An Early Christian Context for the Book of Moses

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1. Introduction

Many readers of the Book of Moses have been impressed by its ancient literary style and motifs. Even so, ever since it was revealed by the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1830–31, the book's ancient context has been an enigma. Joseph Smith never explained, at least as far as available documents allow us to determine, what ancient community read the book or in what context the book was used.

Biblical scholarship has addressed questions like these in its search for the *Sitz im Leben*, the "setting in life," of biblical texts. Many of the Psalms, for instance, are now thought to have been sung as part of the ancient Israelite temple liturgy, thus showing continuity with modern Jewish and Christian communities that use the Psalms in synagogue and church liturgies. Despite the fact that the Bible's link to the past is abundantly documented, the *Sitz im Leben* of biblical texts is not a given but must be reconstructed based on careful study of the texts' contents and language and on comparison with other ancient sources. The Book of Moses can be analyzed in similar ways.

In 2016, I published an article arguing that the Book of Moses was crafted to serve as the text for an ancient ritual.[1] The book's discourse frames and narrative structure suggest that the book was recited as part of a dramatic performance of the creation, the events in the Garden of Eden, and the redemption of Adam and Eve. The performance included the Aaronic Priesthood ordinances of sacrifice and baptism, which are the foci of chapters 5 and 6

respectively. In both of these chapters, a divine commandment to perform the ordinance is given, instruction is provided on the way in which the rite is to be performed, the meaning of the rite in connection with the Atonement of Jesus Christ is explained, and the opportunity to perform the ordinance is opened to the audience. In that article, I point out that the expulsion from the garden and the focus on sacrifice and baptism seem to correspond to three features of the Temple of Solomon: the temple doors (which were decorated with images of cherubim), the altar of sacrifice, and the giant laver or "sea" (which stood on the backs of twelve cast oxen, like the modern temple baptismal font). However, there is need for further investigation of the ancient ritual context of the Book of Moses. Specifically, an investigation taking into account the language of the book, its contents, and comparison with ancient sources is needed to illuminate the book's most likely historical setting and appropriate ritual context. This further investigation is the purpose of this study.

I will begin with an examination of the features of the Book of Moses that point to a performative ritual context, paying particular attention to aspects that may help determine the context. Then I will discuss evidence for the historical setting in which the Book of Moses belongs. In contrast to my 2016 study, in which I assumed an ancient Israelite origin, I will argue that the Book of Moses was most likely an early Christian text. The ritual context, rather than being situated at the Temple of Solomon, was most likely part of early Christian practice. I will then discuss how the stages of the book's narrative might relate to the historical and ritual context of the book. Overall, the scenario that fits best with the internal evidence of the Book of Moses and with comparative evidence from early Christian sources is that the book was the text of a ritual drama performed at the baptism of catechumens. The physical setting of the rite was most likely a house of worship that functioned as a temple; thus, the connections with the Temple of Solomon noted in my previous study are not coincidental, but they belong to the conceptual framework of the book's performance.

2. A Performative Context

In the ancient world, in which literacy was much less common than it is in modern Western society, religious texts were frequently meant to be read aloud and heard. Often, this enunciation of the text took place within a ritual context. For instance, portions of the Gospels were read on designated occasions in the liturgical calendar as part of the "liturgy of the word," a portion of the Eucharist rite. The ancient church also produced an extensive array of liturgical books that prescribed the actions to be performed by the clergy, the hymns to be chanted by the choir, and the prayers and refrains to be enunciated by the congregation. Even non-liturgical texts would be read on ceremonial occasions, when saints would be honored through a recitation of their stories, or when doctrine would be explained through the reading of written homilies. Whitney Shiner suggests that the Gospel of Mark was designed to be recited at the water's edge after an all-night vigil as part of a baptismal service, so that the reading of the resurrection scene would dramatically coincide with the break of dawn.[2] Theatrical performances were another means by which narrative texts were presented. Religious narratives were performed in the sacred spaces of the synagogue and the church; some may also have been performed in the public theater.[3]

Some ancient liturgical poetry uses the technique known as *ekphrasis*, which involves explicit reference to the physical setting as a way to enhance the experience of the audience. A good example of ekphrasis is a Syriac hymn composed in honor of the domed cathedral in Edessa around the sixth century. This hymn is a *soghitha*, a specific kind of hymn that was sung as part of the liturgy; an extensive description of the cathedral's features and of their symbolic meanings is framed as a prayer offered by the participants in the ritual.[4]

Unlike liturgical poems that use ekphrasis, the Book of Moses does not explicitly reference the physical context in which it was meant to be read. This makes the identification of the context harder.

The text itself provides some clues that indicate a performative context. At the conclusion of each major section of the book are statements that relate the narrative to a contemporary audience.

These asides to the audience, each of which ends with the word *amen*, can be examined for what they may imply about the context in which the Book of Moses was meant to be read.

> These words were spoken unto Moses in the mount, the name of which shall not be known among the children of men. And now they are spoken unto you. Show them not unto any except them that believe. Even so. Amen. (Moses 1:42)

> And these are the words which I spake unto my servant Moses, and they are true even as I will; and I have spoken them unto you. See thou show them unto no man, until I command you, except to them that believe. Amen. (Moses 4:32)

> 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. 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. (Moses 5:58–59)

> And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man . . . and thus may all become my sons. Amen. (Moses 6:65–68)

The word *thus* at the beginning of Moses 6:65 introduces a summary like that at the end of chapter 5. The liturgical refrain "amen," rather than belonging to the speech of the "voice out of heaven" to Adam (Moses 6:66–68), is best understood here as a paratextual conclusion of this passage, as it is in the preceding conclusions of sections. The phrase "and thus may all become my sons" at the end of Moses 6:68 seems to apply Adam's experience didactically to a wider audience. This didactic opening-up may be multilayered: As part of Enoch's speech, it refers to the audience to which Enoch is preaching. But it could also refer to the audience of the Book of Moses itself.

