



## The Pearl of Greatest Price: Mormonism's Most Controversial Scripture

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### Product Description

The Pearl of Greatest Price narrates the history of Mormonism's fourth volume of scripture, canonized in 1880. The authors track its predecessors, describe its several components, and assess their theological significance within the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Four principal sections are discussed, along with attendant controversies associated with each. The Book of Moses purports to be a Mosaic narrative missing from the biblical version of Genesis. Too little treated in the scholarship on Mormonism, these chapters, produced only months after the Book of Mormon was published, actually contain the theological nucleus of Latter-day Saint doctrines as well as a virtual template for the Restoration Joseph Smith was to effect. In The Pearl of Greatest Price, the author covers three principal parts that are the focus of many of the controversies engulfing Mormonism today. These parts are The Book of Abraham, The Book of Moses, and The Joseph Smith History. Most controversial of all is the Book of Abraham, a production that arose out of a group of papyri Smith acquired, along with four mummies, in 1835. Most of the papyri disappeared in the great Chicago Fire, but surviving fragments have been identified as Egyptian funerary documents. This has created one of the most serious challenges to Smith's prophetic claims the LDS church has faced. LDS scholars, however, have developed several frameworks for vindicating the inspiration of the resulting narrative and Smith's calling as a prophet. The author attempts to make sense of Smith's several, at times divergent, accounts of his First Vision, one of which is canonized as scripture. He also assesses the creedal nature of Smith's Articles of Faith, in the context of his professed anti-creedalism. In sum, this study chronicles the volume's historical legacy and theological indispensability to the Latter-day Saint tradition, as well as the reasons for its resilience and future prospects in the face of daunting challenges.