

TIMOTHY P. SMITH

WITH BOB HOSTETLER

Foreword by Eugene Ulrich, PhD

**THE
CHAMBERLAIN
KEY**

**UNLOCKING THE GOD CODE TO REVEAL
DIVINE MESSAGES HIDDEN IN THE BIBLE**

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THE CHAMBERLAIN KEY

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This book is dedicated to all the parents in the world—past, present, and future—whether by blood, adoption, or unofficial arrangement. There is something about parenthood that seems to both challenge and reward every facet of our humanity and allow all those who take this responsibility upon themselves to discover the full dimensions of their own nature. It is also dedicated especially to my own parents, who have lived to see the love they have shared with each other blossom like “a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall” (Genesis 49:22, KJV).

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FOREWORD

As chief editor of the biblical Dead Sea Scrolls, I have spent my entire career teaching and writing in the areas of the Hebrew Scriptures, the scrolls, and the Septuagint. With regard to the reliability of the Masoretic Hebrew text that is used in the observations made in this book, it is based on the Saint Petersburg Codex (*Codex Leningradensis; Firkovich B 19 A*), which is the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible in the Hebrew language, whose colophon dates it to AD 1008 or 1009. This is the text, in modern printed form (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*), used by most scholars today.

The Aleppo Codex is almost a century older, but most of the Pentateuch is missing from it. The Dead Sea Scrolls are older by a millennium, but, though fragments from almost thirty manuscripts containing parts of Genesis are preserved, none contains text from Genesis 30.

The antiquity of that Hebrew tradition is safely assured, however, by three different sources. First, the Dead Sea Scrolls in the Genesis fragments that did survive exhibit a text that is virtually identical with the Saint Petersburg Codex. Second, the (pre-Christian) Samaritan Pentateuch is identical with it in its consonantal text. Third, the ancient Greek translation (the Septuagint) of Genesis, most scholars would agree, was translated around 280 BC from a Hebrew source text that was virtually identical with the Hebrew consonantal text of the Leningrad Codex.

However one wishes to interpret the meaning and significance of this book, the reader may rest assured that the text on which Timothy Smith bases his interpretation has almost certainly been there for a very long time, since before the birth of Christ.

—Eugene Ulrich, PhD
Chief Editor, Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls
Department of Theology, University of Notre Dame

Out of the Shadows

For more than fifteen years I managed to keep the lid on a discovery that will dramatically redirect biblical scholarship, Christian theology, and perhaps even the trajectory of history itself.

What began as a mystery concerning my own family and ancestry has unfolded into perhaps the most astounding revelation of the modern age, as you will see in the pages that follow. It is based on an unexplained phenomenon, an anomaly in four verses of text in the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew book of Genesis. I have found messages embedded in those few verses that simply could not be there—but nevertheless they were.

I have pursued every possible explanation in an effort to account for this bizarre finding. One discovery has led to another and then another. I've consulted some of the world's most respected scholars and scientists until only one plausible explanation remains: the original ancient text of the Hebrew Scriptures (parts of which date back to 800 BC, perhaps earlier) is more than a text in the traditional sense—more than a manuscript containing wisdom and prophecy and transcendent truth. It is also a complex communication device with the ability to breach the very boundaries of time itself. By using this tool, a supernatural power has reached across millennia to make contact with you and me, right here and now.

The text of the Hebrew Bible presents us with a familiar literary structure.

Words form sentences and concepts that we recognize. We use accepted rules of translation and interpretation to extract what we believe is the meaning of the narrative. However, the smallest discrete units of the biblical text are Hebrew letters, the quanta of this textual universe, which are capable of organizing themselves into a less obvious form of intelligent communication, one that transcends the ordinary parameters of time and space. This hidden substructure is what holds the ancient Hebrew text together.

The key that I've found to this hidden language is not some rigid, mechanical cipher code but a means of gaining access to the beautifully unpredictable nature of the universe and life itself, which turns out to possess a level of order that is both intentional and intelligent. A manifestation of divine intelligence—or God, if you will—is functioning in visible ways right alongside us.

And now we have a new way to access it.