What do we learn from these asides to the audience? First, they seem to indicate a performative context in which the text was recited to an audience of believers. We see, for instance, a shift from a general narrative voice, with God spoken of in the third person,

to narration in which God speaks in the first person. The shift is evocative of a dramatic context in which a single person plays the double role of actor and narrator. The verbs used in the asides to the audience are also significant: "These words were *spoken* unto Moses in the mount . . . and now they are *spoken* unto you. *Show* them not unto any except them that believe . . . And these are the words which I *spake* unto my servant Moses . . . and I have *spoken* them unto you. See thou *show* them unto no man . . . except them that believe." These verbs imply that the audience of the book is expected to experience the text aurally, as Moses did. They also imply that the text exists in written form, such that one might "show" the words to another outside of the performative context (an action that the audience is cautioned about).

Second, the fact that these asides to the audience are placed at the ends of major sections of the text suggests that they mark transition points in the performative context. What kind of transition could have taken place here? It is significant that a major shift of scene occurs in the narrative after each of the asides. After Moses 1:41–42, the text transitions from Moses's dialogue with God on the mountain to God's account of the creation of the earth and the events of the Garden of Eden. The aside in Moses 4:32 occurs at the point where God drives Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Moses 5:58–59 marks a shift from an account of the wicked posterity of Cain, who were "shut out from the presence of the Lord" (Moses 5:41), to an account of Adam and his righteous posterity. And Moses 6:65–68 marks a return from Enoch's account of Adam's baptism to the narrative about Enoch, including his own vision comparable to Moses 1. Further, Moses 5 and 6 feature different rituals performed by Adam, each of which is explained doctrinally to Adam, taught to his posterity, and applied to a wider audience: chapter 5 features sacrifice (Moses 5:4–12, 18–21, 58–59), and chapter 6 features baptism (Moses 6:51–68). These asides could therefore mark shifts of scene in the performative context, points at which the audience would move to a different location and, in some cases at least, participate in a ritual specific to that location.

3. The Book of Moses as an Early Christian Text

The Book of Moses belongs to at least two historical contexts. The modern context in which Joseph Smith revealed the book is relatively well-documented and uncontroversial. However, the book is not simply a modern revelation but also a restoration of ancient scripture. It purports to belong originally to an ancient context. An approach to the ritual setting of the Book of Moses depends on an understanding of this original context.

Most Latter-day Saint scholars who have written on the original time period of the Book of Moses have placed it in a preexilic Israelite context. An important study by Noel B. Reynolds argues that the version of Genesis found on the Brass Plates, and thus influencing the thought and language of Book of Mormon prophets, was similar to the Book of Moses, from the content of the narrative down to the level of the words and phrases used.[5] This would imply that the Book of Moses dates to sometime before 600 BC. Kent Jackson has discussed instances of Hebraisms in the original manuscripts of the Book of Moses; he concludes that these portions of the Joseph Smith Translation are restorations of text originally found in the ancient Hebrew version of Genesis.[6] Some studies focusing on Moses 1 have posited for this chapter an ancient Israelite origin within the broader context of the ancient Near East.[7] Recently, a study by John W. Welch and Jackson Abhau argues that the text of the Book of Moses derives ultimately from a record composed by Moses himself, although the evidence assembled in that study could also suggest an origin contemporary with the biblical priestly source (known in biblical scholarship as P), thus making the date more ambiguous.[8] Many studies of the Book of Moses, including the extensive works by Jeffrey Bradshaw, show that the Book of Moses incorporates ancient traditions but leave open the question of the book's precise place relative to these traditions.[9]

The idea that the Book of Moses belongs to a preexilic Israelite context is natural in light of the fact that the Book of Moses is part of Joseph Smith's inspired translation of the Old Testament. If the intent of this translation was to restore things that were originally part of the text, then the Book of Moses, along with the rest of the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis, should date to the time of the original composition of Genesis. This was my assumption

when I began my own scholarly investigation of the Book of Moses, as is evident from my previous study on the Book of Moses as a ritual text.[10] However, this is not the only possible approach, and there is reason to believe, on the contrary, that what Joseph Smith restored in his translation of Genesis was something other than the original ancient Israelite form of the text. Based on my continued investigation, it seems that at least the first seven chapters of the work (i.e., Moses 1–7) represent a form of the text that fits best in an early Christian context.

3.1. New Testament Language

One of the most salient indicators of an early Christian origin of the Book of Moses is the frequent appearance of phrases found in the New Testament and in other sources from the same period but absent from the Old Testament (excluding the Joseph Smith Translation). The following list of examples is not comprehensive, but it is sufficient to show that the most natural fit for the literary context of the book is an early Christian context.

> "Only Begotten" and "Only Begotten Son," as titles of Christ (Moses 1:6, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21, 32, 33; 2:1, 26, 27; 3:18; 4:1, 3, 28; 5:7, 9, 57; 6:52, 57, 59, 62; 7:50, 59, 62): see John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; Hebrews 11:17; 1 John 4:9; in the KJV New Testament, the phrases "Only Begotten" and "Only Begotten Son" translate a single Greek word (*monogenēs*)[11]
>
> "transfigured before" God (Moses 1:11): see Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:2
>
> "get thee hence, Satan" (Moses 1:16): see Matt. 4:10
>
> the Holy Ghost "beareth record" of the Father and the Son (Moses 1:24; 5:9): compare 1 John 5:7
>
> "by the word of my power" (Moses 1:32, 35; 2:5): compare Heb. 1:3 ("by the word of his power"); the Lord explains in Moses 1:32 that the phrase "the word of my power," as the means by which he created the worlds, refers to his Only Begotten Son, which recalls John 1:1–3
>
> "full of grace and truth" (Moses 1:32; 5:7): see John 1:14; cf. John 1:17[12]

"immortality and eternal life" (Moses 1:39): both terms are absent from the Old Testament but are relatively frequent in the New Testament: *immortality* occurs six times, all in Pauline epistles; *eternal life* occurs twenty-six times in the Gospels, Pauline epistles, epistles of John, and Jude; "eternal life" also appears elsewhere in Moses (5:11; 6:59; 7:45)[13]

