

## Introduction

"As early as June 1830, opposition to the newly organized Church had become a force to be reckoned with. Intolerant neighbors and outsiders harassed the members. At times bigotry erupted into mob rule.

"Not unexpectedly, much of this malevolent force was directed toward the Prophet Joseph Smith. That June a mean-spirited constable arrested and verbally abused the Prophet for the better part of a day. The constable refused to allow Joseph to eat. It was not until that evening, after traveling 15 miles, that the lawman stopped at a tavern for refreshment. Even during the meal, he continued to torment the Prophet. According to Joseph Smith's account, the constable gathered a number of men 'who used every means to abuse, ridicule and insult me. They spit upon me, pointed their fingers at me, saying, `Prophecy, prophecy!' and thus did they imitate those who crucified the Savior of mankind, not knowing what they did.'

"However, the Lord continued to sustain his people and his prophet, and revelations poured from heaven. Joseph reported that 'amid all the trials and tribulations we had to wade through, the Lord, who well knew our infantile and delicate situation, vouchsafed for us a supply of strength, and granted us 'line upon line of knowledge-here a little and there a little,' of which the following was a precious morsel.' The Prophet then recorded the revelation that is now chapter 1 of the book of Moses but was at first called 'the vision of Moses.'

"It was under these circumstances that the Lord began the process leading to the creation of the book of Moses-a most remarkable book, one of the revelatory gems of the Restoration and a major component of the Pearl of Great Price...

"When the Prophet Joseph Smith first released the whole series of Moses revelations to the Church in December 1830, he lumped them into two distinct documents. The first he titled 'A Revelation given to the Elders of the Church of Christ on the first Book of Moses/Chapter First,' which now comprises Moses, chapters 2 through 4. The second he titled 'Chapter 2nd-a Revelation Concerning Adam after he had been driven out of the garden of Eden.' It began with our present chapter 7 and carried the history well beyond Adam to Noah, ending at what is now Moses 8:12.

"The Prophet continued to ponder and work on the Moses revelations as time allowed over the next few years, and his work was published in various Church newspapers. However, the published excerpts were only segments of what would later become the book of Moses. The published book itself resulted from work done by Elder Orson Pratt of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1878. The First Presidency asked him to edit the 1851 edition of the Pearl of Great Price that had been published in England under the direction of Elder Franklin D. Richards, also of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. President Richards's work contained only a part of what is now in the book of Moses. Elder Pratt, having assisted Joseph Smith with some of his work on the portions printed decades earlier, pulled together all the revelations and called the whole 'the Book of Moses.' This work was first published in its entirety as part of the 1878 edition of the Pearl of Great Price.

"During general conference in October 1880, the Saints accepted this remarkable book along with the rest of the Pearl of Great Price as one of the standard works of the Church. It is of note that the powerful doctrines contained in the book of Moses and the other books in the Pearl of Great Price were not canonized until the Lord had proved his Saints. When they showed themselves hungry for these precious morsels of his word, he inspired his prophets to make the Pearl of Great Price binding as scripture." (Richard D. Draper, "The Remarkable Book of Moses," *Ensign*, Feb. 1997, 15)

### **Moses 1:1 God... spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up**

When did Moses receive this revelation, before or after the Exodus? This revelation came to Moses after he spoke to Jehovah at the burning bush (Ex. 3:1-6). Moses referred to the burning bush revelation in his present battle with Satan, declaring that he had been commanded previously to pray to God and would worship none other (v. 17). But this revelation apparently came before Moses returned to Egypt to deliver the children of Israel, for in this revelation he is promised the power of God by which he would deliver them (v. 25-26).

Moses left Egypt and settled in Midian with Jethro. During this time, he married one of Jethro's daughters; he was also called to be a prophet (Ex. 2-4). It would have been during this time-before he had returned to Egypt to deliver Israel-that Moses 1 occurred.

### **Moses 1:1 Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain**

## Bruce R. McConkie

The mountains of the Lord! The mountains of the Great Jehovah! The holy places where the soles of his feet have trod! How grand they are! And they are the towering peaks and the cloud-topped summits where the temples of the Lord—all of them—shall be built in the last days.

In all the days of his goodness, mountain heights have been the places chosen by the Lord to commune with his people. The experiences of Enoch, and of Moriancumer, and of Moses show how the Lord deigned to deal with his servants when they lifted themselves temporally and spiritually toward heaven's heights...

