

A Few More Bullseyes for Joseph Smith from Ancient Christian Writings

A summary of a few incredible Temple related “coincidences”

Excerpts compiled by Cameron Ford

This document contains quotes from a book called “The Temple in Time and Eternity” edited by Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks. The book is a compilation of different chapters written by various authors. To fully understand what is presented, a few definitions are helpful, as given below:

Gnosticism: A movement among some 2nd century Christians that took elements of the original Christian church and created some doctrinal innovations. This movement was suppressed by the main Christian churches of the day and many of the gnostic documents were destroyed. Because of the loss of many genuine Christian doctrines and teachings in the first centuries, it is often hard for biblical scholars to determine what doctrines the Gnostics inherited from the earliest Christians and what doctrines they added. “Gnosis” means knowledge of spiritual mysteries.

Some of the core teachings [doctrinal innovations of the Gnostics] include the following:

1. All matter is evil, and the non-material, spirit-realm is good.
2. There is an unknowable God, who gave rise to many lesser spirit beings called Aeons.
3. The creator of the (material) universe is not the supreme god, but an inferior spirit (the Demiurge).
4. Gnosticism does not deal with "sin," only ignorance.
5. To achieve salvation, one needs *gnosis* (knowledge).

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosticism>

Nag Hammadi Library: “The Nag Hammadi Library, a collection of thirteen ancient books (called “codices”) containing over fifty texts, was discovered in upper Egypt in 1945. This immensely important discovery includes a large number of primary “Gnostic Gospels” – texts once thought to have been entirely destroyed during the early Christian struggle to define “orthodoxy” – scriptures such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Truth. The discovery and translation of the Nag Hammadi library, initially completed in the 1970’s, has provided impetus to a major re-evaluation of early Christian history and the nature of Gnosticism.” (<http://gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl.html>)

Pistis Sophia: a gnostic text discovered in 1773, possibly written between the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pistis_Sophia) It was first published into English in 1896. (<http://gnosis.org/library/psoph.htm>)

40 Day Literature: Ancient Christian literature purporting to contain the secret teachings the Savior gave to his Apostles in the 40-day period between his resurrection and his ascension. This is a favorite topic of the Gnostics.

Coptic Church: The Egyptian Christian church that has existed from very early times.

Apocrypha: Biblical or related writings not forming part of the accepted canon of Scripture.

The Temple in Time and Eternity: Chapter 5 “Sacred Temples Ancient and Modern” by Richard O. Cowan, pages 107-108

“In recent decades a large body of apocryphal literature dating from early Christian times has been discovered and published. Particularly significant was the uncovering of a library of books written by fifth-century Christians at Nag Hammadi, a settlement on the Nile River in central Egypt. Much of this material focuses on Christ’s “forty-day ministry,” especially in Galilee. According to these nonscriptural texts, the Lord performed sacred ordinances and gave his disciples teachings that Latter-day Saints associate with the temple endowment. In the middle of the fourth century, Cyril of Jerusalem described how the faithful had “entered the Annex of the baptistry, ... [and] removed [their] street clothes,” which act represented “putting off the old man and his works.” They were then washed in a “tank of holy running water,” anointed, and received a new garment.

The early Christians came together in a circle to pray. References in the New Testament itself describe how even in public worship the disciples prayed in the spirit of unity with uplifted hands (see 1 Timothy 2:8) and how women prayed with their heads covered or veiled (see 1 Corinthians 11:5 RSV).

The writers of the Gospel of Philip, one of the apocryphal documents in the Nag Hammadi library, believed that the most sacred part of the temple was what he called the “bridal chamber,” where a “woman is united to her husband” and “will no longer be separated.” If a person does not receive these blessings in this world, he asserted, they cannot be received elsewhere (compare D&C 132:15-28).”

The Temple in Time and Eternity: Chapter 4 “Temple Prayer in Ancient Times” by John A. Tvedtnes, page 88

“The prayer circle is also known from early Christian texts ... One of the most remarkable descriptions is in the fourth book of the Coptic *Pistis Sophia*, where we find Jesus standing at the altar praying, surrounded by his apostles and women disciples clad in linen garments (see *Pistis Sophia* 136). A short while later, Jesus sets out an offering of wine, water, and bread. He then stands before the offering, with the disciples behind him clad in linen garments and making signs with their hands as Christ prays (see *Pistis Sophia* 142). The account of this offering is also found in another Coptic document *2 Jeu* 45-47. The scene is followed by Jesus’ instructions on how the disciples can use the signs and names to pass beyond both gods and angels to enter the presence of the Father (see *2 Jeu* 48-50). In *1 Jeu* 41, Jesus has the twelve surround him while he prays and they repeat after him. In *2 Jeu* 42-43, Jesus asks that the twelve and the women disciples surround him so he can teach them the mysteries of God. What then follows in the text is a discussion of signs, seals, and how to pass by the guardians at the veils to the presence of God.”