"them that believe" (Moses 1:42; 4:32): see Mark 16:17; John 1:12; Rom. 3:22; 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:21; 14:22; Gal. 3:22; 2 Thess. 1:10; Heb. 10:39; the contrasting phrase "them that do not believe" also appears (Rom. 15:31; 1 Cor. 10:27; 14:22)

"I am the Beginning and the End" (Moses 2:1): see Rev. 21:6; 22:13; compare also the usages "God . . . who is . . . the beginning and end of all things" (Josephus, *Antiquities*, 8.280); "God . . . the beginning, and middle, and end of all things" (Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, 2.190)[14]

"Beloved Son," as a title of Christ (Moses 4:2): see Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 2 Pet. 1:17; the phrase "beloved son" appears elsewhere in the New Testament (Luke 20:13; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:2) and in the Greek Septuagint of Gen. 22:2, but it is absent from the Hebrew and KJV Old Testament

"my Chosen," as a title of Christ (Moses 4:2; 7:39): compare "chosen of God" in reference to Christ in Luke 23:35 and 1 Pet. 2:4[15]

"thy will be done" (Moses 4:2): see Matt. 6:10; 26:42; Luke 11:2

"the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:2): compare Matt. 6:13 ("For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever"); note the proximity of this phrase to "thy will be done" both in Moses 4:2 and in the Lord's prayer in Matt. 6:9–13[16]

"by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that [Satan] should be cast down" (Moses 4:3): compare Rev. 12:10, "Now is come . . . the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down"; note that the Hebrew title *Satan* means "accuser"

"the devil" (Moses 4:4): sixty-one instances in the New Testament, translating the Greek word *diabolos*

"as thou hast fallen" (Moses 5:9); "Adam fell," "and by his fall came death" (Moses 6:48); "the fall, which fall bringeth death" (Moses 6:59): use of the word *fall* in reference to Adam's transgression, or to the sin of the human race, is not found in the Old or the New Testament, but it occurs in apocryphal literature: Jubilees 12:25 (Jewish, ca. second century BC: "because it ceased from the mouth of all of the sons of men from the day of the fall"); 4 Ezra 7:48[118] (Jewish, first century AD: "O Adam . . . the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants"); 3 Baruch 4:17 (Greek, first to third century AD: "by means of the fall . . . come forth . . . murder, adultery, fornication . . .")

"carnal, sensual, and devilish" (Moses 5:13; 6:49): compare James 3:15 ("earthly, sensual, devilish")

"Satan desireth to have thee" (Moses 5:23): compare Luke 22:31 ("Satan hath desired to have you")

Perdition, as the title of a person (Moses 5:24): compare "the son of perdition" in John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3; the word *perdition* as an abstract noun meaning "destruction" (translating the Greek word *apōleia*) occurs elsewhere in the King James version of the New Testament (Phil. 1:28; 1 Tim. 6:9; Heb. 10:39; 2 Pet. 3:7; Rev. 17:8, 11)

"the Gospel" (Moses 5:58, 59; 8:19): eighty-three instances in the New Testament; the word *gospel* irrespective of the English definite article occurs 101 times in the New Testament but is not found in the Old Testament

"holy angels" (Moses 5:58): see Matt. 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Acts 10:22 (singular "holy angel"); Rev. 14:10

"gift of the Holy Ghost" (Moses 5:58; 6:52): see Acts 2:38; 10:45

"anointing" the eyes in order to see (Moses 6:35, "anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see"): compare John 9:6–7, 11 (Jesus anoints the eyes of a blind man with clay and commands him to wash in the pool of Siloam, and he "came seeing"); Revelation 3:18 (the Lord tells the church in Laodicea, "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see"); these are the only passages in the Bible that refer to anointing the eyes

"no man laid hands on him" (Moses 6:39): see John 7:30, 44; 8:20

"my God, and your God" (Moses 6:43): see John 20:17

"only name given under heaven whereby salvation shall come" (Moses 6:52): compare Acts 4:12

collocation of water, blood, and Spirit (Moses 6:59–60): see 1 John 5:6, 8

"born again of water and the Spirit" (Moses 6:59), "born of the Spirit" (Moses 6:65): see John 3:3 ("born again"), 5–8 ("born of water and of the Spirit," "born of the Spirit")

"the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Moses 6:59, original text): see Matthew 13:11. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is absent from the Old Testament; in the New Testament it is found only in Matthew (thirty-two occurrences), but it is frequent in rabbinic literature

"cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten" (Moses 6:59): compare 1 John 1:7 ("the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin")[17]

"immortal glory" (Moses 6:59, 61): attested in a Greek inscription of the second century BC and in homilies by John Chrysostom (died AD 407);[18] the adjective *immortal* is not found in the Old Testament

"the words of eternal life" (Moses 6:59): see John 6:68

eternal life "in the world to come" (Moses 6:59): see Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; the phrase "world to come" is absent from the Old Testament but occurs five times in the New Testament; other than the two just quoted, see Matthew 12:32; Hebrews 2:5; 6:5

"by the Spirit ye are justified" (Moses 6:60): compare 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:16

"the Comforter," referring to the Holy Ghost (Moses 6:61): see John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 (translating the Greek word *paraklētos*)[19]

"the inner man" (Moses 6:65): see Eph. 3:16; Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16[20]

"baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost" (Moses 6:66): see Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16

"they were of one heart and one mind" (Moses 7:18): compare Acts 4:32 ("And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul"—note that "soul" here translates Greek *psychē*, rendered in NIV as "mind")

"in the bosom of the Father," referring to heaven (Moses 7:24, 47): see John 1:18 (note that JST deletes this phrase in this verse, perhaps implying that it entered the text sometime after its original composition)

"a great chain in his hand" (Moses 7:26): see Rev. 20:1 (here the one holding the chain is an angel, unlike Moses 7:26, in which it is the devil)

commandment to "love one another" (Moses 7:33): see John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; Rom. 12:10; 13:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 4:9; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 1:5[21]

"without affection" (Moses 7:33): see Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3 (translating the single Greek word *astorgos*)