Is it any wonder, then, that in prophetic imagery the term "mountains of the Lord" has become a symbol to identify the places where spiritual blessings are received? The restored gospel is "a banner upon the high mountain" (Isa. 13:2); when we preach the gospel, we "publish it upon the mountains" (D&C 19:29); and the Lord's promise to Zion is that she "shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains" (D&C 49:25). The highest accolade of praise bestowed upon a preacher of righteousness is the sweet expression: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, The God reigneth!" (Isa. 52:7.)

Singling out the righteous from among men, the Psalmic word asks: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" Is not the hill of the Lord the place where salvation is found? "Or who shall stand in his holy place?" (Ps. 24:3.) Is not his holy place his temple on earth and his eternal kingdom hereafter? Indeed, those who gain exaltation in the highest heaven hereafter are said to "come unto Mount Zion." (D&C 76:66.) Truly, the mountains of the Lord are the places of greatest spiritual refreshment in this life and the places of the fulness of spiritual enjoyment in the life to come.

All of this is but prelude to saying that all of the holy temples of our God in the latter days shall be built in the mountains of the Lord, for his mountains—whether the land itself is a hill, a valley, or a plain—are the places where he comes, personally and by the power of his Spirit, to commune with his people. If he has no house on earth, he comes to a mountaintop or other places of his own choosing, but when his people have built him a place "where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20), as it were,

then he comes to that holy house. (*The Millennial Messiah: The Second Coming of the Son of Man* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 275-276)

**Moses 1:2 he saw God face to face and he talked with him**

**Marion G. Romney**

This clear and certain knowledge of God the Eternal Father and his Only Begotten Son and man's likeness and relationship to them was given to Moses [by] the time he led Israel from Egypt. The revelation was then necessary, because during their bondage Israel's knowledge of God had been corrupted. (*Conference Report*, April 1970, Second Day-Morning Meeting 68)

**Moses 1:5 no man can behold all my works... and no man can behold all my glory**

"This is my work and my glory..." you know the rest. God may tell us about his *work*; He may tell us about his *glory*. He may show us a portion of his *work*; He may show us a portion of his *glory*. But man, in his state of infinite finiteness, cannot comprehend either God's works or his glory. He can't even be transfigured to comprehend them. They are so great, so incomprehensible, that no one can remain mortal who sees them all. That's pretty remarkable!

**Orson Pratt**

"No man can behold all my glory and afterwards remain in the flesh;" that is, it would consume him; the sight would be so overwhelming that the mortal tabernacle would melt away. Should a mortal man be permitted to gaze upon all the works of God, which include all His glory, mortality could not endure it. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 2: 245)

**Hugh Nibley**

So, here we have a big scene. We're only going to be shown a small part of it, but it's a real part. He says, Look, and I will show it to you, but I won't show it all to you because it is without end, and you can't see that now. (*Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe, 1)

## Delbert L. Stapley

Now to me this verse is so meaningful it justifies a second reading, and I would ask that you please keep in mind as I repeat the verse the improbability of man conquering space and uncovering the secret of God's extensive creation and works and glories. (January 10, 1962, *BYU Speeches of the Year, 1962*, p. 9)

### **Moses 1:6 thou art in the similitude of mine Only Begotten**

All men and women are created in the similitude of God, "And I, God, created man in mine own image, in the image of mine Only Begotten created I him; male and female created I them" (Moses 2:27).

With Moses, there is an additional meaning. Moses' ministry was also in the similitude of Jesus' ministry. Speaking to the Israelite, Moses declared, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things" (1 Ne. 22:20; Deut. 18:15-19)

A full comparison of the prophet Moses and the prophet Jesus is beyond the scope of this chapter, but within this chapter, we see several similarities, especially in dealing with Satan (See Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).

- Moses and Jesus both commune with God upon a high mountain prior to their mortal ministry
- They both are physically weak at the end of the communion, Christ because of fasting, Moses because of mortality (v. 10)
- In a weakened state, both are tempted by Satan
- In both instances, Satan is angry that he is not God's Only Begotten, that he is not worshipped.
- Moses and Jesus both reject Satan's temptations with the word of God
- After triumphing against Satan, both are visited with more divine communication (Matt. 4:11)

### **Moses 1:8 Moses beheld the world and the ends thereof, and... he greatly marveled and wondered**

## Neal A. Maxwell

Some easily fall into the trap described by Paul, when they are "ever learning" but "never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (2 Tim. 3:7.) One might learn, for instance, a great deal about the physical

characteristics of this planet earth, but yet be ignorant of why it was created in the first place. (See Isa. 45:18; 1 Ne. 17:36; Moses 1:33, 39)

For mortals, therefore, the gospel is inexhaustible, because "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10.) Jacob's words are strikingly similar to Paul's: "For the Spirit speaketh the truth ... of things as they really are, and ... as they really will be." (Jacob 4:13.) Unsurprisingly, the scriptural definition of truth matches: "Truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come." (D&C 93:24.) What vastness!

