



Lesson 1

“This Is My Work and My Glory”

Moses 1

Purpose: To understand that (1) we are children of God, (2) we can resist Satan’s temptations, and (3) God’s work and glory is to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the plan of salvation. It enables man to regenerate his life from the fallen state of mortality to become a spiritual being, becoming a new creature in Christ (II Cor 5:17) and have His image engraven in your countenance (Alma 5:19) while in mortality and throughout the eternities. It contains the principles and ordinances that adopt us into the family Christ and obtain a fullness of His glory. (D&C Sec. 98). Those principles and ordinances are divided into two parts, first is what the Lord called the ‘preparatory gospel’ (D&C Sec. 84:26) consisting of 1, Faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, 2 Repentance, and 3 Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. These steps prepare us for the gospel which is receiving the Holy Ghost by the laying on hands by those in authority to administer that ordinance. Having the Holy Ghost in your life is having the gospel in your life, there is no other definition in the scriptures. The scriptures are instructions on how to receive and keep the Holy Ghost in our lives and examples of those that did and those that did not.

It is helpful, before starting the Old Testament to learn the relationship between Jesus Christ, Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament and man. Moses gives that clear understanding and becomes the basis of understanding and applying the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our lives. The canonized scriptures are not theological dogmas to be discussed in debate and argument, but to be prayed about, pondered, meditated on, then applied to our lives through action. They are guides to having the Holy Ghost as a constant companion, who conveys “the mind of God.” (Lectures on Faith [1985], 53)

The Book of Moses

Starting in June of 1830 to February 1831, Joseph Smith revised the first six chapters of the book of Genesis which today is called the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) and is now published by the Herald Publishing House, part of the Community of Christ Church, formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The first six chapters of Genesis were revised into eight chapters in what is known as the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price.

Commentary:

Moses 1

1 The words of God, which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain,

The vision recorded in Moses 1 took place after Jehovah spoke to Moses at the burning bush but before Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea (see Moses 1:17, 25–26). The name of the mountain is not known. (see Moses:1:42)

2 And he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence.

Moses was able to endure God's presence because "the glory of God was upon Moses" (Moses 1:2); he was transfigured (see v. 11; see also D&C 67:10–12). Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote: "Transfiguration is a special change in appearance and nature which is wrought upon a person or thing by the power of God. This divine transformation is from a lower to a higher state; it results in a more exalted, impressive, and glorious condition. . . . "By the power of the Holy Ghost many prophets have been transfigured so as to stand in the presence of God and view the visions of eternity" (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 803).

3 And God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name; for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless?

The personage who spoke to Moses was the premortal Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. Being one with Heavenly Father, Jesus at times speaks as if He were God the Father (see Moses 1:6). This is known as divine investiture, whereby Christ is invested with authority to speak for and in behalf of the Father (see also D&C 29:1, 42, 46).

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote: "All revelation since the fall has come through Jesus Christ, who is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. . . . He is the God of Israel, the Holy One of Israel; the one who led that nation out of Egyptian bondage, and who gave and fulfilled the Law of Moses. The Father has never dealt with man directly and personally since the fall, and he has never appeared except to introduce and bear record of the Son" (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:27).

4 And, behold, thou art my son; wherefore look, and I will show thee the workmanship of mine hands; but not all, for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease.

All born to earth are spirit children of God, our Heavenly Father. In a 1909 discourse titled "The Origin of Man," the First Presidency wrote: "Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so he undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages and aeons, of evolving into a God" (Improvement Era, Nov. 1909, 81). The word "similitude" mean "visible likeness." More important in context of this great event, is not that Moses is a spiritual offspring of God, but that he had been endowed with the Holy Ghost. (see Moses 1:39) just as did Adam and Eve (Moses 5:4-11) The Holy Ghost conveyed to them the mind of God even when these miraculous events were not occurring.

6 And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior, for he is full of grace and truth; but there is no God beside me, and all things are present with me, for I know them all.

The First Presidency gave in a 1912 discourse on Moses 1:6, with the historical context to help us understand this phrase: "Moses was reared in an atmosphere of idolatry. There were numerous deities [gods] among the Egyptians. In commencing the work which the Lord said he had for Moses to do, it was necessary to center his mind and faith upon God the Eternal Father as the only Being to worship. . . . The sole object of worship, God the Eternal Father, stands supreme and alone, and it is in the name of the Only Begotten that we thus approach Him, as Christ taught always" ("Only One God to Worship," Improvement Era, Apr. 1912, 484–85). The phrase "there is no God beside me" should not be interpreted to mean that mankind does not have the eternal potential to become like God.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained: "God does not live in the dimension of time as do we. We are not only hampered by our finiteness (experiential and intellectual), but also by being in the dimension of time. Moreover, God, since 'all things are present' with him, is not simply predicting based solely on the past. In ways that are not clear to us, he sees rather than foresees the future, because all things are at once present before him" (Things As They Really Are [1978], 29; see also Alma 40:8; D&C 130:4-7).