It is no easy task to explain how I made this discovery, let alone to help you understand and believe it. After all, I am neither a scholar nor a theologian. Neither am I an expert in ancient languages. In some ways I am a most unlikely candidate to have uncovered signs of a divine hand at work, which sometimes has left me wondering, *Why me?* and *Why now?*

I hope the account you are about to read will answer those questions while also serving to strengthen your faith, as it has mine.

PART I

THE UNFOLDING

Finder of Lost and Hidden Things

Virginia, 2016

The chamberlain key was not my first discovery in a life marked by curiosity and exploration. But it is by far the most important and consequential.

For more than thirty years I have engaged in the work of evaluating and preserving valuable physical objects from every part of the world and every period in history. I have spent most of my life answering questions and unraveling mysteries, many of which began with something I could touch: a chest, a painting, a tapestry, a scepter, a banner, a coin, a cloak, a sword, or a scroll. As an appraiser, restorer, and conservator of fine art and antiquities, I have discovered priceless items stashed in attic eaves, sealed in long-forgotten vaults, or gone missing from the White House. Many such treasures have impressed me with their astronomical value, dazzled me with their breathtaking beauty, or haunted me with their gruesome history. But like many explorers, historians, and investigators, I have passed much of my time in the unglamorous drudgery of countless details, the disconnected bits of things that must be carefully considered, culled, and reassembled before the destination is reached or the truth uncovered.

My paternal grandfather, Clarence R. Smith, arrived in Washington, DC, in 1938 to begin the construction of the Jefferson Memorial. He also worked on a number of other important building and renovation projects: the National Gallery of Art, the US

Capitol, the Carderock Division of the Naval Sea Systems Command, and many others. His youngest son—my father, E. Jay Smith—continued in this tradition, beginning with the construction of the official residence of the vice president on the grounds of the US Naval Observatory. When my father retired in the 1990s, his building and architectural firm was credited with designing, building, and renovating many of the Washington area's most venerated public buildings and private residences.

I was born in 1960 in Langley, Virginia, a tiny community just inside the Washington, DC, Beltway. In 1966 my parents purchased a small horse farm in Great Falls, Virginia, a mere seven miles up the Potomac from Langley. The place was called Windswept, and all the horses had been named accordingly: Gusty, Breezy, Sea Breeze, and so on. The brick ranch house rambled along the side of a steep hill overlooking rolling pastures and a lake fed by a stream known as Colvin Run. The property was adjoined on all sides by other horse farms and small Virginia estates.

Among my favorite activities on a cold, rainy day was to sneak into our home's spacious attic and pull up the ladder behind me so no one would know I was there. I listened to the muffled sound of voices and footsteps below, delighted by the musty secrecy of the place, as I rummaged through boxes of old photographs, sports equipment, toys, tools, and Christmas decorations. I set up the family nativity scene, placing a small candle in the stable, positioning and repositioning animals and people until I was satisfied that all were in their correct spots.

One stormy day in late winter I could no longer resist the sturdy pine boxes stacked against the eaves in the far corner of the attic. I knew perfectly well they were forbidden, but their lure was overpowering. By the light of a red Christmas candle I carefully slid the top crates onto the attic floor, opened them one by one, and inspected their contents. There were folders full of old handwritten documents, their pages creased and oxidized to a light tobacco brown. One box contained nothing but ornate knobs, handles, and latches—some of rich patinated brass and others of skillfully handwrought iron, pitted and rusted but still intact. Another was crammed with metal tubes containing rolled-up architectural drawings and wonderful hand-colored maps that I turned in every direction, attempting to decipher their locations in the larger world.

Most curious of all was a large iron star, cast in round relief, its dry soldier-blue

paint flaking off onto my hands as I dragged it into the candlelight for a better look. I hefted it above my head and figured it weighed more than half a sack of sweet feed, about thirty-five pounds. I had no idea at the time where it had come from and what its purpose might have been. Only later would I learn that it was originally part of a set of thirteen, one star for each of the original American colonies.

I would also discover that twenty years before, at the end of World War II, my grandfather had begun one of many renovation projects on the US Capitol building, this time to replace the ceilings and roofs of both the House and Senate chambers. The star I'd found in the attic once hung in the Capitol but had since become part of a forgotten treasure trove of historic documents and artifacts in that structure's attics and catacombs. As the only star among its companions that was ever salvaged and retrieved, in some ways it illuminated the course of my professional life and personal passion. Years later, when I became a professional hunter and finder and restorer of lost and forgotten things, I arranged for the star to be returned to the architect of the Capitol.

