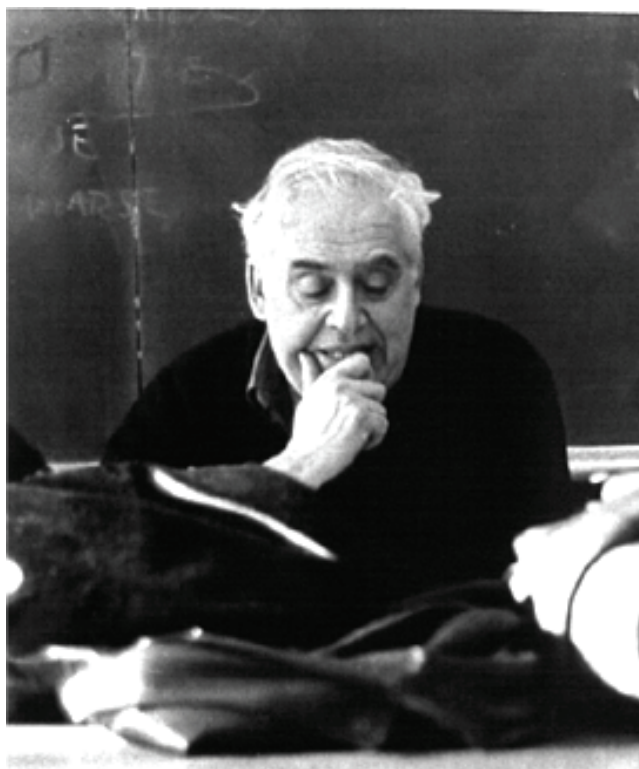


Excerpted from Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Book of Moses*, Salt Lake City: Eborn, 2010  
For more information, see [www.imageandlikeness.net](http://www.imageandlikeness.net)

### 3. The Vision of Moses as a Heavenly Ascent

Co-Authored with David J. Larsen



*Figure 3-1. Harold Bloom, 1930-*

**T**HE eminent Yale professor and Jewish literary scholar Harold Bloom has called the book of Moses and the book of Abraham two of the “more surprising” and “neglected” works of LDS scripture.<sup>91</sup> With the great spate of publications over the decades since fragments of Egyptian papyri were rediscovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,<sup>92</sup> we have begun to see a remedy for the previous neglect of the book of Abraham.<sup>93</sup> Now, gratefully, because of wider availability of the original manuscripts and new detailed studies of their contents, the book of Moses is also beginning to receive its due.<sup>94</sup>

What did Professor Bloom find so “surprising” in the book of Moses? He said he was intrigued by the fact that many of its themes are “strikingly akin to ancient suggestions.” While expressing “no judgment, one way or the other, upon the authenticity” of LDS scripture, he found “enormous validity” in the way these writings “recapture... crucial elements in the archaic Jewish religion.... that had ceased to be available either to normative Judaism or to Christianity, and that

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survived only in esoteric traditions unlikely to have touched [Joseph] Smith directly.”<sup>95</sup> In other words, Professor Bloom found it a great wonder that Joseph Smith could have come up with, on his own, a modern book that resembles so closely ancient Jewish and Christian teachings.



*Figure 3-2. Hugh W. Nibley, 1910-2005*

Hugh Nibley’s assessment of the genius that shines forth in the Pearl of Great Price also bears repeating:

Was there ever a more daring example of extreme scholarship than Joseph Smith’s announcement of the forthcoming publication of his translation of the Book of Mormon from the gold plates to which he had been introduced by an angel? In less time than it takes a college student to produce a respectable term paper and after devastating advance notices in the press, the twenty-five-year-old dirt farmer from upstate New York had prepared a 588-page book covering every major aspect in the life of an ancient civilization over a period of one thousand years and was diligent in placing it in the hands of an invincibly hostile public.

## TEMPLE THEMES IN THE BOOK OF MOSES

The answer to our opening question, by the way, is “Yes, there was another even bolder venture: five years later when Smith surpassed his first effort by laying out firsthand accounts by the ancient leaders of the seven major dispensations of sacred history.”<sup>96</sup> The separate histories range in length from single chapters to eleven pages (five chapters) of the Book of Abraham. The books of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, and Joseph Smith, each giving a firsthand account of his dispensation, may now be challenged and tested by a library of ancient apocryphal writings, which Géza Vermès calls “The Rewritten Bible.” In a time when those apocryphal writings were almost totally unknown to the world, Joseph Smith could be his usual unshakably confident self; but today we have the library of texts to support or refute him.<sup>97</sup>

After all these years it comes as a surprise for me to learn that the Book of Moses appeared in the same year as the publication of the Book of Mormon, the first chapter being delivered in the very month of its publication. And it is a totally different kind of book, in another style, from another world. It puts to rest the silly arguments about who really wrote the Book of Mormon, for whoever produced the Book of Moses would have been even a greater genius....

Was the great last dispensation to be brought on with old shopworn forms and ceremonies? A dispensation is a period of the world's history during which the church of God with its covenants and ordinances is upon the earth; in the apocalyptic scheme of things it is a comparatively brief period of light following a long period of darkness. What would be an appropriate ensign to announce and inaugurate such a happy time? The single civilization that embraces the world today, whichever way it turns, sees only itself, a great all-confining cliché in which one can think only of what is being thought and do only what is being done. It cannot even imagine a new dispensation, let alone supply one. Like a heavy galleon it labors on into ever deepening gloom, prodded on its way from time to time by promising puffs of a New Order, New Method, New Education, New Deal, New Life, New Cure, New Light, New Way, etc., but ever and again losing momentum as the fleeting winds quickly blow themselves out, leaving the old scow to wallow on as best it may towards the dawn of nothing... From what source can we look for comfort? From none on this distracted globe.

It came from the outside, the Mormons said: The long, long silence was broken by an angel from on high. At once the whole world exploded in one long hoot of derision—adequate witness to the total novelty of the thing; here was something utterly alien and retrograde to everything the world taught and

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believed... [No one could] be asked to take him seriously were it not that he came before an unbelieving world with boundless riches in his hands.<sup>98</sup>

Having spent the last few years in focused study of this inspired work of scripture, I have also been astonished with the extent to which its words reverberate with the echoes of antiquity—and, no less significantly, with the deepest truths of my personal experience. Indeed, I would not merely assert that the book of Moses holds up well under close examination, but rather that, like a fractal whose self-similar patterns become more wondrous upon ever closer inspection, the brilliance of its inspiration shines most impressively under bright light and high magnification: there is glory in the details.

A prime example of such inspiration is Moses 1, one of the most remarkable chapters in scripture. Though it serves as a superb introduction to succeeding chapters that describe the Creation and the Fall, its separate prologue<sup>99</sup> and epilogue<sup>100</sup> signal its status as a revelation that can stand apart on its own. The events described apparently took place sometime after Jehovah called Moses out of the burning bush<sup>101</sup> but before he had returned to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel.<sup>102</sup>

Though several of the individual episodes in the chapter are very well known—Moses' confrontation with Satan, his comprehensive vision of the earth and all its inhabitants, and God's declaration about his "work and glory"—how all these pieces join beautifully into a coherent whole has been generally underappreciated by scripture readers. It is now quite evident, however, that the outline of events in Moses 1 fits squarely in the tradition of ancient "heavenly ascent" literature and its relationship to temple theology, rites, and ordinances.<sup>103</sup> It is significant that this account was revealed to Joseph Smith more than a decade before the full temple endowment was administered to others in Nauvoo.

#### ***Heavenly Ascent in the Ancient World***

Although stories of heavenly ascent bear important similarities to temple practices, they make the claim of being something more. While ancient temple rituals dramatically depict a figurative journey into the presence of God, the ascent literature tells the stories of prophets who experience actual encounters with Deity within the *heavenly* temple—the "completion or fulfillment" of the "types and images" in earthly priesthood ordinances.<sup>104</sup> In such encounters, the prophet may experience a vision of eternity, participation in worship with the angels, and the conferral of certain blessings that are "made sure"<sup>105</sup> by the voice of God Himself.



*Figure 3-3. Guardians Part the Veils and Admit Muhammad to the Throne of God*

For example, such an experience is reported in traditions about Muhammad. Doubting Meccans had asked that he “confirm the authenticity of his prophethood by ascending to heaven and there receiving a holy book... In this, he was to conform to a model illustrated by many still extant legends... regarding Enoch, Moses, Daniel, Mani, and many other messengers who had risen to heaven, met God, and received from his right hand a book of scripture containing the revelation they were to proclaim.”<sup>106</sup> During his “night journey” (*isra*), the angel Gabriel mounted him on Buraq, a winged steed, that “took him to the horizon” and then, in an instant, to the temple mount in Jerusalem.<sup>107</sup> At the Gate of the Guard, Ishmael “asks Muhammad’s name and inquires whether he is indeed a true messenger.”<sup>108</sup> After having given a satisfactory answer, Muhammad was permitted to gradually ascend from the depths of hell to the highest of the seven heavens on a golden ladder (*mi’raj*).<sup>109</sup> At the gates of the Celestial Temple, a guardian angel again “ask[ed] who he [was]. Gabriel introduce[d] Muhammad, who [was] then allowed to enter the gardens of Paradise.”<sup>110</sup>



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The heavenly journeys described in accounts attributed to prophets and mystics have been mirrored in ritual since time immemorial, especially in practices relating to the initiation of kings. All evidence seems to indicate “a broad continuity of culture throughout the Levant”<sup>111</sup> wherein the candidate for kingship underwent a ritual journey intended to confer a divine status as a son of God<sup>112</sup> and allowing him “*ex officio*, direct access to the gods. All other priests were strictly deputies.”<sup>113</sup> Scholars have long debated the meaning of scattered fragments of rituals of sacral kingship in the Old Testament, especially in the Psalms.<sup>114</sup> Findings at Qumran and Dura Europos suggest that in at least some strands of Jewish tradition these rituals were democratized, enabling members of the community to participate in what Fletcher-Louis calls an “angelomorphic priesthood” and a routinized form of transformational worship that ritually brought them into the presence of God.<sup>115</sup>

