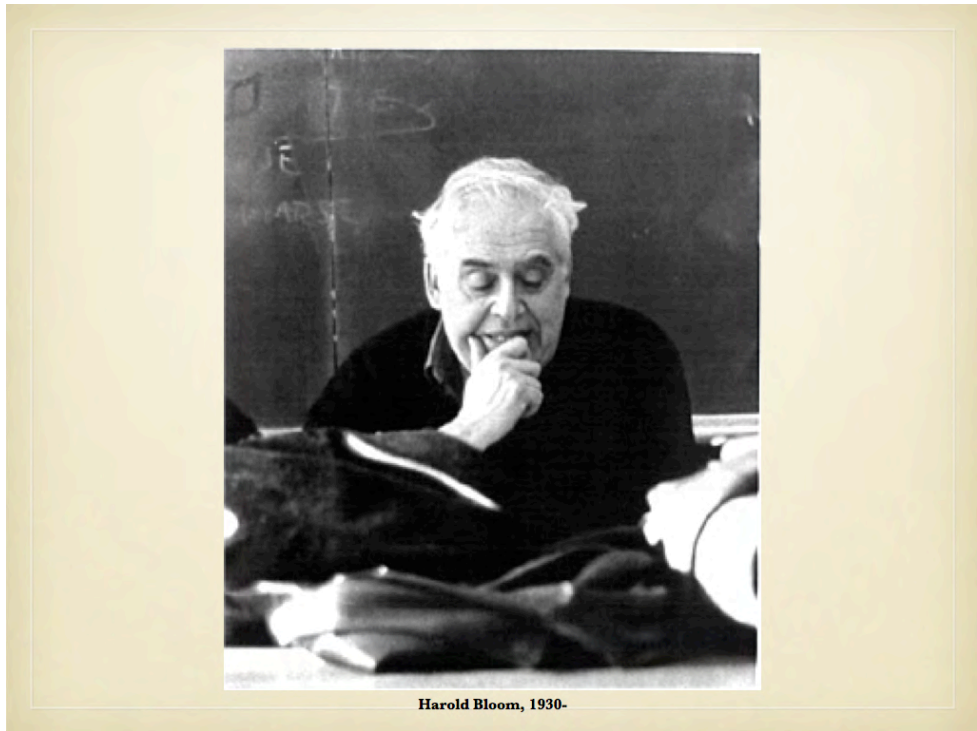


**THE APOCALYPSE OF ABRAHAM:
AN ANCIENT WITNESS FOR THE
BOOK OF MOSES**

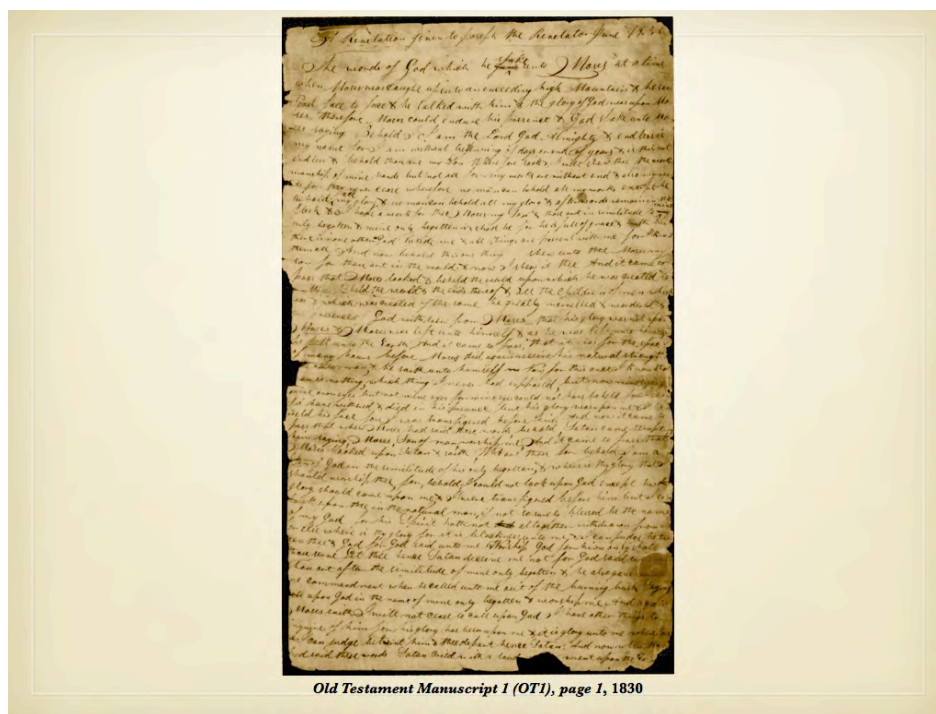
**JEFFREY M. BRADSHAW AND DAVID J. LARSEN
FAIR CONFERENCE PRESENTATION
5 AUGUST 2010**

Adapted from J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*

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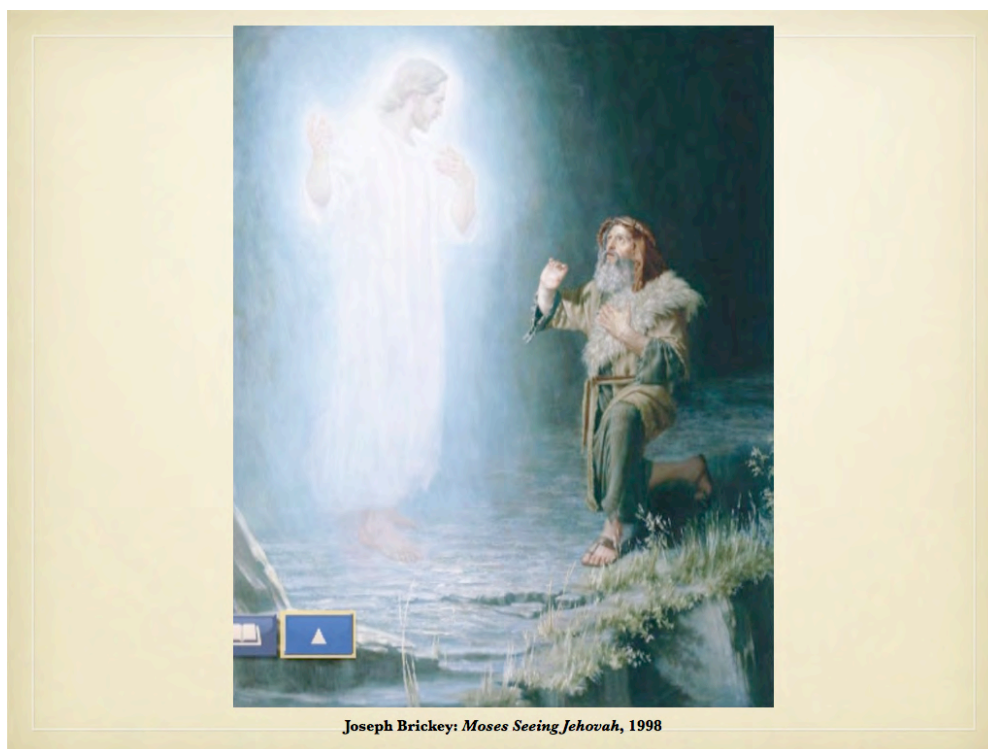