A TREASURE HUNTER'S TRAINING

On the first day of my summer vacation from school in 1972, my dad came into my bedroom at 5:30 a.m. and placed a leather tool belt, fully equipped, at the foot of my bed and told me it was time to get up and get going. This was not a total surprise, since all three of my older brothers had their summer vacations commandeered in the same way. I spent my first day "on the job" at the equipment and material yard, where I worked in the blazing sun, prying nails out of old lumber so it could be reclaimed for concrete forms, scaffold boards, and gangways. My supervisor, Lonnie, was a tough, weathered African American man who had worked for my father since my father first went into business and with my grandfather before that. Under his watchful eye I hauled bricks, mortar, lumber, and shingles from one spot to another and occasionally swung my hammer at wide-headed roofing nails that Lonnie must have figured were hard to miss.

Toward the end of that summer, a plan began to shape itself in me. I recognized that it wasn't the buildings themselves that interested me, despite their magnificence;

it was the things we often found in them. Some of the workmen, including my older family members, spoke of finding old and curious items in strange places, and I began to wonder if a job existed where a person could be paid to locate lost or hidden objects, a sort of professional finder of things.

By the time I was twenty years old, I owned and operated a thriving antique-restoration operation out of the family-business headquarters in McLean, Virginia. Capitalizing on the reputations of my father and grandfather, I was invited into homes and institutions that were pretty heady for someone my age. I hired the most talented and dependable subcontractors in the area: oil-painting conservationists trained at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, porcelain specialists from China, cabinet and furniture makers moonlighting from their jobs with my father, and a furniture upholsterer who had worked for every First Lady since Bess Truman. I ferried the more common items to a workshop I maintained in the Shenandoah Valley. I plied everyone I encountered for information, techniques, and trade secrets, learning how to handle many projects myself. I trained others from scratch to handle the nuts-and-bolts repair jobs, and I developed protocols and habits that serve me well to this day.

Not long after setting up my own shop, I was invited to perhaps the most historic estate home in the McLean area. Known as Salona, it had been the home of Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee, the Revolutionary War hero and father of Gen. Robert E. Lee. The current owner was a distinguished elderly woman, matriarch of a prominent Mid-Atlantic political family. We had never met, but she contacted me because she knew my parents socially and because my father’s company had been involved in the architectural renovation of Salona House.

When she greeted me at the door, I got the impression that she mistook me for my oldest brother (I sported a closely trimmed beard at the time and looked older than my twenty years). As she led me on a grand tour of the historic home, it was obvious she had played the docent many times before.

My hostess began by describing a pre-Columbian settlement on the site and showed me a small collection of Native American artifacts that had been unearthed on the property over the years. She led me from room to room, recounting well-rehearsed facts and anecdotes about the furnishings and architectural details of the estate home. Nearly every piece of English and Early American furniture had a story

that was interwoven with important events in Virginia history and the many prominent figures in her family. She identified the subject of every portrait on the walls and drew my attention to antique Persian carpets, rare Chinese Imperial and imported porcelains, delicate English Staffordshire pieces, and sturdy mocha-ware pottery. She concluded her private seminar with a romantic (and historically accurate) account of how Dolley Madison fled to the refuge of Salona in 1814 when British troops were burning the White House in order to reunite with her husband, President James Madison, who had arrived the previous day.

Having completed the tour, we reversed our course back through the house as my hostess pointed out various furnishings, artwork, and other items I would be asked to clean, repair, and restore. She never requested a cost estimate, only a timeline for completing the work. Though at the time I was in over my head, I took great pains with those valuable articles and learned all I could about them while they were in my care: the precise materials used in their composition, the methods applied to their construction, individual variations and subtleties of style and proportion, as well as the identity and background of their makers. I consulted with seasoned experts to be sure I didn't embark on any process that might depreciate the pieces in any way. I was especially keen to note signs of previous restoration and repair, to avoid the less-than-perfect work of my predecessors in the trade, and to emulate their most artful successes.

