers; Confusion of Sects; Apostate Condition of the World Foretold; How the Apostles Were Sent out; Authority Required; What the Saints Should Do; Opposition to the Gospel, Ancient and Modern; Testimony (Discourse by Elder Chas. W. Penrose, Delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Sunday Afternoon, May 20th, 1883)," in *Journal of Discourses,* 41. See also Matthew 25:1–13). We need our own access to the light of the Son.

Baptism represents the first sacrifice. The temple endowment represents the second sacrifice. The first sacrifice was about breaking out of Satan's orbit. The second one is about breaking fully into Christ's orbit, pulled by His gravitational power. The first sacrifice was mostly about giving up temporal things. The second one is about consecrating ourselves spiritually, holding back nothing. As Elder Maxwell said, the only thing we can give the Lord that He didn't already give us is our own will. Neal A. Maxwell, "Jesus, the Perfect Mentor," *Ensign*, February 2001, 17.

Seeking to be meek and lowly, disciples gladly offer God their will. As our children sing, "I feel my Savior's love. . . . / He knows I will follow him, / Give all my life to him" (*Children's Songbook*, "I feel my Savior's love," 74–75). And then what happens? In President Benson's words, "When obedience ceases to be an irritant and becomes our quest, in that moment God will endow us with power" (cited in Donald L.

> Staheli, "Obedience—Life's Greatest Challenge," *Ensign* 28, May 1998, 82).

61. See Bradshaw and Bowen, "By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified", 176–79, 183–85.

62. Those who have been "ordained priests, after his [the Lord God's] holy order, which was after the order of his Son" are commanded to "teach . . . the people" so that "the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption" (Alma 13:1–2). I would suggest that this teaching was intended to be not only by precept but also by their personal example of self-sacrifice in likeness of the Son, who is described Himself as a "great high priest" in Hebrews 4:14. As Harold Attridge notes (Attridge and Koester, *Hebrews*, 284):

    > Before [the author of Hebrews] sounds the familiar note of Christ's exalted status [which is, incidentally, the theme of the first verses of Alma 13], our author reverts to the results of the self-sacrificial act by which that status is achieved.

    It is in this sense that the Lord can say, despite the fact that it is His sacrifice that ultimately makes us holy, "sanctify *yourselves*" (for example Exodus 19:22; Leviticus 11:44, 20:7; Numbers 11:18; Joshua 3:5, 7:13; 1 Samuel 16:5; 1 Chronicles 15:12, 14; 2 Chronicles 29:5, 15, 34; 30:3, 8, 15, 24; 31:18; 35:6; Isaiah 66:17; Doctrine and Covenants 43:11, 16; 88:68, 74; 133:4, 62. See also John 17:19; 2 Timothy 2:21).

63. Compare Moroni 10:32–33. In my view, the word "after" should not be read mistakenly in a temporal sense, but rather in line with the atemporal Old English sense of "more away, further off" (See Greek *apotero*)—meaning essentially that "all we can do" is always necessary but never sufficient. We are saved by grace despite all we can do. This is similar in spirit to Stephen E. Robinson's line of thinking (Robinson, *Believing*, 91–92):

    > I understand the preposition "after" in 2 Nephi 25:23 to be a preposition of separation rather than a preposition of time. It denotes logical separateness rather than temporal sequence. We are saved by grace "apart from all we can do," or "all we can do notwithstanding," or even "regardless of all we can do." Another acceptable paraphrase of the sense of the verse might read, "We are still saved by grace, after all is said and done."

    For additional discussion of this verse in the context of general discussions of divine grace, see Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 155–56; Brad Wilcox, "His Grace Is Sufficient," speeches.byu.edu/talks/brad-wilcox/his-grace-is-sufficient/; Joseph M. Spencer, "What Can We Do? Reflections on 2 Nephi 25:23," *Religious Educator* 15, no. 2 (2014), rsc.byu.edu/vol-15-no-2-2014/what-can-we-do-reflections-2-nephi-2523. Two excellent studies by Jared Ludlow and Daniel O. McClellan have gone further to place the scripture in its required literary context: Daniel O. McClellan, "2 Nephi 25:23 in Linguistic and Rhetorical Context" (Presentation, 'Book of Mormon Studies: Toward a Conversation' Conference, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, October 12–13, 2018),"; McClellan, "Despite All We Can Do," LDS Perspectives, 18 March 2020, interpreterfoundation.org/ldsp-despite-all-we-can-do-with-daniel-o-mcclellan/).