The eminent Yale professor and Jewish literary scholar Harold Bloom once called the book of Moses and the book of Abraham two of the “more surprising” and “neglected” works of LDS scripture.¹ With the great spate of publications over the decades since fragments of Egyptian papyri were rediscovered in the Metropolitan Museum of Art,² we have begun to see a remedy for the previous neglect of the book of Abraham.³ 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.⁴



The placement of the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price obscures the fact that it was actually produced as part of the “Joseph Smith Translation” of the Bible (JST). This is the first page of the manuscript of Moses 1—dated June 1830, a time of great exuberance in the Church, but also a period of intense persecution for Joseph Smith. Like many of the Prophet’s revelations, the manuscript appears to have been flowingly dictated in a single setting. That the Prophet could find the time, strength, and inspiration necessary to receive and record this beautiful and complex account of the visions of Moses during such a busy and difficult period is a great wonder.

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 survived only in esoteric traditions unlikely to have touched [Joseph] Smith directly.”⁵ In other words, Professor Bloom found it extraordinary that Joseph Smith could have come up with, on his own, a modern book that resembles so closely ancient Jewish and Christian teachings.



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.⁶ 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.

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.⁷ 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”⁸ by the voice of God Himself.



Building on the earlier work of Jared Ludlow⁹ and Hugh Nibley,¹⁰ David Larsen and I are exploring significant relationships between the first chapter of the book of Moses and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*.¹¹ 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.

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 14th 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. It is noteworthy that the first publication of an English translation was in the Church's *Improvement Era* magazine in 1898.¹²



One of the unique features of the *Codex Sylvester* is its series of beautiful color illustrations. Though one of the illustrations previously appeared in an article by Hugh Nibley,¹³ 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.

This illustration accompanies a story about how Abraham's father Terah's house was destroyed by fire from heaven because he persisted in idol worship.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

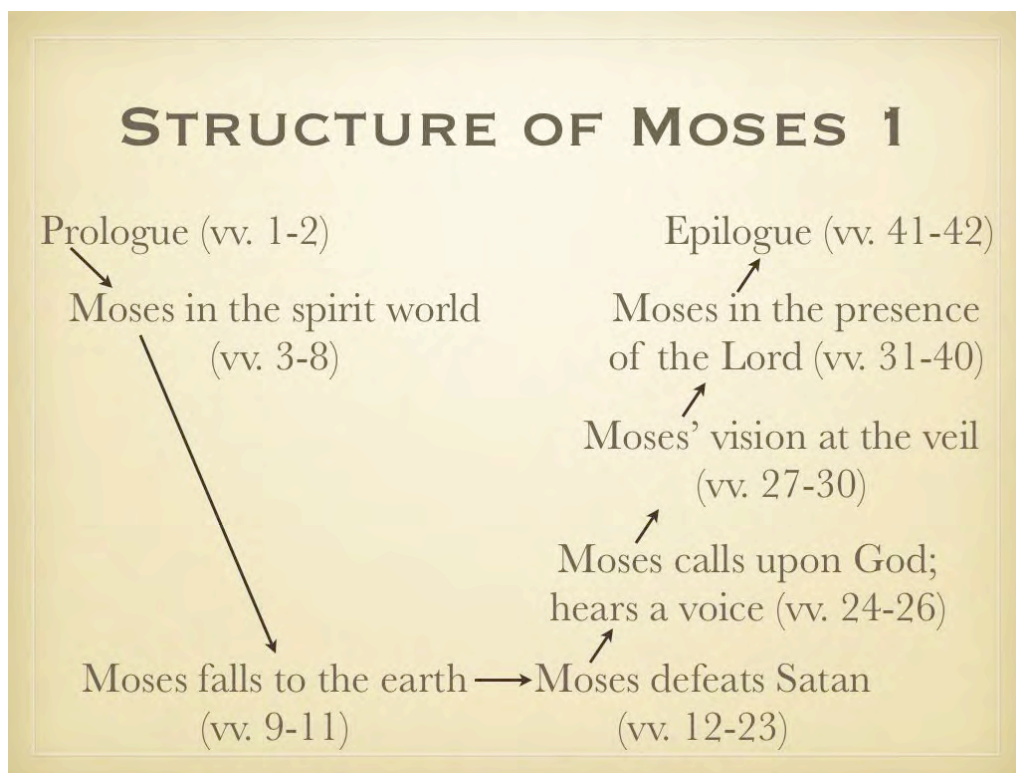


Here, Abraham appears with a group of sacrificial animals.¹⁶ His robe now covers both of his shoulders. Deity forms a two-handed gesture. This may be related to the practice in ancient Israel, where the high priest transferred the sins of the people to the scapegoat in a ritual action involving both hands.¹⁷

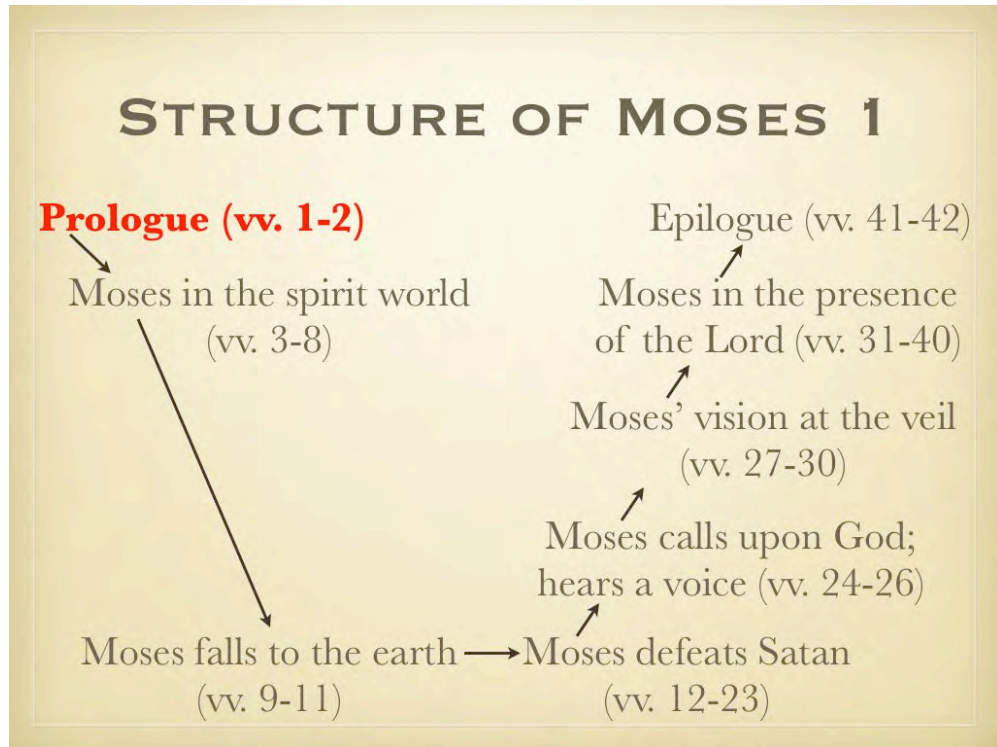
The figure at right is Yahoel, an Angel of the Presence, whose name connotes the “Lord God,” the Divine Name, and whose body, face, and hair are also reminiscent of God Himself.¹⁸ The turban, blue robe, and golden staff recall a royal high-priestly figure.¹⁹



