

5 - Facsimiles Explained, Part I

As we move further into the Book of Abraham it is necessary to provide some background on the illustrations, we see at the beginning of Chapter 1 and in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 5. These three facsimiles are Egyptian, and they are placed in the necessary and proper order as we see them.

Joseph Smith provided “*translations*” of the ancient records and texts. Included with the Book of Abraham are three Egyptian Facsimiles. These Facsimiles or vignettes are connected to the Abraham text in multiple ways. Abraham uses them as examples or “representations” as well as being used in a conceptual way within the text itself. The first four verses of Chapter 1 explain that this text is a record of Abraham’s desire to receive and bestow what may be called his endowment or the covenants and rights of the fathers with their associated blessings. The Three Facsimiles represent this very idea within the Egyptian Religion.

The Egyptians used four main types of records to maintain their rituals in their religion. The oldest of their records are called **Pyramid Texts**. Their rituals were carved into the stones outside and inside of their pyramids. These records date back to about 3,500 BC. These records centered around the Pharaoh, as he was the one who needed to become exalted and become like God. The concept of exaltation was limited to the leaders, Pharaoh in particular. It was his “right” to become the son of God on earth, and the one who could rule and reign over the common man.

These concepts date back to the time of the first Pharaoh, Menes. These texts are the oldest recorded information concerning their rituals and ceremonies that would get him from this life to the next life and achieve exaltation and be introduced into the world of the Gods. Those records were carved into the stone walls at the base of the pyramid, and thus they are called **Pyramid Texts**.

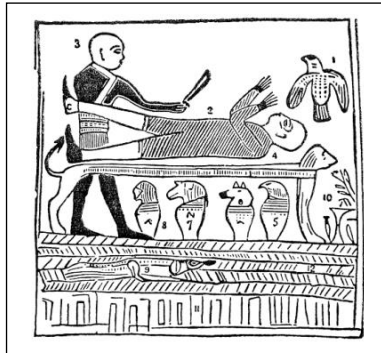
The next records are called the **Coffin Texts**. These contained the correct phrases and key words found in the Pyramids texts that allowed the participant to pass by the angels and sentinels and into the world of the gods. These texts were abridged and carved onto the sarcophagus of the individual, hence the **Coffin Texts**.

These **Coffin Texts** were further abridged and put on papyrus. Those same key phrases and key words needed to pass by the angels and enter into the world of the Gods became known as the **Book of the Dead**.

From these condensed texts the initiate would abridge further the needed key words and phrases necessary to pass by the angels and into the world of the Gods. They would write them onto to what is called the *sn sn papyrus*, or the **Book of Breathings**.

We have done the same thing. The Endowment Joseph Smith began in Nauvoo usually took over a day and a half to complete. Much later the process was reduced to just over two and one-half hours, and now our endowment process has been abridged down to 90 minutes. The key elements and information have been left intact, even if the timeline is sometimes out of order, allowing the participant to gain an understanding of what is going on.

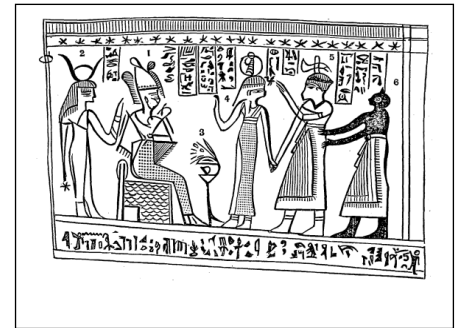
Abraham's record connects us very strongly to the religious patterns of ancient Egypt. The Facsimiles we see in our Book of Abraham actually come from the Book of the Dead. Those mummies Joseph purchased from Michael Chandler also contained some *sn sn papyri*.



#1 Death of a God



#2 Resurrection & Ascension



#3 Enthronement of the God

The First Pharaoh and the Kings in both Egypt and Mesopotamia tried earnestly to imitate the sacred ordinances of the true endowment from that first order established in the days of the first patriarchs, even from Adam. They turned them into the rituals of Kingship and Coronation, thus corrupting the endowment in order to legitimize their unrighteous dominion and kingship over their subjects. Both cradles of civilization became the centers of spiritual wickedness in our scriptures. Once the Gospel is understood, the Lord commands all to “Go ye out from Babylon” (D&C 133:5, 7, 14) and “flee unto Zion” (v 12).

