



Congruence and Concatenation in Jewish Mystical Literature, American Freemasonry, and Mormon Enoch Writings

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Abstract

The Biblical character Enoch is a central figure in early Jewish mystical literature, where his story is redolent with themes related to the concepts of transformation and communion with the Divine. This rich and mythic wisdom significantly influenced American Royal Arch Freemasonry, and through it, early Mormonism. This paper explores the shared aspects of these traditions: where they overlap, and specifically, where Mormonism may rely upon Freemasonry. The Enoch pseudepigrapha and their Masonic and Mormon iterations are presented as a series of related mystical traditions. Linked by common themes of theophany, grand assembly, and heavenly ascent, they are utilized in similar, yet innovative ways to impart spiritual truth to their followers.

Introduction

The Biblical character Enoch, familiar to readers of Genesis as the grandfather of Noah and as a man who did not die but was instead “taken by God,” is a central figure in early Jewish Merkabah and Hekhalot literature. Many elements, unexplored in the scriptural account of Enoch,¹ are more abundantly covered in these ancient, extracanonical sources. Here, Enoch’s story is redolent with themes related to the concepts of transformation, communion with the Divine, and theosis. This rich and mythic wisdom significantly influenced American Royal Arch Freemasonry, which, in turn, informed early Mormonism’s

¹ The few references to Enoch from the Bible are found in Genesis 5:18-24; Hebrews 11:5; Jude 1:14-15.

own scriptural account. The Enoch story in all three traditions shares many similar thematic elements, including

- Theophany (1 Enoch 14:18-25; Webb: 244; Moses 7:3-4)
- Enoch's call to preach (2 Enoch 18; Oliver 1823: 85; Moses 6:23-27, 37; 7:15)
- Foreknowledge and prophetic warning of the destruction of the world (1 Enoch 10:4-5; Webb: 246; Moses 7:41-67)
- A grand assembly (1 Enoch 69:26-28; Oliver 1823: 87-92; Doctrine and Covenants 107:53-56)
- Adam's apocalyptic prophecy (1 Enoch 12-14; Oliver 1823: 82; Doctrine and Covenants 107:56)
- Expertise in astronomical and calendrical sciences (1 Enoch 72-80; Oliver 1823: 80-81; Abraham 3:15-19)
- Dissemination and preservation of celestial knowledge (1 Enoch 81:1-3; Webb: 247; Moses 6:42-46)
- Enoch as scribe, and instructor in the art of writing (Orlov 2005: 383, Oliver 1855: 133 note 12; Moses 6:46)
- Recovery of hidden or lost books (1 Enoch 67:1, 81:2; Oliver 1823: 84-85; Homer: 70)
- Two pillars or tablets (Orlov 2001; Webb: 246-47; Cowdery²)
- Temple liturgy (1 Enoch 25; Webb: 245-46; Oliver 1823: 83-84; Bradshaw 2014)
- A revolutionary social order (1 Enoch 60; Bullock; Moses 7:18-19, 62-63)
- Heavenly ascent and divinization (1 Enoch 14, 71; Oliver 1826: 17-23; Moses 7:63, 69)

This paper compares and contrasts a selection of the above themes: Enoch's theophany and call to preach, a grand assembly, and heavenly ascent. Each suggests Masonic and Mormon borrowing, expansion, recontextualization, and revelation upon the ancient Enoch tradition. The Mormon "Book of Enoch" contains interesting similarities to its more contemporary Enoch writings, apparently drawing upon Freemasonry for mythic content. A central thematic element in Masonry is the "recovery of that which was lost" – a principle that Mormonism values so much that the Latter-day Saints (LDS) refer to the establishment of the church as "the Restoration." The two groups present variations on this theme, mining the ancient texts for clues about the human personality and its potential.

² In this 1835 letter, Cowdery seems to quote Josephus regarding Enoch's pillars, but his telling includes details that are not found in that source. These anomalous elements appear to be unique Masonic expansions of the Josephus text.

Masonic and Mormon Access to Enoch Writings

Lost books of scripture, including the Book of Enoch, have been discussed for centuries. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was known that a book attributed to the Biblical prophet Enoch had once been written, but only portions were commonly available. Tantalizing fragments of this apocryphal work were mentioned or quoted in several places: the Biblical book of Jude (1:14-15, quoting 1 Enoch 1:9); writings by Church Fathers Justin Martyr, Minucius Felix, Irenaeus, Origen, Cyprian, Hippolytus, Commodianus, Lactantius, and Cassian (quotes in Greek from the first five chapters of 1 Enoch); and George Syncellus' eighth-century work *Chronographia Universalis* (quoting 1 Enoch 6:1-9:4; 15:8-16:1 in Greek). From these and other Judeo-Christian sources³ the Freemasons crafted their own Enoch legend (Cryer: 72-73).⁴

Freemasonry is a mystically oriented community of men, joined by a shared moral code, who meet together to ritually enact the elevation of the human personality, degree by degree. Their system is characterized by symbolic language, image, and performance, woven into allegorical ceremony. Historically rooted in early Christian mysticism, the degrees are said to be tied to an ancient, concealed, oral tradition (De Berage: xix-xx). Masonic authors often discuss legends that illustrate or illuminate the symbolism in their ceremonies. Thus, although the Enoch story is not stated anywhere in the Masonic ritual itself, it forms a legendary backdrop to the culminating Holy Royal Arch degree.