In fact, the ultimate place in which we hope to be is "in the presence of God, ... where all things ... are manifest, past, present, and future, and are continually before the Lord." (D&C 130:7.) What a wondrous God we worship. The **Prophet Joseph Smith** said, "The past, the present, and the future were and are, with [Jehovah], one eternal 'now.' " (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 220) How different the Lord's "now" is from ours. While encountering and exploring such vastness, we sometimes know more than our tongues can tell. Knowledge which is "spiritually discerned" is not always easily communicated.

In exploring this comprehensiveness and everlastingness, there will be some surprises. Our understanding of some things will be restructured and expanded, especially in the world to come, for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9.) In eternity, when the faithful receive "all that [the] Father hath," this will include an enormous enlargement intellectually. (D&C 84:38.) ("The Inexhaustible Gospel," *Ensign*, Apr. 1993, 70)

**Moses 1:8-12 the presence of God withdrew from Moses... and Moses was left unto himself**

**Hugh Nibley**

Moses is down on the earth now. He's flat; he's out cold. He is in a dismal state, but he still trails clouds of glory. (*Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe [n.p., n.d.], 2)

**Orson Pratt**

Moses began to understand that it was not for him as a mortal personage to cast his eyes forth and behold all the infinite creations of the Almighty dispersed through boundless space; but the Lord was willing that he should know in part. And Moses, when he saw the glory of God, and the things with which he was surrounded, pertaining to the planetary systems, he began to wonder and marvel, as you and I would do if we had the privilege of gazing in vision upon the works of God. And while he was marveling at what he had seen, the Lord for some reason, withdrew from him, probably to try him, to see if he would be faithful to him. And when the Spirit of the Lord was taken from him, and the glory of God had withdrawn from him and the Lord himself had departed from before him, Moses was left to himself. O how weak! He fell to the earth, and for the space of many hours he did not receive his natural strength. And when in this weak, fallen condition he exclaimed, I know now that man is nothing; and he began to call upon the Lord to restore his strength. And Satan, we learn, took advantage of Moses on this occasion, while thus left to himself, and came and stood before him, and said Moses, son of man, I am the Only Begotten, worship me. Moses looked upon Satan and perceived the difference at once between the glorious personage that had appeared to him a short time before, and the personage of Satan. And Moses in looking upon this strange visitor said, Where is thy glory that I should worship thee? (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 20: 72 - 73)

**Moses 1:10 man is nothing**

**Richard E. Turley Sr.**

Philosophies abound which belittle man's position on this earth. In the account of Moses, even he thought after seeing the creations of God that man is nothing, but God made it clear to him that man is everything. (*Ensign*, May 1998, 84)

**Aileen H. Clyde**

What a wonder, to Moses and to us, that we, who may feel as nothing when we compare ourselves to the vast universe, are in fact the reason for its creation and for the creation of the earth.

I think it is important to stretch our minds and try to comprehend, as Moses was shown, the paradox of being small and great at the same

time. The scriptures help us keep in our awareness our unique and eternal identities. We had existence as individuals long before this life. We had agency then, and we chose to come to earth, though we knew there would be hazards and hard things here. We had sufficient confidence then to choose to follow the plan of Jesus Christ. We knew that his help would come in showing us ways to live righteously, ways to love and serve each other, and ways to shun the bad and seek the good.

Then a transition takes place and we find ourselves here—one of the ones Moses saw—part of a great panorama, and yet struggling as individuals to find the identity we once knew. ("Confidence through Conversion," *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 88)

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

Comparing what we are with what we have the power to become should give us great spiritual hope. Think of it this way: There are some very serene, blue lakes on this planet situated in cavities which once were red, belching volcanos. Likewise, there are beautiful, green, tropical mountains formed from ancient, hot extrusions. The parallel transformation of humans is much more remarkable than all of that—much more beautiful and much more everlasting!