In contrast to texts that describe, whether in vision or ritual form, a temporary ascent of the living to heaven followed by a return to earth, Ginzberg summarizes Jewish traditions about the soul’s eventual ascent to heaven after death. One difference between Ginzberg’s account and the story of Muhammad is that the Garden of Eden or Paradise is depicted as a mere waystation rather than a permanent resting place: “the souls of all men must pass through it after death, before they reach their final destination”<sup>116</sup>:

For the souls of the departed must go thorough seven portals before they arrive in the heaven 'Arabot. There the souls of the pious are transformed into angels, and there they remain forever, praising God and feasting their sight upon the glory of the *Shekinah* [= the divine Presence]. The first portal is the Cave of Machpelah, in the vicinity of Paradise, which is under the care and supervision of Adam. If the soul that presents herself at the portal is worthy, he calls out, “Make room! Thou art welcome!” The soul then proceeds until she arrives at the gate of Paradise guarded by the cherubim and the flaming sword. If she is not found worthy, she is consumed by the sword; otherwise she receives a pass-bill, which admits her to the terrestrial Paradise. Therein is a pillar of smoke and light extending from Paradise to the gate of heaven, and it depends upon the character of the soul whether she can climb upward on it and reach heaven. The third portal, Zebul, is at the entrance of heaven. If the soul is worthy, the guard opens the portal and admits her to the heavenly Temple. Michael presents her to God, and conducts her to the seventh portal, 'Arabot, within which the souls of the pious, changed to angels, praise the Lord, and feed on the glory of the *Shekinah*.

Manichaeic sources explicitly assert that the rituals performed while in life prefigure the actions that disciples will perform after death when, “at the time of their coming forth... the angel who holds the victory prize extends to him the

right hand. And it draws him out of the abyss of his body, and accepts him in with the kiss and love.” That soul “shall be perfected and increased... in the household of the living ones, with the gods and the angels and all the apostles and the chosen. And he receives the crown [...] glory in the life for ever.”<sup>117</sup>

**The Structure of Moses 1**

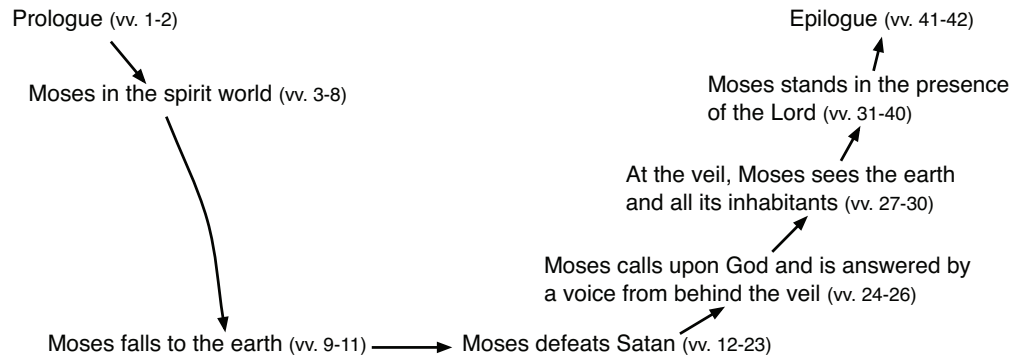


Figure 3-4. The Structure of Moses 1

Consistent with the basic temple pattern and stories of heavenly ascent, Moses’ account tells of how he descends in vision from his first home in the spirit world and then undertakes a step-by-step return to the Father.

*Prologue.* Verses 1-2 provide the kind of opening that Turner calls an “announcement of plot”<sup>118</sup>—not an account of what is happening at the moment, but rather a brief anticipatory summary of the principal events of the rest of the story. In this case, the prologue describes how Moses will be “caught up” to “an exceedingly high mountain” where he will receive the glory of God and, after conversing with Him face to face, will enter into His presence.<sup>119</sup>

*Moses in the spirit world (vv. 3-8).* Following the prologue, Moses is given a description of God’s attributes and a confirmation of his call to a work to which he had previously been foreordained as a son of God in the similitude of the Only Begotten.<sup>120</sup> He is then shown the “world upon which he was created”—referring to the preexistent spirit realm—and “all the children of men which are, and which were created”—paralleling the view of organized intelligences given to Abraham.<sup>121</sup>

*Moses falls to the earth (vv. 9-11).* Having left the presence of God and no longer being clothed with His glory, Moses falls to the earth—meaning, first, that he collapsed in weakness, and, second, that he descended again to the relative darkness of the telestial world, thus recapitulating the journey of Adam and Eve and “landing,” as Nibley puts it, “as a natural man.”<sup>122</sup> Moses is then left to himself to be tested in a dramatic encounter with Satan.<sup>123</sup>

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*Moses defeats Satan (vv. 12-23).* Prefiguring his later encounter with Christ in the wilderness, Satan tempts Moses—now in a physically weakened state—to worship him. A context of priesthood ordinances is implied. For example, having banished Satan through the power of the Only Begotten (a motif linked in ancient sources to baptism), Moses is “filled with the Holy Ghost.”<sup>124</sup>

*Moses calls upon God and is answered by a voice from behind the heavenly veil (vv. 24-26).* Continuing to press forward, Moses “calls upon the name of God” in sacred prayer. Since the moment he “fell to the earth,” Moses could no longer speak face to face with the Lord, having been “shut out from his presence.”<sup>125</sup> Following his prayer, however, Moses is answered by a voice from behind the heavenly veil enumerating specific blessings.<sup>126</sup> In his discussion of early Christian and Jewish temple rituals, Tvedtnes notes that “prayer opens the veil to allow one to enjoy the presence of God.”<sup>127</sup>

*At the heavenly veil, Moses sees the earth and all its inhabitants (vv. 27-30).* While “the voice is still speaking,” Moses is permitted to see the inside surface of the heavenly veil and there beholds every particle of the earth, all of its inhabitants, and “many lands; ... each ... called earth.”<sup>128</sup>

*Moses stands in the presence of the Lord (vv. 31-40).* The culminating sequence of the vision begins in verse 31 when Moses, having continued to inquire of the Lord,<sup>129</sup> comes to stand in His presence. God speaks with Moses face to face, describing His purposes for this earth and its inhabitants.<sup>130</sup> Moses is then shown the events of the Creation, the Fall, and how the Plan of Redemption was given to Adam and Eve, as recorded in chapters 2-5 of the book of Moses.

#### ***Parallels to Moses 1 in the Apocalypse of Abraham***

Building on the earlier work of Jared Ludlow<sup>131</sup> and Hugh Nibley,<sup>132</sup> David Larsen and I are exploring significant relationships between the first chapter of the book of Moses and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.<sup>133</sup> The *Apocalypse of Abraham* recounts the visionary journey of Abraham to the highest heaven, where he learns the secrets of Creation and is given a grand vision that includes a history of the world and a view of the spirits that existed with God before the Creation.

The document is thought to be Jewish in origin, though it has been preserved by Christian hands.<sup>134</sup> It is noteworthy that the first publication of an English translation was in the Church’s *Improvement Era* magazine in 1898.<sup>135</sup>

This picture shows the first page of a rare facsimile edition of the *Codex Sylvester* (*Silvestrov svod*), the oldest and the only independent manuscript with the full text of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. It is written in Old Slavonic and dates to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Most scholars date the composition of the original Hebrew or Aramaic



text to within a few decades of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, though it may contain traditions that are older.