In 1768, Scottish Freemason and adventurer James Bruce embarked on a journey he claimed was a search for the source of the Nile. Some of his actions, however, suggest that he may have been looking for something more esoteric as well. Bruce belonged to the Canongate Kilwinning No. 2 Lodge of Edinburgh, one of the oldest in Scotland, with side-degrees and mystical teachings entrenched in Jewish and Christian myth and ritual (Mackenzie: 238). A few years after his initiation in 1753, Bruce began to study the Ethiopian languages of Ge'ez and Amharic (Ullendorff 1953: 130). Legend had it that the sacred Ark of the Covenant, another fundamental element associated with the Royal Arch Degree, was located in Ethiopia. After arriving in that country, Bruce wrote that he spent much of his time within the libraries of dilapidated monasteries, fingering through dusty volumes of neglected religious works. In 1773 he returned to Scotland and brought back at least 27 manuscripts, including the historical "Kebra Nagast" (Ullendorff 1968: 75)⁵ and three complete copies of the Ethiopian "Book of Enoch," considered canonical in that tradition (Ullendorff 1953: 133).

³ Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* and Higdon's *Polychronicon* contained passages that were used by Freemasons in constructing their Enoch legend.

⁴ It is believed that the Royal Arch ritual was created between 1725 and 1730, though elements of the associated legends were in existence prior to these dates.

⁵ "The Kebra Nagast . . . is the repository of Ethiopian national and religious feelings." It is a 14th-century account, written in Ge'ez, of the origins of the Solomonic line of the Emperors of Ethiopia. It contains an account of how the Queen of Sheba/Queen Makeda of Ethiopia met King Solomon and how the Ark of the Covenant came to Ethiopia with Menelik I. It also discusses the conversion of the Ethiopians from the worship of the sun, moon, and stars to that of the "Lord God of Israel."

Bruce discussed little of the Book of Enoch or Kebra Nagast in the pages of his autobiographical *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile*. It is, however, likely that he communicated the essential stories of both obscure texts to his Masonic brethren in Scotland and North America. Given the importance of the Enoch tradition to Royal Arch Masonry, word-of-mouth accounts of Bruce's discoveries were likely to have circulated in Masonic lodges in the United States prior to 1800.

Freemasons, and later, the Latter-day Saints, had a vigorous interest in the ancient Enoch accounts. Both groups believed that theirs was a restoration of an ancient tradition. The interest of the Latter-day Saints in missing works of scripture⁶ dated from the early years of the Mormon Restoration movement (Smith 1907: 1:132).⁷ By June 1830, Joseph Smith had begun his work on the "new translation" of the Bible, in which he relied on revelation to clarify the biblical record. Writing the account of Enoch was one of Smith's major preoccupations from November 30 to December 31, 1830 (Bradshaw: 9). Later, the first eight chapters of Joseph Smith's "inspired revision" of Genesis, which included two chapters on Enoch, were separately canonized as the "Book of Moses."

The Book of Enoch that James Bruce brought back from Ethiopia was not completely translated from Ge'ez into English until 1821, by noted linguist Charles Laurence. LDS scholar, Hugh Nibley, claimed that Laurence's translation of the Ethiopic Enoch was rare in America and that Americans were generally unaware of its existence prior to 1840 (110). Some Mormon writers continue to follow Nibley's tradition of basing Smith's prophetic status upon his ability to parallel the Enoch pseudepigrapha without having had access to these ancient writings.⁸ This view is problematic. Laurence's English translation of 1 Enoch was available and widely disseminated in 1821. In fact, the book became so popular in the United States that an American printing was done in 1828, fully two years before Joseph Smith produced the Mormon Enoch writings. Mormon historian Michael Quinn traced a

⁶ Some of the lost books mentioned in the Bible are: "the book of the covenant" (Exodus 24:7), "the book of the wars of the Lord" (Numbers 21:14), a book by Samuel (1 Samuel 10:25), "the book of Nathan the prophet" and "the book of Gad the seer" (1 Chronicles 29:29), "the book of Shemaiah the prophet" (2 Chronicles 12:15), "the story of the prophet Iddo" (2 Chronicles 13:22), an epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 5:9), an epistle from Laodicea (Colossians 4:16), Enoch's writings (Jude 1:14–15), and the book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18).