The *Apocalypse of Abraham* describes Yahoel as both man and bird.²⁰ In this and related texts, other angelic beings, including Satan, are also described as birds.²¹ 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.²² In the book of Abraham, the young prophet is saved by “the angel of his presence,” who declares himself to be Jehovah.²³



One of the most significant things I have gained through studying the *Apocalypse of Abraham* and other similar texts is a better understanding of the structure of the first chapter of Moses. From the recurring pattern here, in the LDS book of Abraham, and similar ancient documents it becomes clear that Moses' experience was not simply a series of randomly-arranged visions, but rather a sequence reflecting the plan of salvation in miniature from the personal perspective, starting with the spirit world and ending in the presence of the Lord. I will organize my discussion of parallels between Moses 1 and the *Apocalypse of Abraham* around the many elements of structure that they share.²⁴

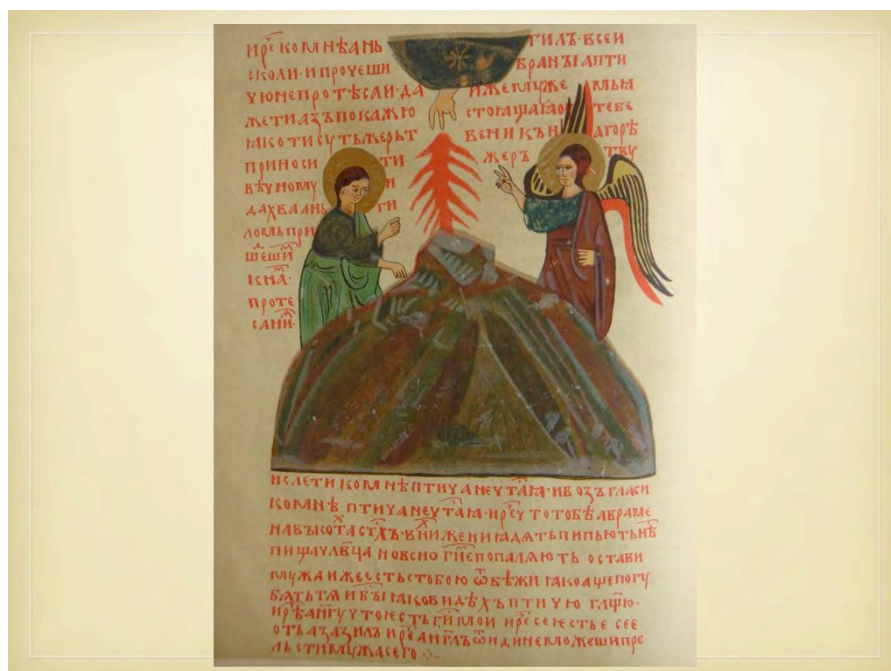


Though Moses 1 serves as a superb introduction to succeeding chapters that describe the Creation and the Fall, its separate prologue²⁵ and epilogue²⁶ signal its status as a revelation that can stand apart on its own. Verses 1-2 provide what Turner calls an “announcement of plot”²⁷—a brief summary of the chapter describing the central event of the Moses’ vision, when he will see God “face to face.”²⁸

PROLOGUE (VV. 1-2)

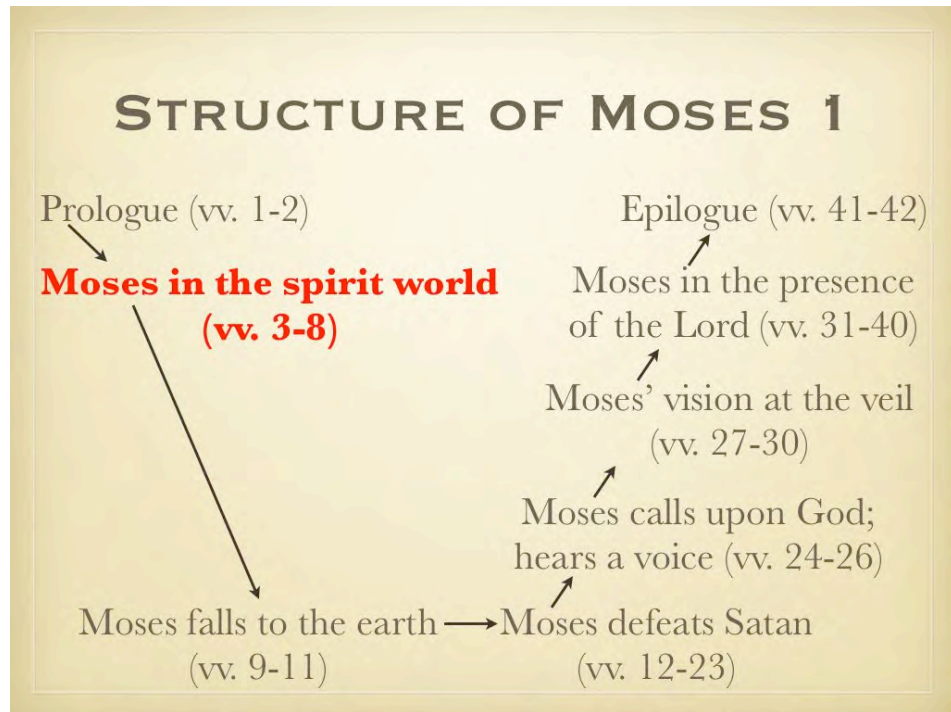
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Setting	an exceedingly high mountain (1:1)	a high mountain (9:8)
Sacrifice	Cf. Abraham: ... revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar (Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 2)	Go... and set out for me a pure sacrifice (9:5)

In this and subsequent slides, we will see the many parallels between the first chapter of the book of Moses and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*. In both books, the setting for the revelation is a “high mountain.”²⁹



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.³⁰ 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 *Apocalypse*, 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."³¹ 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.³²



Following the prologue, Moses is given a vision of the spirit world.

