

Comments on Moses 5

This chapter recounts the events leading to the corruption of mankind. While Adam and Eve were cast from the Garden as a result of their transgression, they held to the Lord and kept His words. However, they had a son who rebelled against the Lord, and this son became the father of lies. The chapter contrasts the righteousness and obedience of Adam, Eve, and Abel to the wickedness of Cain and his children.

1 AND it came to pass that after I, the Lord God, had driven them out, that Adam began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I the Lord had commanded him. And Eve, also, his wife, did labor with him. 2 And Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto him sons and daughters, and they began to multiply and to replenish the earth. 3 And from that time forth, the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land, and to till the land, and to tend flocks, and they also begat sons and daughters.

4 And Adam and Eve, his wife, called upon the name of the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence. 5 And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

6 And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. 7 And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth. 8 Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.

9 And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will. 10 And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God. 11 And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.

v1-11 Adam and Eve are cast out of the Garden and do what the Lord commanded them (cf. 4:22-25) to do: till the earth (v. 1) and multiply and replenish (v. 2-3). Since leaving the Garden they can no longer speak face to face with the Lord, but they do hear and obey His voice (v. 4). He commands them to observe the Law of Sacrifice (v. 5). After observing the Law of Sacrifice for some time, an angel of the Lord appears to them and teaches them the Law of Sacrifice represents (v. 6-8). Adam and Eve are then enlightened by the Holy Spirit and obtain a testimony concerning the Atonement (v. 9). They are filled by the Spirit, and Adam understands and prophesies concerning the Lord's plan for mankind (v. 10), and Eve perceives the necessity of the Fall (v. 11).

v1 Adam works to maintain life, and Eve labors along side him. Despite the fallen condition, they are still working to remain "one flesh" (cf. 3:24).

v2 Adam and Eve observe the commandment from Moses 2:28.

v3 "the sons and daughters of Adam began to divide two and two in the land", intra-family marriage is not prohibited, as far as we know from currently available Scripture, until the Law of Moses is dispensed. When discussing matters of incest it is important to distinguish between intra-family marriage and intra-family fornications. While the English term "incest" does not differentiate between these two, they are treated separately in the Scriptures. The most vehement prohibitions in the Law address intra-family fornications, which are clearly sexual immorality, and these prohibitions occur separate from the prohibitions of intra-family marriage. Intra-family fornications were discouraged well before the Law was dispensed, as Ham's lustfulness is condemned.

v4-11 In v. 4-6 Adam and Eve are still naive to things in general, they "know not" why they are keeping the commandments other than the Lord said to do it. Hence the necessity of the Lord sending ministering angels to teach them principles of the gospel (v. 7-8). After this angelic education, the Spirit falls upon Adam (v. 9, cp. Moses 6:65-66), and presumably Eve as well given her enlightening as well, and they then are perceiving the nature of the gospel and the necessity of the Fall (v. 10-11).

The text attributed to Adam by Enoch appearing in 6:53-68 probably occurs at this point in time, cp. v. 9's statement concerning the Holy Ghost falling upon Adam with the similar statement in 6:65-66.

v9 "the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam...saying: I am the Only Begotten", a curious statement as it is apparently the Holy Spirit saying he is the Only Begotten. Naturally, a vicarious testimony is assumed, but in addition to this a careful examination of what is said sheds additional light. The Spirit says "I am the Only Begotten". Recall that "I am" is a form of the divine name, cp. Exod. 3:14. Thus, granted license, this quote could be paraphrased from "I am the Only Begotten" to "YHWH the Only Begotten".

12 And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters. 13 And Satan came among them, saying: I am also a son of God; and he commanded them, saying: Believe it not; and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish.

14 And the Lord God called upon men by the Holy Ghost everywhere and commanded them that they should repent; 15 And as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins, should be saved; and as many as believed not and repented not, should be damned; and the words went forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree; wherefore they must be fulfilled.

16 And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to call upon God. And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said: I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words. But behold, Cain hearkened not, saying: who is the Lord that I should know him? 17 And she again conceived and bare his brother Abel. And Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

v12-17 Adam and Eve are teaching their children the gospel (v. 12), but the adversary is there corrupting them (v. 13). The Lord responds to Satan's activity by calling on all of mankind to repent (v. 14) and be saved or suffer damnation (v. 15). Despite all of this adversity, Adam and Eve remain faithful and continue to call on the Lord. The conflict between good and evil among the children of Adam and Eve is typified by Cain (v. 16) and Abel (v. 17).

