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To Open the Last Dispensation: Moses Chapter 1

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Source: *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless: Classic Essays of Hugh W. Nibley*

Published: Provo, UT; Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004 (2nd Edition)

Page(s): 1-22

Abstract: 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. That first chapter is a composition of unsurpassed magnificence. And we have all overlooked it completely. ...



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To Open the Last Dispensation: Moses Chapter 1

1

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. That first chapter is a composition of unsurpassed magnificence. And we have all overlooked it completely.

The Joseph Smith controversy is silly for the same reason the Shakespeare controversy is silly. Granted that a simple countryman could not have written the plays that go under the name of Will Shakespeare, who could? If that man is hard to imagine as their author, is it any easier to imagine a courtier, or a London wit, or a doctor of the schools, or, just for laughs, a committee of any of the above as the source of that miraculous outpouring? Joseph Smith's achievement is of a different sort, but even more staggering: he challenged the whole world to fault him in his massive sacred history and an unprecedented corpus of apocalyptic books. He took all the initiative and did all the work, withholding nothing and claiming no immunity on religious or any other grounds; he spreads a thousand pages before us and asks us to find something wrong.

And after a century and a half with all that material to work on, the learned world comes up with nothing better than the old discredited Solomon Spaulding story it began with. What an astounding tribute to the achievement of the Prophet that after all this time and with all that evidence his enemies can do no better than that! Even more impressive is the positive evidence that is accumulating behind the book of Moses—which includes fragments from books of Adam, Noah, and Enoch; for in our day ancient books that bear those names are being seriously studied for the first time in modern history, and comparison with the Joseph Smith versions is impressing leading scholars in the field. But even without external witnesses, what a masterpiece we have in that first chapter of the book of Moses! Consider the below.

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 everdeepening 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, and so forth. But it is 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. To want something totally new and different is one thing; to supply it is another. Dr. Samuel Johnson, James Boswell reports, "projected . . . a work to shew how small a quantity of real fiction there is in the world; and that the same images, with very little variation, have served all the authors who have ever lived." Who, then, is going to come up with anything really new?

It would help also, since we are asking for the impossible, for this new thing to be vast in scope and glorious in conception and compounded of truth rather than fiction. 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 believed. It wasn't only that the boy Joseph Smith had an idea about an angel—it was the clear, detailed, factual, clinical account of the visits that left his fellowmen incoherent with rage. Even more outrageous was his vision of the Father and Son: the mere idea of it was astoundingly original, but again, the simple, straightforward, noble manner in which he reported it left no room for contention; it was “yea, yea,” and “nay, nay,” for as the only witness to the most astonishing of his experiences, Joseph could not be confounded by any contrary evidence; and by the same token neither could anyone be asked to take him seriously were it not that he came before an unbelieving world with boundless riches in his hands.

For one thing, he brought out three formidable volumes of scripture. One need look no further than the opening chapter of each of these to realize that a new dispensation is indeed upon us, with all the visions and blessings of old. The first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, or Book of Commandments, takes up all the main themes of the gospel that had been the burden of every former dispensation, and had been lost in all the dark intervals between them, and weaves them together into one strong texture in which warning and deliverance are equally balanced. The emergence in our day of the old apocalyptic literature, heretofore unrecognized for what it was, though it has suddenly become clear that the Bible teems with it, now supports Doctrine and Covenants section 1 as newfound text after text echoes its message in identical terms.