Abraham was a very real, unwilling participant in the ancient coronation ceremonies in both Mesopotamia and in Egypt. These ancient ceremonies had three major components within the kingship rituals. These rituals were copied and ‘*earnestly imitated*’ from the religion of the earliest patriarchs. The three main elements of this ritual are:

1. The Death of the God,
2. The Resurrection and Ascension of the God, and
3. The Enthronement of the God.

In ancient Egypt these elements had to be in the order listed above in order to convey the meaning of the ritual and initiation into the world of the Gods. It is not a coincidence that the Facsimiles are presented in the Book of Abraham in just this order, *representing* the blessings and endowment of power (Knowledge) for which Abraham so earnestly sought.

First, I want to show a short clip from a DVD called, “*Faith of an Observer*,” an hour-long documentary about Brother Hugh Nibley, who devoted much of his life to writing about Abraham's life and experiences in Egypt. He provides a very unique perspective on how the writings of Abraham in Egypt relate to the Gospel today.

The first temple we see in scripture is the Temple of Solomon, which was constructed and operated under an Aaronic Priesthood Order, *not* a Melchizedek Order. It functioned under the Law of

Moses. The Temples in Egypt, on the other hand, were patterned after the Melchizedek Order that came from Noah. The Egyptian Temples were established and patterned after the patriarchal religion and Melchizedek authority that *preceded* the Mosaic Law. We can therefore gain a greater understanding of our temples by studying the Egyptian temples.



This clip shows the first and only time Brother Nibley ever went to Egypt. He used to tell me when I was working with him that one could learn more about Egypt in the libraries of the United States than one could in Egypt.

Transcript from the DVD

Whenever we look in these Egyptian monuments, the king has to follow one thing—Maat, “righteousness.” Maat. “Righteousness, justice, fairness, honor, a stable social order, things as they should be.” We would say the two things that cover everything are that. . . the Beloved Son (who) is “full of grace and truth.” (33) You see truth has nothing false about it. But grace says there is nothing negative about it. Self-interest, ulterior motives, scheming, gaining, trying to get ahead, influence, power game. None of that. Grace is the very opposite of that. It’s charis; our word “cheer” is also related to it. Also the Greek charis, Latin gratia. Gratia means “thanks,” it means “a free gift.” A gift you don’t ask anything in return for. You feel that way, just as we give things to children, not for what they can do for us, but because of love, you see. So grace is . . . the tendency is of course to render it in the new translations as “love,” which is right. So grace and truth . . . and this is Abraham. Right from the beginning here when he says where . . . “having been a follower of righteousness”—this is righteousness; this is Maat—desiring also to be the one to possess greater knowledge.” Always he wants to possess great knowledge and then he wants a greater knowledge too.

Here’s where we draw the line, you see; we don’t think that’s so important. We’ve lost interest in knowledge today, and it’s a very interesting thing. We want power, recognition, and things like that, but knowledge for its own sake doesn’t excite us very much. It’s surprising how many students will say, “Don’t tell us something we don’t already know.” I used to have students come up indignantly and say to me after class, “Brother Nibley, I’ve never heard of that before.” “Of course! That’s why you’re here, because you’ve never heard of that before!” But no, they just want to be told the same standard routine testimony and so forth. Desiring to be one to possess great knowledge and to be a greater follower of righteousness. Notice, there is your gospel of repentance, to be a greater follower. Always to be like the man Adam; he is ever seeking more light and truth or more light and knowledge, either one, you see.

Abraham not only had to take his wisdom to the Egyptians, but he had to acquire wisdom from them. This was the going concern. This was the center of—not just the intellectual, but the spiritual center of the world at the time. Abraham has to hack in, to use that expression now, on the whole world of his time because he is the father of the

faithful, and it's going to spread everywhere. He had to know the world, and the best place to get in on the ground floor was certainly Egypt. So he did and we have to do the same sort of thing.