That was a seminal experience for me. The care and effort I invested in Salona House soon brought more opportunities, and I gave every new assignment as much attention as I had the first, along with the benefit of my growing expertise. I made it my goal to turn up some new tidbit of information that I could offer every client when the job was finished and their precious objects returned. My patrons appreciated my interest and enthusiasm, and they rewarded me with referrals that led to a constant stream of fascinating employment.

By the time I was twenty-six years old, I was operating one of the largest antique and fine-art restoration businesses in North America, with one division devoted to private clients and another to contracts with the federal government.

But the clues to the greatest treasure I would ever discover were still hidden in my dreams.

STORMS AND SYMBOLS

My life on the surface no doubt looked great to outsiders, but my inside life was a different story. I was experiencing a crisis of faith. Although my family, church, and business responsibilities were expanding and thriving, my spiritual strength seemed to be draining away. Was I buckling under my new responsibilities? Was I burning out? Cracking up?

My dreams were contributing to my stress. On the exact same date for three years in a row—beginning on the night of January 12, 1986—I'd had the same powerful dream. I know because I started keeping a journal the morning after the first one, a practice I have continued ever since.

Each dream began the same way, with a massive dark storm rising ominously on the horizon, but the dream each year extended the story and contributed new details. These dramatic scenes employed distinct symbols, some of which were familiar to me and some of which were entirely new. After each dream I dug into Scripture and history to try to decipher its meaning.

Then one night in April 1989 I had another dream, this one out of sequence and very different from the rest, a dream in which I was looking at a map of North America. I saw a tiny cartoon version of our Ford van driving from east to west across the continent, much like a 1940s newsreel showing a plane flying across a spinning globe. In the dream our van stopped deep in the Canadian Rockies of British Columbia. The location imprinted itself so vividly in my brain that when I awoke I was able to pull out an atlas and mark the spot. I noted the longitude and latitude, wrote them down on a scrap of paper, and put it in my wallet.

I believed, because of the repetitive nature of the dreams and some of the symbolic nature of the content, that I was being guided—and prompted to act—though for what purpose I didn't have a clue. Thanks to the dream, however, I did have one strikingly specific detail: a place I could locate.

Plunging ahead with the reckless confidence—and often the foolishness—of youth, I decided to go there.

An Overwhelming Encounter

Western Canada, 1989

In the summer I drove my family to British Columbia and the location indicated in my dream, four hundred miles north of Fort Saint James, high in Canada's Rocky Mountains. My wife was just a few months from delivering our third son. Our two other sons, ages four and six, sported coonskin caps, assuming we were on a marvelous wilderness adventure. A friend of mine and his wife were also traveling with us.

Strange things started happening from the moment we arrived in mid-July. Maps showed nothing at the longitude and latitude I'd so carefully recorded. No towns, no roads, no camps—nothing at all. I had never been high in the Rockies before, especially this far from civilization. It was breathtakingly beautiful but also more than a little frightening. We were able to access the location only via an old logging road often blocked by fallen limbs or bisected by tumbling streams that required us to carefully negotiate the best way to get our Ford van across. We had brought along sufficient supplies to get through the winter, and both women were slowly coming to the realization that I was crazy enough to proceed with my plan to winter there (winter temperatures in that part of the Canadian Rockies can plummet to fifty degrees below zero).

When we reached the precise spot I was looking for, a spectacular panorama

opened before us. Two aquamarine lakes, one feeding into the other, reflected the surrounding wilderness in every direction, looking as pristine as the day it was created. To the northwest one majestic peak towered above the rest, and no sooner had we stepped from the van to take in the scene than a vivid rainbow appeared over it. The sight was stunning, a sign perhaps, but what it might mean other than “Welcome, traveler,” I had no idea.

We set up a camp of two dome tents protected by large tarpaulin canopies, under which we arranged folding chairs, clothes-drying racks, and other simple necessities. The boys gathered several dozen large, smooth stones from a nearby stream, and we fashioned a deep circular fire pit. Once we started a blazing fire, we dove into the lake for a frigid but long-overdue bath.

The next day I climbed as high into this mountain as daylight in those northern latitudes would permit. The responsibility for my family and companions weighed heavily on my mind and soul as I built a small fire with the limited forage available this high above the tree line. I intended to stay on Rainbow Mountain (as I now called it) as long as it took to receive some kind of divine guidance. Having come this far, I needed to understand why I had been summoned to this spot and how my wife could safely give birth in such a place. Within a few months there would be no getting out, and I worried that our camping supplies would be no match for winter in the wilderness.