At the same time, the opening chapter of the Book of Mormon emerges as the perfect model and type of those more specialized apocalypses or testaments attributed to individuals that are now taking up their position in the growing procession of early Jewish and Christian Apocrypha. The standard scenario which they follow is the story of the righteous man, distressed by the evils of his time and deeply concerned for the future of his people, for whom

he weeps and prays until one day he is carried away in a vision in which he makes a celestial journey culminating with the view of God upon His throne. On his journey he learns the plan of salvation as well as the secrets of the universe, and receives a call to teach and admonish God's children on earth. Returning to earth, he first bears witness of divine providence to his immediate family, and bestows patriarchal blessings and prophetic warnings on his sons (hence the designation of his story as a "testament"), and then goes forth among the people to preach repentance and warn of judgments to come (that makes the account an "apocalypse"). Usually his message is rejected and he with a faithful band retires from the scene as destruction descends upon the wicked. Today we have testaments and apocalypses bearing the name of almost every patriarch, prophet, and apostle from Adam on down, some of them very old, and all of them connected in with each other and with the Bible at crucial points. Hence, we can say without hesitation that the first chapter of the Book of Mormon, the testament of Lehi, has the authenticity of a truly ancient pseudepigraphic writing stamped all over it. It is a well-nigh perfect example of the genre.

But it is the first chapter of the book of Moses that commands the most boundless wonder and esteem. It was brought forth in the very month that the Book of Mormon came from the press and no one less inspired than the man who produced the one could have produced the other. Find the author of the book of Moses and you have found the author of the Book of Mormon. All other candidates may withdraw. And yet, what a difference! The one is a collection of the writings of pious sectaries in the wilderness—the Rekhabite motif resounds on almost every page: chronicles and annals, letters and sermons, commentaries, hymns and meditations; the other, the voice of Moses booming down the corridors of time as he transmits to us the words that come down to him from the beginning—he sings Enoch's song, and Noah's, and Adam's, to which Abraham's is added in another book. But it is that opening chapter to which we turn with awe. What other prelude could there be to the history of the race, what other prologue could ever give it such depth of meaning and such gratifying consistency? First, we find Moses in the presence of God and the bosom of eternity, being apprised of a special calling to which he has been appointed as coworker with the Savior (see Moses 1:3–9). A preliminary test is indicated—suddenly the lights go out and Moses is found lying unconscious and helpless upon

the earth; as he slowly comes to himself, he recognizes the misery and the glory of fallen man: "Now, . . . I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed." And then, in the same breath: "But now mine own eyes have beheld God; . . . his glory was upon me; . . . I was transfigured before him" (Moses 1:10–11). Weakness is his present condition, glory his everlasting birth-right. It is in this moment of man's greatest helplessness and vulnerability that Satan chooses to strike, attempting first by persuasion and then by intimidation to get Moses to worship him as the god of this world. But Moses has not wholly forgotten who he is, "a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten," and denounces Satan as a sham, while professing himself awaiting further light and knowledge: "I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him" (Moses 1:13, 18). The humiliating exposure of Satan becomes unendurable when Moses announces that he actually is what his adversary falsely claims to be, "a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory that I should worship thee?" (Moses 1:13). This is too much for Satan, who casts aside his celebrated but now useless subtlety and launches a frontal attack of satanic fury, a tremendous tantrum, as he "cried with a loud voice, and ranted upon the earth, and commanded, saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me" (Moses 1:19). The whole scene is presented in dramatic form as a ritual combat *stichomythia*; and true to the ancient pattern, the hero is momentarily bested, overcome by the powers of darkness as he "began to fear" and "saw the bitterness of hell." But with his last ounce of strength he calls upon God from the depths and is delivered: he has won the fight, he has prevailed against the power of him who "sought to destroy the world, for he knew not the mind of God."

And now the scene changes (verses 23 and 24 read like stage directions); the lights go up, the music soars and Moses, though remaining on earth, is again invested with glory and hears the voice of God proclaiming him victor, worthy and chosen to lead God's people "as if thou wert God" — the type and model of the ancient Year King proclaimed after his victory over death as God's ruler on earth. He is specifically told that he shall "be made stronger than many waters" — for he has just passed through the waters of death and rebirth, *de profundis*; and shown himself capable and worthy of the mission which is now entrusted to him. After this royal acclamation, reminiscent of combat and coronation episodes dramatized in the earliest year rites throughout the