If the text of these verses is read in a linear fashion, the conclusion would be that Cain and Abel were not Adam and Eve's first two children.

v13 Only after Satan comes among them does mankind become "carnal, sensual, and devilish". This implies Adam, Eve and humans in general are not intrinsically "carnal, sensual and devilish" but are inspired to be as such by the adversary (v. 14).

v16 "bare Cain...I have gotten a man from the Lord", the name is a word play. The Hebrew for "Cain" is "kayin", and "I have gotten" is "kaniti". The name is ironic, as Eve has obtained a child as a blessing from the Lord, but the child ultimately rejects the words of the Lord contrary to Eve's hopes.

v17 "Abel", the Hebrew is "hevel" and strictly translated means "breath" or "nothingness" suggesting something transitory. It can be read as an inspired prediction of his fate (cf. 4:21).

Note the description of Abel antithetically parallels the description of Cain in the preceding verse. This serves as a literary tool indicating the two characters are being contrasted in the subsequent narrative.

18 And Cain loved Satan more than God. And Satan commanded him, saying: Make an offering unto the Lord. 19 And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. 20 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; 21 But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. Now Satan knew this, and it pleased him. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

22 And the Lord said unto Cain: Why art thou wroth? Why is thy countenance fallen? 23 If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted. And if thou doest not well, 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; 24 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. 25 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.

26 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. 27 And Adam and his wife mourned before the Lord, because of Cain and his brethren. 28 And it came to pass that Cain took one of his brothers' daughters to wife, and they loved Satan more than God.

v16-28 The origin of the corruption of mankind. Cain rejects the Lord and follows Satan (v. 16). Cain fails to make offerings to the Lord, despite His standing command to do so (cf. v. 5), but does after he is commanded to do so by Satan (v. 18) indicating he is willing to obey Satan and not the Lord. Satan cunningly sets up Cain for a fall by having him offer a sacrifice he knows the Lord will reject (v. 21). Cain, formerly ignorant and rebellious, now becomes angry and hostile towards the Lord. The Lord is well aware of the situation and sternly warns Cain of

Satan's intentions to destroy him and the consequences of his current actions (v. 22-25). Cain is even more angry and ignores the Lord's warning and the admonitions of Abel (v. 26), much to the consternation of his parents (v. 27). Cain continues in his path of rebellion by marrying a woman and persuading her to serve the adversary as well (v. 28).

In The Five Books of Moses Everett Fox comments on the Genesis account as follows (all references in the quoted text are in the book of Genesis):

The First Brother (4:1-16): With the story of Kayin and Hevel the narrative points both forward and backward. For the first time the major Genesis themes of struggle and sibling hatred, and discontinuity between generations, make their appearance. In addition the concept of sin is introduced, having not appeared by name previously. One may observe significant links to the garden story. Once again human beings are given a choice; once again disregarding the warning leads to death and estrangement from God; and once again the primal bond between humanity and the soil is ruptured. Chapter 3 is directly recalled by the use of specific wording: God echoes the curse he had put on woman (3:16) in his warning to Kayin (4:7), and "Where is Hevel your brother?" (4:9) brings to mind "Where are you?" (3:9), which had been addressed to Kayin's father.

The text is punctuated by the use of "brother," a meaningful seven times, as well as by changing connotations of the word "face" (Kayin, unable to bring about the lifting of his own face, becomes estranged from God's). Repetition also helps to convey the harshness of Kayin's punishment: he is exiled to the "land of Nod/Wandering" (v. 16), for which we have been prepared by the "wavering and wandering" of verse 12 and 14.

v19-20 The PofGP Moses account contains considerable additional material over the Genesis account, which gives insight into Cain's personality. However, notwithstanding the additional material, the Genesis account does provide insight into Cain's personality in the two verses which parallel these. We are informed Cain brings the fruit of the ground where Abel brings the firstlings, the very best, of his flock. Cain did not bring the very best. Abel's zeal for the Lord is manifest and contrasted with Cain's lack of zeal.

v22-23c The Lord has a rhetorical question and answer session with Cain to identify what the problem really is:

Why art thou wroth?
Why is thy countenance fallen?
If thou doest well,
thou shalt be accepted.
And if thou doest not well,
Sin lieth at the door.