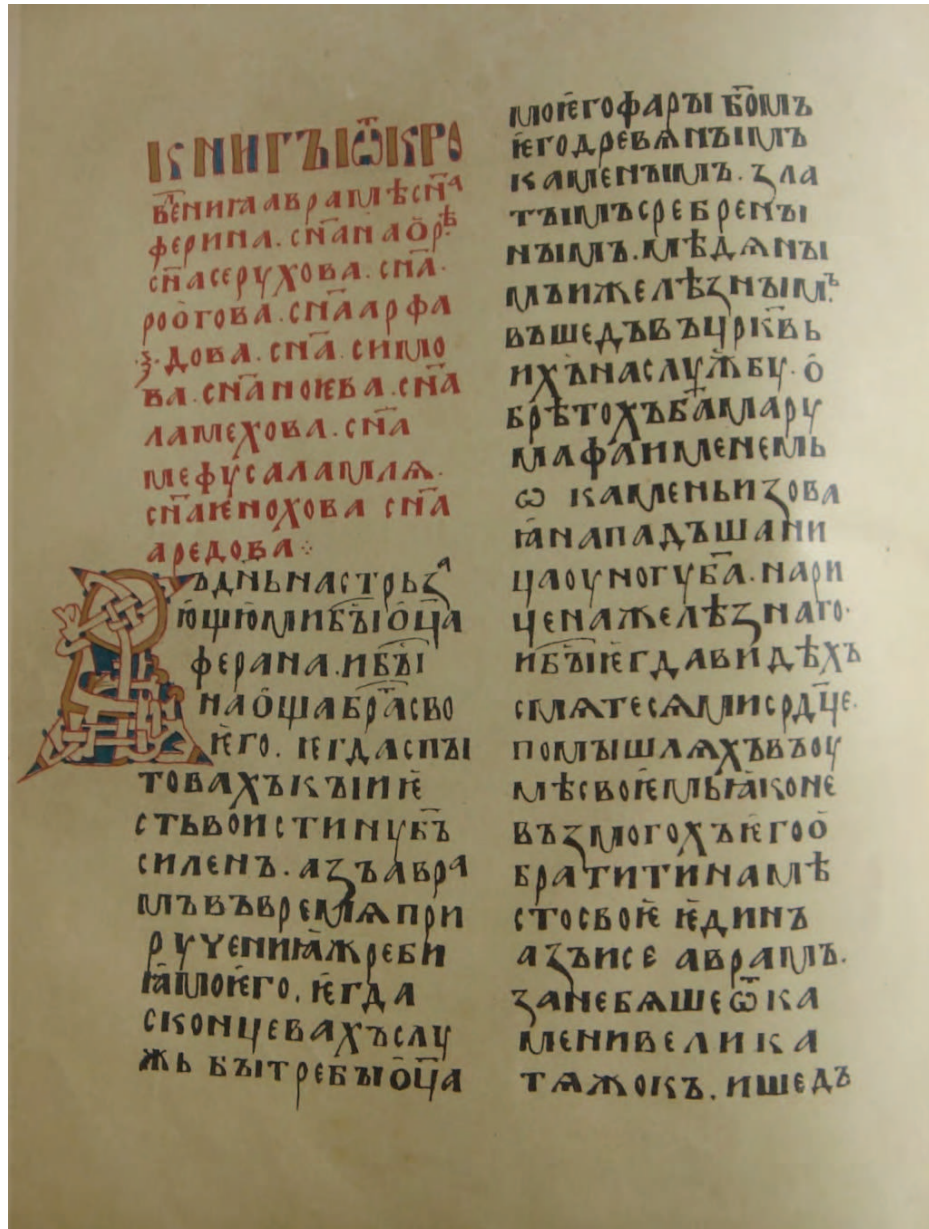


Figure 3-5. First Page of the Sylvester Codex, 14<sup>th</sup> century

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Figure 3-6. *The House of Terah Destroyed By Fire*

One of the unique features of the *Codex Sylvester* is its series of beautiful color illustrations. In addition to the original manuscript kept in Moscow, Russia, I have been able to find only two copies of the facsimile edition<sup>136</sup> containing the illustrations—one located in Munich and the other in Oxford. Though one of the illustrations previously appeared in an article by Hugh Nibley,<sup>137</sup> so far as I have been able to learn, the full set of six illustrations has not appeared in print for more than a century. The illustrations are valuable because they shed light on how medieval Christians in the East understood the text. In a few significant cases, it is clear that these Christians interpreted these stories differently than the first- or second-century editor of the text.

The illustration above accompanies a story about how Abraham's father Terah's house was destroyed by fire from heaven because he persisted in idol worship.<sup>138</sup> Abraham, a nimbus surrounding his head, stands at left wearing a green robe on his left shoulder indicating his priestly status. Note the crescent moon on the blue half-orb at the top representing God's presence. We do not yet understand why the moon appears here, though a colleague has suggested an influence from the Bogomils, a Christian sect that had previously flourished in the region where the manuscript was composed.<sup>139</sup>



*Figure 3-7. Abraham with Sacrificial Animals*

Above, Abraham appears with a group of sacrificial animals.<sup>140</sup> His robe now covers both of his shoulders. Deity forms a two-handed gesture. This may be related to the practice in ancient Israel, where the high priest transferred the sins of the people to the scapegoat in a ritual action involving both hands.<sup>141</sup>

The figure at right is Yahoel, an Angel of the Presence, whose name connotes the “Lord God,” the Divine Name, and whose body, face, and hair are also reminiscent of God Himself.<sup>142</sup> The turban, blue robe, and golden staff recall a royal high-priestly figure.<sup>143</sup>

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Figure 3-8. Winged Yahoel Compared with Abraham Facsimile 1, Figure 1

The *Apocalypse of Abraham* describes Yahoel as both man and bird.<sup>144</sup> In this and related texts, other angelic beings, including Satan, are also described as birds.<sup>145</sup> This is shown to be an intriguing detail in light of the depiction of “the Angel of the Lord” on the far right of Facsimile 1 of the Book of Abraham as a bird.<sup>146</sup> In the book of Abraham, the young prophet is saved by “the angel of his presence,” who declares himself to be Jehovah.<sup>147</sup>

We now examine in detail specific phrase-by-phrase parallels, both in specific wording and overall structure, between the two texts.

#### *Prologue*

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Setting</b>	an exceedingly high mountain (1:1)	a high mountain (9:8)
<b>Sacrifice</b>	Cf. Abraham: ... revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar (Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 2)	Go... and set out for me a pure sacrifice (9:5)

Figure 3-9. Parallels for the *Prologue* (Moses 1:1-2)





*Figure 3-10. Abraham's Sacrifice Is Accepted of the Lord*

Like the book of Moses, the first chapter of the *Apocalypse* proper begins with a scene on a high mountain. As Thomas observes, the essential thing in such accounts is to suggest “a place that is suitably high for temple activity.”<sup>148</sup> In the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the mountain is a place of sacrifice.

The prophet once again wears his robe in priestly fashion as he performs the sacrifice.<sup>149</sup> In contrast to the blast of flames that destroyed the house of Terah, the divine fire that consumes the sacrifice in this illustration denotes God’s approval and acceptance. Note the gesture of blessing shown by the hand of God, which reaches through the veil of the heavens. In this instance, the veil is decorated with a single star or sun.

Consistent with the ancient pseudepigraphal book, the LDS book of Abraham states that the “key of power... pertaining to other planets” was “revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar, which he had built unto the Lord.”<sup>150</sup> Though not explicitly detailed in scripture, it is easy to imagine that Moses might have also offered sacrifice on the mountain prior to receiving his vision.<sup>151</sup>



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#### *The Prophet in the Spirit World*

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Aretology</b>	the Lord God Almighty, Endless (1:3)	the primordial and mighty God (9:3)
<b>God to show a vision of eternity</b>	I will show thee the workmanship of my hands (1:4)	I shall set before you the ages (9:6)
<b>Reason for God's favor</b>	Cf. Abraham: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly (Abraham 2:12)	since you loved to search for me (9:6)
<b>The prophet is commissioned</b>	I have a work for thee, Moses, my son (1:6)	I called you my friend (9:6)

**Figure 3-11. Parallels for Moses in the Spirit World (Moses 1:3-6)**

In both the book of Moses and the *Apocalypse*, the prophet is given a description of God's majesty, called an *aretology*. Because the two prophets have found God's favor, they receive a special title and commission,<sup>152</sup> and will be allowed to see a vision of eternity.

TEMPLE THEMES IN THE BOOK OF MOSES

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Vision of the spirit world</b>	Moses... beheld the world upon which he was created... and all the children of men which are, and which were created (1:8)	And I saw there a great crowd of men, and women, and children... I gave them a command... and they came into being (21:7, 22:2; cf. 9:9)
<b>Some of the spirits are chosen</b>	Cf. Abraham: among all these were many of the noble and great ones... These I will make my rulers (Abraham 3:22, 23)	half of them on the right side... and half of them on the left... Those on the right side... are the people set apart... to be born of you and to be called my people (21:7, 22:5)

**Figure 3-12. Parallels for *Moses in the Spirit World* (Moses 1:8; Abr. 3:22-23)**

In both *Moses 1* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* the prophet is promised a view of the things of eternity. Though in somewhat different sequence, both accounts include a vision of the spirit world. The book of *Moses* says that he is next shown the “world upon which he was created”—referring to the preexistent spirit realm—and “all the children of men which are, and which were created.” Likewise, in the *Apocalypse*, Abraham will be shown “a great crowd of men, and women, and children” before they “came into being.”<sup>153</sup>

In the book of *Abraham*, the Lord points out the many “noble and great ones” that were chosen before they were born.<sup>154</sup> Likewise, in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, a premortal group of spirits is “set apart... to be born of [Abraham]” and to be called “[God’s] people.”<sup>155</sup>

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#### *The Prophet Falls to the Earth*

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Fall and loss of strength</b>	Moses... fell unto the earth... And... it was for the space of many hours before Moses did receive his natural strength (1:9-11)	I... fell down upon the earth, for there was no longer strength in me (10:1-3)

**Figure 3-13. Parallels for Moses Falls to the Earth (Moses 1:9-11)**

Following their initial vision, both prophets experience a “fall to the earth” that leaves them vulnerable to the will of the Adversary.<sup>156</sup> Abraham is made to say: “I... fell down upon the earth, for there was no longer strength in me,” closely paralleling the words of Moses 1 where “he fell unto the earth” and lost his “natural strength.”<sup>157</sup>

While you or I might have quickly skimmed over this scene, thinking it of little interest, it was clearly a significant event to the illustrator, who found it important enough to merit a separate visual depiction.<sup>158</sup> The scene shows Abraham being raised up out of sleep—or perhaps death<sup>159</sup>—by the hand of Yahoel, who, using the right hand, lifts him firmly by the wrist.<sup>160</sup> The rays emanating from hand of God<sup>161</sup> impart the spirit of life, recalling the creation of Adam, when God breathed... the breath of life” into the first man, and he became “a living soul.”<sup>162</sup>

Reinforcing the interpretation of this scene from the visions of Moses and Abraham are the many parallel depictions of the resurrected Christ raising up the dead by the same gesture.

TEMPLE THEMES IN THE BOOK OF MOSES



Figure 3-14. Abraham Falls to the Earth and Is Raised by Yahoel



Figure 3-15. The Harrowing of Hell. The Barberini Exultet Roll, ca. 1087

### 3. THE VISION OF MOSES AS A HEAVENLY ASCENT

#### *The Prophet Defeats Satan*

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Satan disrupts the worship of God</b>	Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me (1:12)	And the impure bird flew down... and said, “What are you doing, ...Leave [Yahoel] and flee! (13:4-5)
<b>Satan’s identity is questioned</b>	Moses... said: Who art thou? (1:13)	I said to the angel, “What is this, my lord?” And he said, “This... is [Satan]” (13:6)
<b>Satan contrasted with the prophet</b>	I am a son of God... and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee? ...I can look upon thee in the natural man (1:13, 14)	[Yahoel]: “Reproach on you, [Satan]! Since Abraham’s portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth (13:7)

**Figure 3-16. Parallels for Moses Defeats Satan (Moses 1:12-14)**

Prefiguring his later encounter with Christ in the wilderness,<sup>163</sup> Satan tempts the prophet—in his physically weakened state—to worship him. Satan’s attempt to disguise his identity is made apparent. Lacking both divine glory and heavenly inheritance, the Devil is easily and humiliatingly exposed.