⁷ In December 1830, Joseph Smith wrote the following: "Much conjecture and conversation frequently occurred among the Saints, concerning the books mentioned, and referred to, in various places in the Old and New Testaments, which were now nowhere to be found. The common remark was, 'They are lost books'; but it seems the Apostolic Church had some of these writings, as Jude mentions or quotes the Prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam." Later, June 1833, Smith indicated a continuing interest in missing scripture in a letter sent to various Church leaders: "We have not found the Book of Jasher, nor any other of the lost books mentioned in the Bible as yet; nor will we obtain them at present. Respecting the Apocrypha, the Lord said to us that there were many things in it which were not true, and to those who desire it, should be given by the Spirit to know the true from the false" (see *Times and Seasons*: 800).

⁸ A full consideration of the argument raging in Mormon studies over the pedigree of Joseph Smith's Enoch writings is beyond the scope of this paper. Many apologists argue that revelation is the only viable origin for Smith's version of the Enoch stories, despite probable access by Smith to numerous contemporary resources. For representative apologist approaches, see Nibley; Bradshaw; see Cirillo for information on Enoch sources easily available to Smith.

surviving copy of this edition to a public library in New York (191). Moreover, Laurence's Enoch was not the only translation which might have been available to Joseph Smith and his contemporaries.⁹

"Far from being neglected," wrote Ariel Hessayon, "Enoch and the books under his name had preoccupied monks, chroniclers, rabbis, Kabbalists, Academicians, magicians, Catholic theologians, and Protestant divines, Orientalists, sectarians and poets alike" (40). Additionally, Royal Arch Masons¹⁰ would have been deeply interested in the discovery of the Book of Enoch, which reinforced their own Enoch lore.

Though access to the Enoch pseudepigrapha was possible from several places, it seems more plausible that Smith utilized Masonic tradition rather than other sources for inspiration in his Enoch writings. For example, passages from the Talmud, which had some delicious parallels to Mormon scripture, may not have been directly available to Smith in 1830. However, Freemasons made use of the Talmud and other Jewish mystical texts and teachings in their discussions of Masonic history and tradition.¹¹ They wasted no time incorporating these ancient Enoch materials into their legends and ritual. The information demonstrably entered Freemasonry by the time of Smith. Masonic writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century were men of letters. They were clerics and antiquarians; they studied Latin and ancient languages.¹² They wrote and lectured on the convergence of science, religion, mysticism, and the historical past. These writings and a thorough education in Masonic legend were available to Smith, his family members, and associates through Masonic authors Thomas Webb, George Oliver, and others.

In addition to Smith's acquaintance with Masonic literature, other possibilities for his early knowledge of the Craft abound. In reaction to William Morgan's 1826 disappearance following his exposure of the Holy Royal Arch Degree, the anti-Masonic movement flared into existence in Batavia, New York. Masonic influence in American society as well as vigorous anti-Masonic activity are possible avenues of transmission that LDS scholars regularly overlook or dismiss. By 1832, there were 141 anti-Masonic newspapers in the United States. Anti-Masonic pamphlets, almanacs, and addresses were printed and distributed in large quantities in Palmyra, New York.¹³ Itinerant lecturers and former lodge

⁹ Available excerpts or partial translations of the Book of Enoch included Grabe 1698; 1715: 177-96; Fabricus: 160-224; Whiston; De Sacy 1800, 1801.

¹⁰ The Royal Arch was a well-established, recorded part of Freemasonry in the United States by 1752, with traces of the degree existing in the UK by 1723 (see Cryer: 25-35, 43-45).

¹¹ For example, Oliver cites the Talmud and other ancient Jewish and Kabbalistic sources several times (see 1823: 106, 111, 130, 145, 148, 149, 151, 152).

¹² One of the earliest recorded Freemasons, Elias Ashmole (1646) was an antiquarian interested in the resolution of science and mysticism. Rev. John Theophilus Desaguliers was known as the father of modern speculative Freemasonry for his part in framing Masonic ritual and establishing the first Grand Lodge. He was a cleric and philosopher, and scientist, inventor of the planetarium. Rev. George Oliver, a foremost Masonic author, was a contemporary of Joseph Smith. He was a Doctor of Divinity, skilled in ancient languages and thoroughly acquainted with ecclesiastical antiquities.

¹³ The anti-Masonic newspaper *Palmyra Freeman* (September 22, 1829) advertised "A complete assortment of anti-masonic publications for sale by the subscriber, at his anti-masonic book-store in this village, among which

members who had renounced Masonry toured the country, reenacted Masonic rituals (McCarthy: 375), and formed caravans travelling from town to town across the state of New York giving public exhibitions of the degrees (Hines). Though Smith did not become a freemason until 1842, very few people who lived in the United States in that time period would not have had some idea of Masonic ritual and history, either through cultural acquaintance or by anti-Masonic exposure. Arguably, Smith's exposure to Masonic ritual and legend, from family members as well as societal influences, extended "from the cradle to the grave" (Literski: 1).

In light of the probable interface between Mormonism, Freemasonry, and ancient sources, it is unsurprising that many similarities would exist among the three traditions, but the types of parallels seen in the Enoch stories are instructive. The similarities reinforce the idea that Freemasonry influenced Mormonism earlier and more deeply than generally appreciated.¹⁴ They also highlight the thread of a mystical tradition that sheds light on human spiritual yearnings.