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: "Without the knowledge of all things God would not be able to save any portion of his creatures; for it is by reason of the knowledge which he has of all things, from the beginning to the end, that enables him to give that understanding to his creatures by which they are made partakers of eternal life; and if it were not for the idea existing in the minds of men that God had all knowledge it would be impossible for them to exercise faith in him" (Lectures on Faith [1985], 51-52; see also D&C 88:41; 93:8-36).

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.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell wrote that Moses' statement "surely was not a reflection on man, 'God's greatest miracle,' but a placing of man in the vast perspective of God's creations and a realizing, even so, that we are God's exclusive work and his greatest glory" (Notwithstanding My Weakness [1981], 75). Latter-day scripture affirms the truth that with and through God man can fulfill his divine potential to truly become even as God (see D&C 76:55-59, 92-95; 88:107; 121:29; 132:20).

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.

"It must be obvious then that to endure the glory of the Father or of the glorified Christ, a mortal being must be translated or otherwise fortified. Moses, a prophet of God, held the protecting Holy Priesthood: ". . . and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence." (Moses 1:2.) Grease on the swimmer's body or a heavy rubber skin diver's suit may protect one from cold and wet; an asbestos suit might protect a fire-fighter from flames; a bullet-proof vest may save the policeman from assassin's bullets; one's heated home may protect from winter's chilling blasts; deep shade or smoked glass can modify the withering heat and burning rays of the midday sun. There is a protective force which God brings into play when he exposes his human servants to the glories of his person and his works." (Spencer W. Kimball, Conference Report, April 1964, Afternoon Meeting 94 - 95.)

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.

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?

"Moses seemed bothered when Satan addressed him as a 'son of man.' He retorted, 'I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten.' (Moses 1:12-13.) Knowing that he was created in the image of God strengthened Moses to overcome Lucifer's temptations. Sons of men are sons of the world, and they give heed to worldly things. Not realizing their divine heritage, they give up their birthright to worship the images of the world. Sons of God, however, know that they are heirs to a celestial future and can thus envision heavenly riches. This vision helps them to worship only God and to follow his path." (Dennis Largey, "Refusing to Worship Today's Graven Images," Ensign, Feb. 1994, 13)

15 Blessed be the name of my God, for his Spirit hath not altogether withdrawn from me, or else where is thy glory, for it is darkness unto me? And I can judge between thee and God; for God said unto me: Worship God, for him only shalt thou serve.

Then came Satan, the audacious, the father of lies, and represented himself as being the son of God in the distinctive sense. Moses was able to discern and perceive. (quotes Moses 1:13-14) Oh, that we all had such power of discernment. That is a gift of the Spirit, to which we are entitled and we will have it as we live for it. With that gift we shall be free, to a great extent, from the deception that otherwise might lead us astray. As the Lord gives revelations, so does Satan, each in his way. As the Lord has revelators upon the earth, so has Satan, and he is operating upon those men by his power, and they are receiving revelations, manifestations, that are just as truly of the devil as was his manifestation to Moses. (James E. Talmage, Conference Report, April 1931, Afternoon Meeting 27.)

19 And now, when Moses had said these words, Satan cried with a loud voice, and ranted upon the earth, and commanded, saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me.

Satan's purpose is and has always been to have God's glory be his. That is all he seeks after. It is the salvation of mankind that fulfills God's work and for Satan to possess it would be in direct opposition to God's holy purpose. (see D&C 76:55-59, 92-95; 88:107; 121:29; 132:20)

20 And it came to pass that Moses began to fear exceedingly; and as he began to fear, he saw the bitterness of hell. Nevertheless, calling upon God, he received strength, and he commanded, saying: Depart from me, Satan, for this one God only will I worship, which is the God of glory.

Moses saw the bitterness of hell. (see D&C 10:43). We also know that Satan will eventually be bound (see D&C 45:55; 88:110), will tremble in fear (see D&C 35:24), and will be cast out from this earth and from among its people (see D&C 76:33, 36). Satan is bound by our righteous actions and that happens in mortality and is a condition of eternal life. (see 1 Nephi 22:26).

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.

"Depart from me, Satan, for this one God only will I worship. In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan." (See Moses 1:1-24.) And that is a good statement to be used by every soul who is besieged by this father of lies. (Spencer W. Kimball, Ensign, Mar. 1976, 71)

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, even from the presence of Moses, that he beheld him not.

Note that the contest is not between God and the devil-that was never a contest. It is Moses himself who here proclaims his own advantage over Satan, as he goes on: "Where is thy glory, for it is darkness unto me? And I can judge between thee and God." (Verse 15.) In the next three verses he repeats that he shares the nature of the Only Begotten and finds Satan a fraud: "Satan, deceive me not," ending by summarily ordering him off the premises. (Verses 16-18.) These are stinging blows, for Satan has always claimed the earth as his own special precinct and the role of the Only Begotten as his exclusive vehicle. Moses' repeated reminders of his own intimacy with the Only Begotten drives the pretender into a screaming rage. (Hugh Nibley, Enoch the Prophet, edited by Stephen D. Ricks [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1986], 157)

25 And calling upon the name of God, he beheld his glory again, for it was upon him; 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.