Although Alma 24:10–11 defines "all we could do" [note the past tense, emphasis added] solely in terms of repentance, I believe that one of the purposes of the process of sanctification is to allow us to grow in holiness, gradually acquiring a capacity for doing "more"—specifically, becoming "good" like our Father (see Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19) and "doing good" (Acts 10:38, emphasis added) like the Son, an evolution of our natures jointly enabled by the Atonement and our exercise of moral agency.

Despite all this, of course, it must never be forgotten that even repentance itself, which is "all we can do" at the time we first accept Christ, would be impossible had not the merciful plan of redemption been laid before the foundation of the world (Alma 12:22–37). And, of course, it is His continuous grace that lends us breath, "preserving [us] from day to day, . . . and even supporting [us] from one moment to another" (Mosiah 2:21).

64. Hugh W. Nibley, "The Meaning of the Atonement," in *Approaching Zion*, ed. Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 560. For an extensive and insightful study of this and related verses, see Matthew L. Bowen, "'Where I Will Meet You': The Convergence of Sacred Time and Sacred Space as the Etiological Function of the Tent of Meeting," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Space, and Sacred Meaning,* vv. 6–9.

65. In the Latter-day Saint Bible Dictionary, the "oracle . . . for the most holy place" is said to describe "the innermost room of the temple of Solomon; the Holy of Holies." Taken together with Hugh Nibley's translation of LXX Exodus 29:45, this biblical language suggests that "oracles in your most holy places wherein you receive conversations" may refer to intimate conversations with the Lord that take place symbolically at the veil of earthly temples, prefiguring an analogous "conversation" with the Lord that will someday take place for the righteous at the "veil" of the "heavenly temple."

66. See, for example, Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–26. For more on this topic, see Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, 99–109.

67. Nibley, "Atonement", 567.

68. Nibley, "Atonement", 567–68. Compare the ritual embrace in Egyptian temple rites (*Message (2005)*, 445–49). See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *In God's Image and Likeness 1: Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve* (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2014), 504n6-38.

69. See, for example, Nibley's discussion of the meaning of these terms, in Nibley, "Atonement", 558–62.

70. "Assembly and Atonement," in *King Benjamin's Speech: 'That Ye May Learn Wisdom'*, ed. John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 124. Justifying his interpretation, Nibley writes ("Atonement", 560):

> The kapporeth is usually assumed to be the lid of the Ark, yet it fits much better with the front, since one stands before it.

Nibley gives further arguments for his interpretation in "Atonement", 610n13.

71. For related material from Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian sources, see Bradshaw, *In God's Image 1*, 503n6-37.

72. Not only in 2 Nephi 31–32, but also, for example, the experience of the brother of Jared (see M. Catherine Thomas, "The Brother of Jared at the Veil," in *Temples of the Ancient World*) and in the visionary experience with veil symbolism that, according to an account by Fayette Lapham, took place in a Nephite tabernacle that was apparently described in the lost pages of the Book of Mormon (see Bradley, *Lost 116 Pages*, 252–53).

73. See, for example, Hebrews 6:18–20; 10:19–23, discussed in more detail in Bradshaw, *Freemasonry*, 71–88.

74. Yasin M. al-Khalesi, *The Court of the Palms: A Functional Interpretation of the Mari Palace*, ed. Giorgio Buccellati, Bibliotheca Mesopotamica (Malibu, CA: Undena Publications, 1978), 67. More broadly, see Bradshaw, "Investiture Panel," 23–42.

75. In the translation of Samuel Sandmel, M. Jack Suggs, and Arnold J. Tkacik, eds., *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha, Oxford Study Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 280. See also Ether 12:4.

76. See also Marion G. Romney, "The Oath and Covenant Which Belongeth to the Priesthood," *Conference Report*, April 1962, 17.

77. Kevin L. Barney, ed. *Footnotes to the New Testament for Latter-Day Saints* (2007), 3:82. See also Romney, "Oath", 17.

78. For Joseph Smith's teachings on this topic, see Bradshaw, "Understanding the Doctrine of Election."

79. See also Hebrews 4:14; Attridge and Koester, *Hebrews*, 118–19.

80. Margaret Barker, *The Risen Lord: The Jesus of History as the Christ of Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996), 42–43. See also Gregory Nazianzen, "Oration 39: Oration on the Holy Lights," in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (1894; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 16, 358; Origen, *Homilies on Luke: Fragments on Luke*, trans. Joseph T. Lienhard (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), Homily 24 on Luke 3:15–16, 103; 1 Corinthians 3:13.