I stayed that night on Rainbow Mountain huddled close to a small fire, pouring out my heart and soul to God. At daybreak I returned to camp with hardly a whispered promise or intimation of peace. In truth I was confused and disillusioned as well as exhausted from the arduous hike and the cold, sleepless night. I promptly fell asleep in our tent only to experience a vivid dream. My family, friends, and I were welcomed by a large group of people (who were somehow related to one another) to a lovely cabin on a farm near the banks of a crystal river. The hand-hewn logs of the cabin and its surroundings were clear in every detail, including the cabin’s furnishings.

When I awoke I carefully recorded the dream in my journal and described it to my wife and friends. I told them that if such a place actually existed, I would recognize it instantly.

SHELTER FROM THE STORM

Our campsite in Rainbow Valley marked the end of a trail; there was no going forward in a vehicle, so in order to search for the cabin I had seen in my dream, we had to work our way back the way we came. In ten miles or so we reached a logging road that roughly followed the course of the Omineca River. Having already traversed the side heading toward Germansen Landing, we turned upriver. This road, in better shape than our Rainbow Valley trail, twisted and turned as it followed the river's meanderings. We saw two other cabins as we drove upriver, and the rest of the party insisted we stop and investigate them. But neither looked anything like the site in my dream, so we kept going. The rough road wound down a long grade and then rose as it hugged the Omineca, when suddenly the cabin I had seen in my dream just twenty-four hours earlier appeared on our left.

We piled out of the van to inspect the sprawling homestead that obviously belonged to someone who had not been there in some time. The five-acre clearing that revealed a bend in the swiftly flowing Omineca River was nestled in an alpine landscape of massive fir trees interspersed with alders whose trunks looked like bleached bones. In the mountains that surrounded us, flora eventually gave way to barren rock slides and snow-tipped peaks. As my two small sons dashed about the compound calling out one exciting discovery after another, the grown-ups poked around the main cabin.

It was a simple log structure consisting of a kitchen, a great room, and two small bedrooms off to one side. Above these was an additional low-pitched loft that I knew immediately would be perfect for the boys, accessible by a crude ladder. A wood-fired cookstove in the kitchen and a potbellied stove in the center of the structure promised ample heat. A lean-to pantry off the back of the kitchen was equipped with a primitive indoor privy that was a warmer prospect for the upcoming winter than midnight walks in the snow to an outhouse. Two other one-room cabins dotted the clearing as well as a large woodshed, a dilapidated barn and chicken coop, and a workshop close to the old logging road that continued into the wilderness of the Northwest Territories.

It was everything I had seen in my dream, except no one was here to welcome

us. And although we had explored freely so far, we couldn't just move in without permission from the cabin's owners. So we piled back into our van and drove several miles back down the rugged logging road to Germansen Landing, just beyond the bridge that spanned the Omineca River. It was the closest thing to civilization in the area, a trading post for miners, loggers, trappers, and the few homesteading families that we learned were spread over hundreds of square miles in the surrounding wilderness. We asked the family that tended the little store about the vacant property and learned that it belonged to a family from Alberta that was due to arrive soon on their annual family getaway. We returned to the homestead, set up camp near the river, and awaited the family's arrival.

In less than a week they showed up, and all eleven of them — children included — were die-hard wilderness survivalists. Informed about our presence by the proprietors of the trading post, they acted as if it were the most natural thing in the world for us to be waiting for them on their property. The encounter was surreal yet comforting. They invited us to move into one of the smaller cabins and make ourselves comfortable. No one among them was much of a talker, but for the next three weeks our new friends made it their mission to pass on their catalog of knowledge and skills: hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and foraging, as well as an awareness of the area's many dangers. I was content to enjoy their company and learn all I could while planning to ask a favor that seemed too much to ask. It turned out I never had to make my request.

A few days before their sojourn's end, Frank, patriarch of the clan, asked me to walk with him down by the river where he had first taught us to hunt grouse. This time, however, he left his bird gun behind. The extended August sun warmed the afternoon and sparkled off the river. I followed him without conversation or question, waiting for him to speak his mind.