ancient world, the scene again changes, as Moses and the reader view the field of labor in which the prophet is to work; he receives a thorough briefing, an intimate knowledge of the earth in its cosmic setting, its physical makeup (“every particle” of it), and everything that lives upon it. Naturally, he wants to know what is behind the behind and beyond the beyond, but God assures him that such knowledge is not for now: “But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you” (Moses 1:35), with which knowledge Moses is finally “content.” Nevertheless, quite fundamental to a correct understanding of this world is its relationship to the wider structure of things, to heavens without end and worlds without number, constantly coming into existence and passing away in an endless processing; “and there is no end to my works, neither to my words” (Moses 1:38). And this cosmic discourse is summed up and concluded in the most comforting proclamation of all: “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). All this becoming and passing away, the endless processing of the same elements, would offer only the overpowering and depressing prospect of science fiction, were it not for that ultimate assurance: man is going somewhere after all; in the course of nature he is doomed (see 2 Nephi 9:7) but the course of nature does not have the last word—God is on top of the problem and He is working for us.

The three concluding verses of the chapter place upon it an undeniable seal of authenticity. Of careful concern in each of the records handed down through the Prophet Joseph is the establishing of the exact manner in which the work has been preserved. This is another mark of the newly discovered pseudepigrapha: these verses of Moses might have been taken out of any number of Jewish or Christian Apocrypha; especially those writings from the “Forty day Literature” in which the Coptic records are so rich: “And now, Moses, my son . . . thou shalt write the things which I shall speak. And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught and take many of them from the book which thou shalt write, behold, I will raise up another like unto thee; and they shall be had again among the children of men—among as many as shall believe” (Moses 1:40–41). And so the present dispensation gets them: “And now they are spoken unto you. Show them not unto any except them that believe” (Moses 1:42). Such is the standard formula for the preservation and transmission of apocalyptic writings.

As a literary tour de force, Moses chapter 1 is awe-inspiring. Equally impressive is the way it takes up a position alongside other ancient writings that tell the same story in much the same way. Of particular relevance are the apocalypses of Abraham and Adam, from both of which Joseph Smith has conveyed purported writings. Let us turn to them for some illuminating comparisons.

Those who wish to credit Joseph Smith with a comprehension of comparative literature and ritual far beyond his time and training are free to do so. They may even insist, as they have with the Book of Mormon, that this is the way any uneducated rustic would tell the story. Today, however, we have several very ancient and significant parallels to Moses 1, which lie far beyond the reach of coincidence or daydreaming. The number of details and the order in which they occur make it perfectly clear that we are dealing with specific works of great antiquity which come from a common source. To show what we mean, let us compare Moses', Abraham's, and Adam's confrontations with Satan; these stories themselves contain pointed references to Enoch, with whom each here is duly compared. Let it be remembered that these accounts are not scripture but are simply ancient records that help us understand the Enoch story.

First the Apocalypse of Abraham, an Old Slavonic account discovered in 1895 and first published by Bonwetsch in 1897.¹ Klaus Koch has recently ranked it as one of the six definitely authentic early Hebrew apocalypses.² Let us place it in parallel columns against our book of Moses, chapter 1.

Moses

Apocalypse of Abraham

The setting:

1:1 The words of God . . . unto Moses . . . when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain.

9:8 [Abraham, in order to receive the vision, must] bring me the sacrifice . . . upon a high mountain.

God will show him everything:

4 I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands; but not all, for my works are without end, . . .

6 In this sacrifice I will show forth to thee the ages of the world,

5 Wherefore, no man can behold all my works . . . and no man can behold all my glory. . . .

(See Abraham 2:12: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee.)

6 And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son. . . .

8 And . . . Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created; . . . and all the children of men which are, and which were created. . . .

and show thee that which is hidden. Thou shalt behold great things, which thou hast never seen before,

because thou delightest to seek after me,

and I have called thee my friend.

9 And I will show unto thee, the ages of the world fixed and created by my word, and show thee what is going to happen to the children of men as they shall do good or evil.