81. Attridge and Koester, *Hebrews*, 184. See 185, 222–24. See also Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, ed. C. Clifton Black and John T. Carroll (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 172–73.

Comparing the symbol of the anchor to an image in Virgil, Witherington concludes that he was "thinking no doubt of an iron anchor with two wings rather than an ancient stone anchor" (Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Hebrews, James and Jude* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007], 225). The shape of the anchor recalls both the covenant and the oath by which the former is "made sure" (2 Peter 1:10).

The symbol of the anchor evokes the tradition of pounding nails into the Western Wall of the Jerusalem Temple. Daniel Rona writes: "Older texts reveal a now forgotten custom of the 'sure nails.' This was the practice of bringing one's sins, grief, or the tragedies of life to the remains of the temple wall and

'nailing' them in a sure place. The nails are a reminder of Isaiah's prophecy [22:23–25] that man's burden will be removed when the nail in the sure place is taken down" (Daniel Rona, *Israel Revealed: Discovering Mormon and Jewish Insights in the Holy Land* [Sandy, UT: The Ensign Foundation, 2001], 194). Christian use of anchor imagery goes back to "the first century cemetery of St. Domitilla, the second and third century epitaphs of the catacombs" ("Christian Symbols," FishEaters [website], fisheaters.com/symbols.html). Although the anchor is frequently depicted in connection with a figure representing the Hope afforded by Jesus Christ, it is, from the perspective of those who aspire to a place in God's presence, an even more appropriate companion to the crowning blessings associated with the requirement of Charity, as shown in a stained glass panel by Ward and Hughes from the cathedral in Lichfield, England (Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, Figure 6–13, 472). In 2 Nephi 31:20, Nephi associates this "love of God and of all men" with the ultimate attainment of both a "perfect brightness of hope" and the sure promise of the Father ("Ye shall have eternal life").

82. David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. M. M. Mitchell and D. P. Moessner (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2011), 300–1.

83. See John 1:12; Doctrine and Covenants 11:28–30; 39:4; 42:52.

84. This phrase, applied by Moffit to Jesus Christ and His followers, originated with the Jews in Qumran. See, for example, Geza Vermes, ed. *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, rev. ed. (London, England: Penguin Books, 2004), Rule of the Community (1QS), 4:22–26, 103. For a more detailed study of the meaning of this concept in the context of the theology of the Qumran Community and of early Christians, see Fletcher-Louis, *Glory*.

85. Moffitt, *Atonement*, 301. Wherefore," says Moroni, "whoso believeth in God might with surety hope for a better world, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, which hope cometh of faith, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God" (Ether 12:4, emphasis added). Note that these ordinances provide only a "hope for a better world," and not yet the actual entrance into it.

86. Joseph Smith, Jr., "Letter to Silas Smith, 26 September 1833," in *The Joseph Smith Papers: Documents, Volume 3: February 1833–March 1834*, ed. Steven E. Snow et al. (Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2014), 301–8, 305–6, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-silas-smith -26-september-1833/1, spelling and punctuation modernized.

87. See Bradshaw, "Understanding the Doctrine of Election."

88. See, for example, 2 Nephi 2:22–26; Alma 18:36, 39; 22:13; Mormon 9:12, Doctrine and Covenants 20:17–18, 20–25; Moses 6:54–59; Articles of Faith 1:1–3. Compare James E. Talmage, *The House of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 83.

89. Bruce R. McConkie, "The Three Pillars of Eternity," BYU Devotional, 17 February 1981, speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-r-mcconkie/three-pillars-eternity/.

90. Nathan Richardson, "Two Views of the Plan of Salvation," *Latter-day Saint Philosopher* (blog), 23 December 2010, ldsphilosopher.com/two-views-of

-the-plan-of-salvation/; see also Nate Richardson, "Creation Fall & Atonement Narrative," RichardsonStudies (blog), 3 November 2018, richardsonstudies .com/2018/11/03/creation-fall-atonement-narrative/. See also Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, 7–10.

91. Noel B. Reynolds, "Lehi's Dream, Nephi's Blueprint: How Nephi Uses the Vision of the Tree of Life as an Outline for 1 and 2 Nephi," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 52 (2022), journal.interpreterfoundation.org /lehis-dream-nephis-blueprint-how-nephi-uses-the-vision-of-the-tree-of -life-as-an-outline-for-1-and-2-nephi/.