"the Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world" (Moses 7:47): compare Rev. 13:8 ("the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," as a noun phrase); the term "the Lamb" is used as a title of the Messiah only in the New Testament and is distinctively Johannine (John 1:29, 36; twenty-seven instances in Revelation), and the words *lamb* and *slain* collocate only in Revelation (5:6, 12; 13:8)[22]

"climb up" by a gate or door, as a metaphor of progression through Christ (Moses 7:53): see John 10:1

The phrases listed above are all absent from the Old Testament. Moreover, some of these phrases embody concepts that would be unexpected in an ancient Israelite historical context. For instance, the phrase "them that believe" is used in the Book of Moses to describe those who believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ or who belong to the community of believers. The phrase is used to

distinguish those to whom it is permitted to show the words of the book itself; this usage evokes an environment in which certain teachings have to be guarded, perhaps because of persecutions. This phrase would be unexpected in an ancient Israelite environment, in which faith in Jehovah was the national religion (for an ancient Israelite text, we would expect something more like "them that fear the Lord"—see, for instance, Pss. 15:4; 25:14). More broadly, the use of the word *believe* without a direct object or adverbial complement, which is relatively frequent in the Book of Moses (Moses 1:41; 5:15; 6:52; 7:1; 8:24) and in the New Testament, occurs in the Hebrew Bible in only one instance: in Isaiah 7:9. But here, it is in reference to believing a specific prophecy; this cannot be the sense in which the word is used in the Book of Moses, since one would not know if a person believes the text without the person being shown it first. Interestingly, the word *believe* is also entirely absent from the Book of Abraham; the same is true of the word *faith*, attested in Moses 6:23; 7:13, 47. This underscores the great difference in language between these two ancient scriptures revealed by Joseph Smith.

Likewise, the phrase "carnal, sensual, and devilish" (Moses 5:13; 6:49) seems uncharacteristic of Israelite culture of the Old Testament period.[23] A distinction between the flesh (as embodied in the word *carnal*) and the spirit, the former being regarded as sinful and impure, may be hinted at in some Old Testament passages (such as Gen. 6:3) but finds clear expression in literature only from the Hellenistic period onward. As listed above, the noun *devil*, on which the adjective *devilish* is based, is also absent from the Old Testament. The four adjectives *carnal*, *earthly*, *sensual*, and *devilish* are all absent from the Old Testament, but all are found in the New Testament:

> carnal: Rom. 7:14; 8:7; 15:27; 1 Cor. 3:1, 3, 4; 9:11; 2 Cor. 10:4; Heb. 7:16; 9:10; James 3:15
>
> earthly: John 3:12, 31; 2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 3:19; James 3:15
>
> sensual: James 3:15; Jude 1:19
>
> devilish: James 3:15

The phrase "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" in the original text of Moses 6:59 is especially significant in relation to the performative context of the Book of Moses. This phrase, too, would be unexpected in an ancient Israelite context. The word *mystery* and its plural form *mysteries* are not found in the Old Testament, but together they are attested twenty-seven times in the New Testament. The meaning referring to induction into rites, as found in Moses 6:59, is characteristic of the Greek word *mustērion*, which also appears as a loanword with the same meaning in postbiblical Hebrew and Aramaic (*misṭērīn*).[24]

Finally, the phrase "the inner man" (Moses 6:65; Eph. 3:16; Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16) is characteristic of Greek philosophy; it appears in Judeo-Christian sources in the early centuries AD and would appear strange in a Hebrew text from the preexilic period.[25]

There is, of course, much in the language of the restored portions of the Book of Moses that parallels the Old Testament. This does not weaken the assertion that the language of the text is of early Christian date, since early Christian authors had access to the Old Testament and quoted from it frequently (this is abundantly evident in the New Testament itself). Following are some examples of Old Testament-like language, where New Testament parallels are either nonexistent or relatively infrequent.

> speaking with the Lord "face to face" (Moses 1:2, 31; 7:4): see Ex. 33:11[26]
>
> "choose ye this day to serve the Lord God who made you" (Moses 6:33): compare Jos. 24:15 ("choose you this day whom ye will serve")
>
> "they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy," in context mentioning Zion (Moses 7:53): compare Isa. 35:10; 51:11
>
> "God of heaven" (Moses 6:43): twenty-two instances in the Old Testament, found only twice in the New Testament (Rev. 11:13; 16:11)
>
> "there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18): compare Deut. 15:4 ("save when there shall be no poor among you")

Enoch's speech in Moses 7:29–31 shows a high concentration of Old Testament-like language. This passage closely resembles the Psalms; indeed, the passage itself has a poetic character and may be dubbed the Psalm of Enoch. There is even a loose chiasmus at the beginning and end of the passage: the question "How is it [that] thou canst weep?" frames the whole passage, and the phrase "from all eternity to all eternity" occurs near the beginning and the end. However, the chiasmus is not as tight as we would expect were this a genuine preexilic Hebrew poem, and the use of parallel bicola, which is characteristic of most biblical poetry, is absent. Phrases in this passage that are parallel to the Psalms include the following:

> "from all eternity to all eternity" (Moses 7:30, 31): compare Pss. 41:13; 90:2; 103:17; 106:48
>
> "thy curtains are stretched out still" (Moses 7:30): compare Ps. 104:2; Isa. 40:22
>
> "naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne" (Moses 7:31): compare Ps. 89:14
>
> "mercy shall go before thy face" (Moses 7:31): compare Ps. 89:14

From the evidence of the New Testament-like phrases that appear in the text, we see that the revealed portions of the Book of Moses have the closest affinities with Johannine literature (the Gospel of John, the epistles of John, and the book of Revelation). However, the text is not simply Johannine, since some phrases are found in Matthew or other parts of the New Testament and are not characteristic of Johannine literature. In addition, some of these revealed portions show affinities with the Psalms and other parts of the Old Testament. This is broadly similar to Christian texts from the first to the third century. For example, in the Didascalia Apostolorum (composed around the early third century), Matthew and Proverbs are quoted with great frequency, and there are also quotations from John, the Johannine epistles, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other parts of the Old Testament. Usually, quotations are explicitly signaled with phrases like "the Lord said" or "it is written," but often the quotation is simply worked into the text with no overt signal. Although Didascalia Apostolorum is a different kind of text from the Book of Moses (it lays out rules for the church, like an

early analogue to our modern Church Handbook, while the Book of Moses is narrative), this exemplifies the literary influences that were prevalent in early Christian writings.

