

The Curtain Rises

The Pearl of Great Price should be read as a single work, an epitome of world history, summarizing and correlating in the brief scope of less than sixty pages the major dispensations of the gospel, past, present, and future. The story is told largely by excerpts, which announce themselves as fragments of original books written by Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and Joseph Smith, all centering about the figure of Christ and his mission in the meridian of time, with a preview of the millennium thrown in. Enoch's proper place in that story is best known by those who see the big picture. Thus, the following section deals with the type of story that Enoch's history belongs to, the visions from Creation to Judgment.

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

The story opens (verse 1) with Moses speaking with God face to face on "an exceedingly high mountain," wrapped in the divine glory, sharing the light of divinity. This situation, including the mountain, is the well-known epic and dramatic "prologue in heaven," with the hero receiving a special calling and assignment to a work in this lower world; like the audience, he is being prepared for the blows that follow. (Vol.2, Ch.4, Pg. 155)

TEMPLE AND MOUNTAIN

The boldest and clearest recent statement embracing the world landscape of culture and religion is in the works of M. Eliade, and he brings it all back to the temple. "The Temple, . . . preeminently the sacred place, . . . a celestial prototype" and holy mountain, typifies "the act of Creation . . . [which] brought the ordered cosmos out of chaos"; it is the scene of the sacred marriage, the ritual confrontation with evil appearing as the dragon, serpent, or other figures of death and destruction, ending in the victory of the king, whose triumphant coronation inaugurates the New Year and a new age of the world. (Vol.4, Ch.8, Pg.376)

In this respect it (the temple) resembled a mountain, for "the mountain itself was originally such a place of contact between this and the upper world." A long list might be made of holy mountains on which God was believed to have talked with men in ancient times, including "the mountain of the Lord's house." A great many studies have appeared in the 1950s describing the basic idea of the temple as a sort of antechamber between the worlds. (Vol.4, Ch.8, Pg.360)

Reference to the Holy of Holies is unmistakable . . . recalling the well-known Ziggurat concept of the ancients in which the temple itself was to represent a mountain by which one mounted to heaven and the presence of God. (Vol.2, Ch.4, Pg.224)

Think back, my good man, to the first act of recorded history. What meets our gaze as the curtain rises? People everywhere building towers. And why are they building towers? To get to heaven. The tower was, to use the Babylonian formula, the markas shame u irsitim, the "binding-place of heaven and earth," where alone one could establish contact with the upper and lower worlds. That goes not only for Babylonia but also for the whole ancient world, as I have pointed out at merciless length in my recent study on the "Hierocentric State." The towers were artificial mountains, as any textbook will tell you, and no temple-complex could be without one. (Vol.5, Part.2, Ch.1, Pg.164)

. . . such towers while serving as astronomical observatories were originally "temples of passage,"

reception places for divinity whenever it visited the earth; the holy mountain itself, according to this authority, was originally such a place of contact between heaven and earth. There is no doubt at all, Contenau believes, that these Babylonian towers are the same as the Egyptian pyramids in their function of "passage for divinity from heaven to earth and back again," the two having a common but very ancient and unknown origin. (Vol.8, Ch.3, Pg.109)

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

What do men fear most? Believe it or not, it is joy. Against joy, society erects its most massive bulwarks. The gospel is a message of terrifying joy. What is the culmination of all joy? To stand in the presence of God and behold his face--we don't need to argue that point. Yet what is the most frightening prospect that mortal man can imagine? Certainly, to

stand in the presence of God and behold his face! The presence of Jesus was an unbearable torment to wicked men and devils alike; rather than look upon the face of the Lord, the wicked shall beg the rocks and the mountains to cover them; the Apostles who cheerfully faced death at the hands of devilish men were "sore afraid" at the approach of God the Father on the mountain; and when Moses descended from another mountain, the people fell down in deadly fear at the presence of one who had been talking face to face with God, though Moses himself at an earlier time had "hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God" (Exodus 3:6).

HEAVENLY MESSENGERS

If mankind is to get any real help it must come from outside, and it does. First of all angels, yes angels, must come to explain and establish things (Moroni 7:29-32); they do not come on their own, but are direct representatives from the presence of God, "subject to him, to minister according to the word of his command." Moreover, these angels do not come to just anybody, but only to those possessing peculiar qualifications, "showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness" (Moroni 7:30). These ministrations, then, are not for the foolish, hysterical, over-imaginative, ambitious, or posturing members of the race: to possess along with strong faith a firm mind in every form of godliness is to qualify for something definitely beyond the range of the ordinary run of mortals. Those so favored are expected to "prepare the way among the children of men" for passing on the important information they have received by sharing it with and entrusting it "unto the chosen vessels of the Lord," namely, those who are chosen by God to direct his work in the world. These in turn "bear testimony of him," and through their efforts "the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ" (Moroni 7:31-32). (Vol.7, Conclusion, Pg.403)

Thus, in Apocalypse of Abraham 1:1, Abraham's genealogy begins with Enoch; he, like Enoch, is shown the universal vision (9:61); spends forty days on a high mountain and is shown the fate of the human race (9:8); is caught up and taken on a cosmic journey (9:14); is overcome and has to be reassured in the presence of God (10:14); moved amidst vast meteorological and geological disturbances (11:1-6); is caught up as on wings to a high mountain and hence to heaven, where he beholds all things (12:1-9); has a bout with Satan in the manner of Moses (Moses 1); learns the story of Satan's fall and the sins of the Watchers (13:14); describes the throne of God where "naught but peace" is found (13:18), etc., ending with the vision of the

return of the temple, the priesthood, and the celestial Zion (13:26ff.).