92. Reynolds summarizes as follows ("Lehi's Dream, Nephi's Blueprint", 231–32):

> While literary and visual artists continue to find inspiration in the human dramas retold throughout the book, the text itself features visualizations of its basic doctrinal messages: (1) God on his throne in heavenly council, (2) the tree of life with the straight and narrow path, the iron rod, and the great and spacious building, and (3) the allegory of the olive tree. As I will explain below, those three visual images are part of Lehi's and Nephi's great vision and provide the blueprint for the complex of covenant history and doctrinal teaching recorded by multiple authors throughout the entire book.

> Speaking specifically of the importance of 2 Nephi 31, Reynolds writes in "The Gospel According to Nephi: An Essay on 2 Nephi 31," *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Resotred Gospel* 16, no. 2 (2015), 53–54, 69, rsc.byu.edu /vol-16-no-2-2015/gospel-according-nephi-essay-2-nephi-31:

> Second Nephi 31 is . . . the earliest comprehensive statement of the gospel message in the Book of Mormon—even though several previous passages make it clear that Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob knew the gospel—as it clearly sets forth all six elements of that message as it is recognized in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today, including:

> 1. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
> 2. Repentance.
> 3. Baptism of water.
> 4. Gift of the Holy Ghost.
> 5. Enduring to the end.
> 6. Eternal life.

> These same six elements are included in both of the other Book of Mormon presentations of the gospel or doctrine of Christ that were given by Christ himself. . . .

> This passage may have served the Nephite dispensation in much the same way that Joseph Smith's First Vision has served this last dispensation by providing the highest possible authority for its central claims—including the prophetic claims of the first leader. We find the Nephite prophets across 1000 years of ministry staying true to the concepts and phraseology introduced by Nephi in this passage. This is most clearly reflected in their teachings on the gospel, baptism, and charity. Although we cannot know the extent to which later

prophets had access to Nephi's small plates, it is clear that his phrasing and teachings persist through their writings to the very end of Mormon's volume.

93. Spencer, *An Other Testament*, 45–49.

94. Rappleye, "Tongue of Angels."

95. See Bradshaw, Larsen, and Whitlock, "Moses 1 and the Apocalypse of Abraham (Journal)."

96. At left in figure 6, we see Gustave Doré's famous illustration of the "empyrean heaven." The Greek term *empyros* (fiery) is derived from *pyr* (fire) and is not to be confused with the unrelated term "imperial" (see, for example, Rosa Giorgi, *Anges Et Démons*, trans. Dominique Férault [Paris, FR: Éditions Hazan, 2003], 63–65). This is a representation of the highest heaven as a realm lighted by the pure fire of God's glory (see, for example, Margaret Barker, "The Holy of Holies," in *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy*, ed. Margaret Barker [London: T & T Clark, 2003], 185). Since, in this instance, the sacred center is in heaven rather than earth, it is shown as a circle rather than a square. The heavenly throne is, in the words Lehi used to describe his dream, "surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God" (1 Nephi 1:18). Hugh Nibley points out: "A concourse is a circle. Of course, [numberless] concourses mean circles within circles and reminds you of dancing. And what were they doing? Surrounded means 'all around'. . . It was a choral dance" (Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 17, 211. See also Barry Robert Bickmore, *Restoring the Ancient Church: Joseph Smith and Early Christianity* [Ben Lomond, CA: FAIR, 1999], 304–6; Nicoletta Isar, "The Dance of Adam: Reconstructing the Byzantine *Choros*," *Byzantino-Slavica: Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines* 61 [2003]; Frederick M. Huchel, *The Cosmic Ring Dance of the Angels: An Early Christian Rite of the Temple* [North Logan, UT: The Frithurex Press, 2009]).

97. See also 1 Nephi 10, 15.

98. Illustration for Paradiso Canto 31, *Divine Comedy* (1308–1321) by Dante Alighieri, upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d2/Paradiso_Canto_31.jpg.

99. *Book of Mormon 2024, Come, Follow Me—for Home and Church: Living, Learning, and Teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2024), 72, churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-home-and-church-book-of-mormon-2024/15.

100. DGraphicArtsDesign, "Tree of Life," etsy.com/listing/1476437684/tree-of-life-digital-download-jesus-art.

101. See also Nephi's explanation to his brothers in chapter 15.

102. On the roles of the Father and the Son's in explaining the dream to Nephi, see Reynolds, "Lehi's Dream, Nephi's Blueprint," 53, 72–73.