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Satan told to depart and cease his deception</b>	Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not (1:16)	Depart from [Abraham]! You cannot deceive him (13:12-13)
<b>The prophet received the glory that Satan lost</b>	God said unto me [Moses]: Thou art after the similitude of mine Only Begotten (1:16)	the garment which in heaven which was formerly yours [Satan’s] has been set aside for [Abraham] (13:14)
<b>Satan told to depart a second time</b>	Depart hence, Satan (1:18)	vanish from before me! (14:7)

**Figure 3-17. Parallels for Moses Defeats Satan (Moses 1:16-18)**



TEMPLE THEMES IN THE BOOK OF MOSES

In almost identical words, the book of Moses and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* relate that Satan is told to depart and cease his deception. Satan is reminded that the glory he once possessed now belongs to Moses and Abraham. Moses' words constitute a second "humiliating exposure of Satan"—an announcement that Moses "actually *is* what his adversary falsely *claims* to be."<sup>164</sup> In both texts, Satan is forcefully told a second time to depart.

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Satan's final attempt to gain the prophet's worship</b>	Satan cried with a loud voice, ...saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me (1:19)	[Satan] said, "Abraham!" ... And the angel said to me, "Answer him not!" (14:9-10)
<b>Satan's frightening tantrum and final departure</b>	Moses... commanded, saying: Depart from me, Satan... And now Satan began to tremble (1:21)	Cf. Enoch: "And Enoch said to [Satan], Depart! ... Then he departed and spoke to all of [his followers]... and trembling... seized them (1 Enoch 13:1, 3, Gizeh)

**Figure 3-18. Parallels for Moses Defeats Satan (Moses 1:19-23)**

The continued resistance of Moses and Abraham calls for a dramatic change in tactics. In the words of Nibley: "Satan... casts aside his celebrated but now useless subtlety and launches a frontal attack of satanic fury, a tremendous tantrum."<sup>165</sup> Blaming his intended victim for all his troubles, a parallel story in the Armenian version of the *Life of Adam and Eve* records that Satan "wept loudly" as he railed forth in self-pity, and the Latin version has him "groaning." The Georgian account highlights the manipulative intent of the Devil's theatrics, stating that he "began to cry with forced tears."<sup>166</sup>

Nibley fills in a missing parallel to Moses' final dismissal of Satan with a passage from the ancient book of *1 Enoch*.<sup>167</sup> In related traditions, Satan and Cain are both known as "earth shakers"<sup>168</sup> who make the ground tremble beneath them—however, in the end of all these stories, these mirrors of wickedness are themselves the ones who are left shaken and trembling in defeat.

### 3. THE VISION OF MOSES AS A HEAVENLY ASCENT

#### *The Prophet Calls Upon God; Hears a Voice*

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Ascent to heaven</b>	Moses lifted up his eyes unto heaven (1:24). Cf. Nephi: upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away (2 Nephi 4:25)	the angel took me with his right hand and set me on the right wing of the pigeon and he himself sat on the left wing of the turtledove... and carried me up (15:2-3)
<b>Voice at the veil</b>	And he heard a voice, saying: Blessed art thou, Moses (1:25)	And while he was still speaking, behold a fire was coming toward us... (17:1)
<b>Many waters</b>	and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters... as if thou wert God (1:25)	and a sound [voice]... like a sound of many waters (17:1)

**Figure 3-19. Parallels for *Moses Calls Upon God; Hears a Voice* (Moses 1:24-26)**

Following his prayer, Moses is answered by a voice from behind the heavenly veil promising that he will be made “stronger than many waters... as if [he were] God.”<sup>169</sup> Similarly, at this point the *Apocalypse* tells us that Abraham hears a “sound [or voice]... like a sound of many waters.”<sup>170</sup>

The statement that Moses was “caught up,”<sup>171</sup> phrased in what is called the “divine passive,”<sup>172</sup> reveals that his ascent was accomplished by God’s power and not his own.<sup>173</sup> Such wording may sometimes imply a context of priesthood ordinances. For example, we are told elsewhere that Adam was “*caught away* by the Spirit of the Lord” into the water and baptized.<sup>174</sup> Note that the Apostle Paul, like Moses and Abraham, was also “caught up” to the third heaven.<sup>175</sup>

Here we see Abraham and Yahoel ascending to heaven on the wings of two of the birds provided by God at the time of the sacrifice.<sup>176</sup> The imagery of ascent on the wings of birds is a convention that goes back at least two thousand years.<sup>177</sup> Once again, Yahoel holds Abraham firmly by the wrist, using the right hand.<sup>178</sup> Note also the hand of divine blessing from heaven, and the veil marked with a star or sun, along with other markings we have not yet been able to decipher.

A parallel that ties Moses’ experience to that of Abraham in the *Apocalypse* is found in 1 Nephi 11:1 where Nephi was “caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high mountain, which [he] never had before seen.”<sup>179</sup> Nephi later said that “upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains,”<sup>180</sup> just as the *Sylvester Codex* shows Abraham being raised up to heaven on the wings of a bird.



Figure 3-20. Ascent of Abraham and Yahoel

### 3. THE VISION OF MOSES AS A HEAVENLY ASCENT

#### *The Prophet's Vision at the Veil*

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>The prophet beholds the earth</b>	As the voice was still speaking, Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth (1:27)	And he said unto me, “Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation (21:1)
<b>The inhabitants of the earth</b>	he beheld also the inhabitants thereof (1:28)	and those who inhabit it (21:1)
<b>The prophet questions God</b>	Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so, and by what thou madest them? (1:30)	Eternal, Mighty One! Why did you ordain it to be so? (26:1). Cf. <i>The Mother of Books</i> : My Lord, ... From where did he make the spirits? What was the origin of his creation?

**Figure 3-21. Parallels for Moses' Vision at the Veil (Moses 1:27-30)**

In Moses 1:27, we are told: “And it came to pass, as the voice was still speaking, Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth.” Remarkably, the book of Moses phrase “as the voice was still speaking” parallels a nearly identical phrase—“And while he [the angel] was still speaking”— in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.<sup>181</sup> In both cases, the phrase seems to be a code expression having to do with an exchange of words as one is preparing to pass from one side of the heavenly veil to the other.<sup>182</sup> In the case of the *Apocalypse*, the phrase immediately precedes Abraham’s recitation of certain words taught to him by the angel in preparation for his ascent to receive a vision of the work of God. In such accounts, once a person has been thoroughly tested, the “last phrase” of welcome is extended to him: “Let him come up!”<sup>183</sup> Significantly, following Abraham’s ascent, when he passes back through the heavenly veil in the opposite direction on his return to the earth, the expression “And while he was still speaking” recurs.<sup>184</sup>

The change in perspective as Moses passes upward through the heavenly veil is related in subtle beauty in the book of Moses. Previously, as he stood on the earth, Moses had “lifted up his eyes unto heaven.”<sup>185</sup> Now, after ascending to heaven, he “cast his eyes” down to see the earth and all of its inhabitants.<sup>186</sup> Similarly, Abraham is told: “Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation and those who inhabit it.”<sup>187</sup>

Moses' vision is perfectly in line with ancient accounts that speak of a "blueprint" of eternity that is worked out in advance and shown on the inside of the heavenly veil.<sup>188</sup> Writes Barker: "Those who passed beyond the veil found themselves outside time. When Rabbi Ishmael ascended and looked back he saw the curtain on which was depicted past, present and future. 'All generations to the end of time were printed on the curtain of the Omnipresent One. I saw them all with my own eyes'...<sup>189</sup> [Similarly,] Enoch was taken up by three angels and set up on a high place whence he saw all history, past, present and future."<sup>190</sup>

Moses witnessed its entire history from beginning to end like Adam, Enoch, the Brother of Jared, John the Beloved, and others.<sup>191</sup> Moroni taught that those with perfect faith cannot be "kept from within the veil" (i.e., cannot be kept from passing through the veil<sup>192</sup>)—meaning the heavenly veil behind which God dwells, whose earthly counterpart is the temple veil that divides the holy place from the holy of holies.<sup>193</sup> Seeing all this, Moses asks "Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so...?"<sup>194</sup> Likewise, Abraham asks, "Eternal, Mighty One! Why did you ordain it to be so?"<sup>195</sup>

At this point, we observe a significant difference between the book of Moses and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. On the one hand, Moses will receive a partial answer to his question about "by what" God made these things through a vision of the Creation.<sup>196</sup> He will also be told something about "why these things are so."<sup>197</sup> On the other hand, in the *Apocalypse*, the dialogue between Abraham and the Lord centers, not on the creation and purpose of the universe, but rather on recent events of local concern, including the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, and the future of Israel.<sup>198</sup> This seems just the kind of material that a first- or second-century redactor might have inserted into the text. By way of contrast, questions found in the Islamic *Mother of Books* provide a closer parallel to those found in the book of Moses: "My Lord, ... From where did he make the spirits? What was the origin of his creation?"<sup>199</sup>

#### *The Prophet in the Presence of God*

The granting of the privilege to Moses of *seeing* God is paralleled both in Old Testament accounts such as Isaiah and Ezekiel, and in pseudepigraphal writings such as *1 Enoch*. In a second major difference with the book of Moses, however, the *Apocalypse of Abraham* explicitly rejects any visualization of God, and insists on the "revelation of the divine Voice" alone.<sup>200</sup> The redactor of the *Apocalypse* seems to be arguing a theological point that is important to him when he has Yahoel tell Abraham: "the Eternal One... himself you will *not* see."<sup>201</sup>

Just as Moses is then shown the events of the Creation and the Fall,<sup>202</sup> the *Apocalypse of Abraham* describes how the great patriarch looked down to see the



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affairs of what is called in modern revelation the “kingdoms of a lower order.”<sup>203</sup> The Lord’s voice commanded Abraham to “look,” and a series of heavenly veils were opened beneath his feet.<sup>204</sup> Like Moses, Abraham is shown the heavenly plan for creation—“the creation that was depicted of old<sup>205</sup> on this expanse” (21:1<sup>206</sup>), its realization on the earth (21:3-5), the Garden of Eden (21:6), and the spirits of all men with certain ones “prepared to be born of [Abraham] and to be called [God’s] people (21:7-22:5)”<sup>207</sup> When Abraham is told again to “Look... at the picture,” he sees Satan inciting the Fall of Adam and Eve (23:1-14),<sup>208</sup> just as Moses saw these events following his own heavenly ascent.