So it is, amid the vastness of His creations, God's personal shaping influence is felt in the details of our lives—not only in the details of the galaxies and molecules but, much more importantly, in the details of our own lives. Somehow God is providing these individual tutorials for us while at the same time He is overseeing cosmic funerals and births, for as one earth passes away so another is born (see Moses 1:38). It is marvelous that He would attend to us so personally in the midst of those cosmic duties. ("Becoming a Disciple," *Ensign*, June 1996, 17)

**Moses 1:11 my natural eyes could not have beheld; for I should have withered and died in his presence**

### **Orson F. Whitney**

That is what John meant when he said: "No man hath seen God at any time." And that is what Paul meant, in saying: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." It means that no man with his natural eyes can see God in his glory. He must use his spirit eyes, the eyes with which he "walked by



sight" when a spirit in the spirit world, the eyes that he saw with before coming to earth and receiving his natural eyes. In this second estate, where we "walk by faith," we are not permitted to use at all times our spirit sight. But now and then the Lord chooses one from among men, and gives him that rare privilege. The power of God comes upon such a one, transfigures him, opens his spirit eyes, and constitutes him a seer in the highest sense of the term. Such a man was Moses. Such a man was the brother of Jared, such a man was Nephi, and such a man was Joseph Smith. There have been many such men. They have seen God actually, literally, but it was with their spiritual and not with their natural eyes. "The natural man is an enemy to God;" the natural eye cannot behold him, the natural ear cannot hear him. But the spirit eye can behold him, and the spirit ear can hear him. With the Spirit of the Lord upon us, we can see and comprehend God, so far as he chooses to make himself known. This is the great differentiating feature between the Latter-day Saints and those who have not received the gift of the Holy Ghost. (*Conference Report*, October 1924, First Day-Morning Session 23)

### **Spencer W. Kimball**

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 other wise 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. (*Conference Report*, April 1964, Afternoon Meeting 94 - 95.)

### **Howard W. Hunter**

A seer is one who sees. This does not mean that he sees through his natural eyes but rather through spiritual eyes. The seeric gift is a supernatural endowment. Joseph was like unto Moses, the ancient seer, who saw God face to face, but he explains how he saw him in these words: "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" (Moses 1:11).

We should not suppose that to see spiritually is not to see literally. Such vision is not fancy or imagination. The object is actually beheld, but not with the natural eyes. (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 225)

### **Moses 1:12-13 Moses, son of man, worship me**

"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)

### **Moses 1:15 I can judge between thee and God**

"Satan became agitated and insistent and redoubled his efforts, tempting Moses again. Satan told him, 'I am the Only Begotten, worship me' (Moses 1:19).

"Moses knew this was not true, but Satan's rantings had a terrifying effect on him. However, he did not let fear overtake him. He prayed again, received strength from God, and commanded Satan again to depart. Then with loud wailing, weeping, and gnashing of teeth, Satan finally departed (see Moses 1:20-22).

"Moses recognized error, he prayed continually for help, and he overcame fear. Thus he was able to defy Satan's attempts to intimidate him.

"We want to enable our children to recognize error and take action, as Moses did. This is much more than simply telling them what to think and what to do. It is helping them seek for and love truth and choose to act

independently, to act according to it." (Michaelene P. Grassli, "Helping Children Know Truth from Error," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 13)

## **James E. Talmage**

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. (*Conference Report*, April 1931, Afternoon Meeting 27.)

### **Moses 1:20 he saw the bitterness of hell**

The contrasts here are extreme. Having just conversed with God, having just beheld the earth and all of its inhabitants, Moses sees "the bitterness of hell." From heaven to hell; Moses saw both and everything in between. But he didn't see it for long, "I, the Lord, show it by vision unto many, but straightway shut it up again; Wherefore, the end, the width, the height, the depth, and the misery thereof, they understand not, neither any man except those who are ordained unto this condemnation." (D&C 76:47-48)

### **Moses 1:21 In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan**

This is the fourth time Moses commands Satan to leave. This is the first time that Satan leaves. The first three times lacked sufficient authority to command Satan; the fourth invoked the name of the Only Begotten, and Satan had no choice but to leave.

"Moses had learned something about himself. He was a son of God. Oh, how important it is that our children be reminded of this truth. And Moses commanded Satan to leave, but to no avail. And Satan was

angry. Moses again commanded him to depart, and Satan cried and ranted upon the earth, again refusing to leave (see Moses 1:18-19).