103. See Bradshaw, "Faith, Hope, and Charity," 83–90 for a discussion of four exemplary scriptural passages on faith, hope, and charity, and the doctrine of Christ—Ether 12, Moroni 7, Hebrews 6, and 2 Nephi 31–31. 90–111 describe

in depth conjectured relationships of these three cardinal virtues to different areas of the temple.

104. Smith, *Teachings*, 305. Elsewhere I have argued that although this wording is not explicitly included in notes by witnesses of the 21 May 1843 discourse, it should not be dismissed simply as an unwarranted elaboration by later Church historian (see Bradshaw, "Understanding the Doctrine of Election," 173–79).

105. Smith, *Teachings*, 12–13: "They are they who saw the mysteries of godliness . . . they saw angels ascending and descending upon a ladder that reached from earth to heaven." Compare 1 Timothy 3:16; Doctrine and Covenants 19:10; 84:19–21. Speaking of Jacob's dream of the heavenly ladder in Genesis 28, Marion G. Romney, said: "Jacob realized that the covenants he made with the Lord were the rungs on the ladder that he himself would have to climb in order to obtain the promised blessings—blessings that would entitle him to enter heaven and associate with the Lord" (Marion G. Romney, "Temples—the Gates to Heaven," in *Look to God and Live* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971], 239–40). See also Hugh W. Nibley, "On the Sacred and the Symbolic," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 579–81.

106. Bible Dictionary, s.v. "Sacrifices," churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bd /sacrifices. Compare Morales, *Exodus Old and New*, 97–98. President Nelson suggested that members study the Bible Dictionary entry on sacrifices, among others, to prepare for the temple (Russell M. Nelson, "Personal Preparation for Temple Blessings," *Ensign*, May 2001, 32) in *Hope in Our Hearts*, ed. Russell M. Nelson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009):

> Spiritual preparation is enhanced by study. I like to recommend that members going to the temple for the first time read short explanatory paragraphs in the Bible Dictionary, listed under seven topics: "Anoint," "Atonement," "Christ," "Covenant," "Fall of Adam," "Sacrifices," and "Temple." Doing so will provide a firm foundation."

107. See Bradshaw and Bowen, "By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified", 176–79, 183–85.

108. This section updates and summarizes ideas that were previously proposed in Bradshaw, "Faith, Hope, and Charity", 81–111.

109. DGraphicArtsDesign, "Tree of Life."

110. Bradshaw and Bowen, "By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified", 92–99.

111. See, for example, April D. DeConick, "The True Mysteries: Sacrementalism in the 'Gospel of Philip'," *Vigilae Christianae* 55, no. 3 (2001), 239 (see, further, 239–45):

> The eucharist sacrament is another ritual activity referred to by Philip. It seems to correspond to the Holy of the Holy shrine, the shrine closely tied to "redemption" (69:23). Accordingly, this shrine is to be associated with the second room in the Temple, the hekhal or holy place. In the hekhal stood a golden altar for incense offerings (1 Kings 7:48. See 1 Kings 6:20–21), ten lampstands (1 Kings 7:48–49), shul-chan ha-panim or the table of the Countenance (1 Kings 7:48–49) upon which was ritually offered lechem ha-panim, the bread of the Countenance. Every Sabbath twelve loaves of unleavened bread

were placed on the table before the face of Yahweh (Leviticus 24:5–9). After a week, the loaves were eaten by the priests (Leviticus 6:7–9; 24:5–9). There seems also to be evidence that the priests placed jugs of wine on the Table along with the loaves and then partook of beverage and bread when the time came for them to participate in the weekly meal.

See also Exodus 25:22–29; 37:9–12; Numbers 4:7; 1 Samuel 21:7; 1 Kings 7:34–35; 2 Chronicles 4:19.

112. According to Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the Valentinians* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2006), 345, the eucharist

unfolds a soteriological symbolism that is parallel to and overlaps with that of baptism–anointing [confirmation, in Latter-day Saint tradition]. . . . The fact that the eucharist has soteriological significance autonomously of the baptism-anointing sequence is probably related to the nature of the eucharist as a repeated maintenance ritual, which makes it functionally distinct from the initiation ritual performed only once for each candidate."