The hero is helpless after the vision:

9 And the presence of God withdrew from Moses . . . and [he] was left unto himself. And . . . he fell unto the earth.

10 And . . . it was for the space of many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength. . . .

10:1 [Hearing a voice] I looked here and there.

2 It was not a human breath, and so my spirit was afraid, and my soul departed from me. And I became as a stone, and fell to the earth, for I had no more strength to stand;

3 And as I lay with my face to the ground I heard the voice of the Holy One say,

4 Go, Jaobel, in the power of my name, and raise that man up! Let him recover from his trembling.

Satan takes advantage of his weakness:

13:1 I carried out everything according to the angel's instructions . . .

12 Behold, Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship *me*. (emphasis added)

13 And . . . Moses . . . said: Who art thou? . . .

15 I can judge between thee and God. . . .

16 Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not; . . .

Satan put to shame by humiliating contrast with the hero:

13 I am a son of God . . . and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?

14 For behold, I could not look upon God, except . . . I were transfigured before him. But I can look upon thee in the natural man. Is it not so, surely?

15 . . . Where is thy glory, for it is darkness unto me? And I can judge between thee and God; . . .

3 Then an unclean creature with wings alighted upon the sacrificial victims. . . .

4 The unclean bird said to me: What are you doing, Abraham, in this holy place . . . where you yourself may perish in the fire!

5 Leave the man [angel] standing beside you and flee!

6 And I asked the angel: Who is this, my Lord?

7 He said: This is ungodliness: this is Azazel [Satan]!

8 [Michael:] Shame upon you, Satan!

9 For Abraham's part is in heaven, and thine is upon this earth.

10 God has placed thee upon this earth as the Adversary, to lead dishonest spirits and practice deception.

12 Listen, my friend, and I will put you to shame,

13 Thou has not the power to tempt all the righteous.

16 Get thee hence, Satan;
deceive me not;

for God said unto me: Thou
art after the similitude of mine
Only Begotten.

14 Depart from this man! Thou
canst not lead him astray for he
is thine enemy and enemy to
all those who follow thee and
love after thy desire.

15 For behold, the garment [of
glory] which once fitted you in
heaven, is now laid up for him.
And the decay to which he was
fated now goes over to thee!

The hero is strengthened for the contest:

17 And he also gave me com-
mandments . . . saying: Call
upon God in the name of mine
Only Begotten, worship me.

18 . . . I have other things to in-
quire of him: for his glory has
been upon me, wherefore I can
judge between him and thee.
Depart hence, Satan.

14:3 Take heart, exercise the
power that I give thee over
this one, who hateth truth . . .

4 . . . who rebelled against the
Almighty . . .

5 Say to him: . . . Depart,
Azazel . . .

6 Thy lot is to rule over those
who are with thee . . .

7 Depart from me . . .

8 And I spoke as the angel in-
structed me.

The hero is overcome but calls out and is saved:

19 And . . . Satan cried with a
loud voice, and ranted upon
the earth, and commanded,
saying: I am the Only Begot-
ten, worship me.

20 And . . . Moses began to
fear exceedingly; and . . . saw
the bitterness of hell. Never-
theless, calling upon God, he
received strength, and he com-
manded, saying: Depart from
me, Satan. . . .

9 He [Satan] spoke: Abraham!
And I said: Here is thy servant.

10 But the angel said to me: O,
do not reply to him! For God
has given him power over
those who answer him.

11 . . . no matter how much he
speaks to thee, answer him not,
lest his will overpower thine.

12 For the Eternal One has given him a powerful will. Answer him not!

(The following detail about Enoch's meeting in Gizeh with Satan is found in 1 Enoch 13:1-3:

21 And now Satan began to tremble, and the earth shook; and Moses received strength, and called upon God, saying: In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan.

1 And Enoch said to Azazel, Depart! Thou shalt have no peace, a great sentence has gone forth against thee to bind thee.

2 And there will be no further discussion or questioning with thee, because of thy dishonest and deceitful works among men.