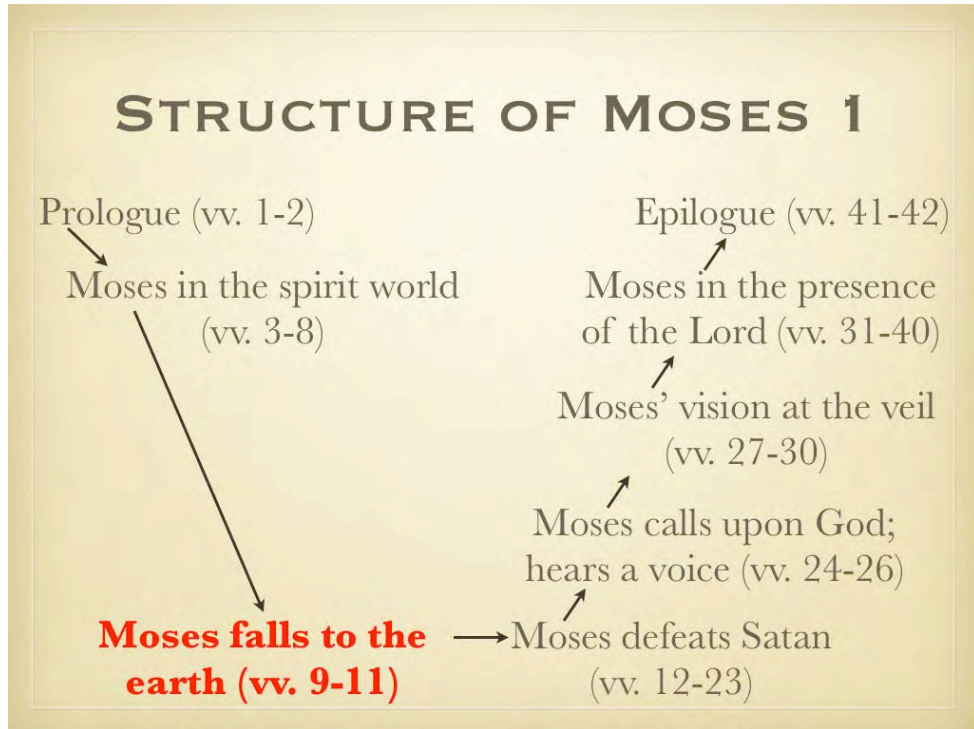
<h1>MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD (VV. 3-8)</h1>		
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Aretology	the Lord God Almighty, Endless (1:3)	the primordial and mighty God (9:3)
God to show a vision of eternity	I will show thee the workmanship of my hands (1:4)	I shall set before you the ages (9:6)
Reason for God's favor	Cf. Abraham: Thy servant has sought thee earnestly (Abraham 2:12)	since you loved to search for me (9:6)
The prophet is commissioned	I have a work for thee, Moses, my son (1:6)	I called you my friend (9:6)

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,³³ and will be allowed to see a vision of eternity.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD (VV. 3-8)</h2>		
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Vision of the spirit world	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)
Some of the spirits are chosen	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)

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.”³⁴

In the book of Abraham, the Lord points out the many “noble and great ones” that were chosen before they were born.³⁵ 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.”³⁶



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.”³⁷ Moses is then left to himself to be tested in a dramatic encounter with Satan.³⁸

MOSES FALLS TO THE EARTH (VV. 9-11)		
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Fall and loss of strength	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)

Remarkably, both texts speak of how each prophet “fell” and lost his strength.³⁹

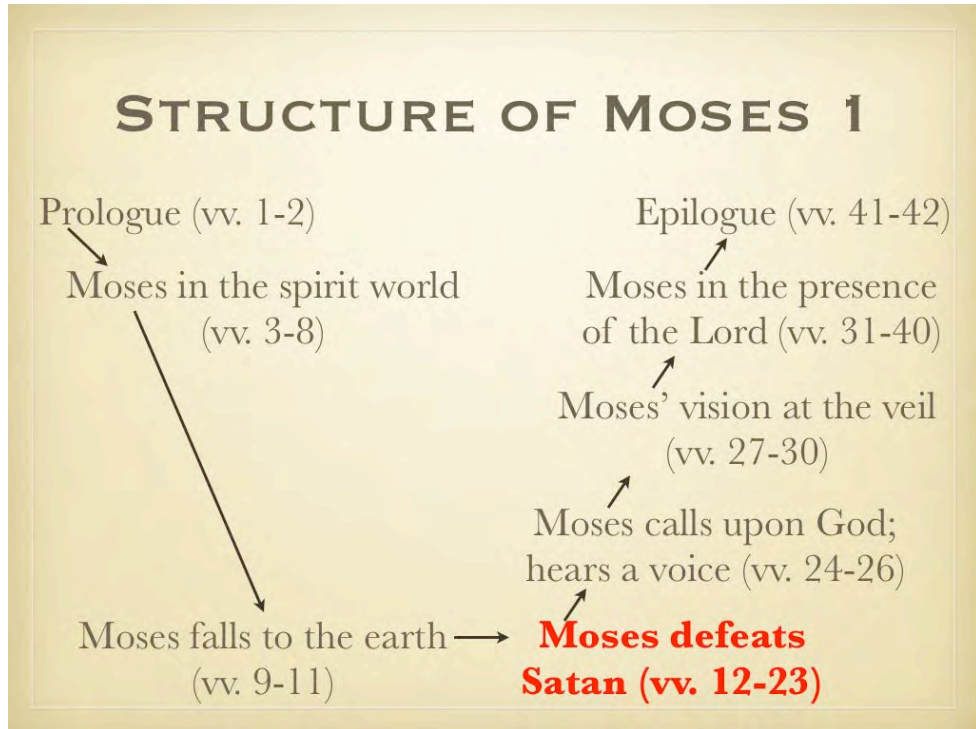


While you or I might have quickly skimmed over this scene, thinking it of little interest, it was clearly a significant event to the illustrator, who found it important enough to merit a separate visual depiction.⁴⁰ The scene shows Abraham being raised up out of sleep—or perhaps death⁴¹—by the hand of Yahoel, who, using the right hand, lifts him firmly by the wrist.⁴² The rays emanating from hand of God⁴³ 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.”⁴⁴



The Harrowing of Hell from the Exultet Roll: *Codex Barberini Latinus 592*, (f. 4) , ca. 1087

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.