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>God’s purpose is His own</b>	For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me (1:31)	As the will of your father is in him, ... so also [my] will ... is inevitable (26:5)
<b>Moses speaks with the Lord face to face</b>	Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face (1:31)	He whom you will see going before both of us ... is the Eternal One... whom himself you will <i>not</i> see (16:3)
<b>Vision of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Fall</b>	Moses sees the creation of the earth (ch. 2), the Garden of Eden (ch. 3) and the Fall of Adam and Eve (ch. 4)	Abraham sees the creation of the earth (21:3-5), the Garden of Eden (21:6), and Satan inciting the Fall of Adam and Eve (23:1-14).

**Figure 3-22. Parallels for Moses’ Vision at the Veil (Moses 1:31-40)**

Of great interest for our study is that fact that, in explicit contradiction to the text of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the fourteenth-century Christian illustrator of the *Codex Sylvester* had no qualms about representing God visually. Barker observes: “To see the glory of the Lord’s presence—to see beyond the veil— was the greatest blessing. The high priest used to bless Israel with the words: ‘The Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you: The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace’<sup>209</sup>... Seeing the glory, however, became controversial. Nobody knows why. There is one strand in the Old Testament that is absolutely opposed to any idea of seeing the divine... [On the other hand,] Jesus said: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God’;<sup>210</sup> and John saw ‘one seated on the throne.’<sup>211</sup> There can be no doubt where the early Christians stood on this matter.”<sup>212</sup>



*Figure 3-23. Abraham and Yahoel Before the Divine Throne*

In the illustration,<sup>213</sup> the figure seated on the throne seems to be Christ. His identity is indicated by the cruciform markings on His halo. Behind Him sits another figure, perhaps alluding to the statement that “Michael is with me [God] in order to bless you forever.”<sup>214</sup> Beneath the throne are fiery seraphim and many-eyed “wheels” praising God. The throne is surrounded by a series of heavenly veils, representing different levels of the firmament separating God from the material world—the latter being signified by the outermost dark blue veil. The fact that the veils are depicted as fabric rather than simply a “rainbow effect” is easily revealed by close inspection.

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Figure 3-24. William Blake, 1757-1827: *The Lord Answers Job*, 1826

Knowing he could not quench his thirst from the “broken cisterns,” of human wisdom, Moses, like Job, sought “the fountain of living waters,”<sup>215</sup> placing “emphasis on seeing God after so much mere hearsay.”<sup>216</sup> William Blake’s depiction of the story’s culminating theophany captures the prime purpose of such strivings. It shows God surrounded by a concourse of angels. The prophet looks up to converse with Him face to face, while his friends lie prostrate in terror.<sup>217</sup> In other versions of Blake’s drawing, the visionary is actually caught up with God in the circle, with identical faces that mirror one other in serene mutual regard. According to Fisch, the key to understanding the illustration is that “Man is about to take on the nature of God... For according to Blake’s radical reading of the Gospel, ... Man himself—not merely Jesus, but every man and woman—is potentially endowed with divine glory and even divine power!”<sup>218</sup> Blake expressed this thought in the couplet: “God becomes as we are, that we may be as he is.”<sup>219</sup> Both William Blake and Joseph Smith, according to Harold Bloom, “sought to end the distinction between the human and the divine.”<sup>220</sup>

TEMPLE THEMES IN THE BOOK OF MOSES

*Epilogue*

	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Apocalypse of Abraham</b>
<b>Scripture to be lost and restored</b>	when the children of men shall ... take many of [my words] from the book which thou shalt write, ...I will raise up another... and they shall be had again among the children of men— among as many as shall believe. (1:41)	Cf. 2 Enoch 35:1-2: And... another generation will arise, the last of many... And I shall raise up for that generation someone who will reveal to [truthful men] the books in your handwriting
<b>Some scripture to be reserved for the righteous</b>	These words were spoken unto Moses... Show them not unto any except them that believe. (1:42)	Cf. Ezra, certain books were to be read by the “worthy and unworthy” whereas others were to be only given “to the wise.” (4 Ezra 14:6, 45-47)

**Figure 3-25. Parallels for Epilogue (Moses 1:41-42)**

Parallels between ancient texts and the first chapter of the book of Moses are reflected even in the epilogue. For example, though the theme of scripture that is to be lost and restored is not found in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, another work preserved in Slavonic, *2 Enoch*, records that a last “generation will arise... And I shall raise up for that generation someone who will reveal to [truthful men] the books in your handwriting.”<sup>221</sup>

**Conclusions**

A close examination of the details of the account of Moses’ heavenly ascent in the context of its overall structure throws important light on the significance of temple ordinances performed in our day. Parallels with other ancient texts, such as the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, confirm the basic temple pattern, and constitute an impressive witness of the antiquity of the text restored by Joseph Smith’s revelations. Hugh Nibley concluded as a result of his study: “These parallel accounts, separated by centuries, cannot be coincidence. Nor can all the others.”<sup>222</sup>

For Joseph Smith, as Bushman insightfully observes, knowledge was not only a source of power and salvation<sup>223</sup> but also of comfort.<sup>224</sup> Said the Prophet on one occasion, “I am glad I have the privilege of communicating to you some things which if grasped closely will be a help to you when the clouds are gathering and

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the storms are ready to burst upon you like peals of thunder. Lay hold of these things and let not your knees tremble, nor hearts faint.”<sup>225</sup> May we all “grasp closely” the supernal knowledge available to us through latter-day revelation so that as “the clouds are gathering and the storms are ready to burst upon [us] like peals of thunder” in our day, *our* knees will not tremble, nor will *our* hearts faint.



## ENDNOTES

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- 80 H. W. Nibley, *Treasures*, pp. 177-178; for a more detailed translation and summary, see H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, pp. 487-501.
- 81 E.g., A. F. J. Klijn, *2 Baruch*, 54:13, p. 640: “you have prepared under your throne the treasures of wisdom”; M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, GR 12:7, p. 381:21: “the living water below the throne”; M. Lichtheim, *Memphite*, 61, 1:55: “The Great Throne... is the granary of Ta-tenen.”
- 82 E.g., Matthew 25:14-29.
- 83 E.g., A. F. J. Klijn, *2 Baruch*, 52:7, p. 639: “Prepare your souls for that which is kept for you, and make ready your souls for the reward which is preserved for you”; E. Hennecke, *et al.*, *Apocalypse of Paul*, 20, pp. 771-772: “there are many good things which the Lord has prepared and his promise is great... Paul, may you receive the reward.”
- 84 E.g., F. G. Martinez, *DSS Translated*, 1QS 4:16-17, p. 7: “For God has sorted them into equal parts until the last day.”
- 85 E.g., Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions*, 3:26, p. 121.
- 86 = the idea of things having been remembered from a former existence.
- 87 E. Hennecke, *et al.*, *Pearl*.
- 88 E.g., W. Barnstone, *et al.*, *Songs of Thomas*, 1:49, p. 620.
- 89 E.g., M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, GR 1:64-65, 72, p. 13; GR 10:1, p. 243:35-36.
- 90 E.g., E. S. Drower, *Thousand*, pp. 212, 241, 245.
- 91 H. Bloom, *Names Divine*, p. 25. Hugh Nibley concurs with this assessment, noting that the Pearl of Great Price “has received less attention than the other writings and has been studied only superficially” (H. W. Nibley *et al.*, *One Eternal Round*, p. 18).
- 92 H. W. Nibley, *New Look*; H. D. Peterson, *Story*.
- 93 See especially e.g., E. D. Clark, *Blessings*; J. Gee *et al.*, *Astronomy*; H. W. Nibley, *Drama*; H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*; H. W. Nibley, *Abraham 2000*; H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*; M. D. Rhodes, *Hor*; J. A. Tvedtnes *et al.*, *Traditions*.
- 94 Forty years ago Richard P. Howard (R. P. Howard, *Restoration 1969*) and Robert J. Matthews (R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*) began publishing their pioneering studies of the Joseph Smith Translation or JST, of which the book of Moses is an extract. The wide availability of Matthews’ exhaustive study, in particular, was very effective in abating the qualms of Latter-day Saints (T. E. Sherry, *Changing*), who had not yet had an opportunity to compare the RLDS (now Community of Christ) publication of Joseph Smith’s “Inspired Version” of the Bible (J. Smith, Jr., *Holy Scriptures*) with the original manuscripts. Such qualms proved by and large to be unfounded. Matthews clearly established that recent editions of the “Inspired Version,” notwithstanding

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their shortcomings, constituted a faithful rendering of the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his scribes—insofar as the manuscripts were then understood (R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*, pp. 200-201; see also K. P. Jackson, *Book of Moses*, pp. 20-33). Four years later, in 1979, the status of the JST was further enhanced by the inclusion of selections from the translation in the footnotes and endnotes of a new LDS edition of the King James Bible. Elder Boyd K. Packer heralded this publication event as “the most important thing that [the Church has] done in recent generations” (B. K. Packer, *Scriptures*, p. 53; cf. B. R. McConkie, *Sermons*, p. 236). Twenty-five years later, in 2004, with painstaking effort by editors Scott Faulring, Kent Jackson, and Robert Matthews and the generous cooperation of the Community of Christ, a facsimile transcription of all the original manuscripts of the JST was at last published (S. H. Faulring *et al.*, *Original Manuscripts*). In 2005, as an important addition to his ongoing series of historical and doctrinal studies, Kent Jackson provided a detailed examination of the text of the portions of the JST relating to the book of Moses (K. P. Jackson, *Book of Moses*). Richard Draper, Kent Brown, and Michael Rhodes’ verse-by-verse commentary on the Pearl of Great Price, also published in 2005, was another important milestone (R. D. Draper *et al.*, *Commentary*). Others have also made significant contributions. Taken together, all these studies allow us to see the process and results of the Prophet’s work of Bible translation with greater clarity than ever before. See Royal Skousen for a review of these recent studies of the original JST manuscripts (R. Skousen, *Earliest*). I have published a detailed commentary on Moses 1-6:12 (J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image*) and a brief guide to symbolism in the stories of the Creation and of the lives of Adam and Eve (J. M. Bradshaw, *Brief Guide*).