"I understand you folks intend to stay out here. You're looking for something, and you think you might find it here."

I knew he wasn't asking a question. "That's true, although what I'm looking for isn't something you can lay your hands on."

"That's a good sort of thing to be seeking." He sounded satisfied with my answer.

I was tempted to tell him what had led me out here in the first place, including my dreams, but the situation was complicated, and I didn't want to speak for anyone else. My friends had their own ideas, which seemed to change regularly, and my wife had tentatively agreed to the trip, but naturally her first concern was the safety and welfare of our children—including the baby who was due in the middle of winter. *I should never have encouraged anyone to come with me*, I thought. "This was all my idea."

"I figured as much." He nodded and looked across the river at a swarm of black flies on the opposite shore. "The breeze is holding them over there for now, but if it shifts, they'll be all over us." This was no casual warning—the mosquitoes and black flies in that part of the Rockies were vicious at this time of the year—but I sensed something deeper in his observation.

"Things would be simpler if I had come alone. This place is beautiful, but I know it can get harsh." I was trying to sound sensible.

"Yep. I've been bringing my family out here at all times of year. They like it for the most part, especially the boys. Never had anything really bad happen. A few close calls. You all can stay right here for as long as you like." With one last wary glance at the flies, Frank turned and headed up the trail back toward the cabins.

I said nothing but stayed right on his heels.

"You've got most of what you need to get through the winter. I know you got a ton of that freeze-dried food, but I'd get a pile of onions and potatoes from the trading post if I were you. You can trap hares and ice-fish too. Don't imagine you're going to bring down a moose with the peashooter I'm going to leave you, but it's good for grouse. There's a few folks around here you can count on in a pinch. You'll meet 'em, and they'll drop by.

"Here's the most important thing: when the first big snow hits, which will be sooner than you think, you and that friend of yours get the two big square-point shovels in the tool shed and bank up snow against the side of the cabin, all the way up to the top of the walls. Bank it and pack it. Don't worry about the roof; it'll take care of itself. You're going to turn that cabin into an igloo. If you do like I say, that old wood stove will keep that place so warm it'll near chase you out no matter how cold it gets." He glanced back at me. "You got all that?"

"Yes, sir. I understand. And I really appreciate it. That's a load off my mind."

“Good. And one more thing.” Without breaking stride he said, “You’ll find what you’re looking for sooner or later. In the meantime, you keep your family warm and fed.”

Though we had become friends over the previous three weeks, Frank’s generosity astounded me. And thanks to his advice we did stay warm and well fed. That remote cabin on the banks of the Omineca River became a sacred place for me, the site of miracles and wonder. I experienced for the first time in my life what it was like to survive on one of our planet’s outer edges, where so much of God’s creation still supplies both sanctuary and danger, often in dizzying succession.

My third son would be born there that December, delivered right into my own hands, after my wife endured an extended and exhausting labor. I would learn how to pray with desperate humility and would experience the swiftness of God’s provision when we turned to Him in dire circumstances. I would discard many cherished misconceptions, toted into the mountains with the rest of my gear. I would experience many powerful dreams and visions, but none compared to what occurred one September night when the northern lights were crackling and blazing in a flawless starlit sky.

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

The wee hours of September 8, 1989, changed my life forever in ways I could not yet begin to imagine. God heard my prayers and answered my yearning in such a remarkable and unexpected manner that I still marvel to this day, reliving the circumstances over and over in my heart and mind in order to glean one more bit of wisdom or guidance. Whenever I’m discouraged, I go back and read the dog-eared pages of my journal from this time, seeking the comfort and reassurance they always bring.

That night I lay awake in bed next to my wife in our small bedroom in the cabin on the Omineca River. She was sound asleep as I cradled her head with my left arm. Our unzipped sleeping bags, which we used as blankets, covered us as I peered around the cozy log room. My jeans hung over a ladder-back chair in the corner, my boots upright alongside it.

Then it struck me that the room wasn’t dark, though it was not yet morning;

I could see everything clearly. No sooner had this thought occurred to me than I felt a terrific force pressing against my chest and face. The room filled with an ominous presence, thick and palpable. All around me countless dim shapes seemed to be struggling with one another, all possessed by some malign purpose. Somehow I knew they hated me, and that knowledge caused such terror in me that I was unable to move. I tried calling out, but I couldn't make a sound. Panic swept over me. Making one last desperate attempt I cried out, "In the name of Jesus Christ, deliver me."

