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Further Development of the Gospel in the Adamic Dispensation

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In addition to the knowledge concerning Adam and the hand-dealings of God with him and his posterity, learned from ~~our Mosaic fragment~~, the book of Moses, and set forth in the preceding chapter, we have still further knowledge revealed concerning him from the same source. Full knowledge was given to Adam concerning the whole plan of salvation as it had been wrought out in the council of Divine Intelligences when they contemplated the creation of the world and the mission to be given to the Christ as Redeemer, and doubtless the mission of Adam to the then desolate world; and we are told in this revelation to Adam concerning these things that the Lord said by his own voice to him:

Exposition of the gospel by direct word of God.

I am God; I made the world, and men before they were in the flesh. . . . If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you. (Moses 6:51-52)

And the Lord further said unto him:

Inasmuch as thy children are conceived in sin, even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good. And it is given unto them to know good from evil; wherefore they are agents unto themselves, and I have given unto you another law and commandment. Wherefore teach it unto your children, that all men, everywhere, must repent, or they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God, for no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence; for, in the language of Adam, Man of Holiness is his name, and the name of his

Only Begotten is the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, a righteous Judge, who shall come in the meridian of time. . . . By reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory; For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified; Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment. And now, behold, I say unto you: This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten, who shall come in the meridian of time. (Moses 6:55–62)

Adam’s baptism—born of the water and of the spirit.

And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost. This is the record of the Father, and the Son, from henceforth and forever; And thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, from all eternity to all eternity. Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons. (Moses 6:64–68)

Adam made an high priest. “Thou art after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years, . . . thou art one in me, a son of God” (Moses 6:67, 68). From other sources of knowledge, through revelation, we have reason to believe that these words carry with them peculiar significance; namely, that Adam was made an high priest of God, after the order of the Son of God. This was the same order of priesthood as that which later was held by Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18–20), of whom Paul said that he was king of righteousness, also king of peace; that he was “made like unto the Son of God; and abideth a priest continually” (Heb. 7:2–3).^a

^aFurther scriptural discussion about Melchizedek and the priesthood can be found in Alma 13 and JST Gen. 14:25–40.

Priesthood: God's authority given to man. Priesthood it may **be** well to remark here, is that power which God gives to men by which they become representatives of, or agents of, God; by reason of which they are authorized to act for God, that is to say, in his stead, in delivering the word of God unto men, preaching righteousness, and conveying to men from time to time such messages as God may have to send into the world. Also to administer in the ordinances pertaining to the salvation of men. ~~The degree of This~~ priesthood conferred upon Adam is after the order of that priesthood which the Son of God held.

Thus early in the Adamic dispensation ~~this~~ **the** priesthood after the order of the Son of God was conferred upon men, and was designed to be perpetuated among them that there might always be priests of the Most High God to minister in things pertaining to God, even as described by Paul:

For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. . . . And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God. (Heb. 5:1, 4)

Even as Adam, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and **as** many others were called.

“This priesthood,” we are assured by the Prophet of the New Dispensation,

was first given to Adam; he obtained the First Presidency, and held the keys of it from generation to generation. He obtained it in the Creation. . . . He had dominion given him over every living creature. He is Michael the Archangel, spoken of in the Scriptures. . . . The Priesthood is an everlasting principle, and existed with God from eternity, and will to eternity, without beginning of days or end of years.¹ The keys have to be brought from heaven whenever the Gospel is sent (i.e., to the earth).²

The last days of Adam's life. The closing scene with reference to the ministry of Adam upon the earth **is** described in the following revelation to the Prophet of the New Dispensation:

Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah, who were all high priests, with the residue of his posterity who were righteous, into

¹This supplies the material for an explanation of Paul's somewhat mysterious saying when speaking of Melchizedek, he says: “Without Father, without Mother, without descent, [having] neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually” (Heb. 7:3). But it was the priesthood which Melchizedek held that was without father or mother, without beginning of days or end of life, not the man Melchizedek.

²Smith, *History of the Church* 3:385-86.

the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, and there bestowed upon them his last blessing.

And the Lord appeared unto them, and they rose up and blessed Adam, and called him Michael, the prince, the archangel. And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him: I have set thee to be at the head; a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever.

And Adam stood up in the midst of the congregation; and, notwithstanding he was bowed down with age, being full of the Holy Ghost, predicted whatsoever should befall his posterity unto the latest generation. These things were all written in the book of Enoch,³ and are to be testified of in due time. (D&C 107:53–57)

Cain and his descendants. Running parallel with these events, which make up the development of the dispensation of the gospel given to Adam, is the continued opposition to the way of righteousness, set up and perpetuated by Cain and his coadjutors. Cain's wickedness did not end with the murder of his brother Abel. By direct decree of God he was cursed as to the earth which had opened her mouth to receive his brother's blood from his hand. The earth would no more yield her strength to his tillage—a fugitive and a vagabond should he become. He complained that under this decree his punishment was greater than he could bear; also he feared that every one that should find him would slay him. Whereupon God set a mark upon him (~~doubletless the mark of a black skin~~) and decreed that whosoever should slay Cain, vengeance should be taken upon him sevenfold (Gen. 4:9–15). He naturally would withdraw himself from the more righteous of the descendants of Adam, and Genesis recounts his living eastward from Eden, where he founded a city which he named for a son born to him—Enoch. And here the Genesis account of Cain ends, save that a descendant of Cain's—Lamech—fifth in the direct line of descent, also became a murderer, killing most likely two men, for in his confession to his wives he said: "I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold" (Gen. 4:23–24).