95 H. Bloom, *American Religion*, pp. 98, 99, 101.

96 Comparing the different volumes of scripture in the LDS canon, Nibley writes (H. W. Nibley *et al.*, *One Eternal Round*, pp. 18-19):

The Book of Mormon and the Old Testament are tribal histories—we still identify ourselves with the tribes of Israel. The New Testament and the Doctrine and Covenants are theological and doctrinal teachings, everlasting and timeless. But the Pearl of Great Price brings together the contemporary accounts of the seven main dispensations of the world since Adam. Coming last, it sums up the entire history of mankind, filling in many of the gaps in our knowledge that have remained to this day. The records of Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Joseph Smith were given to the Saints as a bonus for their acceptance of the Book of Mormon and are still kept in reserve; we may anticipate the pleasure of more light to come.

See also Nibley’s discussion of the seven “axial dispensations” in H. W. Nibley *et al.*, *One Eternal Round*, pp. 57-60.

97 H. W. Nibley *et al.*, *One Eternal Round*, pp. 586-587.

## ENDNOTES

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98 H. W. Nibley, *To Open*, pp. 1-3.

99 Moses 1:1-2.

100 Moses 1:42.

101 Moses 1:17.

102 Moses 1:25-26.

103 Ginzberg reports traditions of “several ascensions of Moses”: a first “at the beginning of his career,” a second “at the revelation of the Torah,” and the third “shortly before his death” (L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:417). For a brief overview of accounts that interpreted Moses’ ascent to Sinai as an ascent to the holy of holies, see M. Barker, *Great High Priest*, pp. 218-219. For useful general summaries of ascent literature, see M. Barker, *Risen*; M. Barker, *Temple Theology*; W. J. Hamblin, *Temple Motifs*; J. F. McConkie, *Premortal*. For an interpretation of the Islamic *hajj* pilgrimage as a form of ascent, see S. A. Ashraf, *Inner*, p. 125, and for the Islamic story of Habib, who “entered [Paradise] alive,” see M. Ibn Ishaq ibn Yasar, *Making*, pp. 227-228. For a discussion of Moses’ vision on Sinai as an ascent and rebirth, see P. Borgen, *John and Philo*, pp. 60-65. For a more extensive commentary on Moses 1, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image*, pp. 32-81. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*; H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 17, p. 205.

104 H. W. Nibley, *Apocryphal*, p. 312; cf. pp. 310-311. See W. W. Isenberg, *Philip*, 85:14-16, p. 159.

105 2 Peter 1:10.

106 D. C. Peterson, *Muhammad* (2001), p. 527.

107 *Ibid.*, pp. 528-529.

108 A. Schimmel, *Messenger*, p. 160.

109 No relationship to the English word “mirage.” See W. J. Hamblin *et al.*, *Temple*, p. 136; M. Ibn Ishaq ibn Yasar, *Sirat Rasul*.

110 W. J. Hamblin *et al.*, *Temple*, p. 136 n. 134.

111 N. Wyatt, *Degrees*, p. 192.

<sup>112</sup> N. Wyatt, *Hollow Crown*, p. 32.

113 N. Wyatt, *Degrees*, p. 220.

114 Some well-known studies relating to this long research tradition include J. H. Eaton, *Kingship*; A. M. Hocart, *Kingship*; S. H. Hooke, *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*; E.

O. James, *Initiatory*; A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*; H. P. L'Orange, *Cosmic Kingship*; S. Mowinckel, *Psalms*; G. Widengren, *King and Tree of Life*; G. Widengren, *King and Covenant*. Wyatt insightfully critiques some of the earlier literature and emphasizes the continuity of divine kingship traditions throughout the ancient Near East (N. Wyatt, *Myths of Power*; N. Wyatt, *There's Such Divinity*).

115 C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Glory*, pp. 56, 212–13, 476. See also C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Religious Experience*, pp. 132-133. Regarding the possibility of such forms of worship at Dura Europos, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*.

116 L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:69-70.

117 I. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 41.11, 17-21, 22-25, 9, pp. 43-46. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image*, pp. 658-660. For a discussion of relevant Mandaean traditions, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image*, pp. 867-873.

118 L. Turner, *Announcements*, pp. 13-14.

119 Moses 1:31. Though God speaks to Moses near the beginning of the chapter, the parallel wording regarding Moses' "face to face" experience does not appear until verse 31, making it clear that this is the event to which the prologue is pointing us.

120 Moses 1:3-7.

121 Moses 1:8; cf. Abraham 3:22-23.

122 H. W. Nibley, *Assembly*, p. 128.

123 Moses 1:9-23.

124 Moses 1:24.

125 Moses 1:9.

126 Moses 1:25-26.

127 J. A. Tvedtnes, *Rituals*.

128 Moses 1: 27-28, 29.

129 Moses 1:30.

130 Moses 1:35-40.

131 J. W. Ludlow, *Visions*.

132 H. W. Nibley, *To Open*; H. W. Nibley, *Abraham 2000*, pp. 1-73.

133 D. J. Larsen *et al.*, *Vision of Moses*.

134 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, pp. 2-3; R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, pp. 681-683.

## ENDNOTES

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135 See E. H. Anderson *et al.*, Abraham. Nibley comments: “In 1898, just a year after the *Apocalypse of Abraham* was published to the world by Bonwetsch, two Latter-day Saint students made the first English translation of the writing, which appeared in the first volume of the *Improvement Era*.... It is significant that it was the Latter-day Saints who first made the *Apocalypse of Abraham* available to the world in English, as it was they who first recognized the book of Enoch, in Parley P. Pratt’s review of 1840, not as a worthless piece of apocrypha, but as a work of primary importance... Brothers E. H. Anderson and R. T. Haag, who made an excellent translation of Bonwetsch’s German—remarkably close, in fact, to Box’s ‘official’ English version of 1919—detected in the text ‘many things of a character both as to incidents and doctrines that ran parallel with what is recorded in the Book of Abraham, given to the world by Joseph Smith’ (E. H. Anderson *et al.*, Abraham, p. 705). They wisely contented themselves, however, with printing the text without other commentary than three or four passages in italics, trusting the Latter-day Saint reader to think for himself” (H. W. Nibley, Abraham 2000, pp. 11-13).

136 P. P. Novickij (Novitskii), Otkrovenie Avraama. Based on online searches of library catalogues worldwide. One of the illustrations, reproduced in black and white, appeared in “The Dictionary of Angels” (see G. Davidson, Angels, pp. 316-317), and apparently was the basis for a figure used in H. W. Nibley, Apocryphal, p. 278.

137 See H. W. Nibley, Abraham 2000, p. 18.

138 See specific parallels between the book of Abraham and this story in *Ibid.*, pp. 11-15. Translation of Caption: “A voice from heaven to Abraham saying, the Lord God your creator (you are) searching (for) in the mind of (your) heart. I am he. Go out from your father’s house, so (you will) not be killed and in the sins of your father’s house. (I) went out and right away burned fire his whole house.” I am indebted to Professor David K. Hart of BYU for providing a literal translation of the captions (D. K. Hart, January 29 2009). Kulik’s translation for the corresponding text in the manuscript is: “In the wisdom of your heart you are searching for the God of gods and the Creator. I am he! Leave Terah your father, and leave the house, so that you too are not slain for the sins of your father's house!” (A. Kulik, Retroverting, 8:3-6, p. 16). The difference “Lord God” vs. “God of gods” is noteworthy.

139 N. Isar, February 8 2009. See also E. A. S. Butterworth, Tree, pp. 121-123.

140 Translation of Caption: Go make a sacrifice. And (he) put me on my feet and led me to the glorious mountain of God Oriv. And I said to the angel, Oh, singer of the eternal, I have no sacrifice with me. How can I make a sacrifice? And (he) said, turn around and I turned around and lo, coming after us (+1 word??) were the sacrifices: calf, goat, sheep, turtledove and pigeon. Cf. A. Kulik, Retroverting, 12:3-6, p. 19. The first part of the caption comes from 9:5, which Kulik translates as: “Go... and set out for me a pure sacrifice” (A. Kulik, Retroverting, 9:5, p. 17). The phrase “And (he) put

me on my feet” has no equivalent here but probably relates to 10:4. The next part of the caption comes from 12:3-6, which Kulik renders as: “And we came to the glorious God’s mountains—Horeb. And I said to the angel, ‘Singer of the Eternal One, behold, I have no sacrifice with me, nor do I know a place for an altar on the mountain, so how shall I make the sacrifice?’ And he said, ‘Look behind you.’ And I looked behind me. And behold, all the prescribed sacrifices were following us: the calf, the she-goat, the ram, the turtledove, and the pigeon” (A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 12:3-6, p. 19).