After his fall, Moses is left to himself to be tested in a dramatic encounter with Satan.⁴⁵

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN (VV. 12-23)		
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan disrupts the worship of God	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)
Satan's identity is questioned	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)
Satan contrasted with the prophet	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)

Prefiguring his later encounter with Christ in the wilderness,⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷

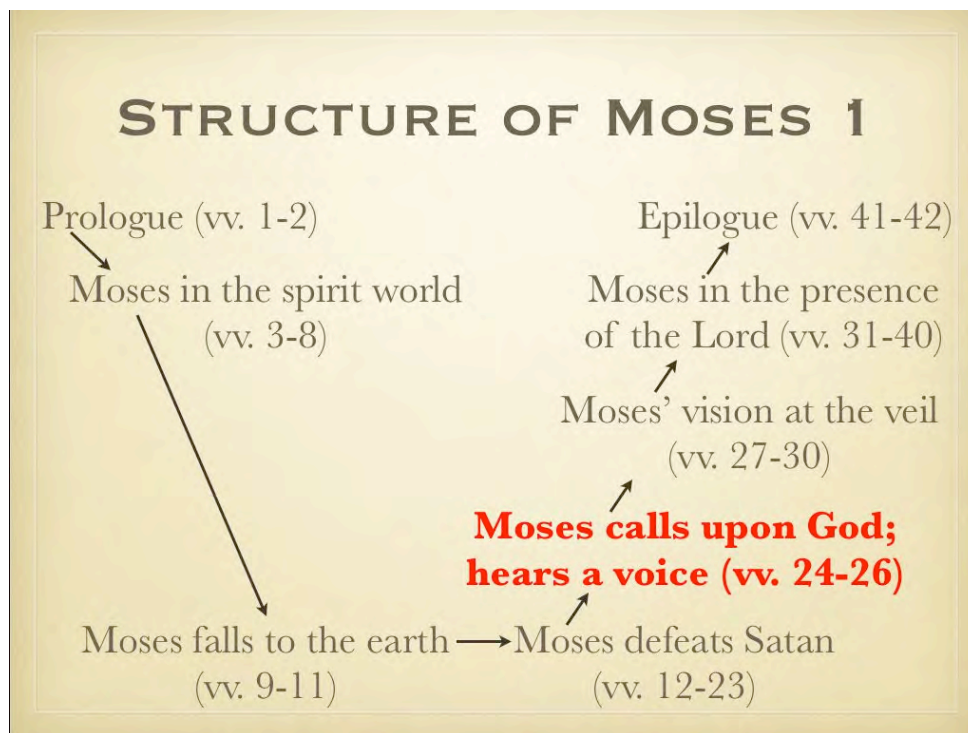
MOSES DEFEATS SATAN (VV. 12-23)		
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan told to depart and cease his deception	Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not (1:16)	Depart from [Abraham]! You cannot deceive him (13:12-13)
The prophet received the glory that Satan lost	God said unto me [Moses]: Thou art after 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)
Satan told to depart a second time	Depart hence, Satan (1:18)	vanish from before me! (14:7)

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."⁴⁸ In both texts, Satan is forcefully told a second time to depart.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">MOSES DEFEATS SATAN</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">(VV. 12-23)</h3>		
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan's final attempt to gain the prophet's worship	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)
Satan's frightening tantrum and final departure	Moses... commanded, saying: Depart from me, Satan... And now Satan began to tremble (1:21)	Cf. Enoch: "And Enoch said to Azazel, Depart! ...Then he departed and spoke to all of them [his followers]... and trembling... seized them (1 Enoch 13:1, 3, Gizeh)

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."⁴⁹ 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."⁵⁰

Nibley fills in a missing parallel to Moses' final dismissal of Satan with a passage from the ancient book of *1 Enoch*.⁵¹ In related traditions, Satan and Cain are both known as "earth shakers"⁵² 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.



As Moses begins to move upward again, 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 baptism⁵³), the book of Moses tells us that he was “filled with the Holy Ghost.”⁵⁴ Continuing to press forward, Moses “calls upon the name of God” in prayer.

MOSES CALLS UPON GOD; HEARS A VOICE (VV. 24-26)

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Ascent to heaven	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)
Voice at the veil	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)
Many waters	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)

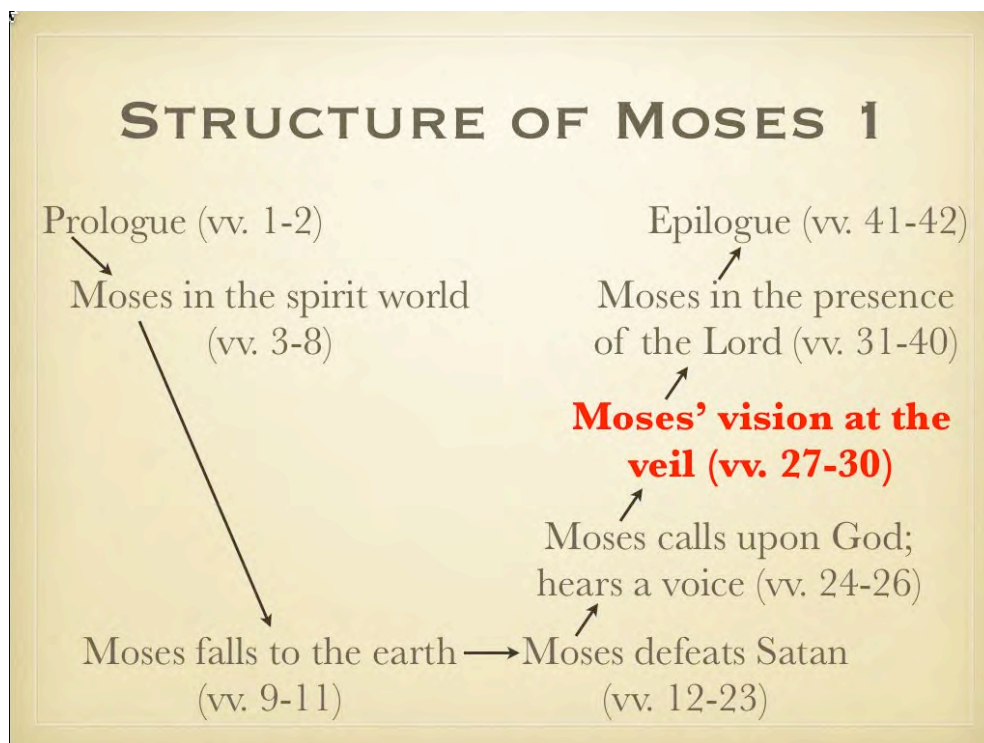
Moses and Abraham are now fully prepared for their heavenly ascent. The statement that Moses was “caught up,”⁵⁵ phrased in what is called the “divine passive,”⁵⁶ reveals that his ascent was accomplished by God’s power and not his own.⁵⁷ Such wording may sometimes imply a context of priesthood ordinances. For example, we are told elsewhere that Adam was “*caught away* by the Spirit of the Lord” into the water and baptized.⁵⁸ Note that the Apostle Paul, like Moses and Abraham, was also “caught up” to the third heaven.⁵⁹

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.”⁶⁰ Similarly, at this point the *Apocalypse* tells us that Abraham hears a “sound [or voice]... like a sound of many waters.”⁶¹



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.⁶² The imagery of ascent on the wings of birds is a convention that goes back at least two thousand years.⁶³ Once again, Yahoel holds Abraham firmly by the wrist, using the right hand.⁶⁴ 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."⁶⁵ Nephi later said that "upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains,"⁶⁶ just as the *Sylvester Codex* shows Abraham being raised up to heaven on the wings of a bird.