One thinks of Moses also "clothed upon with glory" on the mountain (Moses 7:3; 1:2, 9). Rabbi Ishmael having reached the door to the presence of God must become a crowned king and a priest before he can enter. He asks for this because, like others who make this supreme prayer, he seeks to be delivered from his lower condition, that Satan (Qafsiel) "may not get power over me nor throw me down from the heavens," i.e., even as they were, for on meeting Adam in the dark and dreary world, Satan boasts and taunts him, that he has caused him to be cast out of Paradise even as Adam had caused his expulsion from heaven at the time of the Creation. In short, Ishmael utters the classic prayer of Adam, Moses, Abraham, and others, and receives the proper reply when God immediately sends "Metatron, his Servant the angel, the Prince of the Presence" to instruct him and bring him farther on the way:

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

... an Ethiopian text teaches that only the prophets by ascending a high mountain to a high place can hear the fearful name of God," pending which God is known only by epithets, (Vol.2, Ch.2, Pg.39)

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

We can only "hear the word of the Lord," and to hear is to obey; that is why the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth actually begins with the ears. From the very first amid a million possible paths we are lost and stumbling without God's instructions; and in fact both his works and his words are for our benefit (Moses 1:38-39), the words always going along with the works to put us into the picture:

"My works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease" (Moses 1:4). (Vol.9, Ch.9, Pg.266)

We are never alone; we share a universe of discourse through the miracle of the word. Again we quote a favorite passage: "There is no end to my works, neither to my words" (Moses 1:4). "Behold, this is my work and my glory," namely, to share with others what he has, "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:38-39). There is nothing mysterious about the endlessly debated logos--it is communication. God does not choose to live in a vacuum. (Vol.9, Ch.9, Pg.267)

The Lord says, "There is no end to my works or my words" (Moses 1:4). The civilization survives only on its words. That's what we have from the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Hebrews. We have the scriptures. We have the Testaments. We have the Book of Mormon. What has survived is a voice from the dust speaking to us; that's all that has survived. We wouldn't even know that that civilization ever existed without the voice from the dust. That which survived is the word. At least we will leave that behind. But the nice thing about the order the Lord wishes to establish here is that it is eternally perpetrated, not only in the heavens but here, as long as it needs to be anywhere. (Vol.9, Ch.15, Pg.484)

5. Wherefore, no man can behold all my works, except he behold all my glory; and no man can behold all my glory, and afterwards remain in the flesh on the earth.

Bible to have occurred in the past must actually be assumed not to have happened at all. Even the most opinionated Bible student today would not limit himself so strictly; but granted that we may go farther than Tertullian, how far may we go? Nothing in the restored gospel was more offensive to the Christian world than its insistence on going much too far to suit the Christian world, and daring to speak of doctrines and events not mentioned in the Bible at all. (Vol.5, Part.2, Ch.5, Pg.237)

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

God's sons and another . . . "The Man Adam" is "many," and yet there is but one great archetype; there are saviors on Mount Zion, but there is only one Savior; lords many, but only one Lord; there are prophets and the Prophet; there is a Daniel and the Daniel; an Elijah and the Elijah, anointed ones and the Anointed One, devils and the devil. We need not be disturbed when the Odes of Solomon report that Enoch is "raised up to become the Son of God," (Vol.2, Ch.2, Pg.38 - Pg.39)

7. And now, behold, this one thing I show unto thee, Moses, my son; for thou art in the world, and now I show it unto thee.

achieve proof, "only a stronger probability" by continued research. "Personal knowledge in [the exact sciences] is not made but discovered, and as such it claims to establish contact with reality beyond the clues on which it relies [i.e., knowing is an art]. It [the skill of the knower] commits us, passionately and far beyond our comprehension, to a vision of reality." "We must be prepared for the possibility that the human brain will never be able to understand itself, or consciousness or perhaps the nature of life itself. If so . . . the theory of dialectical materialism will be disproved." (CWHN, 10:249).