141 The two-handed *impositio manus* goes back to the Day of Atonement imagery when both hands were placed on the scapegoat by the high priest before it was sent out into the wilderness (A. Edersheim, *Temple*, pp. 249, 253). This seems to have been carried over into the *reconciliatoria manus impositio* as part of the sacrament of penance, and is documented as far back as the Council of Orange in 441 (A. Villien, *Sacraments*, pp. 153-154). Ordination of the bishop seems to have been done more often than not with two hands, as opposed to lower orders of the priesthood (J. Cooper *et al.*, *Testament*, 1:21, p. 65 and note p. 161). The practice in the benediction of catechumens, at exorcism before baptism, and at confirmation is contradictory (J. Cooper *et al.*, *Testament*, note p. 161). Barker also suggested that only the bishop could perform a two-handed gesture (M. Barker, September 22 2008).

142 Note that the name is apparently an expression of *yhwh’l*. A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 11:2, p. 19; see J. J. Collins, *Imagination*, p. 228; A. A. Orlov, *Praxis*, p. 62; R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, p. 693 note 10b. See also discussion in G. Scholem, *Trends*, pp. 69-70.

143 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 11:3, p. 19.

144 A. A. Orlov, *Angelology*. See also A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, p. 83; B. Lourié, *Review*.

145 Cf. Ezekiel 1:10; P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, 2:1, p. 257, 24:9, p. 278, 26:3, p. 280, 44:5, p. 295, 47:4, p. 300.

146 Specifically regarding the dove, Joseph Smith explained: “The sign of the dove was instituted before the creation of the world, a witness for the Holy Ghost, and the devil cannot come in the sign of a dove” (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 29 January 1843, p. 276; cf. B. R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 1:404; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 21 March 1841, p. 66). Nibley comments: “[T]he dove that takes one to heaven is the Holy Ghost, who also instructs and teaches ‘through the heavens,’ ‘revealing... the grand Key-words... as, also, the sign’ (Book of Abraham, Facsimile 2, explanation of Figure 7) by which alone supernal knowledge can be conveyed” (H. W. Nibley, *Abraham 2000*, pp. 56-57, see also pp. 18, 43 figure 3). Whether representing the ascent to heaven of the souls of the living (e. g., Nephi, Moses) or dead (e.g., E. S. Drower, *Adam*, pp. 8, 32; H. W. Nibley, *New Look*, July 1969, p. 109; M. D. Rhodes, *Hor*, p. 20), or else the descent of heavenly messengers to earth (H. W. Nibley, *New Look*, July 1969, pp. 108-110, August 1969, pp. 75-77; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, before 8 August 1839, p. 10; J.



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Smith, Jr., Teachings, December 1835, p. 98), the common idea behind the symbol of a bird is that of sacred communication and communion between the spheres, “the certain tie between heaven and earth” (H. W. Nibley, *New Look*, July 1969, p. 109).

147 Abraham 1:15-16.

148 M. C. Thomas, *Brother of Jared*, p. 391.

149 Translation of Caption: “And the angel said to me, all these many (+2 words??) but the bird do not divide and give to men which I will show standing by you since these are the altar on the mountain to bring a sacrifice to the eternal. And I gave to the angels which came (that?) which had been divided. And an unclean bird flew down to me. And spoke to me, the unclean bird, and said, Why, Abraham, are you on the holy heights? In them neither eat nor drink, and no food of men but all are scorched by fire. Leave the man who is with you. Run away. As they will destroy you. And it was [when?] I saw the bird speaking, and said to the angel, what is this, oh lord? And he said this is from Azazel and the angel said: Go away. You cannot deceive this man.” Kulik gives the text corresponding to the first part of this caption as: “And he said to me, ‘Slaughter and cut all this, putting together the two halves, one against the other. But do not cut the birds. And give them [halves] to the two men whom I shall show you standing beside you, since they are the altar on the mountain, to offer sacrifice to the Eternal One’... And I gave to the angels who had come to us the divided parts of the animals” (A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 12:8-9, 13:1, pp. 19, 20).

Note that Satan appears as a bird, which is apparently how Yahoel appeared. So perhaps Satan is here imitating the form of an angel. Kulik renders the text corresponding to the second part of the caption as: “And an impure bird flew down on the carcasses, and I drove it away. And the impure bird spoke to me and said, ‘What are you doing, Abraham, on the holy heights, where no one eats or drinks, nor is there upon them food of men. But these will all be consumed by fire and they will burn you up. Leave the man who is with you and flee! Since if you ascend to the height, they will destroy you.’ And it came to pass when I saw the bird speaking I said to the angel, ‘What is this, my lord?’ And he said, ‘This is iniquity, this is Azazel!’ And he said to him, ‘Reproach on you, Azazel!... Depart from this man! You cannot deceive him’” (A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 13:3-7, 12-13, p. 20).

150 Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 2.

151 See footnote regarding “Shelem” on the previous page. A context of calling upon God is also implied in both accounts, as in similar experiences with Lehi Joseph Smith, and Abraham (i.e., in the book of Abraham).

152 Regarding the title given to Moses, see Barker for a discussion of Psalm 110 and the idea that priests after the order of Melchizedek became sons of God (M. Barker,

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Who was Melchizedek). In Arabic, Abraham is simply referred to as *al-Khalil*, “the Friend” (cf. Hebrew “Hebron” from *haver* = “friend”).

153 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 21:7, 22:2, p. 26.

154 Abraham 3:22-23.

155 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 21:7, 22:5, pp. 26-27.

156 Moses 1:9-11; *Ibid.*, 10:1-3, p. 17. Likewise, following one of his visions, Daniel reported that he “fainted, and was sick certain days,” and of a second occasion he wrote: “I was left alone... and there remained no strength in me... and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground” (Daniel 8:26; 10:8-9). Saul “fell to the earth” during his vision and remained blind until healed by Ananias (Acts 9:4, 17-18). Lehi “cast himself on his bed, being overcome with the Spirit” (1 Nephi 1:7). Similarly, Alma “fell to the earth; and it was for the space of three days and three nights that [he] could not open [his] mouth, neither had [he] the use of [his] limbs” (Alma 36:10; cf. Mosiah 27:12, 18-19). Of his weakness following the First Vision, Joseph Smith wrote: “When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength...” (JS-H 1:20). Concerning his experience of watching Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon as they received the vision of the three degrees of glory (D&C 76), Philo Dibble wrote: “Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which Joseph remarked, smilingly, ‘Sidney is not used to it as I am’” (Cited in L. R. Flake, *Three Degrees*, p. 6). Note that when Jesus Christ was “led by the Spirit into the wilderness” (JST Luke 4:1), it was at a point of physical weakness following a forty-day fast when Satan appeared to tempt Him.

157 Moses 1:9-10.

158 Translation of Caption: “I heard a voice saying, Here Oilu, sanctify this man and strengthen (him) from his trembling and the angel took me by the right hand and stood me on my feet and said to me, stand up oh friend of God who has loved you.” Kulik’s translation of the corresponding text in the *Apocalypse* reads: “And when I was still face down on the earth, I heard the voice of the Holy One, saying, ‘Go, Yahoel, the namesake of the mediation of my ineffable name, sanctify this man and strengthen him from his trembling!’ And the angel whom he sent to me in the likeness of a man came, and he took me by my right hand and stood me on my feet. And he said to me, ‘Stand up, <Abraham,> the friend of God who has loved you, let human trembling not enfold you. For behold I am sent to you to strengthen you and to bless you in the name of God.’” (A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 10:3-6, pp. 17-18).

159 In the Ezekiel mural at Dura Europos, the “hand from heaven” is specifically associated with the “revivication of the dead” (J. M. Bradshaw, *Ezekiel Mural*; H. Riesenfeld, *Resurrection*, p. 34). In a formula repeated throughout the rabbinical

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literature, the “Key of the Revival of the Dead” is mentioned as one that “the Holy one... has retained in His own hands” (H. Riesenfeld, *Resurrection*, p. 12).

160 The scene recalls Rashi’s exegesis of the account of how the children of Israel fell back at the power of the voice of God at Sinai, after which “the angels came and helped them forward again” (A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, pp. 32-33. See Rashi, *Exodus Commentary*, pp. 240-241). Compare John 18:4-6, where the arresting guards fell back when Christ declared His divinity.

161 In classic iconography, the gesture being given by God represented the spoken word. This is consistent with the mention of the heavenly voice in the caption. In medieval Christianity, the meaning later changed to that of blessing (H. P. L’Orange, *Cosmic Kingship*, pp. 171-183).

162 Moses 3:7. Nibley also cites a parallel with Abraham 1:18 (“Behold I will lead thee by my hand”), and sees a corresponding theme in the book of Abraham when Abraham is delivered from the altar: “The expressions ‘loose the bands of Hades’ and ‘him who stareth at the dead’ signify the nature of the deliverance and are both typically Egyptian, the latter of which Box finds quite bizarre. Facsimile 1 is a very proper illustration to the story” (H. W. Nibley, *Abraham* 2000, p. 16, see also p. 42).

163 Matthew 4:8-9.

164 H. W. Nibley, *To Open*, p. 5.

165 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

166 G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, 12:1, p. 15E.

167 See R. H. Charles, *Enoch*, 13:1, 3, p. 288. English translation in H. W. Nibley, *To Open*, pp. 10-11; cf. R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha*, 2:196 n. 13:1. Nibley’s reading is perfectly coherent. However, Nickelsburg does not see the logic of the *Gizeh* variant, calling it “nonsense” (G. W. E. Nickelsburg *et al.*, *1 Enoch*, n. 13:1a, p. 234).

168 Regarding Satan, see H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 17, pp. 212-213. On Cain, see Rashi, *Genesis Commentary*, 4:16, p. 47; cf. *Midrash Tanhuma*, *Bereshit* 9 in H. N. Bialik *et al.*, *Legends*, 101, p. 24.