The ancient pseudepigrapha present Enoch as a figure from the collective unconscious. Each one of these traditions is a theological gold mine. The images are deep and almost inexhaustible in their connections with Judeo-Christian tradition. Reading the accounts and contemplating them in connection with one's own purpose in life can be transformative. They are all rich, compelling, and potent objects of meditation, devices by which the meditator enters into superconscious mind states and himself ascends. They can provide an opportunity to open a door and arise, or serve as tools by which a person achieves a focused state of mind to accomplish spiritual objectives. Freemasons and Mormons used the Enoch stories in much the same way to inspire and instruct their adherents.

This practice is illustrated in three key areas: Enoch's theophany and call to preach, a grand assembly, and heavenly ascent.

Enoch's Theophany and Call to Preach: A Comparison of Ancient, Masonic, and Mormon Accounts

An early account of Enoch's call to preach comes from the book of 1 Enoch, a work of pseudepigrapha believed to date from about 300 BCE (Isaac: 6-7).¹⁵ It contains all of the elements of a classic theophany, in which the initiate is conducted to the throne of God.¹⁶ In this account, Enoch, a righteous man, experiences such a vision. Propelled by clouds, mist, and stars, he is elevated into heaven. The voices of cherubim resound as he enters the

is 'Light on Masonry,' disclosing the secrets of forty-eight degrees of the order, and containing much other interesting matter."

¹⁴ Some have argued that Joseph Smith had a negative impression of Masonry that was exhibited in his earlier work. However, a more careful reading suggests that Smith pragmatically utilized both positive and negative expressions of Masonry in his reworking of Masonic material.

¹⁵ 1 Enoch is a composite work, representing numerous periods and writers from about the second century BCE to the first century CE.

¹⁶ These elements include a vision, forces of nature, a high place such as a mountain, fire, angels, a throne, transfiguration, God dressed in white robes, and a prophetic commission.

heavenly palace, surrounded by tongues of fire. He approaches an exalted throne, upon which is seated a being of great glory, whose robe is “shining more brightly than the sun,” and is “whiter than any snow.” Enoch must veil his face in order to be able to look upon this divine personage. The Lord calls him forward by name and by the title, “Enoch, righteous man, scribe of righteousness,” whereupon he is given a commission to rebuke and warn the “Watchers of heaven” (1 Enoch 1, 14, 15).

In later chapters, Enoch is taught principles of the astronomical and astrological sciences. Reading the book of “the tablets of heaven,” he learns of the workmanship of the world and all the works of the children of flesh upon the earth (1 Enoch 71-79; 80:1-5). He is then told to return to his children and teach them and prophesy of the coming destruction of humankind (1 Enoch 81:5-6).

The imagery in this account is exquisite and captivating, describing the heavenly luminaries, crystal stones, and rivers of flaming fire. The great palace is described as “hot like fire and cold like ice,” its inner walls “like mosaics of white marble,” its ceiling “like the path of the stars” (1 Enoch 14:10-14). The narrative is evocative of similar accounts of prophetic callings in the scriptures and other religious traditions.

Another ancient account of Enoch’s call to preach comes from the Talmud. This account reads very like the callings of Moses, Samuel, and Isaiah and their “here am I” responses. In this story, Enoch is a hermit, drawing apart from the wickedness of the world, using the knowledge and understanding he has gained to serve the Lord. One day, as he prays, an angel of the Lord calls to him from heaven, saying, “Enoch, Enoch.” Answering “Here am I,” he accepts the call of the angel to arise and walk among the people of the earth. Assembling them together, he addresses them, teaches them the ways of the Creator, and eventually “ma[kes] peace through all the land” (Polano: 19).

The Masonic Enoch tradition contains many similarities to the Enoch pseudepigrapha and other ancient counterparts. The following material is drawn from Webb’s highly influential monitor of early American Masonic ritual, a source accessible to Joseph Smith (244-47). As in the other accounts, Enoch is a righteous man, who lives “in the fear and love of his Maker.” As part of his devotion, he studies the seven liberal arts and sciences, with special attention to astronomy.¹⁷ In the Masonic telling of the Enoch story, humanity is elevated by the sciences. In Enoch’s case, his studies have had such a life-altering effect upon him that God promises him a special revelation. According to his desire, the Name of God will be revealed to him. He is transported to the top of a mountain, where God appears in a vision. The characters of the Divine Name are given upon a triangular plate of gold and thus restored to humankind. Enoch is then called to preach to the degenerate inhabitants of the world who will soon be destroyed in a great flood which he has foreseen.