"Moses then realized that he had a major challenge on his hands. This was no ordinary person. He was fearsome, angry, and powerful. Moses wanted no part of this and commanded boldly, 'Depart from me, Satan, for this one God only will I worship, which is the God of glory. And now Satan began to tremble, and the earth shook' (Moses 1:20-21).

"Here was a power that was dark and bitter. How could Moses withstand such? In this great moment of crisis, 'Moses received strength, and called upon God, saying: In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan' (Moses 1:21). He now appealed to a power beyond his own. He tapped into a source of strength and authority through the Lord Jesus Christ, a power which Satan could not defy. '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' (Moses 1:22).

"Years ago, one of our colleagues shared this tender experience with us. His young daughter, Kim, had just learned to count. In fact, she could count all the way from one to ten. They were so excited they called Grandma. 'Hi, Grandma. Do you want to hear me count?' Then she began to count, 'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.' Perhaps the Savior smiled and was pleased that Kim could count from one to ten.

"When we use these sacred words, 'in the name of Jesus Christ,' they are much more than a way to get out of a prayer or out of a testimony or out of a talk. We are on holy ground, brothers and sisters. We are using a name most sublime, most holy, and most wonderful-the very name of the Son of God. We are now able to come unto the Father through His Beloved Son. What power and reassurance and peace come when we really pray in His name. This conclusion to the prayer may, in many ways, be the most important part of the prayer. We can appeal to the Father through His victorious Son with confidence that our prayers will be heard. We can ask and receive, we can seek and find and subsequently find the open door." (L. Edward Brown, "Pray unto the Father in My Name," *Ensign*, May 1997, 79)

**Spencer W. Kimball**

"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. (*Ensign*, Mar. 1976, 71)

**Moses 1:15-22 Satan cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth**

### **Hugh Nibley**

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.

Casting off all pretense to his celebrated subtlety and cunning, the Adversary resorts to an all-out frontal attack, and the battle is on—the ritual combat that meets us so often in the earliest dramatic and epic literature of the race: "Satan cried with a loud voice, and rent upon the earth, and commanded, saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me." (Verse 19.) Moses was terrified by the ferocity and passion of the attack; in fact he was quite overcome. Paralyzed with fear, "he saw the bitterness of hell." (Verse 20.) It is the well-known theme of the hero-king reduced to the last extremity, calling with his last ounce of strength out of "the bitterness of hell": "Nevertheless, calling upon God, he receives strength" (verse 20), and at the last moment is delivered.

And now the tables are turned: It is the dark opponent who is down; he trembles and the earth shakes as he retreats in uproar and anguish. (*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)

**Moses 1:25 thou shalt be made stronger than many waters**

## Hugh Nibley

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. (*Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price*, edited by Robert Smith and Robert Smythe [n.p., n.d.], 4-5)

**Moses 1:27 Moses... beheld the earth... there was not a particle of it which he did not behold**

## Orson Pratt

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. (*Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854-1886], 2: 245)

### **Vaughn J. Featherstone**

If we could "number the particles of the earth, yea millions of earths . . . it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations." We have to surrender our puny understandings to an incomprehensible totality of creations by the Creator. Including every blade of grass, every flower, tree, shrub, animal, fish, insect, such a vision reaches far beyond our mortal ability to understand or comprehend.

And yet He touches our individual lives. (*The Incomparable Christ: Our Master and Model* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 33)

### **Moses 1:33 worlds without number have I created**

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

The vastness of it all is truly overwhelming. We are living on a small planet which is part of a very modest solar system, which, in turn, is located at the outer edge of the awesome Milky Way galaxy. If we were sufficiently distant from the stunning Milky Way, it would be seen as but another bright dot among countless other bright dots in space, all of which could cause us to conclude, comparatively, "that man is nothing." (Moses 1:10.)

Yet we are rescued by such reassuring realities as that God knows and loves each of us personally and perfectly. Hence, there is incredible intimacy in the vastness of it all. Are not the very hairs of one's head

numbered? Is not the fall of each sparrow noticed? (See Matt. 10:29-30.) Has Jesus not borne, and therefore knows, our sins, sicknesses, and infirmities? (See Alma 7:11-12.)