22 And . . . Satan cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and he departed hence, even from the presence of Moses, that he beheld him not.

3 Then he departed and spoke to all of them [his followers] and they all feared, and trembling and terror seized them.)

The hero is borne aloft:

(See 2 Nephi 4:25: Upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceeding high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man.)

15:2 The angel in charge of the sacrifice . . . took

3 me by the right hand, and set me on the right wing of the dove while he sat on the left side.

4 So it bore me to the limits of the flaming fire

5 and then on into heaven, as if on many winds, which was fixed above the firmament.

24 And . . . when Satan had departed from the presence of Moses, that Moses lifted up his eyes unto heaven, being filled with the Holy Ghost, . . .

25 And calling upon . . . God, he beheld his glory again, . . .

25 . . . And he heard a voice, saying: Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters; for they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God. (Here Moses is hailed as the victorious sacral king.)

27 And . . . Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth, . . .

28 And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof, and there was not a soul which he beheld not; . . . and their numbers were great, even numberless.

(*Bet ha-Midrash* 5:170: Ishmael [double for Enoch]: When I went up to the mountain top . . . arriving at the seventh temple. I stood to pray before God: and I lifted up my eyes and said . . . deliver me from Satan. And the Metatron [also Enoch!] came who [served?] the angel, even the Prince of the Presence, and spread his wings and came to meet me with great joy . . . and he took me with his hand and raised me up.)

17:1 And while he was speaking, fire surrounded us and a voice . . . like the voice of many waters like the raging of the sea in the surf.

15:6 And I saw a mighty light . . . and in the light a mighty fire in which was a host, even a great host of mighty beings [forms] constantly changing shape and appearance, moving, changing, praying, and uttering words I could not understand.

He is shown the field of his mission:

In the “testamentary” literature, each patriarch takes a journey to heaven and is given a view of the entire earth, an account of which then becomes an integral part of his missionary message upon his return.

(Compare 1 Nephi 1:4–15, Abraham 3:15, Moses 1:40.)

27. . . As the voice was still speaking, Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth, yea, even all of it; and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, . . .

28 And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof, and there was not a soul which he beheld not; . . . and their numbers were great, even numberless as the sand upon the sea shore.

29 And he beheld many lands; and each land was called earth, and there were inhabitants on the face thereof.

21:1 He said to me: Look beneath thy feet upon the Firmament. Recognize at that level the creation there presented, the creatures that are in it, and the world that has been prepared for them.

2 And I looked down, and behold . . . the earth and her fruits, and all that moves upon her . . . and the power of the people . . .

3 the lower regions . . . the pit and its torments . . .

4 I saw there the sea and its islands, the beasts, its fishes, leviathan and his sphere . . .

5 the streams of water, their sources and their courses . . .

9 I saw there a mighty host of men, women, and children half of them on the right side of the picture and half on the left.

Confrontation with God:

31 And . . . the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face.

30 And it came to pass that Moses called upon God. . . .

33 And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; . . .

38 And as one earth shall pass away, . . . even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words.

16:1 I said to the angel: I can see nothing, I have become weak, my spirit leaves me!

2 He said to me: Stay with me; be not afraid. He whom thou now beholdest coming towards us . . . is the Eternal One, who loves thee.

3 But He himself you do not see . . .

4 But do not be overcome, I am with you to strengthen you.

17:5 So I continued to pray . . .

6 He said: Speak without ceasing!

7ff. (Abraham calls upon God naming his attributes.)

11 Eli, meaning My God . . .
Ei! Ei! Ei! Ei! Jaol!

13 Thou who bringest order into the unorganized universe, even the chaos which in the perishable world goes forth from good and evil.

Thou who renewest the World of the righteous.

14 O light, that shone upon thy creatures before the morning light . . .

The epic question and answer:

30 And . . . Moses called upon God, saying: Tell me, I pray thee, *why* these things are so, and by *what* thou madest them? (Emphasis added. See also Abraham 1:2: "I sought for the blessings of the fathers, . . . desiring also . . . to possess a greater knowledge.")