The prominence of Johannine language in the Book of Moses is particularly significant in light of early Christian sentiments about the importance of the Gospel of John in ritual settings. The early post-Nicene Church father Ambrose discussed this in a homily on baptism:

> Yet in the book of the Gospel according to John—John, who with greater clarity than the others saw the great mysteries and recounted and explained them—the intention is to see in the blind man this mystery prefigured. Now all the evangelists are saints, and all the apostles, except the traitor [Judas Iscariot], are saints. Yet it was St. John, the last to write a gospel as the friend sought out and chosen by Christ—he it was who trumpeted forth the eternal mysteries in the clearest tones. Everything he has said is a mystery.[27]

The context of this statement makes it clear that John's Gospel featured prominently in the baptismal liturgy.

The dates of John's Gospel and of Revelation are not universally agreed upon; however, a majority of scholars place the composition of both of these texts around the latter half of the first century AD. Considering the evidence of Semitic linguistic influence, the Book of Moses could therefore belong to a Jewish-Christian context around the late first or early second century.

Two alternate approaches could be cited in opposition to this analysis. First, one could posit that these phrases represent preexilic Hebrew (or, perhaps, a form of ancient Egyptian) despite their absence from the Hebrew Bible. This view begins with the observation that many of the passages and phrases in the Book of Mormon, including some which are quoted from the plates of brass, resemble parts of the Book of Moses. One example is the phrase "carnal, sensual, and devilish," which appears in similar contexts in the Book of Moses and in the Book of Mormon (Moses 5:13; 6:49; Mosiah 16:3; Alma 42:10). These resemblances would seem to suggest that the Book of Moses (or something close to it) was found on the plates of brass. The similar phrases in the New Testament could then be explained as evidence that the New Testament

writers also had access to the Book of Moses. Jeff Lindsay and Noel Reynolds have produced extensive studies along these lines.[28]

The evidence brought forward by Lindsay and Reynolds is of great significance. It certainly demonstrates that there are intertextual connections between some of the contents of the plates of brass and the restored portions of the Book of Moses. However, the precise relationship between these texts cannot be adequately described without a systematic comparison of the language of the Book of Mormon, the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis, and the New Testament. Such a comparison is beyond the scope of this paper, but some preliminary observations may be offered here.

One observation is that the use of New Testament-like language in the Book of Mormon involves a number of unique factors. The foundational revelation given to Nephi in 1 Nephi 11–14, which is explicitly linked to the Revelation of John (see 1 Nephi 14:18–27), may have proleptically introduced similar language into Nephite discourse. Further, most of the historical narrative in the Book of Mormon is an abridgment by Mormon and Moroni, who lived long after the ministry of Christ among the Nephites. During his ministry, Christ "did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory" (3 Nephi 26:3). The greater part of this discourse, which may have included material similar to the Book of Moses, was recorded on the large plates of Nephi (3 Nephi 26:7). It is therefore possible that the abridged account is influenced by the language of Christ's teachings.[29] Even quotations from the plates of brass found on the large plates may have been rendered into Christian language in the process of creating the edited text—after all, it is reasonable to imagine Mormon needing to translate the language of the nearly one-thousand-year-old plates of brass into his own written idiom.[30] Finally, the possibility of influence from native American languages and sources is a large unknown factor. It is not out of the question that native American expressions with no direct relationship to the New Testament were nevertheless close enough in meaning that they were translated into English using New Testament language. Thus, the parallel New Testament-like language in the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses may be explained in various ways; it is not always necessary to conclude that one is derived from the other.

Even beyond the use of New Testament-like language, there are many similarities between the scriptures available to the Nephites and the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis (including the Book of Moses). However, it should be noted that there are also significant differences. For instance, the prophecy of Joseph quoted by Lehi in 2 Nephi 3 is similar to Gen. 50 in the Joseph Smith Translation, but the two texts are far from being identical. Gen. 50 JST dwells more extensively on the ministry of Moses. Verse 29 mentions that Moses was "nursed by the king's daughter," a detail that diverges from the account of Moses being nursed by his mother Jochebed in Ex. 2:7–9 but that may be related to Stephen's retelling in Acts 7:21;[31] and verse 34 mentions that Moses "shall gather together my people, and he shall lead them as a flock," which may allude to the description of Moses as a shepherd in Ex. 3:1 (compare the image of the Lord leading his people as a shepherd in Ps. 80:1; Isa. 40:11; John 10:3, 14; 1 Pet. 2:25). The version of the prophecy in 2 Nephi 3 lacks these details about Moses but includes more about the words that will be written by Joseph's descendants, which words "shall cry from the dust" (compare Isa. 29:4). While Nephi mentions that his father quoted this prophecy from the plates of brass (2 Nephi 4:2), he does not specify that the prophecy was found in Genesis; indeed, Nephi describes this as one of multiple prophecies of Joseph on the plates of brass, perhaps implying that it was part of a separate book of prophecies. Nephite scriptures describing the primordial history show a similar degree of difference when compared to the Book of Moses, as I will explain in the excursus later in this study. These differences allow for the possibility that the Book of Moses, rather than being identical with the Genesis record found on the plates of brass, incorporates materials that are more distantly related to the contents of the plates.

An additional observation is that an overall view of ancient Hebrew literature makes it problematic to consider the Book of Moses the source of language common to the Book of Mormon and the New Testament. It would be strange if a preexilic biblical text should have such a heavy influence on New Testament language but should leave no trace in the language of other parts of the Old Testament. Usage within the book also makes it unlikely that the Book of Moses is the ultimate source of this language, since some

of the more distinctively Christian words and phrases are used without explanation, as if the audience should already be familiar with these terms. A good example of this is Moses 5:58: "And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels . . . and by the gift of the Holy Ghost." The usage here presupposes that the terms "the Gospel" and "the gift of the Holy Ghost" are already known to the audience; the text is concerned with expounding the primordial origins of these things, but it does not appear to be introducing them as new concepts.