The Masonic legend emphasizes Enoch’s acquisition of specialized knowledge. To preserve this knowledge, he builds two pillars atop a mountain. Upon these he engraves

¹⁷ The seven liberal arts and sciences are depicted as seven steps on a winding stair discussed in the second, or Fellowcraft degree. The candidate ascends the staircase, which leads into the symbolic presence of the Deity. Elsewhere, they are described as the components of a chariot, taking the initiate to heaven, as Enoch was taken. In this way, Freemasonry is thematically connected with Merkabah (chariot) mysticism.

knowledge of the arts and sciences, as well as directions on how to find the name of God so it will not be lost to the world in the general destruction. One pillar is made of brass, to withstand water, and the other of marble, to withstand fire. In the ritual, the candidate participates in the pendant story of the revelation of the Divine Name of God to Moses on Mount Horeb. Later, he himself will make a symbolic ascent to a representation of the celestial temple (i.e., the tabernacle Moses built in the wilderness) to seek the Divine Name. Enoch, Moses, and the candidate are thematically linked in a recurring motif.

The Enoch tradition in Mormonism comes from an “inspired revision” of the Old Testament commenced by Smith in June of 1830. Its purpose was “to restore and clarify vital points of history and doctrine missing from the Bible” (Taylor: 216-17). With this material, it seems that Smith was recovering details about Enoch into the text of the LDS version of the scriptures. While Smith’s Enoch has much in common with the ancient works, in places where the LDS telling differs, it often closely resembles the Masonic legend. For instance, Smith’s version and the Masonic ritual both rely on the Moses story to enhance and describe Enoch’s encounter with the Divine.

While journeying among the people, Smith’s Enoch hears a voice from heaven and the Spirit of God descends upon him. God tells him to prophesy and call upon the wicked to repent, for humankind has gone astray. Enoch bows down before the Lord and asks: “Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?” The Lord tells Enoch to open his mouth and it will be filled. He should go forth, “and no man shall pierce thee.” He is promised that “all thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course.”

And the Lord spake unto Enoch, and said unto him: Anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see. And he did so. And he beheld the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people (Moses 6:31-36).

In his teachings, Enoch gives further details about his vision. He describes how he (like Moses) was directed to turn aside and go up on the mount Simeon (or the Mount of Hearing; Moses 7:2, note 2a). Here he is “clothed upon with glory,” and sees the Lord face to face. He is shown the world and all the people in it, and is taught about Jesus Christ, the coming Savior (Moses 7:2-11).

As we read these stories, we notice that Enoch is a patriarchal “type.” Many elements of these accounts of the calling and commission of Enoch are similar to those of the Old Testament prophets. When they receive their commissions, Smith’s Enoch, Moses, and Abraham – like the Enoch of Masonic legend – experience reviews of history and visions of the peoples of the earth, followed by cosmic transformation. Martha Himmelfarb has written that these kinds of accounts are common “in Jewish apocalypses and are extremely rare elsewhere” (6). Freemasons’ interest in this panoramic view arises from a desire to see the heavenly pattern in the events of human history. The Masonic Enoch legend stresses a “Grand Design” as part of the weave of the divine tapestry. Mormons embraced the same unique dispensationalist view of the Masons, with its emphasis on the singular thread of

Truth running through time, including periods of apostasy and restoration. This ascending cycle of revolutionary social progression brought humanity, in mutual harmony, ever closer to the throne of God.

A Grand Assembly: A Comparison of Ancient, Masonic, and Mormon Accounts

The idea of a grand assembly holds some interesting correspondences and differences between the ancient accounts of Enoch and the more modern ones. In 1 Enoch, the theme of gathering and assembly takes place in locations prepared for the wicked. After the name of the Son of Man is revealed to the righteous, the wicked angels and the sinners who follow them are to be banished from the face of the earth. The prophecy is given:

With chains shall they be bound,
And in their assemblage-place of destruction shall they be imprisoned,
And all their works vanish from the face of the earth (1 Enoch 69:26-28 in Charles).

Other chapters in 1 Enoch describe hollow places, deep and dark in the rocks; a spirit-prison, where the souls of the dead assemble in torment to await their final judgment (1 Enoch 22:1-5).

In contrast, the Masonic grand assembly is described as a gathering of the righteous in reaction to the growing iniquity of the people of the world. Because they will not listen to Enoch's preaching, he calls a special assembly of Masons, "in whom he could confide," and in the presence of Adam, Seth, his father Jared, and his son Methuselah, he laments the wickedness of men on earth, and asks for advice and assistance in stemming the torrent of evil. As part of this remarkable meeting, Adam communicates a "great and terrible prophecy," "that all mankind, except a few just persons, should so far swerve from their allegiance to God, as to cause the destruction of all created things by water and fire" (Oliver 1823: 87-92).

Mormon scripture includes elements that are similar to both traditions on this point. LDS doctrine includes a "spirit prison" much like that described in 1 Enoch, where the unrepentant dead await their final judgment (Parsons: 1406). But a more intriguing parallel comes into play between the grand assembly of Masons and the Mormon grand council at Adam-ondi-Ahman.

In accord with the Masonic description, LDS scripture reports that three years before the death of Adam, he calls his children together, including Enoch and all of the faithful down to the generation of Methuselah. They meet at a place called "Adam-ondi-Ahman," and in the company of the Lord, Adam gives his posterity his final blessing. Then "Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation" (Doctrine and Covenants 107:56).