Furthermore, the eventual purpose of it all is centered not on some other cosmic concern but on us-"to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) President Brigham Young said there are millions of earths like this one so that certain planets, as Isaiah said, are formed to be inhabited (see Isa. 45:18) as God's plan of salvation is executed and reexecuted! How glorious is our God! Truly, as the Psalmist said, "We are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." (Ps. 95:7.)

Has he not even told us that his "course is one eternal round"? (D&C 3:2.) Are we not also given intriguing intimations such as how "planets ... move in their times and seasons" and how "all these kingdoms, and the inhabitants thereof" are to know the joy of seeing the countenance of the Lord-"every kingdom in its hour, and in its time, and in its season"? (See D&C 88:42, 43, 61.)

In fact, has not the Almighty Father, who oversees it all, shared with us almost more than we can comprehend about his work? But we can understand enough to trust God regarding that which we do not understand. ("Thanks Be to God," *Ensign*, July 1982, 51)

**Moses 1:35 all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them**

**Glenn L. Pace**

This must have been overwhelming to Moses, and he wondered about the purpose of it all. Seemingly, the Lord teased him a little and didn't give him a direct answer to his thoughts. He said, "For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me." Then He added, "And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose. . . . The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine." (Moses 1:31-37.)

In some incomprehensible way, the Lord knows all of His creations intimately. He knows the heavens, the earth, and, more importantly, each individual on any one of the numberless earths. To leave no doubt in Moses' mind that numberless earths are not enough, the Lord



continued, "As one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works." (Moses 1:38.)

And then the Lord felt that Moses was ready to have his question answered. As Moses marveled and wondered-Why this earth? Why all the other earths? And why will there always be more?-the Savior gave him the answer: "For behold, this is my work and my glory-to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.)

The Savior is omnipotent. He is omniscient. With all this power and knowledge, what does He choose to do with His time? His whole purpose in being is to serve others by bringing to pass their immortality and eternal life. He has no other interest. His desire, which seems insatiable, is to lift others. He has an absolute, righteous need for an eternal expression, or outlet, for His infinite love. (*Spiritual Plateaus* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1991], 107)

**Moses 1:37 the heavens... are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man**

**Robert D. Hales**

Just think of what science and astronomy tell us about the expanse of the solar system and the universe. Our solar system centers on the sun, one of a huge group of stars on the order of 100 billion stars swirling around a huge pinwheel-shaped mass called the Milky Way galaxy, which is about 100,000 light-years across. Astronomers cannot see to the end of the universe, but evidence suggests that the vastness of space contains billions of galaxies stretching for an expanse of 5 billion to 15 billion light-years away from the sun. Compared with such distances, our solar system occupies a very tiny amount of space. The universe is virtually incomprehensible to man (see Compton's Living Encyclopedia, s.v. "Solar System").

We sing in praise:

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,

I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,

Thy pow'r thru-out the universe displayed;  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
(Hymns, no. 86)

("In Remembrance of Jesus," *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 25)

**Moses 1:39 This is my work**

**Neal A. Maxwell**

Our Heavenly Father has described His vast plan for His children by saying, "Behold, this is my work and my glory-to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39; emphasis added). Consider the significance of the Lord's use of the word work. What He is doing so lovingly and redemptively is, nevertheless, work-even for Him! We, likewise, speak of "working out our salvation," of the "law of the harvest," and of the "sweat of the brow" (see Moses 5:1; see also Inspired Version, Gen. 4:1). These are not idle phrases. Instead, they underscore the importance of work. In fact, brethren, work is always a spiritual necessity even if, for some, work is not an economic necessity. (*Ensign*, May 1998, 37-38)

**Neal A. Maxwell**

Significantly, when the Lord God described His purposes by saying, "This is my work and my glory-to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), He uses the word *work*, even though His is a "marvelous work." For us, becoming like His Son, or "even as [Jesus is]," certainly is work! (3 Ne. 27:27). Of necessity, this process requires the cross of discipleship to be taken up daily-not occasionally or seasonally. ("Becoming a Disciple," *Ensign*, June 1996, 15)

**Moses 1:39 This is my work and my glory**

Corporations and organizations usually have a Mission Statement, a short sentence describing the goal and focus of the organization. In Moses 1, we get the Lord's Mission Statement: this is my work and my glory-to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. This perspective changes everything; it is indeed a pearl of great price.