The Lord states very matter-of-fact that Cain's presently unhappy condition is simply a result of his own actions and he has nobody to blame but himself. This truth only angers Cain even more.

v23 "And thou shalt rule over him", the standard LDS reading on this is that Satan promised to do things for Cain (cf. v. 30) and Cain will ultimately rule over Satan because he will have a resurrected body and Satan will not. This reading is popular largely because the view was forwarded by Joseph Fielding Smith (Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 2, page 171) based upon a simple reading of the KJV.

This reading is based on a bad translation by the KJV on Gen. 4:7. A modern translation clarifies what the Lord is saying:

KJV Gen. 4:7

If thou doest well,
shalt thou not be accepted?
and if thou doest not well,
sin lieth at the door.
And unto thee shall be his desire,
and thou shalt rule over him.

JPS Gen. 4:7

Surely, if you do right,
There is uplift.
But if you do not do right
Sin couches at the door;
Its urge is towards you,
Yet you can be its master.

The Lord is telling Cain that even though he desires sin, he can still repent and not be a slave to sin. This translation is better, and the reading is much more contextual. However, the Moses account differs from the KJV account, as follows:

KJV Gen. 4:7

If thou doest well,
shalt thou not be accepted?
and if thou doest not well,
sin lieth at the door.

Moses 5:23

If thou doest well,
thou shalt be accepted.
And if thou doest not well,
sin lieth at the door,
and Satan desireth
to have thee; and
except thou shalt hearken

And unto thee
shall be his desire,
and thou shalt rule over him.

unto my commandments,
I will deliver thee up,
and it shall be unto thee
according to his desire.
And thou shalt rule over him;

The version in Moses inserts additional text wherein the Lord explicitly warns Cain not just against sin, but against the adversary in specific. The Lord then tells Cain that if he doesn't hear His warning, then He will deliver him up. Then the text returns to the Genesis account wording, with the final line in Moses being identical to the KJV Genesis account. The ambiguous pronouns of "his" and "him" seem to be attributable to "Satan" as he is referenced in the preceding additional text. But, the text of those lines, especially the last line, is a verbatim quotation of the Genesis account, which is a poor translation. A good translation makes it plain the ambiguous pronouns of "his" and "him" are in fact referring to Cain's own desire to sin, and not the adversary.

v24 This verse indicates Cain was Perdition before he was even born. This necessarily implies that in a pre-mortal setting Cain was at least of the same type as Satan. However, when the War in Heaven occurred Cain threw in his lot with the Lord instead of with his brother Satan. He must have, otherwise he would not have kept his first estate, and had the opportunity to participate in mortality. We are left to speculate as to the details, but a likely scenario would be that Cain foresaw Satan's side losing the War in Heaven so he sided with the opposition just so he could win. However, making the right choice on this one critical decision did not change Cain's nature. When he entered into mortality he still loved Satan.

See Ether 8:15 for a statement indicating Cain was a murderer from the beginning, and compare this with the John 8:44 statement that Satan was a murderer from the beginning. Also cp. Romans 9:22, and D&C 76:33.

The doctrinal implication is sons of Perdition are effectively foreordained by their affiliations with Satan prior to the War in Heaven.

v26 Cain resents what the Lord has to say and becomes even more angry, cp. 1 Ne. 16:2. Also note he is no longer listening to the voice of his righteous brother Abel. It is safe to conclude Abel was calling Cain to repentance as well, which may shed some additional light on the subsequent events.

29 And Satan said unto Cain: Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy 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. 30 And Satan sware unto Cain that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret.