Thanks to this prolonged drought that was on the world, as testified from literature in all directions there, the religious observances had degenerated into rites of a desperate and bloody nature to make the waters run, to bring prosperity, to bring fertility to the land and so forth. It was a time of famine. Remember the whole story of Abraham, the background, the first of the labors of Abraham. The plague for Abraham was famine. Abraham made himself very unpopular. For that reason he would be an ideal substitute for the king for the sacrificial rites. The king was responsible for the prosperity and fertility of the land as he was for the victory of the army. When those failed, he was supposed to be put to death. Even when they didn't fail, every thirty years at the Sed festival (34) he had to be put to death supposedly to renew his strength. But he found a substitute, and there's a lot said about these substitutes. And we are told that Abraham went through this routine too. That he was rescued at the last minute, rescued by an earthquake. The moment he is rescued, the angel takes him up to heaven and then the angel shows him a picture. He draws the whole thing for him on this round picture and points it out to him and says, "When you get back to earth you'll make a duplicate of that," you see. Well, he shows him this diagram of the cosmos, and it looks like our Facsimiles, and of course we see it as the hypocephalus, what it is. Then Pharaoh ordered all his court, 365 nobles, to bring their children to the court and had Abraham sit on the throne and teach them about the Sun and the stars. That's what it says here in Facsimile 3 (Book of Abraham). "Where Abraham seated upon the throne of Pharaoh is discoursing upon the heavens." Now here's an interesting thing. That figure on the throne is Osiris. Well, of course he's Osiris; he has to be. (35) Abraham would have to be Osiris in that capacity. And he is the king. But how it begins, it begins with the Figure One. Osiris is lying on the couch. And he cries out, "Come to my aid and rescue me!" When he reaches the depth, at the last extremities, he cries out, and the Angel of the Lord comes to deliver him. Now this is Horus, you'll notice. He is the Horus Hawk; and always the son of Osiris, is Horus. Horus comes in the form of a hawk and rescues him and takes him up and he delivers him and then he takes him on a guided tour through the heavens, and before you receive your final throne, you have this tour of the universe, and you see all this stuff, and then in the final scene you mount the throne. This is what you do. You come out in glory. And so this is the theme and is exactly the course, the sequence that we follow in the Pearl of Great Price. Facsimiles 1, 2, and 3 in that order.

(33 : John 1:14; 34: Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri, p 198; 35: *Ibid*, p 91-92)

We're going to proceed with the explanations of these three Facsimiles that Br. Nibley talked about. They have to do with the Coronation of the King or Pharaoh. Br. Nibley mentioned the *Sed* Festival. In Mesopotamia it was called the *Akitu* Festival. The Greco-Romans also had their coronation festivals. The Olympics can trace their origins to the Greco-Roman games symbolizing the ritual combat prior to the coronation of their king.

Abraham told us that he wanted to receive the "the blessings of the fathers" and the right to administer the same (Abr 1:2), and those rites are connected to what these three facsimiles represent.

As mentioned earlier, during the time periods of Pharaoh and Nimrod, they could not hold the Priesthood because of their Grandmother Egyptus, a descendant of Cain. They took the ordinances of the Endowment and turned them into the rituals of Kingship and Coronation, “imitating” that “Order established in the days of the first Patriarchs.” Officially they were unable to receive the rites of exaltation while on earth. They understood that the ordinances of the true endowment could make a worthy individual a “first-born” unto God. That is, they made the person a Prophet, Priest, and King unto God. Neither Pharaoh nor Nimrod could officially administer the rites to the Priesthood because of their lineage, so they took those ordinances that they knew were good and right and they turned them into public ceremonies for their own coronation. In the eyes of the people it made them a Prophet, Priest, and King, and son of God to the people. That is what Coronation Ceremonies are all about.

Every ancient history teacher will tell you that the two cradles of civilization are Egypt and Mesopotamia. The two grandsons of Ham who could not hold the priesthood settled both of these regions. These regions became civilizations because both Pharaoh and Nimrod imitated the sacred ordinances of the true endowment, transforming them into public ceremonies for their own coronations, thus legitimizing their reigns as sons of God on earth. Because of this, Egypt and Babylon are depicted in scripture as the two symbols of spiritual wickedness. They usurped the priesthood and exercised unrighteous control, compulsion, and dominion over the souls of the children of men.

Abraham tells us this in **Abr 1:26-27**:

26 Pharaoh, being a righteous man, established his kingdom and judged his people wisely and justly all his days, *seeking earnestly to imitate that order* established by the fathers in the first generations, in the days of the first patriarchal reign, even in the reign of Adam, and also of Noah, his father, who blessed him with the blessings of the earth, and with the blessings of wisdom, but cursed him as pertaining to the Priesthood.