Some of the New Testament-like phrases in the Book of Moses may be placed in a preexilic context by assuming an Egyptian origin or by tracing them to phrases with similar meaning in the Old Testament. According to Mosiah 1:4, Lehi's knowledge of "the language of the Egyptians" enabled him to read the engravings on the plates of brass, which implies that the record, including its account of the primordial history, was written in Egyptian. By the same token, on the assumption that the Book of Moses is contemporary with the plates of brass, its language may have been Egyptian as well. Further, some of the language of the Book of Moses, such as the description of Christ as "full of grace and truth," the commandment to "love one another," and the reference to the Messiah as a lamb, may be traced to Old Testament antecedents with only minor differences in the wording; thus, it is possible that these phrases represent ancient Israelite language that has been rendered into English using New Testament style.[32] These explanations could indeed account for some of the New Testament-like language of the Book of Moses. However, they are unlikely to account for all of it. For instance, the book's prominent usage of the terms *faith* and *believe* is uncharacteristic not only of preexilic Hebrew literature but also of ancient Egyptian (in which equivalents of these terms are entirely unattested). There are also many longer pieces of text in which it is not just the constituent phrases but the overall sense that appears characteristic of the New Testament and/or of early Christian literature. As just one example, the statement "by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that [Satan] should be cast down" (Moses 4:3) would be evocative of Rev. 12:10 even if other words with the same meaning were used instead. Moreover, even if individual phrases can be traced to preexilic contexts, if we step

back and view all these phrases in the aggregate, the likelihood that they would occur together in a preexilic text seems small.

In short, while the evidence assembled by Lindsay and Reynolds shows that there is a relationship between the plates of brass and the Book of Moses, the precise nature of that relationship remains unclear. The Genesis account on the plates of brass likely contained material that is also preserved in the Book of Moses, as Lindsay and Reynolds suggest. It is possible that some of the New Testament-like phrases in the Book of Moses derive from this preexilic source. But none of this evidence unequivocally places the Book of Moses in a preexilic context. An early Christian context seems, in my opinion, to best explain the language of the book as a whole. The abundant concentration of so many New Testament-like phrases, in stark contrast to surviving Biblical Hebrew literature, tips the scales in favor of this later context.

Second, the New Testament language could point to Joseph Smith's nineteenth-century context, since he was known to use Johannine language elsewhere. Of course, most scholars who do not accept the authenticity of the Book of Moses would assume that Joseph Smith drew the language from his own environment. However, this approach fails to account for the fact that the Book of Ether and the Book of Abraham, which are thematically similar to the Book of Moses, are quite different from it in the language they use.[33] It does not work to say that Joseph Smith simply infused all his revelations with Johannine language. If Joseph Smith was the source of this language, then he was at least attentive to stylistic differences among texts from different historical environments. One might then wonder why he decided that a Johannine style was appropriate for the Book of Moses but not for other ancient scriptures.

Ultimately, the simplest explanation for the New Testament language in the Book of Moses is that the text comes from an early Christian historical context. Based on an initial analysis of the phrases used, the most likely date is around the latter part of the first century AD.

3.2. Hebraisms, Wordplays, and Proper Names

As an early Christian text, the Book of Moses would most likely have been transmitted in Greek, although many of the source materials and the overall cultural-linguistic background of the book would have been Semitic (Hebrew and Aramaic). Kent Jackson and others have noted what appear to be Hebraisms in the Book of Moses, including some particularly striking ones that are found in the original manuscript but have since been edited out. Some have also noted apparent wordplays relying on Hebrew vocabulary. In addition, some of the new proper names in the text seem to be of Semitic origin. Each of these things have been put forward as evidence of an ancient Hebrew origin of the book. However, a careful consideration of each of these issues shows that a first-century origin is possible, and in some cases the evidence weighs in favor of the later date.

Apparent Hebraisms that have been noted in the Book of Moses text include "Behold I" in the original text of Moses 1:3 and 4:1, the use of the grammatical constructions "if . . . and" (Moses 6:52) and "as I was . . . and" (Moses 7:2), and the frequent use of the phrase "it came to pass," in these cases, as with proposed Hebraisms in general, it is important to establish the periods of Hebrew in which the construction is found and whether the construction is also found in Aramaic or in Koine Greek. Aramaic is a Semitic language related to Hebrew and thus employs many of the same constructions found in Hebrew. The Greek of the Gospels and Acts shows significant influence from Hebrew and Aramaic, bearing witness to the books' composition in a predominantly Semitic environment, by people whose first language was most likely Aramaic.[34] Thus, what appear to be Hebraisms could potentially indicate an Aramaic or even a Greek origin.

The phrase "Behold I" in the original manuscript in Moses 1:3 and 4:1 is strikingly different from English usage:

> And God spake unto Moses, saying, **Behold I**, I am the Lord God Almighty, and Endless is my name. (Moses 1:3, original manuscript)

> That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and

> he came before me, saying—**Behold I**, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost. (Moses 4:1, original manuscript)

Kent Jackson has suggested that the construction reflects the Hebrew word *hineni*.[35] However, this word literally means "behold me."[36] A more exact parallel is the Aramaic *hā ʾanā*, literally "behold I." The phrase appears in the Aramaic dialect of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which is likely the same literary dialect of Aramaic that was known to the writers of the Gospels.[37] Also, the Greek phrase *idou egō* "behold I," which is exactly analogous to the Aramaic *hā ʾanā*, is found in the Septuagint (translating the Hebrew *hineni* in many instances, for example Gen. 22:1) and in the New Testament (Acts 9:10).

Other apparent Hebraisms are subject to similar considerations. The Hebrew-like grammatical constructions "if . . . and" (Moses 6:52) and "as I was . . . and" (Moses 7:2) are also found in the Aramaic of the Dead Sea Scrolls.[38] The phrase "it came to pass" could represent the Hebrew word *wayhi*, but it could just as well represent the Aramaic *wahawā*. The equivalent Greek phrases *kai egeneto* and *egeneto de* appear in the Septuagint and in the New Testament; they are particularly common in Luke (although, interestingly, they are not characteristic of Johannine literature).