*What many waters was Moses stronger than? Remember, when they passed through the Red Sea, the waters of death. And also the waters of Marah. They were dying of thirst in the wilderness. Moses struck the rock with his staff, and the waters of Marah (the waters of complaint, bitterness) came out. They had been complaining and sinning; that's why they were dying of thirst. The waters gushed forth and saved them. So Moses is stronger than many waters. Notice, he raises his staff. The Lord says, Raise your staff and the waters of the Red Sea will return. The wind blows; the sea comes up and it swamps the chariots of Pharaoh. And the same thing happens again. He strikes the rock with his staff. Joshua does the very same thing when they get to the Jordan. Moses doesn't lead them across the Jordan, but Joshua does. It's at flood, and they can't get across. Joshua backs up the waters. The stuff had piled up behind a dam; and when the dam broke, it came down with a rush of dirty water, mud, sand, trees, and everything else. But again, he raised his staff. So this follows a very distinct pattern. I have published at least a hundred examples of this royal drama taking place. "...for they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God." Moses is going to act in the place of God on earth. He is God's representative, and he has the priesthood to act for God. We say the divine kingship. This is where it is rooted. You act as if you are God. (Hugh Nibley, *Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe [n.p., n.d.], 4-5)*

27 And it came to pass, 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, discerning it by the Spirit of God.

*What did [Moses] behold? He looked upon that which mankind never can look upon in this natural state, without the aid of the same principle; he beheld every particle of the earth, or, as the new revelation says, and there was not a particle of it that he did not behold, discerning it by the spirit of God. What an excellent telescope! Did the Spirit of God impress it by the rays of light upon the retina of the eye only? No: the vision was exhibited to the mind, independent of the natural eye. Instead of acting upon the mere eye, every part of the human spirit could behold and discern, through the medium of that all-powerful substance—the Spirit of God, every particle of this earth. How long would it have taken Moses to have gazed at each particle separately, with the natural eye? While he was gazing with the eye at one, he could not be looking directly at another. It would have taken him a great many millions of years to have gazed directly and distinctly upon every particle of the earth, as we naturally see things in succession. But, instead of this, we find him, in a short space of time, perhaps the interval was only a few minutes or hours, gazing upon every particle of it. Here was something new, and independent of the natural vision, showing him things beneath the surface of the earth. Men look at things above the surface by the natural eye; but here is a man who, by the power of heaven, is enabled to penetrate that which the natural eye could never behold. (Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 2: 245)*

33 And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.

The purpose of this statement is to place into perspective that all of his creations are for His purpose but His message centers on us, "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) According to the Prophet Isaiah they are formed to be inhabited (see Isa. 45:18) with God's plan of salvation, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

37 And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine.

The Savior is omni, omni. He is omniscient, all knowing, omnipresent, present everywhere and omnipotent, all powerful. He has no limitations on His power, glory, light or truth.

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

39 For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

This is the symbiotic relationship between Jesus Christ and man. Christ met all the conditions, through his life and the atonement so the conditions of immortality and eternal life can be met. Christ's ability to provide this, is what make Him God.

"Earth in all its majesty and wonder is not the end and purpose of creation. ". . . my glory," says the Lord himself, "(is) to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) And man in exercising the divine gift of free agency should feel in duty bound, should sense the obligation to assist the Creator in the accomplishment of this divine purpose. The true end of life is not mere existence, not pleasure, not fame, not wealth. The true purpose of life is the perfection of humanity through individual effort, under the guidance of God's inspiration." (David O. McKay, Conference Report, October 1963, First Day-Morning Meeting, 7)

41 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.

The person raised up to restore Moses' words was, of course, Joseph Smith. The book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price and other additions in the Joseph Smith Translation show the Prophet's work on the books attributed to Moses. The amount of material restored in the eight chapters of Moses and the JST throughout the book of Genesis confirms the statement that many words were taken away from Moses' words. Had Joseph Smith had more time to work on his translation of the Bible, there undoubtedly would have been more words restored.

"It was probably this work that led Joseph Smith to declare: 'I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.' (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 327)" ("Many Plain, Precious Truths Lost," LDS Church News, 1994, 01/01/94)—among as many as shall believe.

42 (These words were spoken unto Moses in the mount, the name of which shall not be known among the children of men. And now they are spoken unto you. Show them not unto any except them that believe. Even so. Amen.)

The Savior has commanded not to cast pearls before swine. I am sorry to say that this instruction is not always sufficiently regarded by those to whom our Lord has given, through the Everlasting Covenant, His pearls of wisdom, knowledge, and precious gifts. The consequence is, we lose blessings instead of retaining them—a decrease of the Holy Spirit follows, instead of an increase, and our minds become darkened. What I allude to is this: we too frequently engage in conversation concerning things of the kingdom of God, with persons of a wrong spirit; and feeling over anxious to make them see, understand, and acknowledge the light presented, we urge on, and persist in the conversation until we partake of the spirit of those with whom we are conversing. We ought to be particularly guarded against falling into errors of this kind. (Lorenzo Snow, The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, p. 73)

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