Latter-day Saints further believe that at the second coming of the Savior, a vast meeting will be held at the same sacred place: a spot in Jackson County, Missouri near the former location of the Garden of Eden. At this time the City of Enoch, which was taken up into heaven due to the great righteousness of its inhabitants, will return to the earth. The

righteous people of this holy city and many others will join together with all former dispensation heads such as Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus Christ himself: “The City of Enoch with its inhabitants is to return and join in the grand celebration at the coming of Christ to reign, and all the prophets of old and the righteous saints shall be gathered in the grand assembly of rejoicing” (Smith: 310). Adam will again hold a special role at this great council.

These things, Mormon scripture declares, “were all written in the Book of Enoch” (Doctrine and Covenants 107:57). Interestingly, a similar tale is included in Masonic legend, but not in the extant ancient Enoch literature.

Divinization and Ascent: A Comparison of Ancient, Masonic, and Mormon Accounts

In 1 Enoch chapter 70, Enoch ascends and his spirit is concealed in the heaven of heavens.¹⁸ Here he sees myriads of holy angels, dressed in white. According to 1 Enoch, Michael the archangel raises him up by the right hand and instructs him in the recondite mysteries of the Divine. Enoch falls on his face before the Ancient of Days; his flesh is “dissolved,” and his spirit is “changed” (1 Enoch 70: 1-24; Orlov 2005: 383). The language of earthly flesh being dissolved, also found in 2 Corinthians 5:1, has a direct parallel in the opening prayer to the Royal Arch degree, which mentions the “earthly house” being “dissolved,” before one is admitted into the presence of the Grand Council of Heaven (Sheville: 144).¹⁹ The image of Michael (Hebrew: “who is like God”) taking Enoch (Hebrew: “initiate”) by the right hand and lifting him up to initiate him into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven is suggestive of images found in both Masonic and Mormon ritual and tradition. These things are interesting specifically because they are placed into a ritual context in the Master Mason or Royal Arch degrees and later in the Mormon Temple Endowment ceremony. Lifting up by the right hand of fellowship is found in Mormonism’s Ceremony at the Veil and in the Raising of a Master Mason and the subsequent ceremony of the Passing of the Veils in the Royal Arch Degree’s Rite of Exaltation.

2 Enoch, written about the late first century CE, contains a passage that is similarly reminiscent of Masonic and Mormon ceremonial rites. As Enoch stands before the divine throne, he experiences a marvelous transformation:

And the Lord said to Michael: Go and take Enoch from out [of] his earthly garments, and anoint him with my sweet ointment, and put him into the garments of My glory. And Michael did thus, as the Lord told him. He anointed me, and dressed me, and the appearance of that ointment is more than the great light, and his ointment is like sweet dew, and its smell mild, shining like the sun’s ray, and I looked at myself, and [I] was [transfigured] like one of his glorious ones (2 Enoch 9:17-19; Platt).

¹⁸ This language suggests an affinity with the Divine.

¹⁹ “When we shall have passed through the outward vails (sic) of these earthly courts, when *the earthly house of this Tabernacle shall be dissolved*, may we be admitted into the Holy of Holies above, into the presence of the Grand Council of Heaven, where the Supreme High-Priest forever presides – forever reigns.”

As seen in Mormonism and Masonry, this process is a priestly investiture (Himmelfarb: 4) and initiation into the heavenly mysteries. To adherents, putting on such a garment can imply equality with the angels or the gods.

Another Jewish telling of Enoch's ascent is found in an early but undated collection of midrash woven from the Book of Ecclesiastes. The story begins with the angel Raziel²⁰ standing on the peak of Mount Horeb each day, shouting out the secrets of God to all humankind. Clearly these are things God wants humanity to know, and Raziel is the means to accomplish that. To ensure that this wisdom is not lost, the angel places it in a book and entrusts it to the man Adam. When the angelic hosts learn what Raziel has done, they grow jealous, for they wanted the book themselves. Their displeasure is heightened when they hear how Adam's wisdom has blossomed. To keep the book safe, Adam hides it in a cave,²¹ but the whereabouts of the cave is forgotten when Adam dies. For centuries the book is lost, but God sends a dream to Enoch showing him the cave and commanding him to find and study *Sefer Raziel*. Enoch commits the book to memory, and hides it once again. The myth explains that though Adam read the book, Enoch digested, internalized, or "became" it. The knowledge penetrated him and transformed him completely, making him an example of human spiritual unfolding. He was removed completely from the earthly plane and taken bodily into heaven (Shapiro).