169 Moses 1:25. The title “Almighty” in this verse recalls the demonstration of God’s power over the waters of chaos as the first act of creation (Moses 2:1-2). Moses will in like manner “be made stronger than many waters” (Moses 1:25, R. D. Draper *et al.*, *Commentary*, p. 21). Rabbi Nathan says that on Sinai, Moses “was sanctified and became like the ministering angels” (J. Goldin, *Fathers*, 1, p. 3). Going further, “Philo is so carried away by the exalted Moses that he frequently speaks of him as having been deified, or being God. ‘For when he had left all mortal categories behind he was changed into the divine, so that he might be made akin to God and truly divine’ (Q *Exodus*, 2:29). Philo vacillates on this point, but the fact that he could make such a statement is highly significant (see E. R. Goodenough, *Light*, pp. 223-229)” (E. R.

Goodenough, Introduction to Philo, pp. 148-149; cf. R. S. Eccles, Pilgrimage, pp. 60-61).

170 A. Kulik, Retroverting, 17:1, p. 22. “The same terms are used in the ‘Greater Hekhaloth’ in describing the sound of the hymn of praise sung by the ‘throne of Glory’ to its King—‘like the voice of the waters in the rushing streams, like the waves of the ocean when the south wind sets them in uproar’” (G. Scholem, Trends, p. 61).

171 Moses 1:2.

172 K. L. Barney, June 21 2006.

173 Cf. 2 Corinthians 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Moses 7:27.

174 Moses 6:64.

175 2 Corinthians 12:2.

176 They had been told not to divide these birds, evidently so that the birds could provide the means of their ascent (A. Kulik, Retroverting, 12:8, p. 19, cf. 15:2, p. 22). Translation of Caption: “And the angel took two birds and the angel took me by the right hand and set me on the wing of a pigeon, on the right, and himself set on the wing of a turtledove. And we ascended into the regions of fiery flame and went up into the heights.” Cf. A. Kulik, Retroverting, 15:2-3, p. 22. Note that Abraham is shown on the left wing, though the *Apocalypse* said that he was set on the right wing. Kulik has “edge” for “regions.”

177 Lourié notes “a medieval legend of the ascension of Alexander the Great, which goes back to the Hellenistic era. In the legend Alexander reaches the heaven (or even heavenly Jerusalem) transported by four griffins. This motif suggests that the griffins as the psychopomps transporting visionaries to heaven were not an invention of the authors of the *hekhalot* literature but were a part of the early Jewish environment....” (B. Lourié, Review, p. 233).

178 R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 12:10, p. 695. Cf. H. W. Nibley, *Abraham* 2000, p. 18; Genesis 15:9ff.

179 Cf. Exodus 19:3, Ezekiel 40:2; JST Matthew 4:8; Revelations 21:10; Moses 7:2.

180 2 Nephi 4:25.

181 R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 17:1, p. 696.

182 Compare H. W. Nibley, *Message* 2005, pp. 449-457.

183 M. E. Stone, *Fall of Satan*, p. 47; cf. Revelation 4:1: “Come up hither”; Matthew 25:21: “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

184 R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, 30:1, p. 704.

185 Moses 1:24.

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186 Moses 1:27-28.

187 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 21:1, p. 26.

188 H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 10, p. 117; cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 27 November 1832, 1:299. Scholem writes that “this cosmic curtain, as it is described in the Book of Enoch, contains the images of all things which since the day of creation have their pre-existing reality, as it were, in the heavenly sphere. All generations and all their lives and actions are woven into this curtain... [All this] shall become universal knowledge in the Messianic age” (G. Scholem, *Trends*, p. 72).

189 P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, 45:6, p. 299.

190 M. Barker, *Temple Theology*, p. 28; see also M. Barker, *Boundary*, pp. 215-217. Nibley discusses parallels between the picture presented to Abraham, the “great round” of the hypocephalus, and imagery from Homer (H. W. Nibley, *Abraham 2000*, pp. 42ff.).

191 D&C 107:56, Moses 7:4-67, Ether 3:25, 1 Nephi 14:25, 1 Nephi 14:26, Luke 4:5, M. C. Thomas, Brother of Jared.

192 Ether 3:20; cf. Moses 3:26.

193 P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, 45:1, p. 296 n. a.

194 Moses 1:30.

195 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 26:1, p. 30.

196 See Moses 2.

197 See Moses 1:39.

198 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 27:1-31:12, pp. 30-35. Nibley nonetheless sees parallels between these passages in the *Apocalypse* and the books of Moses and Abraham (H. W. Nibley, *Abraham 2000*, pp. 25-26).

199 W. Barnstone *et al.*, *Mother*, p. 685.

200 A. A. Orlov, *Gods of My Father*, p. 53; see also A. A. Orlov, *Praxis*.

201 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 16:3, p. 22, italics mine.

202 Moses chapters 2-4. Other ancient writings affirm what the book of Moses says about how the stories of the Creation and the Fall were revealed in vision. For example, the book of Jubilees prefaces a recital of the Creation and other events of Genesis with the Lord’s instructions to Moses to record what he would see in vision (O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 2:52, p. 54).

203 D&C 130:9.

204 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 19:1, 4-5, 9, pp. 24-25; cf. *Abraham 3:1-18*.

- 205 I.e., formerly shadowed, sketched, outlined, prefigured (R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, p. 699 n. 21a).
- 206 Cf. *Abraham* 5:3-5.
- 207 Cf. *Abraham* 3:22-23.
- 208 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, pp. 26-28.
- 209 *Numbers* 6:24-26.
- 210 *Matthew* 5:8.
- 211 *Revelation* 4:2.
- 212 M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 14-15.
- 213 Translation of Caption: “Abraham bowing with an angel before the throne of God in the heavens.” Cf. A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 18:3, p. 24. Note that the text says nothing about “bowing” before the throne of God.
- 214 *Ibid.*, 10:17, p. 18. The figure may also represent *Metatron*, whose name, according to one interpretation, is short for the Greek *Metathronios*, i.e., “he who stands beside the (God’s) throne,” or “who occupies the throne next to the divine throne” (G. Scholem, *Trends*, p. 69), or perhaps *Metaturannos*, “the one next to the ruler” (P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, p. 243). “Metatron was merged with two other heavenly figures, (1) the archangel Yaho’el (P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, 1:4, p. 257, 48D:1(1), p. 313), and (2) translated Enoch... From other texts, however, we know of an angel Yaho’el quite independent of Metatron (e.g., A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 10, pp. 17-18)” (P. Alexander, *3 Enoch*, p. 244).
- 215 *Jeremiah* 2:13.
- 216 R. Murphy, *Wisdom*, p. 16; cf. J. L. Crenshaw, *Love*, pp. 62-63; *Job* 19:26-27, 42:5.
- 217 *Job* 38:1.
- 218 H. Fisch, *Presence*, pp. 310-312.
- 219 W. Blake, *Natural Religion*, p. 41; cf. G. B. Hinckley, *Don't Drop*, p. 46; P. B. Munoa, *Four Powers*, p. 102; L. Snow, *Teachings* 1984, p. 1.
- 220 H. Bloom, *Genius*, p. 699.
- 221 F. I. Andersen, *2 Enoch*, 35:1-2, p. 158.
- 222 H. W. Nibley, *To Open*, p. 15. Nibley also cites extensive parallels between Moses 1 and S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*.
- 223 D&C 130:18-19; 131:5-6; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 8 April 1843, pp. 287-288, 14 May 1843, p. 297.
- 224 R. L. Bushman, *Rough Stone*, pp. 487-488.



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225 J. Smith, Jr., Words, 16 April 1843, p. 196.

226 With respect to the creation accounts in scripture, the Latter-day Saints have avoided some of the serious clashes with science that have troubled other religious traditions. For example, we have no serious quarrel with the concept of a very old earth whose “days” of creation seem to have been of very long, overlapping, and varying duration (Alma 40:8; B. R. McConkie, Christ and the Creation, p. 11; B. Young, 17 September 1876, p. 23). Joseph Smith is remembered as having taught that the heavenly bodies were created prior to the earth, asserting that “... the starry hosts were worlds and suns and universes, some of which had being millions of ages before the earth had physical form” (E. W. Tullidge, Women, p. 178). For detailed discussions of the book of Moses creation account, see J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, pp. 82-131. For a general discussion of science and Mormonism, see J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, pp. 526-530.

227 R. D. Draper *et al.*, Commentary, p. 193.

228 Moses 2:14-19. See F. B. Salisbury, Creation, p. 71.

229 H. W. Nibley, Before Adam, p. 69.

230 See 1 John 1:5; cf. Psalm 104:2.

231 J. Taylor, JT 31 December 1876, p. 327. See D&C 88:7-9.

232 Cf. Psalm 36:9.

233 I. Watts, Hymns, God, my only Happiness (Psalm 73:25), 2:94, p. 432.

234 See, e.g., J. L. Kugel, Instances, pp. 157-160.

235 J. Neusner, Genesis Rabbah 1, 3:4, p. 29; cf. Psalm 104:2. Note that the darkness mentioned in Moses 2:2 (“I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the deep”) seems to be entirely without negative connotation. On the contrary, according to Wyatt’s brilliant exposition of related Ugaritic and OT passages (N. Wyatt, Darkness, pp. 95-96, 97), the:

... passage paradoxically makes darkness the locus of the invisibility, and therefore perhaps of the spiritual essence, of the deity. Furthermore, it links darkness explicitly with the waters, and, I suspect, with the primordial waters in mind, as the extraterrestrial location of God. Indeed, the chiasmic structure of the bicolon cleverly envelops the dwelling (*str, skh*) in the darkness and the darkness of the waters, a graphical verbal presentation of the secrecy of the divine abode...

This process involves the initial stages in the self-manifestation of the deity. It is, in somewhat unusual form, an account of a theophany. It describes three stages in it: first, there is the seemingly improbable condition of primordial chaos in which it is to occur [*thw wbhwh*]. Secondly, there is the inchoate medium of