³Jude makes reference also to this book of Enoch wherein he says after speaking of certain vicious characters and what would befall them:

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him (Jude 1:14–15)

[Jude 1:14–15 is quoting from 1 Enoch 1:9.]

While the account of Cain in Genesis is brief, the historian Josephus, doubtless following Hebrew tradition, gives a very much fuller account of his life and of the character of the people who followed him.

Josephus on the people of Cain.

When Cain had travelled over many countries, he with his wife, built a city named Nod, which is a place so called, and there he settled his abode; where also he had children. However, he did not accept of his punishment in order to amendment, but to increase his wickedness; for he only aimed to procure every thing that was for his own bodily pleasure, though it obliged him to be injurious to his neighbors. He augmented his household substance with much wealth, by rapine and violence; he excited his acquaintance to procure pleasure and spoils by robbery, and became a great leader of men into wicked courses. . . . He changed the world into cunning craftiness. . . . Even while Adam was alive, it came to pass, that the posterity of Cain became exceeding wicked, every one successively dying, one after another, more wicked than the former. They were intolerable in war, and vehement in robberies: and if any one were slow to murder people, yet was he bold in his profligate behavior, in acting unjustly, and doing injuries for gain.⁴

Cain and his relationship to Lucifer: All this is in harmony with the further knowledge we have of Cain in the Mosaic fragment familiar to us now as the book of Moses. Here Cain is represented as loving “Satan more than God,” and this even before the murder of his brother. Could it be that Satan had suggested the offering of a sacrifice that God had not appointed, the offering of “first fruits of the ground,” rather than the “firstlings of his flock”? A fruit offering rather than a “blood offering”—such as would symbolize the offering to be made by the Son of God, who is called “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8)? Nothing could be more insulting to the majesty of God than this,[†] and nothing could be more gratifying to Lucifer than through Cain to offer such an insult to God—it would be mockery to his liking! A similar passage occurs in the Genesis account of the conversation between God and Cain in the matter of Cain’s rejected sacrifice:

And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?

⁴Josephus, “Antiquities of the Jews,” bk. 1, ch. 2, p. 27.

[†]On “Cain’s sacrifice, not what the Lord appointed [and] also the statement in regard to Cain’s offering, because he offered fruits,” the committee of the Quorum of the Twelve suggested a different explanation: “It was not because he offered fruits, but because he hearkened unto Satan rather than unto God (Moses 5:18–23).” Roberts wrote a question mark beside this suggestion.

and if thou doest not well, sin ⟨Satan⟩ lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. (Gen. 4:6-7)

This passage has given the commentators much trouble, and many and various explanations have been suggested for it. Light from the Mosaic ~~fragment~~, the book of Moses, however, makes complete understanding clear. The conversation on the matter of the rejected sacrifice is enlarged to read:

And if thou doest not well, sin ⟨Sin⟩ lieth at the door, and Satan desireth to have thee; and except thou shalt hearken unto my commandments, I will deliver thee up, and it shall be unto thee according to his desire. And thou shalt rule over him; For from this time forth thou shalt be the father of his lies; thou shalt be called Perdition; for thou wast also before the world. And it shall be said in time to come—That these abominations were had from Cain; for he rejected the greater counsel which was had from God; and this is a cursing which I will put upon thee, except thou repent. And Cain was wroth, and listened not any more to the voice of the Lord, neither to Abel, his brother, who walked in holiness before the Lord. And Adam and his wife mourned before the Lord, because of Cain and his brethren. (Moses 5:23-27)

Something like this could well be supported from the text in Genesis: “And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him” (Gen. 4:7).

If “Sin” be regarded as one of the many names of Satan, then the reading becomes simple. Then it would stand: If thou doest not well Sin (Satan) lieth (or standeth) at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire (he will hope to possess thee); and then—strangely enough—“Thou ⟨Cain⟩ shalt rule over him ⟨Satan⟩.” Cain shall rule over Satan!

League and covenant between Cain and Lucifer. Turning again to ~~our Mosaic fragment~~ **the book of Moses**, the account is given of the league and covenant of evil between Cain and Lucifer:

And Satan said unto Cain: Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear they brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands. And Satan sware unto Cain that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret. And Cain said: Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness. (Moses 5:29-31)

All this is in character with both Lucifer and Cain, and especially in keeping with that account of Cain and his following given by both the Bible and Josephus, and in harmony with the development of that wickedness in the antediluvian world which finally justified its destruction.

Of Cain and his place in the scheme of things we shall have occasion to speak in a future chapter. What is said here is merely to show how was launched that stream of evil in the world which ran counter to the plan of righteousness inaugurated by the introduction of the Way through the dispensation of the gospel given to Adam, the progenitor of the race.

Taking this chapter with the two immediately preceding it, chapter thirty-three on: “The Problem of Evil”; and chapter thirty-four, on “The Affair in Eden—The Fall of Man”; and now *the preceding chapter and* this on events “After the Fall,” and the first dispensation of the gospel as it was revealed to Adam—all this covers the transition period from men as spirits existing before the beginning of earth life, and the launching of the race into earth life as the progeny of Adam and Eve. We may now consider the gospel—the Way—at the commencement of its earth career.

Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: D&C 84; 107; and Moses 4-6.