In the sixteenth-century Hebrew midrashic Book of Jasher ("Sefer ha Yasher," the Book of the Upright), Enoch separates from the sons of men and "secret[es] himself" in order to serve the Lord. In intervals, he prays and praises God, then goes among his subjects to reprove them, teach them the ways of the Lord, and establish peace among them. Eventually an angel of the Lord appears to Enoch, wishing to conduct him into heaven "to make him reign there over the sons of God, as he had reigned over the sons of men upon earth." Enoch assembles all the inhabitants of the earth together, and one day the likeness of a great horse descends from heaven. The patriarch rises up and rides on the horse, and everyone follows. Though he tells the people to return to their tents, some are not willing to leave him. On the seventh day, like the prophet Elijah who would follow, Enoch "ascend[s] into heaven in a whirlwind, with horses and chariots of fire" (Jasher 3:1-36). This image comprises what is known as Merkabah (chariot) mysticism, the chariot being a powerful symbol of ascent. On the eighth day, the kings who had been with Enoch go to the place where he ascended and find the earth there filled with snow. They break through the snow and discover the men who remained with Enoch all dead and frozen, but they do not find Enoch, "for he had ascended into heaven" (Jasher 3:37-38).

Human beings, with their sinful natures, desire to enter the presence of God. In this allegory, the frozen people represent those aspects of the human personality that one must shed in order to become regenerated by the power of the Divine. Enoch represents

²⁰ The answer to what happened to Enoch was linked to a book, *Sefer Raziel*, meaning "The Book of the Angel Raziel." Raziel means "Secret of God," and the book was said to contain all knowledge, both material and spiritual.

²¹ In Masonry, this cave of concealed wisdom is transformed into Enoch's underground temple, wherein is concealed the golden plate with its mystical characters. In Mormonism a similar tradition of a cave of concealed golden plates, deep within the Hill Cumorah, is found.

perfected humanity and the possibility of celestial ascent. The Jewish Talmud recounts this same story, adding at the end, “They cut through the ice and they found there the dead bodies of the men for whom they were searching, but Enoch they did not find. Therefore is this the meaning of the words of Scripture, ‘And Enoch walked with God; and he was not’ (he was not where search was made), ‘for God had taken him’ (Gen. 5: 24)” (Polano: 20-22).

The final ancient Enoch account to be considered here comes from 3 Enoch, another of the Enoch pseudepigrapha. This work, also called “Book of Temples” or “Book of Palaces” and believed to have been composed in the fifth century CE, is part of the Hekhalot/Merkabah tradition. In this version, Enoch is taken to heaven to serve as witness and to attest to God’s justice, despite the destruction decreed against the living. God establishes a throne for Enoch and announces throughout the heavens that from that moment on Enoch will be known as “Metatron,” which in folk etymology has long been translated “beside the throne” (Miller: 339-40). As Metatron, he becomes the perfect mirror reflecting the nature of the divine. As a Kabbalist interprets 3 Enoch: “the angelic proclamation of Enoch’s identification with the ‘son of man’ sitting on the Throne of Glory indicates that the exalted object of his vision is that of his own higher self” (Leet: 39). Enoch, like Christ, is a “son of man.” Christ represents divinity, reaching down in an act of condescension to lift up humanity. Enoch is humanity, reaching up to become God. His act is one of ascent into the Divine presence.

Enoch’s experiences contain the promise that each one of us can similarly overcome our human limitations and reclaim our original divine potential. Importantly, the light of God began to shine “within Enoch,” and became “perfect within him.” Enoch’s transformation was an inner one first. Only when he embodied the Light of God on earth could he become the fire body of Metatron in heaven. Enoch is symbolic of that which each of us can become, and for which all humanity was destined from the very beginning. This myth places the initiate in sacred time, a partaker of Divine power. We too can become initiates; we too can ascend the holy mountain, we too can ride the chariot of fire. We too can reflect the radiant effulgence of the Divine.

Similarly, Masonic pageantry places initiates into the characters of the Bible in order to identify with the higher self. As a part of the western mystery tradition, one of the fundamental preoccupations of Masonic ritual and tradition is this same perfection of human personality and the subsequent transformation of human society. Of the legend of Enoch, Freemasons say: “We must view it, therefore, as an allegory; but as one which has a profound symbolic character. It was intended to teach the doctrine of Divine Truth” (Mackey: 404). Restored to each Mason by a theological working within the ritual itself, the Lost Name is recovered by the initiate, and then a crown is symbolically placed upon his head. Like Enoch, the candidate ascends from Babylon to Jerusalem, labors to build the temple, recovers the Divine Name, and is crowned a companion in a fellowship of “those who know.” In both the Mormon and the Masonic traditions, Enoch works to impart spiritual knowledge to others and bring them with him as he ascends. Divinization occurs only within community.

In the Smith Enoch account, Enoch continues his preaching to the people of God, and builds a city of holiness. “And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one

heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18-19). In time, Enoch and the entire city are taken up into heaven, by the transforming power of divine love. The people who remain upon the earth are cursed. Again, these people represent humans’ sinful natures. Allegorically, we cannot continue to remain what we are and also become what we are destined to be. From his “high and lifted up” position in the bosom of the Father, Enoch sees two groups of angels. One group is associated with Satan; they descend out of heaven and rejoice as Satan veils the earth with darkness. The other group of angels bear testimony of the Father and the Son. Many people respond to their message and are also caught up by the powers of heaven to join the city of Zion (Moses 7:19-27, 47). Joseph Smith’s habit of using the code word Enoch to identify himself shows that he, too, was capable of placing himself into the prophetic paradigm. He was recovering that which was lost, restoring it to humanity, connecting with the Divine within himself.