Matthew L. Bowen suggests that some passages of the Book of Moses may reflect wordplays in an underlying Hebrew text. Bowen points out that Moses 1:41 may involve a play on the Hebrew root *ysp* "add, do again," thus alluding to Joseph Smith as the one who would restore the words taken away from the book.[39] Moses 1 may echo a preexilic Hebrew account of Moses in which such a wordplay was present. But the fact that a Hebrew-based wordplay is possible in this passage does not necessarily mean that the immediate underlying text was in Hebrew. By way of comparison, Jesus's declaration in John 14:6 that he is "the way, the truth, and the life" is alliterative in Latin and in Arabic; based on the Arabic, it is possible to suggest that Jesus's original declaration in Aramaic was also alliterative. However, the Greek text of this passage, from which all the extant translations derive, does not show alliteration. The suggestion of a Hebrew-based wordplay in Moses 1:41 can thus

coexist with the possibility of an immediate underlying text in Greek.

Bowen also proposes a wordplay between the name *Cain* (Hebrew *Qayin*) and the word *gain* (perhaps reflecting Hebrew *qinyan*, "thing got or acquired, acquisition") in Moses 5:31.[40] This proposal is especially attractive because it works both in Hebrew and in English. To be sure, the Hebrew word usually translated as "gain" in the King James Version is not *qinyan* but *beṣa'* (*qinyan* is usually translated as "substance" in the King James Version). However, it is also noteworthy that the Hebrew word *qinyan* is most likely an Aramaic loanword.[41] The word is found in various Aramaic dialects, including Jewish Palestinian Aramaic and Syriac.[42] This proposed wordplay could, therefore, just as easily support a first-century Aramaic origin as an ancient Hebrew origin. The Greek verb meaning "to get gain," *kerdainō* (James 4:13), is also similar in sound to the name *Cain* (Greek *kain*).[43]

It is also possible to propose wordplays based on Greek in the Book of Moses. For instance, in Moses 5:58, we read, "thus the Gospel began to be preached . . . being declared by holy angels," in Greek, the words for "Gospel" (*euangelion*) and "angel" (*angelos*) are related; for a speaker of Greek, the idea of angels declaring the Gospel would seem quite natural.[44] The Greek word *euangelion* entered Christian Aramaic dialects as a loanword very early, but the word for "angel" in Aramaic and Hebrew was always *mal'ak*; thus, the possible wordplay in Moses 5:58 would work in Greek but not in Aramaic or Hebrew.[45] This example demonstrates that there is much further room for exploration of possible wordplays. In order for suggestions of wordplay to argue convincingly for a linguistic origin of the text, it would be important to conduct a thorough search and to compare the results after various possibilities are taken into account.

Many of the names found in the revealed portions of the text, such as Mahon (changed to Mahan in the current text), Mahijah, Mahujah, Shum, Sharon, and Hanannihah, seem to be rendered from Hebrew or Aramaic rather than Greek, since they contain sounds not found in the Greek alphabet.[46] The name Mahon, found twice in Moses 5:31 in the original manuscript, could represent the Aramaic word *maḥwon*, the plural of *meḥā*, "wound, blow."[47] The

names Mahijah and Mahujah have been connected with the name *MHWY* that appears in the Aramaic Book of Giants; the similarity in the forms of these names is made more interesting by the fact that the character *MHWY* in the Book of Giants plays a role similar to that of Mahijah in the Book of Moses.[48] However, the names could have been rendered from their original Semitic forms even if the source text was in Greek, just as the translators of the King James Bible used the forms *Abraham* and *Bethlehem* in the New Testament instead of the Greek forms *Abraam* and *Bethleem*.

Overall, the evidence of proposed Hebraisms, proposed wordplays, and proper names is inconclusive in establishing the original language of the Book of Moses. In some cases in which an ancient Hebrew origin has been assumed, the evidence could argue just as well or better in favor of a first-century Aramaic or Greek origin.

3.3. The Literary Milieu

The period from the third century BC to the second century AD saw the flourishing of Jewish and Christian apocryphal literature similar to the Book of Moses (see table 1).[49] The book of Jubilees (Jewish, second century BC) and the Greek Life of Adam and Eve (Jewish, first century AD) are both retellings of the early events of Genesis framed as revelations to Moses, exactly like the Book of Moses. The book of 4 Ezra is similar in style and visionary content to the Book of Moses; the Latin text also contains Christian expansions dating to about the third century. The Apocalypse of Adam is notable because it is a Gnostic work, incorporating Christian concepts, although it is very different from the Book of Moses in terms of doctrine. Jeffrey Bradshaw, David Larsen, and Stephen Whitlock have recently called attention to the close similarity between the Apocalypse of Abraham and Moses chapter 1.[50] The Book of Moses fits very well among these texts in the literary milieu of the first to second centuries AD, when some Jewish apocryphal books were already circulating and others, including the Greek Life of Adam and Eve and the Apocalypse of Adam, were being produced.

Table 1. Selected apocryphal literature

Title	Earliest languages	Approximate date
1 Enoch	Hebrew (?), Aramaic, Greek	3rd c. BC to 1st c. AD
Book of Giants	Hebrew (?), Aramaic	2nd c. BC
Jubilees	Hebrew, Greek	2nd c. BC
Genesis Apocryphon	Aramaic	2nd c. BC
Greek Life of Adam and Eve	Hebrew (?), Greek	1st c. AD
Testament of Moses	Hebrew (?), Greek (?), Latin	1st c. AD
4 Ezra	Hebrew or Aramaic (?), Greek (?), Latin	1st c. AD
Apocalypse of Adam	Greek, Coptic	1st or 2nd c. AD
Apocalypse of Abraham	Hebrew (?)	late 1st or early 2nd c. AD

