

Old Testament Lesson #5

“IF THOU DOEST WELL THOU SHALT BE ACCEPTED”

by Ted L, Gibbons

INTRODUCTION: The pattern followed in Moses 5 is the pattern still followed by Lucifer and his fallen angels. Whenever truth is taught or righteousness appears, Lucifer will make an effort to counteract the effects of such activity. After Adam and Eve were taught the fundamentals of the atonement, they

blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters. (Moses 5:12)

I can imagine Adam and Eve describing to their descendants the joy of the Garden and the experience of being in the presence of divine beings. Now such accounts could be accompanied by a promise that such companionship was possible once again for all of God’s children. But Lucifer, almost instantaneously, was there to deflect the power of the word.

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. (Moses 5:13)

1. CAIN COVENANTS WITH SATAN, KILLS ABEL, AND IS CURSED BY THE LORD.

We do not know if the material in Moses 5 is strictly chronological. What we do know is that many of the children of Adam and Eve rejected their parents’ witness of the atonement and loved Satan more than God (Moses 5:13)

When Cain was born, his mother said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words. But Cain did reject the Lord and the teachings of his parents, “and Cain loved Satan more than God.” (Moses 5:18) the command of the Lord to offer sacrifice was still in force, and both Cain and his brother Abel participated. But there was a problem with Cain and with his sacrifice: in fact there were three of them:

1. Cain loved Satan more than God.
2. Cain only offered a sacrifice because Satan commanded him to.
3. Cain offered the wrong kind of sacrifice.

What is happening with Cain is rather like what would happen if a high councilman decided to worship each Sunday in the canyons rather than in church, and to roast hot dogs rather than take the sacrament. He might feel good about what he did but the Lord would not give such activity his approval nor the blessings promised to those who partake worthily of the sacrament.

And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering; But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect. (Moses 5:20,21)

What offering did Cain bring? Fruit of the ground (5:19). In later years, Israel would sacrifice certain plants and grains, but in the beginning, the sacrifice commanded by the Lord was simple blood sacrifice—the sacrifice of the firstlings of the flock. There could be no similitude in a carrot or a rutabaga or an apple. If Cain had no sheep or goats of his own, then he must trade with Abel for one.

Of course Satan knew this would happen. “It pleased him” (5:21) And what happened next must have pleased him too. “Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”

Not many of us enjoy being corrected. We are not anxious to be wrong, but when we are, we do not want it pointed out to us. Nevertheless, we must submit. We must bow before the Lord and his servants and make ourselves obedient.

God spoke to Cain. “Why art thou wroth? Why is thy countenance fallen? (5:22) This is the core of resistance to any call to repentance. Why are you upset? Why are you bitter? The matter is simple. “If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted.” (5:23) But Cain would have none of it. “For he rejected the greater counsel that was had from God . . . He listened not any more to the voice of the Lord . . .” (5:25,26)

What damage is done when we refuse to listen to the voices that call us to repentance? What happened to Cain? (5:31) What happened to Adam and Eve? (5:27)

Cain organized the first secret combination, swearing Cain and his brethren to

silence and secrecy. (5:29,30).

Abel preached to his brother just as his parents had done. (5:26) But Satan offered him a way to put a stop to that and to become the sole owner of Abel's flocks, and get away with it. Satan was

that same being who did plot with Cain, that if he would murder his brother Abel it should not be known unto the world. And he did plot with Cain and his followers from that time forth. (Hel. 6:27)

So Cain killed his brother and "gloried in that which he had done." (5:33) He said something else. "I am free." Satan had promised him that no one would ever know. In addition he may have felt free from the meddling, preaching voice of his little brother.

The compounding nature of Cain's rebellion teaches a great lesson. When he took a wife, "they loved Satan more than God." (5:28) They had children and their children had children. Read Moses 5:41-54 and ponder the tragedy Cain invited into his family by his rebellion. How comfortable would you be if your children's patriarchal blessings promised them that they would be just like their parents? How often do children follow the example, good or bad, of parents?

The works of darkness began to grow and spread. Notice the solemn statement in Moses 5:55. What does the word 'prevail' suggest to you about this society. Moroni warned us about secret combinations. "Suffer not that these murderous combinations shall get above you," he wrote (Ether 8:23), but in the days of Lamech, that is exactly what happened.

2. ENOCH PREACHES REPENTANCE TO THE PEOPLE

Things were pretty bad in the days of Seth.