The Significance of Masonic and Mormon Parallels

The theophany and heavenly ascent in 1 Enoch and related ancient writings form a motif that early Freemasons found significant. From this, they crafted their own legend of the archetypal seeker, who held the ability to uncover and preserve the name of God for future generations. The Masonic Enoch tradition with its esoteric, mystical, and symbolic aspects, is spiritually valuable. Enoch’s journey represents the apotheosis that each Royal Arch Mason seeks to achieve. Through ritual, the initiate, like Enoch, is called by God, experiences a theophany, receives a token of his calling (the divine name), and experiences a heavenly ascent. The candidate sees this dramatic reenactment as a symbolic journey inside himself to discover that which is lost. Having accomplished this task, he is transformed into a companion of the company of heaven. He literally stands beside the throne (i.e. “Metatron”) and becomes the reflection of the divine. Masonic commentator W. L. Wilmshurst notes, “the Royal Arch Degree seeks to express that new and intensified life to which the candidate can be raised and the exalted degree of consciousness that comes with it . . . the purpose of all initiation is to lift human consciousness from lower to higher levels by quickening the latent spiritual potentialities in man” (140).

Mormon scripture and legend all point to a thorough grounding in Masonic lore. Smith employs the Masonic way of using a legend symbolically to approach the Enoch pseudepigrapha and what it says about the human condition and ultimate human potential. What finds its way into the Smith oeuvre from the ancient legends and from the Freemasons is instructive and reveals his unique concerns. Smith’s interest is the divinization of humankind. He makes use of the stories to unify his followers behind a central prophetic authority. Smith’s Enoch is a figure with the ability to unify his people into a community that joins with him in the ascent to God.

Mormon writer Andrew Skinner has called attention to an additional distinctive feature of the Enoch record in the Pearl of Great Price. While Christian themes are apparent in the story of Enoch, Joseph Smith’s version is particularly Christ-centered, treating Enoch as a “type” of Christ. Both the first and second comings of the Son of God in the flesh are prophesied and described in impressive detail, providing a clear and unadulterated description of the atoning sacrifice of the Savior and its impact on this earth as well as on

the heavens (Skinner). This idea accords with the 1 Enoch description of the Lord as a mediator (Himmelfarb: 25) – as “the God of the world: Who will hereafter tread upon Mount Sinai; appear with his hosts; and be manifested in the strength of his power from heaven” (1 Enoch 1:3-4). Skinner invites the reader to “consider the verses in Moses 7 that help put the atonement in its cosmic context;” there is value in the similarities as well as the differences that the modern Enoch tradition has with Enoch legends of the ancient past.

Smith placed into Mormon scripture, liturgy, and ritual a sacred atmosphere and context upon which the seeker could draw to identify with the superconscious and connect with the Divine. Regardless of how one believes that the LDS Enoch writings were recovered, Smith may be recognized as a religious adept. As Harold Bloom stated, the Mormon prophet was a myth-making genius. He went beyond dabbling at the edges of Masonry and penetrated the very heart. He recovered and expanded upon divine myth and recontextualized it to impart transforming power.

The story is told of a man who came across three masons who were working at chipping chunks of granite from large blocks. The first seemed unhappy at his job, toiling away and marking the passage of time as the sun moved across the sky. When asked what he was doing, the first mason responded rather curtly, “I’m cutting stones.” A second mason, seemingly more interested in his work, was hammering diligently and when asked what it was that he was doing, answered, “Well, I’m molding this block of rock so that it can be used with others to construct a wall.” A third mason was hammering at his block fervently, taking time to stand back and admire his work. He chipped off small pieces until he was satisfied that it was the best he could do. When he was questioned about his work he stopped, gazed skyward and proudly proclaimed, “I am a mason and I am building a cathedral.” The value in the study of Enoch traditions lies not just in looking at how the building is constructed, but what it is used for. One must not be so concerned about the provenance of the legends or scripture that one loses sight of their transforming potential.

Mircea Eliade explained that rituals prepare the initiate for a spiritual rebirth (81). By reenacting myth and legend, one experiences a primeval reality and “is seized by the sacred, exalting power of the events recollected or re-enacted” (19). Inasmuch as they cause that transformation and change, not only are ancient stories and traditions authentic, but Masonic legends and ceremonies are authentic; and Mormon scripture and rituals are authentic as well. They transmit a real spiritual strength to the persons who receive them, and facilitate a connection with the Divine. This paper has presented the Enoch pseudepigrapha and their Masonic and Mormon iterations as a series of related mystical traditions. Linked by common themes, they have been utilized in similar, yet innovative ways to impart spiritual truth. Seen in this way, they aid religious scholars, students, and devotees alike in recognizing the latent power in rituals and the process by which they are created.

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