113. This verse from the Book of Mormon, of course, refers to the actual blessing of eternal life at the end of one's probation rather than to the symbolic representation of that blessing that is experienced in earthly ordinances. Regarding the process of enduring to the end, Hafen and others observe:

Sometimes . . . we refer to the first principles as if they represented the entire process of discipleship. When we do that, "endure to the end" can sound like an afterthought, as if our baptism and confirmation have hooked us like a trout on God's fishing line, and so long as we don't squirm off the hook, He will reel us safely in. Or some assume that "endure to the end" simply describes the "no worries" stage of life, when our main job is to just enjoy frequent trips to our cozy retirement cottage while refraining from doing anything really bad along the way. (Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen, *The Contrite Spirit: How the Temple Helps Us Apply Christ's Atonement* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015], 57–58)

But there is more. As President Russell M. Nelson has said, "Enduring to the end . . . means the endowment and sealing ordinances of the holy temple" "Begin with the end in mind," Seminar for New Mission Presidents, June 22, 2014. For a summary of Elder Nelson's talk, see S. J. Weaver, "Begin Missionary Work." Also Noel and Sydney Reynolds have taught that "endure to the end" is a gospel principle that is paired with the temple endowment, just as repentance is paired with baptism (personal communication, May 17, 2014). Nephi offered a similarly expansive view of "enduring": we should "endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God" (2 Nephi 31:16). The first principles will always be first—yet they are but the foundation for pressing on toward the Christlike life: "Therefore not leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, . . . [and] baptisms" (JST Hebrews 6:1–2; emphasis added).

114. To see how Joseph Smith wove together Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 6:19–20, and 1 Peter 1 in alluding to the ritual grasp and actions associated with the oath of the Father, see Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, 60–62.

115. See Bradshaw, "Understanding the Doctrine of Election", especially 190–92. In his comments relating to 2 Peter 1, Joseph Smith further explained that (Smith, *Teachings*, 298–99):

> Though [the Saints addressed by Peter] might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure (2 Peter 1:10), that they had part with Christ, and were joint heirs with Him. Then they would want that more sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19), that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God.

> Then, having this promise sealed unto [us is] an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast. Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble, and tribulation. Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. . . .

> Then I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it.

116. Joseph Smith explicitly tied the imagery of Hebrews 6:18–20 to the idea of making one's calling and election sure (Letter to Silas Smith, 305–6; Joseph Smith, Jr., Andrew F. Ehat, and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* [Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1980], 14 May 1843, 201; Smith, *Teachings*, 298–99).

117. In 2 Nephi 33:9, following an expression of charity for all people, Nephi reiterates that there is no other way than the one he has just outlined: "But behold, for none of these can I hope except they shall be reconciled unto Christ, and enter into the narrow gate [through the faith that leads to repentance and baptism], and walk in the strait path [of hope] which leads to life [eternal life, conferred at the veil], and continue in the path until the end of the day of probation [the requirement to endure to the end]."

118. Bible Dictionary, s.v. Sacrifices.

119. Found in Thessaloniki, Macedonia. Licensed from Alamy.com. Image ID: BM2KC6.

120. Nicoletta Isar, *Choros, the Dance of Adam: The Making of Byzantine Chorography* (Leiden, NL: Alexandros Press, 2011), plate 65. Reproduced with permission of the author.

121. Isar, *Choros*, 73.

122. Isar, *Choros*, 73. Compare the first century *Odes of Solomon* 42:8: "Like the arm of the groom over the bride So is my yoke over those who know me" James H. Charlesworth, "Odes of Solomon," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1983, 42:8, 771.

123. Compare Isar, *Choros*, 52.

124. Hugh W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 16, 1:199.

125. For additional arguments that Joseph Smith was aware of many details of temple-related teachings and ordinances near the beginning of the Restoration, see Bradshaw, Jeffrey M. "The revelatory origins of temple ordinances," in *Joseph Smith: A Life Lived in Crescendo,* 339–426; Bradshaw, "What Did Joseph Smith Know"; Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and K-Lynn Paul, "'How Thankful We Should Be to Know the Truth': Zebedee Coltrin's Witness of the Heavenly Origins of Temple Ordinances," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016), journal.interpreterfoundation.org/how-thankful-we-should-be-to-know-the-truth-zebedee-coltrins-witness-of-the-heavenly-origins-of-temple-ordinances/; Bradshaw, *Freemasonry and the Origins of Latter-Day Saint Temple Ordinances*, 41–54.

126. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, with the assistance of Florian Kugler and Christa Hummel.