And the children of men were numerous upon all the face of the land. And in those days Satan had great dominion among men, and raged in their hearts; and from thenceforth came wars and bloodshed; and a man's hand was against his own brother, in administering death, because of secret works, seeking for power. (Moses 6:15)

But Seth had Enos and Enos had Cainan. Cainan was a part of the first migration of

a righteous people to a land of promise. They left the wicked in the land of Shulon and settled in a land called Cainan. (6:17) Mahalaleel was the son of Cainan and the father of Jared. Note that all these men—the patriarchs of the human family—were “preachers of righteousness” who “called upon all men, everywhere, to repent.” (6:23)

Jared had a son named Enoch, who lived 65 years and begat Methuselah. As the wickedness of the world increased, God called Enoch to a special service.

Enoch, my son, prophesy unto this people, and say unto them--Repent, for thus saith the Lord: I am angry with this people, and my fierce anger is kindled against them; for their hearts have waxed hard, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes cannot see afar off. . . (6:27)

The condition of the wicked is outlined with statements about hearts, ears and eyes. Their eye problem was that they could not see afar off. Have you known people like that. People whose only concern is to live in the present, to be happy now, to have more stuff now, to be rich now. How does such an attitude damage a life? How does it curtail spiritual growth?

Enoch would in fact become a man who could see afar off . . .

And the Lord spake unto Enoch, and said unto him: Anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see. And he did so. And he beheld the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people. (6:35,36)

But first he had to deal with that call from the Lord!

And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying: Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant? (6:31)

Enoch would have other challenges. “All men were offended because of him” (6:37), and they thought him “a wild man . . .” (6:38)

Enoch's announcement that he is "but a lad" is interesting for one who seems to be at least 65 years old. But there is some sense to it. At the time of his call by the Lord, Jared, his father, was 227 years old; his grandfather, Mahalaleel, was 292. Cainan was 362, Enos was 452, Seth was 567, and Adam was only 687 and still had 243 years to live! And you remember that these men were all preachers of righteousness. No wonder Enoch cried "I . . . am but a lad." This would be much like sending a teacher from Tabiona to begin the preaching of the Gospel in Afghanistan.

But the Lord made five promises to Enoch, promises designed to comfort and protect him in his calling.

1. "No man shall pierce thee" (6:32)
2. "I will give thee utterance" (6:32)
3. "My Spirit is upon you" (6:34)
4. "All thy words will I justify" (6:34)
5. "Thou shalt abide in me, and I in you" (6:34)

The conclusion of the call and the promises is this: "Therefore, walk with me." I believe that this invitation is extended to all who called into the ministry. "Walk with me." Enoch did, and we learn this of him later:

And it came to pass when [the people] heard him, no man laid hands on him; for fear came on all them that heard him; for he walked with God. (6:39)

When Enoch spoke what happened?

And as Enoch spake forth the words of God, the people trembled, and could not stand in his presence. (6:47)

Enoch said when he was called that he was "slow of speech." Do you sense from the two verses above that he no longer suffers from that handicap?

3. THE PEOPLE IN THE CITY OF ENOCH ARE OF ONE HEART AND ONE MIND WITH THE LORD, AND THE ENTIRE CITY IS TAKEN TO HEAVEN.

Enoch preached with power and priesthood and build a city of righteousness that would eventually be translated (7:21). But in the days of preparation for that event, wickedness increased in the earth. We will speak of the impending flood and its causes in the next lesson, but take a moment to reflect on what Enoch has become.

And so great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him.
(Moses 7:13)

This power of Enoch reminded me of a passage in the Joseph Smith Translation. You will find it in your JST Appendix in Genesis 14:30,31.

For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; To put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; to do all things according to his will, according to his command, subdue principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was before the foundation of the world.

The oath sworn by God to Enoch and his seed is a promise made to us. Enoch was the Father off Methuselah, who was the father of Lamech, who was the father of Noah. Every mortal is therefore a descendant of Enoch. And those mortals who receive the Melchizedek Priesthood have power promised to them by their faith to do the very works done by Enoch.

The translation of Enoch and his people occurred. What was the world like after they left? (7:24,26) When people repented following the translation of Enoch, what happened to them? (7:27) When only the wicked were left,

God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept; and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is it that the heavens weep, and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains? And Enoch said

unto the Lord: How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity? . . . and naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne; and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end; how is it thou canst weep? (7:28-31)

CONCLUSION: This is a penetrating, heart-rending image. Enoch could not comprehend how God could weep. He presided over worlds without number, a congregation of constellations describe in this way by Enoch:

And were it possible that man could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations; and thy curtains are stretched out still . . .

Why would he weep over a tiny pocket of wickedness in an obscure corner of his universe? His answer to Enoch's question is profound:

The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency; And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood . . . (7:32,33)

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