27 Now, Pharaoh being of that lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood, notwithstanding the Pharaohs would fain claim it from Noah, through Ham, therefore my father was led away by their idolatry;

If I wanted to start a new Church, I'd copy or imitate everything I knew to be true and right: I'd have a Sacrament meeting, Primary, Sunday School, Priesthood, Relief Society, Young Men and Young Women...but not Scouts. That's what Pharaoh and Nimrod did – they imitated “that order established in the first generations.”

Here's another short clip from the DVD of Truman G. Madsen

TGM: Nibley has been a ritualist. That is a man who not only sees that one way to study cultures is to look at their rites, but in addition is convinced that somehow these rites tie in to the ideas of the temple, and finally even to the foundations of civilization. Egypt seems to be the capital or the center related to many other cultures both temporally and spiritually. HN: The Egyptians realized, as we do, that all life comes from the Sun. Its energy reaches us—it's most immediate sensation is light. And if you are in Egypt, you know the Sun dominates the picture. Light and life are literally inseparable. That's a scientific fact of our own day. The light of the world is the life of the world, as the scriptures tell us. (24) (D&C 88:7-13)

As Br Nibley just said, he was convinced the rites of the Egyptian Culture and religion tie directly back to our ideas of the Temple. The Book of Abraham is a record of Abraham's endowment, as seen in chapter one, beginning in verse two. As with the coronation ceremony, there are three important aspects to the ancient endowment (coronation) of the individual that is connected to God. **(1) The Death of the God; (2) The Resurrection and Ascension; and (3) The Enthronement.** This probably doesn't mean much right now, but the life of Christ fulfills these things, and they also pertain to what we do in the temple.

Two (non-LDS) works stand out as the accepted sources for ancient coronation ceremonies: the research of Tor Irstram(i) and A. M. Hocart(ii). Irstram's research focused on sixty-two coronation ceremonies in various parts of Africa. Hocart looked at Kingship Rituals that included ancient and contemporary traditions around the world. Each came to the conclusion that there were common elements found in every ceremony. In fact, in the list of the common elements of each author, astounding parallels to our own rituals emerge.

- i Irstam, Tor, The King of Ganda: Studies in the Institutions of Sacral Kingship in Africa. (Stockholm, 1944).
- ii Hocart, A. M., Kingship, (London 1927).

The Witness of Christ

63 And behold, all things have their likeness, and **all things are created and made to bear record of me**, both things which are temporal, and things which are spiritual; things which are in the heavens above, and things which are on the earth, and things which are in the earth, and things which are under the earth, both above and beneath: **all things bear record of me.** (Moses 6:63)

I have included an explanation here of the events taking place, along with the lists containing the numbers and letters of Irstram and Hocart's works on the ancient and modern coronation ceremonies. I believe you'll see that these rituals and ceremonies were and are connected to the temple and the ordinances and teachings performed there.

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
1. The coronation must symbolize (1) the Death of the God, (2) the Resurrection and Ascension, and (3) the Enthronement. These are the fundamental meanings of Facsimiles 1, 2, and 3 of Abraham	(1) Ceremonies that symbolized the King's death and rebirth. (Resurrection) These all bear record and are prophecies about Christ	A. The theory is that the king (1) dies; (2) is reborn, (3) as a god.
2. Participants must have an invitation or Recommend. See Psalms 15 and 24. "Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?"	(19) Not all were allowed to be present at the most important ceremonies. You need a recommend to be there.	C. (1) Persons not admissible to the sacrifice are not allowed to know anything; (2) an armed guard prevents prying eyes.

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
3. Must wear the robes and clothing of the Gods. The witnesses are the Angels and Gods.	(23) Those taking part dressed themselves as gods.	X. Those taking part in the rites are dressed up as gods. Y. Which may be those of animals.
4. Must be ready to continue both intellectually and spiritually.	(4) Entrance dialogue and proclamation.	B. By way of preparation he fasts and practices other austerities.