31 . . . And the Lord God said unto Moses: For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me.

33 And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; . . .

35 But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are many worlds . . . that now stand, . . . but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.

16 Hear my prayers!

17 Look with favor upon me: Show me, teach me. Give thy servant all that which thou hast promised him.

26:1 Eternal, Mighty, Only One! *Why* hast thou so arranged things, that it should be so?

26:5 As thine own father's [Terah's] will is in him, and as thine own will is in thee, so the resolves of mine own will are set for all the future, before you knew there even was such a thing . . .

19:3 Look upon the places beneath the firmament, upon which thou standest [see this formula in Abraham 3:3, 4, 5, 7, etc.!] Behold there is not a single place nor any spot at all but what is occupied by Him whom thou seekest.

4 And as he spoke the place opened up and beneath me there was heaven.

5 And upon the seventh Firmament on which I stood . . . I saw the splendor of invisible glory investing living beings.

(Abraham 2:12: “Now, after the Lord had withdrawn from speaking to me, and withdrawn his face from me, I said in my heart: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee.”)

4 And he said to me: What in thy heart thou didst so desire, that I will tell thee, because thou hast sought diligently to behold, etc.

Left alone a second time:

9 And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses; and Moses was left unto himself. And as he was left unto himself, he fell unto the earth.

30:1 And as he was still speaking I found myself upon the earth.

2 I spoke: Eternal, Mighty, Only one!

3 Behold I am no longer in the glory in which I was above! And what my heart sought to know I did not understand.

These parallel accounts, separated by centuries, cannot be coincidence. Nor can all the others. The first man to have such a confrontation with Satan was Adam. A wealth of stories about it closely matches the accounts of Abraham, Moses, Enoch, and other heroes. Perhaps the oldest Adam traditions are those collected from all over the ancient East at a very early time, which have reached us in later Ethiopian and Arabic manuscripts under the title of “The Combat of Adam and Eve against Satan.”³ It contains at least thirteen different showdowns between Adam and the adversary, of which we present a few of the most striking. Since the motif was characteristically repeated with variations (the monkish mind could not resist the temptation to work a good thing to death) it will be necessary to repeat some passages from the book of Moses.

Moses

1:9 And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses; and Moses was left unto himself. . . . He fell unto the earth.

10 And it came to pass that it was for the space of many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength like unto man; and he said unto himself: Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.

11 But now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, for my natural eyes could not have beheld: for I should have withered and died in his presence; but his glory was upon me; and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.

12 And it came to pass that when Moses had said these words, behold, Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me.

Combat of Adam

(direct quotations from the document are indicated with quotation marks)

Columns 297–98 Leaving the glorious garden, they (Adam and Eve) were seized with fear and “they fell down upon the earth and remained as if dead.”

299 While Adam was still in that condition, Eve, stretching high her hands, prayed: “O Lord . . . thy servant has fallen from the Garden” and is banished to a desert place. (Genesis 3:18f.)

299 They say: “Today our eyes having become terrestrial can no longer behold the things they once did.”

306 Satan, seeing them at prayers, appears to them in a great light and sets up his throne on the site, thus claiming the earth as his kingdom while his followers sing hymns in his praise.

13 And it came to pass that Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?

15–18 . . . Where is thy glory, for it is darkness unto me? . . . Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not. . . . I can judge between [God] and thee. Depart hence, Satan.

13 I am a son of God. . . .

14 . . . I could not look upon God, except . . . I were transfigured before him. (See Moses 1:20: “Calling upon God, he received strength.”)

307 Adam, puzzled, prays for light, asking: Can this be another God here hailed by his angels? An angel of the Lord arrives and says: “Fear not, Adam, what you see is Satan and his companions who wish to seduce you again. First he appeared to you as a serpent and now he wants you to worship him so he can draw you after him away from God.”

Then the angel exposed and humiliated Satan in Adam’s presence and cast him out saying to Adam:

“Fear not: God who created you will strengthen you!”