31 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. 32 And Cain went into the field, and Cain talked with Abel, his brother. And it came to pass that while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him. 33 And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying: I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands.

v29-33 Taking advantage of his anger at the Lord's rebuke, Satan makes secret combinations with Cain, backed by death threats and the promise of satanic assistance (v. 29-30). Cain believes Satan's lies and is filled with hubris at his seemingly newfound power (v. 31). Thinking he can murder with impunity, Cain goes out and takes his revenge on Abel (v. 32-33).

v31 "Mahan", of the possible interpretations it seems most likely the word means "destroyer" as Cain is called "Perdition" in v. 24 and "perdition" means "destruction".

v33 "I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands", the second phrase is plainly referring to Cain's desire to get gain, cp. v. 50. The meaning of the statement "I am free" is more obscure. It is probably referring to his freedom from Abel's good example (v. 20-21) and Abel's calls to repentance (v. 26). For example, recall how receptive Laman and Lemuel were to Nephi's repeated calls to repentance and his consistent good example, as on a number of occasions they sought to kill both him and Lehi.

It can also be taken as a statement of something to the effect of "I am free to do as please, to murder for gain." In this case, v. 34-35 would be a sharp rebuke from the Lord as He immediately contradicts this statement and calls him accountable. Cain's confession in v. 39 "these things are not hid from the Lord" suggests he previously thought he could hide by means of his secret combinations.

34 And the Lord said unto Cain: Where is Abel, thy brother? And he said: I know not. Am I my brother's keeper? 35 And the Lord said: What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood cries unto me from the ground. 36 And now thou shalt be cursed from the earth which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. 37 when thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a

vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

38 And Cain said unto the Lord: Satan tempted me because of my brother's flocks. And I was wroth also; for his offering thou didst accept and not mine; my punishment is greater than I can bear. 39 Behold thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the Lord, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that he that findeth me will slay me, because of mine iniquities, for these things are not hid from the Lord.

40 And I the Lord said unto him: whosoever slayeth thee, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And I the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. 41 And Cain was shut out from the presence of the Lord, and with his wife and many of his brethren dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

v34-41 Despite the secret combinations with the adversary, the Lord confronts Cain concerning his murdering Abel, and curses him for it (v. 34-37). Cain refuses to take responsibility for his actions and claims his punishment is too severe (v. 38-39).

v36-37 The Lord takes a curse similar to that laid upon Adam in 4:23-25, and makes it much more severe. See also v. 39 where Cain's being driven out is more severe than Adam's as well.

v38 Cain refuses to accept responsibility for his actions and tries to blame it on Satan for tempting him and on the Lord for failing to accept his sacrifice. He then goes on to complain the curse is too severe, ignoring the fact he was previously warned exactly what would happen (cf. v. 23-25). The Lord does not retract his judgement or punishment, but he does respond to Cain's plea in v. 39 and puts a mark upon him for his own protection.

v39 "thou has driven me out", we have here a second "driving out", the first driving out was Adam & Eve from the physical presence of the Lord in 4:31 and here we have Cain being driven out, or "shut out" (v. 41), from the spiritual presence of the Lord.

v40-41 "set a mark upon Cain...shut out from the presence of the Lord", The "mark" is set upon Cain as a warning to others. The mark is not the punishment, the punishment is being cast out of the presence of the Lord referred to in v. 41. The lineage of Cain is later referred to as "black" (cf. 7:8, 7:22), which has traditionally been interpreted by inference to be referring to a black skin color although this is not explicitly stated as such in the text (i.e., the "black" might be figurative, but then what would the "mark" be? The "mark" must be something superficially

observable such that anyone seeing him will recognize him for what he is, thus the general context suggests the "blackness" is literal). This is a similar case to that of the Lamanites where the darker skin is used to physically and culturally separate the Nephites from the Lamanites (cf. 2 Ne. 5:21), and the punishment is the cutting off of the Lamanites from the presence of the Lord (cf. 1 Ne. 2:21, 2 Ne. 5:20). Also note the warning against bigotry based upon skin color in Jacob 3:8-8.

v40 For the first murder, the Lord does not impose capital punishment on Cain. Quite the opposite, he imposes an additional curse on anyone who kills the murderer. Capital punishment apparently is not instituted until the time of Noah (cf. Gen. 9:5-6). Why? The answer may be found in the examples of Nephi and Laman. It is plain through the book of 1 Nephi that Laman is a murderer, even though he never follows through on it, largely because of divine intervention. Why did the Lord relent in the case of Laman? He explains this to Nephi in 1 Ne. 2:19-24, and perhaps the same arrangement was necessary at that time.