Facsimile # 1 - The Death



5. Must descend below all things in order to rise above all things.	(22) The King was made the butt of the people	H. The people indulge at one point in obscenities, or buffoonery.
6. The battle of good against evil, light and darkness, death and resurrection, Christ and Satan.	(5) Ritual fight. Our current election primaries are a type of ritual combat of who is to be King (President).	E. The King must fight a ritual combat (1) by arms, (2) by ceremony, (3) come out victorious.
7. The death of the God or King was often portrayed by a human substitute King during the ritual combat. The substitute could be the sacrifice of the King's enemy or those who may present a threat to the throne.	(24) Human sacrifices.	
	(25) The King's brothers were killed.	
	(26) Substitute King is killed	

Abraham was a substitute for Nimrod just as Christ became the sacrifice for all the world and for Caesar during the coronation rituals.

Facsimile # 2 - Resurrection and Ascension

On the Outside edge
it reads:

I am Djabaty, in the
House of Ben Ben,
So Exalted and so
Glorious. I am a mighty
God in the Temple of
Heliopolis, having been
redeemed.



After the symbolic combat and death of the King, he must go into the basement of the Temple for three days, representing being in the world of the dead.

8. The King (god) must go into the world of the dead for three days. This becomes a time of chaos before the recreation when darkness reigned upon the face of the deep. All fires are to be extinguished for the three days

(6) The King went into retirement for a certain period. (3 days)

D. A kind of Sabbath is observed; The people are silent and lie quiet as at a death.

9. During the three days there is no light, no creation chaos reigns.

(17) All fires are extinguished

While in the Basement of the Temple or the World of the Dead, the King must prepare himself for the glorious resurrection.

10. The King must be cleansed from evil to come forth in the resurrection as the anointed King and God.

(8) The King was washed or baptized with water

[This is the initiatory - being prepared for the resurrection.]

11. The anointing is an ordinance of the resurrection as those parts of the body are anointed to function proper and perfect

(12) The King was anointed with oil.

K. He is anointed with oil,

12. Robes are changed to show the progression toward King and God.

(2) The King was dressed in special robes.


I. The King is invested with special garments.

13. Every new life or station requires a new name to signify the new creation and new creature. **In exaltation you receive a new name that only the recipient knows.**

(3) The King received a new name.

U. He receives a new name

[Whenever one enters into a new existence or new environment, one receives a new name.]

Porter	Irstram	Hocart
14. The ritual and sacral meal. Life comes from death, sustenance and nourishment to both body and spirit comes from the sacrifice, death and resurrection of the God.	(7) The King receives a Communion or Sacrament	G. He receives communion
Coming out of the Temple or underworld after three days, order is now established. Life and light may continue. A new Son of God is the New King.		
Facsimile # 3 - The Enthronement		
		
15. Part of the ritual dress to "trod upon the footstool of god" having your feet shod with the gospel.	(13) The King put on shoes as part of the coronation	P. He puts on shoes as part of the Coronation
16. The scepter, or "wa'as" scepter signifies the authority and power to rule and reign as king and the son of God on earth.	(14) The King received certain regalia. (Emblems of authority)	Q. He receives other royal regalia such as a sword, a scepter, and a ring.
17. The covenant making process must take place accompanied with the oath formulary, as with Abraham.	(11) Admonitions and promises.	F. The King is (1) admonished to rule justly and (2) promises to do so.
18. The crown signifies the acceptance of the King from the gods and the masses. It is an earthly and heavenly crown.	(16) The King was crowned.	O. The King is crowned

Regarding the Enthronement:

When the King comes out of the basement (underworld) of the Temple after three days, he is washed, anointed, receives a new name, is dressed and puts on his shoes. Now he moves onto the

Enthronement aspect of his progression. When he receives his crown, the fires are rekindled after three days of darkness. In both Greece and Mesopotamia, the citizens would break into the Creation Hymn or *Poema*. *The creation hymn signifies the new order being established; a new year begins with the new reign of their 'resurrected' king.* The Greek word, *Poema*, means Creation. The Creation needed to be rehearsed again. In the Book of Mormon, we see these same steps when Mosiah replaces his father Benjamin in the first few chapters of Mosiah. The Creation and our relationship to this world and salvation provided by the creator is rehearsed by King Benjamin. Anciently the first month of the new year was April, which became a common pattern for the gathering of the masses for the new year rites of coronation and other assemblies, like Passover and even our General Conference today.