For centuries, the world has imagined a God that is barely interested in man-One that keeps his distance-One that doesn't speak-One that is too busy to intervene. Yet, the *Pearl of Great Price* teaches us that we are his prime interest-*his* work and *his* glory. His focus is on us. He cares more about the progress of men than the progress of nations. He cares more about man than the mountains, oceans, and rivers. We are not an afterthought of creation; we are the very purpose of creation! What a powerful message this brings to the whole world!

While incomprehensible, we should always remember that God who clothes the lilies of the field and notices the fall of every sparrow, cares for each of his beloved children. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis noted: "He who believes that God cares for men has found the secret of perpetual happiness, sees the best glimmering through the worst, feels the sun's warm beams throbbing through the thickest clouds. No man can remain permanently miserable who believes with all his heart that the Almighty is his defense, and that a divine guide daily pours light upon a human pathway." (*Improvement Era*, 1902, Vol. V. January, 1902. No. 3.)

### **David O. McKay**

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. (*Conference Report*, October 1963, First Day-Morning Meeting, 7)

### **Alexander B. Morrison**

Latter-day Saint views on the nature and destiny of God's children are expressed cogently in these teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith: "All those who keep his commandments shall grow up from grace to grace, and become heirs of the heavenly kingdom, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; possessing the same mind, being transformed into the same image or likeness, even the express image of him who fills all in all" (*Lectures on Faith* [1985], 60).

Latter-day Saints affirm that life is a three-stage process, to be viewed within the context of the Father's "great plan of happiness" (Alma 42:8). Long ago, before the earth on which we now dwell came into existence, God our Father, the mighty Elohim whose children we are, established a plan whereby his offspring would experience life in mortality, with all its trials, temptations, and opportunities, and then return to dwell with Him in eternal glory. The plan provided the perfect way for all of God's children to receive immortality and gain eternal life. Indeed, the very purpose of God's existence-His work and glory-is to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

Three divine events, beyond mortal comprehension in their glory-the grand pillars of eternity-constitute the foundation stones upon which the plan of salvation rests. They are the Creation, the Fall of Adam, and the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Their effects sweep across the existence of mankind from before the world was, through the days of our mortal probation, to the endless vistas of a never-ending eternity. On these great pillars rest the answers to the three primal questions of human existence: where did we come from, why are we here, and what awaits us after death? ("Life-The Gift Each Is Given," *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, 15-16)

### **M. Russell Ballard**

What a wonderful, warm, and reassuring thing it is to know that the primary objective of the very God of heaven is "the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39), or, in other words, our eternal happiness and joy. Sometimes I wonder if we really appreciate what that means and how it should affect our lives. We must give adequate attention to the doctrines of happiness-real happiness, infinite and eternal. They should be the objective of everything we teach in the Church and of everything we do. ("Answers to Life's Questions," *Ensign*, May 1995, 23)

### **Gordon B. Hinckley**

We are all in this great endeavor together. We are here to assist our Father in His work and His glory, "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Your obligation is as serious in your sphere of responsibility as is my obligation in my sphere. No calling in this church is small or of little consequence. All of us in the pursuit of our duty touch the lives of others. To each of us in our respective

responsibilities the Lord has said: "Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees" (D&C 81:5). ("This Is the Work of the Master," *Ensign*, May 1995, 71)

### **Moses 1:41 I will raise up another like unto thee**

"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)

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

Without striving overmuch to produce exact parallels, certain parallels are nevertheless worth noting, as between Moses and Joseph Smith.

...On this occasion, Moses had a terrifying encounter with Satan, and he "began to fear exceedingly." (Moses 1:20.) Moses' remarkable spiritual experience did not come unaccompanied by a traumatic encounter with the adversary. In the Sacred Grove Joseph Smith experienced the power of the adversary; it was "an astonishing influence." The darkness was thick, Joseph said, and for a time he felt "doomed to sudden destruction." (JS-H 1:15-16.)

Both Moses and Joseph experienced "face to face" meetings with the Lord. (Moses 1:2; JS-H 1:17-18.) Both were exhausted by the experience. (Moses 1:9-11; JS-H 1:20.)

Both ancient Moses and modern Joseph prepared their people to journey to respective promised lands, but they were not themselves

permitted to enter therein. (Deuteronomy 3:27; 34:6; Alma 45:19; D&C 135.)

Both Moses and Joseph were libeled and slandered, including accusations that they were power hungry and that they misused authority and paid too little heed to their "lieutenants," some of whom were quick to accuse.