42 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch, and he also begat many sons and daughters. And he builded a city, and he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. 43 And unto Enoch was born Irad, and other sons and daughters. And Irad begat Mahujael, and other sons and daughters. And Mahujael begat Methusael, and other sons and daughters. And Methusael begat Lamech. 44 And Lamech took unto himself two wives; the name of one being Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. 45 And Adah bare Jubal; he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and they were keepers of cattle; and his brother's name was Jubal, who was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. 46 And Zillah, she also bare Tubal Cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron. And the sister of Tubal Cain was called Naamah.

v42-46 The lineage of Cain, the most notable of which are troublemakers.

v45 "Jubal, who was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ", in the OT prophets one described in such a manner would be what we would refer to today as a "partyer" (cf. Isa. 5:12, Amos 6:3-7). This statement is pejorative and not simply informing us he was musically inclined. Modern translations render it to "lyre and pipe" rather than "harp and organ".

v46 "Tubal Cain, as instructor of every artificer of brass and iron", this stays true to the KJV rendering, which is not very good. A better translation would be "burnisher of every blade of copper and iron" (Everett Fox, The Five Books of Moses). This

statement is once again pejorative, indicating the implements he forged were weapons and not tools.

47 And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah: Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. 48 If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech shall be seventy and seven fold;

49 For Lamech having entered into a covenant with Satan, after the manner of Cain, wherein he became Master Mahan, master of that great secret which was administered unto Cain by Satan; and Irad, the son of Enoch, having known their secret, began to reveal it unto the sons of Adam; 50 wherefore Lamech, being angry, slew him, not like unto Cain, his brother Abel, for the sake of getting gain, but he slew him for the oath's sake. 51 For, from the days of Cain, there was a secret combination, and their works were in the dark, and they knew every man his brother.

52 wherefore the Lord cursed Lamech, and his house, and all them that had covenanted with Satan; for they kept not the commandments of God, and it displeased God, and he ministered not unto them, and their works were abominations, and began to spread among all the sons of men. And it was among the sons of men.

53 And among the daughters of men these things were not spoken, because that Lamech had spoken the secret unto his wives, and they rebelled against him, and declared these things abroad, and had not compassion; 54 wherefore Lamech was despised, and cast out, and came not among the sons of men, lest he should die.

v47-54 Lamech murders his great-grandfather for the sake of the oath of the secret combination, is exposed for his actions, and is ultimately made into an outcast by the women of his people.

Ironically, Lamech thinks he will obtain even greater protection by increasing the curse from the Lord from seven to seventy seven (v. 48), but it backfires and he has to flee for his life from his own people (v. 54).

v52 Those who follow after Lamech's example are "shut out" from the presence of God as was Cain, cp. v. 41.

v53-54 Unfortunately, the text does not indicate why Lamech's wives turned against him and made him an outcast, only that they did. Where Cain persuaded his wife to love Satan (cf. v. 28), Lamech obviously failed to. This action by his wives resulted in a gender gap in the secret combination.

v53 "wives", Lamech was practicing polygamy, apparently the first documented case.

55 And thus the works of darkness began to prevail among all the

sons of men. 56 And God cursed the earth with a sore curse, and was angry with the wicked, with all the sons of men whom he had made; 57 For they would not hearken unto his voice, nor believe on his Only Begotten Son, even him whom he declared should come in the meridian of time, who was prepared from before the foundation of the world.

58 And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. 59 And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam, by an holy ordinance, and the Gospel preached, and a decree sent forth, that it should be in the world, until the end thereof; and thus it was. Amen.

v55-59 These verses summarize of events of chapter 5 (v. 55-57) and introduce chapter 6 (v. 58-59). Even though the gospel was preached from the beginning to Adam (v. 58-59), the sons of men rebelled against the Lord (v. 55, 57) causing Him to curse them (v. 56).

Copyright © 2013 by S. Kurt Neumiller <kurt.neumiller@gmail.com>. All rights reserved. No part of this text may be reproduced in any form or by any means for commercial gain without the express written consent of the author. Digital or printed copies may be freely made and distributed for personal and public non-commercial use.