"It is the constitutional disposition of mankind," said Joseph Smith, "to set up stakes and set bounds to the works and ways of the Almighty. . . . Why be so certain that you comprehend the things of God, when all things with you are so uncertain?" These words apply equally to the wildest revivalist and the ablest scientist. Tertullian taught that anything which is not specifically stated in the

"Behold I am a Son of God in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy [Satan's] glory that I should worship thee?" (Moses 1:12-13; emphasis supplied) for God said, "I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of Mine Only Begotten [who] . . . is and shall be the Savior." (Moses 1:6; emphasis supplied.) That "is and shall be" is important, showing the Son of Man's recurrent missions; even more important is "similitude" as the key to identity between one of

"If cause and effect are absolutely equivalent, the question 'Why?' is meaningless. Therefore the exact sciences answer only the simplest question in the cognition of the world, 'How?' " "It is important to combat the assumption that we have real pictures of the past; "these remain possibilities and nothing more," we will never

The Christian world and the sciences alike believe that it is all just a one-act play. The Christians say

8. And it came to pass that Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created; and Moses beheld the world and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are, and which were created; of the same he greatly marveled and wondered.

play, saying that is all there is. There was an episode that began with Adam, clearly marked, representing a particular age. The notion is very clearly defined in the temple. It is the transition from the Cretaceous to the Quaternary, where everything happens according to rule. (CWHN, 9:298).

9. And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses; and Moses was left unto himself. And as he was left unto himself, he fell unto the earth.

10. And it came to pass that it was for the space of many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength like unto man; and he said unto himself: Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.

11. But now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, for my natural eyes could not have beheld; for I should have withered and died in his presence; but his glory was upon me; and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.

it all began with the creation of Adam--there was nothing before; and it will end hereafter with the beatific vision, when we just look at the Lord or sing hymns forever. It came out of nothing (creatio ex nihilo), and it goes, as St. Jerome says, "back into the nothing, from which it came." Science says it ends here. Wherever it began, it ends here. In either case, it ends in a static heaven. But we say, "No, no, no." The play goes on forever, but in distinct episodes. Let us not mistake the episodes for the

Next the lights go out, the glory departs, and we find Moses lying helpless upon the bare earth, cut down to size; he slowly regains his strength until he is able to utter his first commentary on life: "Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed." (Verses 9-10.) Man begins his earthly career at the bottom of the ladder. Then the hero's next remark puts a different face on things: "But now mine own eyes have beheld God; . . . his glory was upon me; and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him." (Verse 11.)

And this is the human predicament, man's condition in its most stark and elementary terms, la misere et la gloire, that besetting contradiction that is the constant concern of early Christian and Jewish writers and the subject of countless philosophical and Gnostic texts, endlessly restated as a perennially new discovery in all the great literature of the world: "How weary, flat, stale and

unprofitable" is the earthly life of man, the "quintessence of dust," and yet "how noble in reason" is that same man, "how infinite in faculty! . . . in action how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god." (Hamlet 1, ii, 133; 2, ii, 303-8.) Yet Moses declares that man is nothing, even while in the same breath calling attention to the clouds of glory still remembered from his native condition. (CWHN, 2:155-156).

Satan's concern with Moses was not to turn him against religion but to enlist his devotions. In Moses 1, a most marvelous piece of epic and dramatic literature, Satan confronts Moses, and Moses doesn't yield. But Aaron does - he falls for Satan's golden calf.

In this state of weakness and suspense, of trials and contradictions, he is the ideal target for the Adversary, who with his usual evil methodology chooses precisely this moment to attack, taking full advantage

12. *And it came to pass that when Moses had said these words, behold, Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me.*

13. *And it came to pass that Moses looked upon Satan and said: Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?*

14. *For behold, I could not look upon God, except his glory should come upon me, and I were transfigured before him. But I can look upon thee in the natural man. Is it not so, surely?*

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

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. (CWHN, 9:323-324).

The early Jewish and Christian traditions are full of accounts in which Satan tried to beguile men by counterfeit glory, even appearing as an angel of light. The righteous however are given the discernment of spirits, and are able to endure true glory-their "confidence wax[es] strong" even "in the presence of God." (D&C 121:45.) Accordingly Satan's false glory never deceives the patriarchs: (CWHN, 2:233).The Curtain Rises

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

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

of his enemy's imperiled condition. With the appearance of this sinister figure the drama begins in earnest. Satan wants to be acknowledged as the ruler of the world-that is the theme- and Moses promptly challenges his claim. Moses, remembering his own high calling, questions his adversary, asking again and again: "Who art thou? For behold, I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten; and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee?"

"For behold, I could not look upon God, except his glory should come upon me. . . . But I can look upon thee in the natural man. Is it not so, surely?" (Verses 13-14.)

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

D. 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.

21. And now Satan began to tremble, and the earth shook; and Moses received strength, and called upon God, saying: In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan.

22. And it came to pass that Satan cried with a loud voice, with weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and he departed hence, even from the presence of Moses, that he beheld him not.

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. Here it is in order to note that the Adversary who relentlessly assails the hero in the earliest epics is none other than the "Earth-shaker," Enosichthon.