Moses' challenges also came from within his inner circle, including at one point Miriam and Aaron, who "spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married. . . . And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it." (Numbers 12:1-2.)

Moses had a challenge on a larger scale. Dathan and 250 prestigious leaders once confronted him: "And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord? . . . Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?" (Numbers 16:2-3, 13.)

Joseph Smith, too, endured major defections from the inner circle in Kirtland, in Missouri, and, still later, in Nauvoo, being said by some to be a fallen prophet.

Both prophets were in the process of developing and leading a group known as Israel-ancient and modern. Both were required to lead a people who were a "mixed multitude." (Exodus 12:38.)

Both prophets were accused of poor planning, which was alleged to have caused people to be miserable whether in the Sinai or in the Zion's Camp march. The children of Israel complained to Moses, "Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." (Exodus 14:12.) Later they murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying: "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat

by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exodus 16:3.) Nephi recounted to his brothers the history of Israel, explaining: "And notwithstanding they being led, the Lord their God, their Redeemer, going before them, leading them by day and giving light unto them by night, and doing all things for them which were expedient for man to receive, they hardened their hearts and blinded their minds, and reviled against Moses and against the true and living God." (1 Nephi 17:30.)

Both men had questions raised about marital decisions they had made: Moses with regard to the Cushite or Ethiopian woman (Numbers 12:1-2), and Joseph in connection with the revelations concerning plural marriage.

Though Joseph Smith appears to have been less victimized by people's wondering why they were being led from situations of comfort into comparative misery, both men experienced the voicing of this challenge from at least some of their followers...

Both Moses and Joseph received-perhaps required-reassuring and reinforcing spiritual experiences after the time of their initial call.

Both prophets, at certain points in their ministry, utilized spokesmen: Aaron for Moses (Exodus 4:27, 30), and Oliver Cowdery and Sidney Rigdon at various and earlier times for Joseph Smith. Yet both were less than perfect.

Both prophets knew what it was to be let down by those upon whom they should have been able to count: Moses in the case of Aaron and the golden calf (Exodus 32), and Joseph with defections from the First Presidency and the Twelve.

Both, in a sense, were drafted by the Lord. They did not start out seeking to become prophets. Moses was surprised by the episode of the burning bush. Joseph Smith was merely trying to find out which of many churches he was to join; it had not occurred to him that all were wrong. (JS-H 1:18.) For Joseph, it started out as simply a question of affiliation. Instead, Joseph launched a dispensation!

Both prophets provided us with added books of scripture and revelation. Modern Joseph brought back some of the truths that had been held back or taken away from what Moses had written, as commanded.

Both of them were thrust into entirely new situations and came to know the fatigue and loneliness of leadership. Hence these lamentations from Moses: "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." (Deuteronomy 9:24.) "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." (Numbers 11:14.) A beleaguered Joseph, a Joseph who already knew more than he could tell, pleaded: "Why will not man learn Wisdom by precept & example at this late age of the world & not be obliged to learn every thing we know by sad experience?"

Both men wished to share more of the leadership burdens with their spiritually enlightened people and followers. Moses told Joshua, "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:29.) Through Joseph Smith, the Lord said: "But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world." (D&C 1:20.)

Both men developed greater mercy and empathy as a result of their adversity. Moses asked the Lord, "Why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath . . . against thy people." (Exodus 32:11-12.) Joseph wrote from Liberty Jail, "It seems to me that my heart will always be more tender after this than ever it was before."

Both were tutored with special tenderness.

In these and other ways there are striking parallels, just as there are parallels between modern Joseph and ancient Joseph. Even so, the significance is not to be seen solely in the parallels but in the substance of the work done, a work that would have been impossible without their humbleness of mind. Meekness calls forth the vital grace of God, which is one reason the meek are so bounteously blessed. (*Meek and Lowly* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1987], 77-81)



## **Moses 1:42 show them not unto any except them that believe**

Of all the precious chapters in the Pearl of Great Price, the first chapter of Moses is certainly one of the most valuable. It will likely be the object of scorn and disregard to those who have no spiritual sensitivity. This pearl of pearls, then, comes with a warning that it should be kept from the unbelievers. Indeed, this advice follows perfectly that of the Master, "cast [not] your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet," and "give not that which is holy unto the dogs" (Matt. 7:6).

## **Lorenzo Snow**

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. (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, p. 73)

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