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.”⁶⁷ Following his prayer, however, Moses is answered by a voice from behind the heavenly veil enumerating specific blessings.⁶⁸ 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.”⁶⁹

At the heavenly veil, Moses sees the earth and all its inhabitants—not the spirit world he had seen previously, but rather a vision of the history of the mortal earth from beginning to end, like Adam, Enoch, the Brother of Jared, John the Beloved, and others.⁷⁰

MOSES' VISION AT THE VEIL (VV. 27-30)		
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
The prophet beholds the earth	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)
The inhabitants of the earth	he beheld also the inhabitants thereof (1:28)	and those who inhabit it (21:1)
The prophet questions God	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?

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*.⁷¹ 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.⁷² 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!"⁷³ 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.⁷⁴

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."⁷⁵ Now, after ascending to heaven, he "cast his eyes" down to see the earth and all of its inhabitants.⁷⁶ Similarly, Abraham is told: "Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation and those who inhabit it."⁷⁷

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.⁷⁸ 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

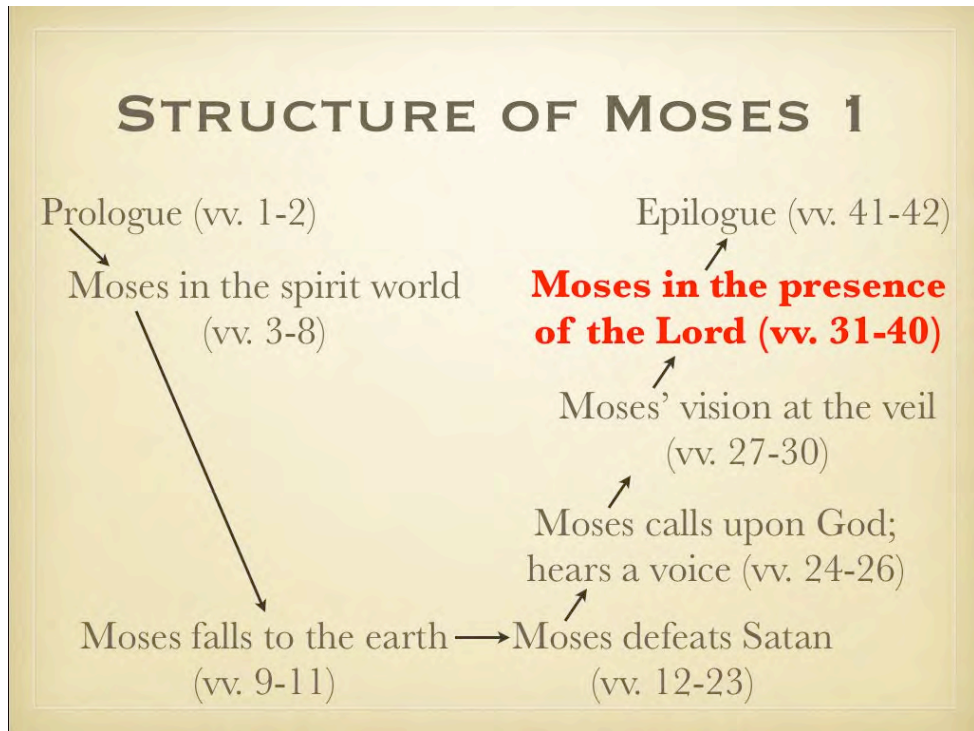
depicted past, present and future. ‘All generations to the end of time were printed on the curtain of the Omnipresent One. I saw them all with my own eyes’...⁷⁹ [Similarly,] Enoch was taken up by three angels and set up on a high place whence he saw all history, past, present and future.”⁸⁰

Moroni taught that those with perfect faith cannot be “kept from within the veil” (i.e., cannot be kept from passing through the veil⁸¹)—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.⁸² Seeing all this, Moses asks “Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so...?”⁸³ Likewise, Abraham asks, “Eternal, Mighty One! Why did you ordain it to be so?”⁸⁴



Walter Rane, *Jehovah Creates the Earth*. ©2000 by Intellectual Reserve.

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.⁸⁵ He will also be told something about “why these things are so.”⁸⁶ 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.⁸⁷ 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?”⁸⁸



The culminating sequence of the vision begins in verse 31 when Moses, having continued to inquire of the Lord,⁸⁹ comes to stand in His presence. God speaks with Moses face to face, describing His purposes for this earth and its inhabitants.⁹⁰

MOSES IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD (VV. 31-40)		
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
God's purpose is His own	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)
Moses speaks with the Lord face to face	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)
Vision of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Fall	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).

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.⁹¹ 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.”⁹²

Just as Moses is then shown the events of the Creation and the Fall,⁹³ the *Apocalypse of Abraham* describes how the great patriarch looked down to see the affairs of what is called in modern revelation the “kingdoms of a lower order.”⁹⁴ The Lord’s voice commanded Abraham to “look,” and a series of heavenly veils were opened beneath his feet.⁹⁵ Like Moses, Abraham is shown the heavenly plan for creation—“the creation that was depicted of old⁹⁶ on this expanse” (21:1⁹⁷), 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)”⁹⁸ When Abraham is told again to “Look... at the picture,” he sees Satan inciting the Fall of Adam and Eve (23:1-14),⁹⁹ just as Moses saw these events following his own heavenly ascent.

