

Cosmic myth as a chaismas. LeGrand Baker

I had one of those “ah-ha — why didn’t think of that before” moments not long ago. It was this”  
The cosmic myth is always in the pattern of a chaismas. In its simplest form it looks like this

The hero is required to leave home  
    He is given a seemingly impossible task  
        He confronts impossible odds  
    He achieves the task  
He returned home triumphant

After I wrote that, this morning, I thought, “That doesn’t look right. The success ought to be in the center at the focal point.’

So I tried another one. This time I used the Hymn of the Pearl

The hero prepares to leave home.  
    he takes off his coat and toga  
        he receives his blessing and assignment  
            he locates the pearl  
                he struggles under great difficulty  
                    he receives a renewal of the blessing  
            he takes the pearl  
        learns he has fulfilled assignment  
    he regains his sacred clothing  
he returns home.

That version looks better because by making the struggle and the renewal of the blessing concurrent, it is a more accurate representation of reality. But it still has the success happening someplace other than at the focal point. I was thinking of that when I went to church today. Travis Martin was teaching the Gospel Doctrine class. While making a not-too-labored allusion to the cosmic myth he observed that the time in the wilderness was the most important part of the story because that was the time when the Children of Israel had to sort out who they were and what their relationship was with God. His comments helped me realize that the pattern was correct after all.

Modern scholars who recognized in this pattern in ancient literature envisioned the form as an open triangle. However it seems to me that it would more accurately depict the ancient’s sense of sacral geometry if we pulled the two ends together so that rather than being a bottomless triangle it became a circle – the eternal round. That appeals to me because then both the cosmic myth and the chaismas could be seen as the triumph of the human soul in an expression of geometric perfection.