307–8 The next morning as Adam prayed with upraised hands, Satan appeared to him, saying, “Adam, I am an angel of the great God. The Lord has sent me to you.” It was his plan to kill Adam and thus “remain sole master and possessor of the earth.” But God sent three heavenly messengers to Adam bringing him the signs of the priesthood and kingship.

309 And Adam wept because they reminded him of his departed glory, but God said they

12 Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me.

19 . . . I am the Only Begotten, worship me.

13 Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou?

21 And now Satan began to tremble. . . .

22 And it came to pass that Satan cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and he departed hence. . . .

were signs of the atonement to come, whereupon Adam rejoiced.

323–24 After a forty-day fast Adam and Eve were very weak, stretched out upon the floor of the cave as if dead, but still praying. Satan then came, clothed in light, speaking sweet words to deceive them saying: “I am the first created of God. . . . Now God has commanded me to lead you to my habitation . . . to be restored to your former glory.”

325 But God knew that he planned to lead them to far-away places and destroy them. Adam said, Who was this glorious old man who came to us? Answer: He is Satan in human form come to deceive you by giving you signs to prove his bonafides but I have cast him out.

326 Adam and Eve, still weak from fasting and still praying, are again confronted by Satan who, being rebuffed, “is sore afflicted” and weeping and wailing says, “‘God has wrecked my scheme. . . . He has rendered worthless the plan which I contrived against his servants.’ And he retired in confusion.”

18 I have other things to inquire of [God]: for his glory has been upon me, wherefore I can judge between him and thee. Depart hence, Satan.

5:6 And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me.

7 And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

9 . . . As thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.

10 . . . Adam . . . was filled, . . . saying: . . . In this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

327 Adam asked, Why is this? Answer: "God wanted to show you the weakness of Satan and his evil intentions, for since the day you left the Garden he has not let a day pass without trying to harm you, but I have not let him have the victory over you." (Adam thus learned to distinguish between good and evil.)

329 Again Adam and Eve were sacrificing with upraised arms in prayer, asking God to accept their sacrifice and forgive their sins. "And the Lord said to Adam and Eve: As you have made this sacrifice to me, so I will make an offering of my flesh when I come to earth, and so save you. . . . And God ordered an angel to take tongs and receive the sacrifice of Adam."

At this Adam and Eve rejoiced. God said: When the terms of my covenant are fulfilled, I will again receive you into my Garden and my Grace. So Adam continued to make this sacrifice for the rest of his days. And God caused his word to be preached to Adam.

1:20 . . . Moses began to fear exceedingly; and as he began to fear, he saw the bitterness of hell. Nevertheless, calling upon God, he received strength. (See Abraham, facsimile 1!)

5:7 This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

330 On the fiftieth day, Adam offering sacrifice as was his custom, Satan appeared in the form of a man and smote him in the side with a sharp stone even as Adam raised his arms in prayer. Eve tried to help him as blood and water flowed on the altar. "God . . . sent his word and revived Adam saying: 'Finish thy sacrifice, which is most pleasing to me. For even so will I be wounded and blood and water will come from my side; that will be the true Sacrifice, placed on the altar as a perfect offering.' . . . And so God healed Adam."

Plainly, others knew the story long ago, but who could have taught it to Joseph? That is the real question.

NOTES

1. For the sources, see Paul Riessler, *Altjüdisches Schrifttum ausserhalb der Bibel*, 3d. ed. (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle, 1975), 1267. It has been traced to Ebionite and Essene circles closely related to the communities of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Unfortunately, we are here reduced to using Riessler's German translation of the Old Slavonic text.

2. Klaus Koch, *Ratlos vor der Apokalyptik* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1970), 19–20.

3. The sources are discussed and some of them are collected and translated in J.-P. Migne, *Encyclopædia Théologique*, vol. 125 (Paris: Chez l'éditeur, 1856), Cols. 289–330. It is to this work that our column numbers refer.