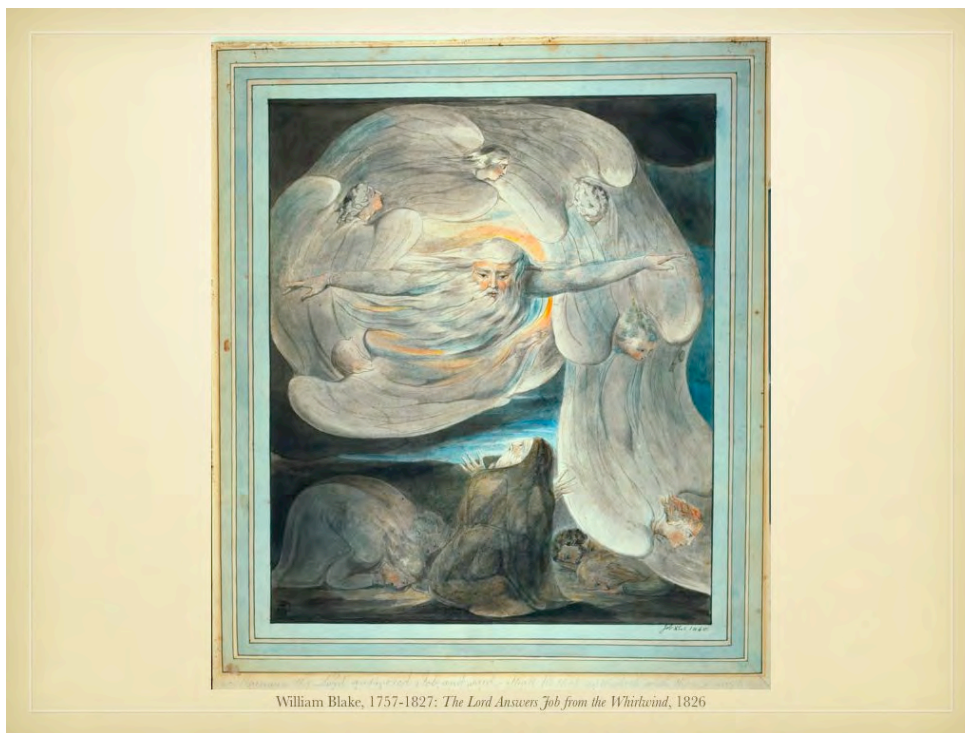


Of great interest for our study is that fact that, in explicit contradiction to the text of the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, the fourteenth-century Christian illustrator of the *Codex Sylvester* had no qualms about representing God visually. Barker observes: “To see the glory of the Lord’s presence—to see 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’¹⁰⁰ ... 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’;¹⁰¹ and John saw ‘one seated on the throne.’¹⁰² There can be no doubt where the early Christians stood on this matter.”¹⁰³

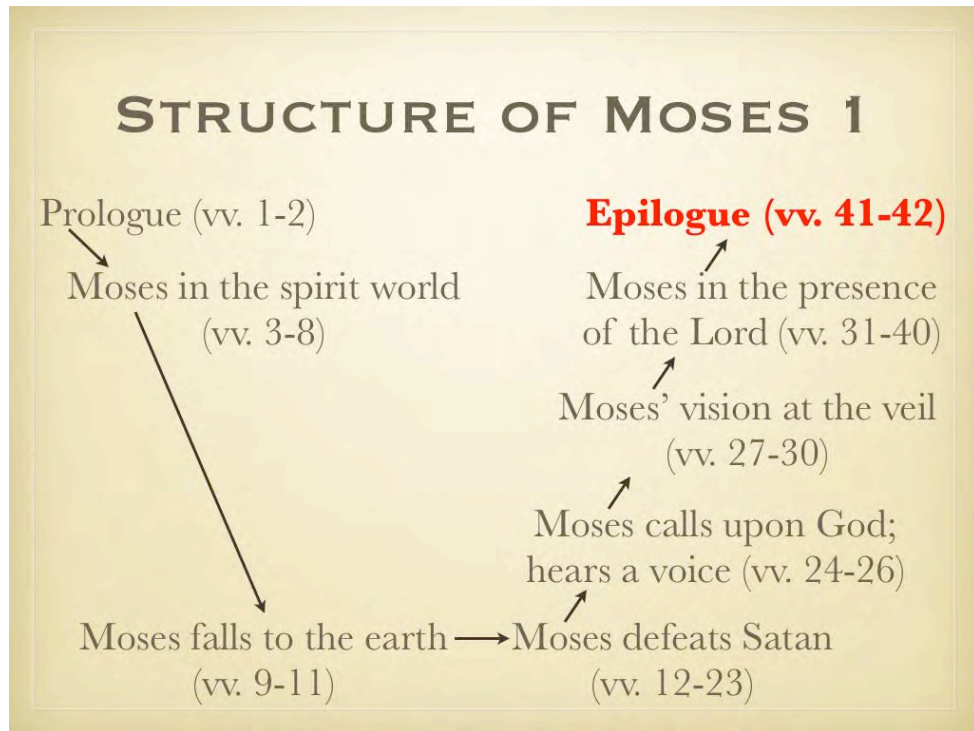
In the illustration,¹⁰⁴ the figure seated on the throne seems to be Christ. His identity is indicated by the cruciform markings on His halo. Behind Him sits another figure, perhaps alluding to the statement that “Michael is with me [God] in order to bless you forever.”¹⁰⁵ Beneath the throne are fiery 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.



Knowing he could not quench his thirst from the “broken cisterns,” of human wisdom, Moses, like Job, sought “the fountain of living waters,”¹⁰⁶ placing “emphasis on seeing God after so much mere hearsay.”¹⁰⁷ 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.¹⁰⁸ 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!”¹⁰⁹ Blake expressed this thought in the couplet: “God becomes as we are, that we may be as he is.”¹¹⁰ Both William Blake and Joseph Smith, according to Harold Bloom, “sought to end the distinction between the human and the divine.”¹¹¹