Immediately light entered the room from the ceiling, flooding the room with a soft, warm, amber glow. The malignant shapes fled, and the crushing pressure on my chest subsided. I was even able to sit upright, but despite all that was happening, my wife still slept peacefully under the covers.

Before I could contemplate my deliverance, a figure descended in a column of light, and though he never spoke aloud, I knew him to be Moses, the prophet and lawgiver of the Old Testament. He stopped a few feet above the floor but remained close enough to me—just a few feet away—so I could easily examine his appearance. He had the look of a man between sixty and seventy years old, with white shoulder-length hair and a thin white beard. He wore a plain white robe with no additional adornment, at least none that I could see. It never occurred to me to pinch myself to see if I was dreaming; on the contrary, I felt such clarity and focus that it was as if my whole being had quickened to absorb the experience. Comfort enveloped me. Joy flooded my soul.

I had been raised in the church. I had attended Sunday school and catechism classes and had read Scripture all of my adult life. I had heard stories of angels appearing to men and women in ancient times. I knew about Moses himself hearing the voice of God from a burning bush. I knew that God had visited Abraham in his tent in Mamre and that Jacob had wrestled with a mysterious night visitor on the banks of the Jabbok. I was familiar with the story of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration when three of His closest friends and followers actually witnessed Him speaking to Moses and Elijah. But of course no one in his right mind ever expects anything like that to happen to *him*, especially not someone who was struggling spiritually. It made no sense at this point in my life. But at the time I knew nothing of what was to come.

The figure of Moses extended his right hand. In it was an off-white linen bag, cylindrical in shape, about twelve inches long and perhaps five inches in diameter, bound together in the middle by a drawstring tied in a simple bow. I reached out and took the small bundle and gently, reverently, began to untie it. I looked up briefly, but my visitor was no longer standing in the pillar of light. When I pulled the drawstring, its contents unfolded in my hands, revealing that the bag was actually a small waist apron, from which fell a simple robe-like garment of crude material, much like a flour sack.

Suddenly I was clothed in the robe through no effort or action of my own. My spirit must have slipped free of my physical body, because what I experienced from this point on took on an even more surreal quality. I felt both intense joy and unrestrained freedom of movement, as if I could travel anywhere I wanted. I found myself outside the cabin, where I was met by two radiant heavenly beings, one woman dressed in a long pale-blue robe and the other in pale green. They greeted me as if they had known me forever and proceeded to conduct me through a ceremony only slightly similar to rituals I had participated in during my religious training or read about in my studies.

The ceremony culminated, and before I could even savor the moment or ponder its significance, I found myself back in the little cabin in the Rocky Mountains, sitting straight up in bed next to my wife, who was still sound asleep. I jumped up, lit a candle, and went through the little cabin to see if anyone else was awake. I yearned to share the experience, but once I understood that no one would awaken for several hours, I forced myself to sit down and record every detail of the event in my journal while its trepidations and insurmountable joys were still fresh in my heart and mind.

For several days afterward I was high with the experience. My wife and our friends responded with amazement and understandable hesitation. As both my nature and my training dictated, I replayed the event repeatedly in my mind. I took long walks alone in the breathtaking landscape and sat for hours on the banks of the Omineca, trying to extract every possible shred of understanding and insight from my experience. But despite my best efforts, the visitation—or whatever it was—remained largely a mystery.

The one thing that was crystal clear to me was that the event was ultimately

positive and divine in nature. The boundless wellspring of love and beauty that emanated from the being I understood to be Moses, and from the two sisterly beings, was all the confirmation I needed.



It would take the better part of another decade before I would begin to understand why I had been visited by Moses, who, according to rabbinical tradition, received the precise letter sequence of the Torah on Mount Sinai directly from God. Still, I knew beyond certainty that I was not deluded or deceived, and to this day I have been guided by that first spiritual experience in ways that underscore its reality and importance.

In 1989, at the time of that visit, much of the technology that would eventually make some sense of these things didn't yet exist, but without that strange encounter I would never have been drawn to investigate the revelations that lay ahead.

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