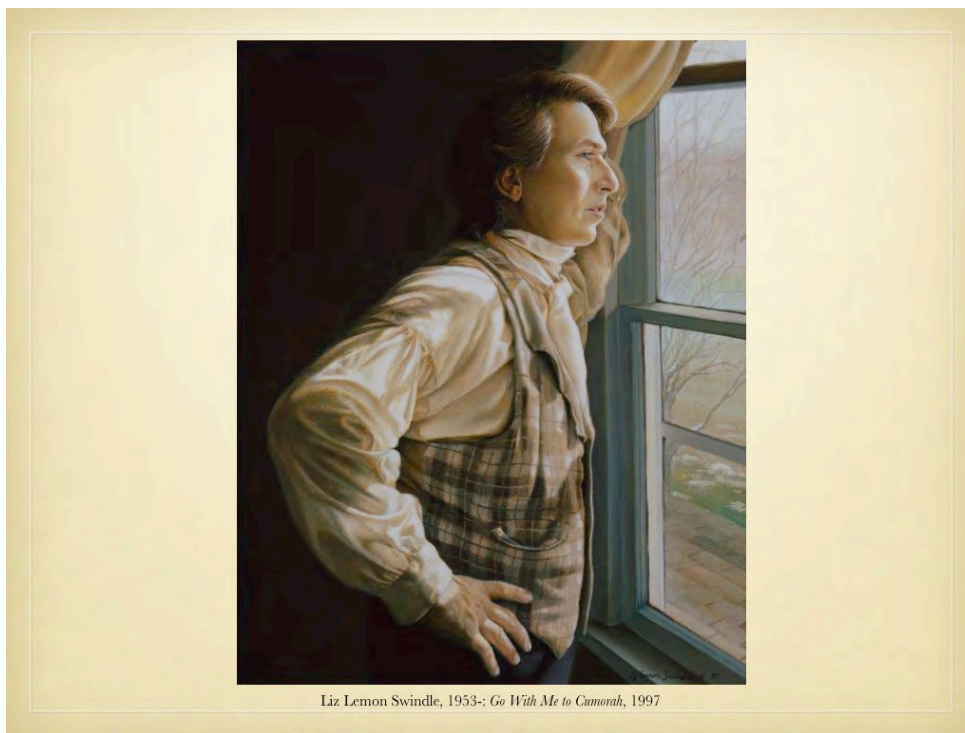


Parallels between ancient texts and the first chapter of the book of Moses are reflected even in the epilogue.

EPILOGUE (VV. 41-42)

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Scripture to be lost and restored	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 them the books in your handwriting... And he will have to point out to... truthful men
Some scripture to be reserved for the righteous	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)

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.”¹¹²



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."¹¹³

For Joseph Smith, as Bushman insightfully observes, knowledge was not only a source of power and salvation¹¹⁴ but also of comfort.¹¹⁵ 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 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."¹¹⁶ 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.

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Endnotes

1 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).

2 H. W. Nibley, *New Look*; H. D. Peterson, *Story*.

3 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*.

4 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 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*).

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

⁶ 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.

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

⁸ 2 Peter 1:10.

9 J. W. Ludlow, *Visions*.

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

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

12 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).

13 See H. W. Nibley, *Abraham 2000*, p. 18.

14 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.

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

16 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).

17 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).

18 Note that the name is apparently an expression of *yhw'h'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.

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

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

21 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.

22 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. 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).

23 *Abraham* 1:15-16.

24 English translation of A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 9-23, pp. 16-29.

²⁵ *Moses* 1:1-2.

²⁶ *Moses* 1:42.

²⁷ L. Turner, *Announcements*, pp. 13-14.

28 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.

29 Note the similar wording that is associated with the mountain where God showed himself to the Brother of Jared: it was called Shelem “because of its exceeding height” (*Ether* 3:1). As Thomas observes, the essential thing is to suggest “a place that is suitably high for temple activity” (M. C. Thomas, *Brother of Jared*, p. 391). Thomas describes the spectrum of meanings associated with the three Hebrew consonants *slm*: “peace, tranquility, contentment, safety, completeness, being sound, finished, full, or perfect. Shelem (and Hebrew *shalom*) signify peace with God, especially in the covenant relationship. It also connotes submission to God, which we see in the Arabic words *muslim* and *islam*. In particular, *shelem* has reference to the peace offering of the law of sacrifice, which corresponds to the seeking of fellowship with God, and thereby has a relationship to the meanings of the at-one-ment; that is, *shelem*, fellowship, sealing, and at-one-ment have an obvious relationship” (M. C. Thomas, *Brother of Jared*, p. 391). Nibley further explains: “The original word of Shelem, *shalom*, means ‘peace,’ but it originally meant ‘safe’ (safety, security) because it was a high place. The Shelem was a high place. It’s still the word for ladder: *silma*, *selma*, a *sullam* in Arabic.” This connotation is significant because the ladder is a symbol often used to represent the process of exaltation” (H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 16, p. 196).

30 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).

31 Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 2.

32 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).

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

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

35 Abraham 3:22-23.

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

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

38 Moses 1:9-23.

39 Moses 1:9-11; A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, 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.

40 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).

41 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 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).

42 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.

43 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).

44 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).

45 Moses 1:9-23.

46 Matthew 4:8-9.

47 See J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *Mormonism's Satan* for more about the theology of Satan in Mormonism.

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

49 *Ibid.*, p. 5.

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

51 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).

52 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.

53 G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, pp. 131, 183-184; H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 10, p. 118, 18, p. 219; see also H. W. Nibley, *Return*, p. 75. Note in this verse and the next the first explicit mention of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost in close proximity, recalling the words of the baptismal prayer (D&C 20:73), in conjunction with the subsequent statements that Moses “lifted his eyes unto heaven” (cf. Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22) and was “made stronger than many waters.”

⁵⁴ Moses 1:24.

55 Moses 1:2.

56 K. L. Barney, June 21 2006.

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

58 Moses 6:64.

59 2 Corinthians 12:2.

60 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).

61 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).

62 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.”

63 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).

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

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

66 2 Nephi 4:25.

67 Moses 1:9.

68 Moses 1:25-26.

69 J. A. Tvedtnes, *Rituals*.

⁷⁰ D&C 107:56, Moses 7:4-67, Ether 3:25, 1 Nephi 14:25, 1 Nephi 14:26; cf. Luke 4:5. See also M. C. Thomas, *Brother of Jared*.

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

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

73 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.”

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

75 Moses 1:24.

76 Moses 1:27-28.

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

78 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).

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

80 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.).

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

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

83 Moses 1:30.

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

85 See Moses 2.

86 See Moses 1:39.

87 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).

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

89 Moses 1:30.

90 Moses 1:35-40.

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

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

93 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).

94 D&C 130:9.

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

96 I.e., formerly shadowed, sketched, outlined, prefigured (R. Rubinkiewicz, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, p. 699 n. 21a).

97 Cf. *Abraham* 5:3-5.

98 Cf. *Abraham* 3:22-23.

99 A. Kulik, *Retroverting*, pp. 26-28.

100 *Numbers* 6:24-26.

101 *Matthew* 5:8.

102 *Revelation* 4:2.

103 M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 14-15.

104 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.

105 *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).

106 Jeremiah 2:13.

107 R. Murphy, *Wisdom*, p. 16; cf. J. L. Crenshaw, *Love*, pp. 62-63; Job 19:26-27, 42:5.

108 Job 38:1.

109 H. Fisch, *Presence*, pp. 310-312.

110 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.

111 H. Bloom, *Genius*, p. 699.

112 F. I. Andersen, *2 Enoch*, 35:1-2, p. 158.

113 H. W. Nibley, *To Open*, p. 15. Nibley also cites extensive parallels between Moses 1 and S. C. Malan, Adam and Eve.

114 D&C 130:18-19; 131:5-6; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 8 April 1843, pp. 287-288, 14 May 1843, p. 297.

115 R. L. Bushman, *Rough Stone*, pp. 487-488.

116 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 16 April 1843, p. 196.