The book of 1 Enoch, the Book of Giants, Jubilees, and the Genesis Apocryphon—manuscripts of all of which were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls—are closely comparable in terms of content to Moses 5–7; many of the parallels have been noted already in scholarship on the Book of Moses.[51] Also found among the Dead Sea Scrolls were five manuscripts containing what has been termed "Reworked Pentateuch." These manuscripts are particularly significant for comparison with the Book of Moses because they present a text that is essentially the same as the received biblical text but with some expanded portions and changes to individual phrases, much like the Book of Moses and the rest of the Joseph Smith Translation.[52]

The production of apocryphal literature continued into the Middle Ages and beyond. Some of the medieval apocryphal literature is typologically similar to the Book of Moses in terms of its relationship to ritual practice, as I have discussed elsewhere.[53]

But in terms of the literary style, the Book of Moses is much closer to earlier apocryphal literature.[54]

Therefore, the Book of Moses, as an expansion of the Genesis narrative with clear Christian elements, fits comfortably in the first century AD. This is not to say that an earlier date is impossible. Some of the Jewish and early Christian apocrypha clearly preserve elements dating back to much earlier periods (as but one example, in the Book of Giants, one of the giants is a literary reincarnation of the ancient Mesopotamian hero Gilgamesh). It is thus possible that similar parabiblical texts existed in earlier times. One also cannot exclude the possibility that the Book of Moses was *sui generis* at the time it was written. However, from an objective standpoint, the flowering of apocryphal literature that reached its height in the first century AD presents the most plausible known context for a literary production like the Book of Moses. In the many extant texts from this period, we can see numerous striking resemblances to the Book of Moses, many of which have already been documented. To date, earlier periods have not presented a single text of this kind. The weight of evidence thus favors a first-century context.

3.4. References to a Time of Wickedness

At the end of Moses chapter 1, the Lord commands Moses to write the things he is about to hear, thus providing a narrative framework for the chapters that follow:

> And now, Moses, my son, I will speak unto thee concerning this earth upon which thou standest; and thou shalt write the things which I shall speak. And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught and take many of them from the book which thou shalt write, behold, I will raise up another like unto thee; and they shall be had again among the children of men—among as many as shall believe. These words were spoken unto Moses in the mount, the name of which shall not be known among the children of men. And now they are spoken unto you. Show them not unto any except them that believe. Even so. Amen.[55] (Moses 1:40–42)

Immediately after this, as God begins to narrate the events of the creation to Moses (Moses 2:1), God reiterates the commandment to write his words.

The prophecy in Moses 1:41 of the corruption and restoration of Moses's revelation is of fundamental importance in situating the book historically. The prophesied time when the book will be restored is correlated with the performative context of the book itself: at that time, according to verse 41, God's words contained in the book will be had "among as many as shall believe," and the audience hearing the narrative is accordingly told to show the words only to "them that believe," in other words, the time when the revelation will be "had again among the children of men" is identical with the historical context in which the book was performed. The audience, by hearing the book, is thus fulfilling the prophecy.

A similar framing occurs in the book of Jubilees. In the introductory first chapter, God commands Moses to write the revelation so that his descendants will know of God's righteous deeds (Jubilees 1:5–6). God also prophesies to Moses of a time of apostasy in which the people would forsake God, be scattered among the nations, and ultimately "forget all of my laws and all of my commandments and all of my judgments, and they will err concerning new moons, sabbaths, festivals, jubilees, and ordinances"—the very things expounded in the book of Jubilees (Jubilees 1:7–14). But after this time, the people would repent, and God would restore the temple and its ordinances (Jubilees 1:15–25). Moses is then commanded again to write the revelation, the observance of which is specifically situated in that future time of restoration:

> And you write down for yourself all of the matters which I shall make known to you on this mountain: what (was) in the beginning and what (will be) at the end, what will happen in all of the divisions of the days which are in the Law and testimony and throughout their weeks (of years) according to the jubilees forever, until I shall descend and dwell with them in all the ages of eternity. (Jubilees 1:26)[56]

Finally, as God begins to narrate the events of the creation at the beginning of chapter 2, he reiterates the commandment to Moses to "write the whole account of creation" (Jubilees 2:1).

The narrative framing of the Book of Moses and of Jubilees is similar not only in content but also in function. In both cases,

the framing relates the restoration of the narrative to the situation of the audience, thus giving the audience a sense of participation in the salvation history described in the narrative. It also lends authority to the rituals revealed in the respective books, tracing these rituals to the lawgiver Moses, who received them from God on the mountain, and thence back to the primordial time when God instructed Adam.

The one like unto Moses mentioned in Moses 1:41 is thought by some interpreters to be Joseph Smith, the modern revealer of the Book of Moses.[57] However, the prophecies of one "like unto Moses" elsewhere in scripture are usually interpreted as referring to Jesus Christ (e.g., Deut. 18:15–19; Acts 3:22–24; 1 Nephi 10:4–5; 3 Nephi 20:23–24; JS-H 1:40).[58] An intended intertextual connection between the prophecy in Moses 1:41 and that in Deut. 18:15–19 is likely, given the similarity in language (with the verb "raise up"), the fact that the prophecy in Deuteronomy is uttered by Moses, and the evidence for the importance of the prophecy in early Christian historical memory relating to Moses (Acts 3:22–24; 7:37). If the prophecy as found in Moses 1:41 indeed refers to Jesus Christ as a restorer of the primordial history revealed to Moses, this would resonate with traditions of Jesus expounding primordial history during the forty-day ministry after his resurrection and before his ascension into heaven (Acts 1:3).[59] After the Resurrection, according to Luke, Jesus appeared to two of his disciples, "and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). The Arabic Apocalypse of Peter, or Book of Rolls, an apocryphal book attributed to Clement of Rome, recounts a revelation by Jesus to the apostles on the Mount of Olives before his ascension. The revelation starts with the creation and ends with the Second Coming, occupying about 800 pages in some manuscripts.[60]

I would therefore suggest that the prophecy of one like unto Moses in Moses 1:41 is primarily a reference to Christ. Even so, it is possible to see here a multilayer prophecy. After all, the one being referred to is not named, which leaves the reference open to other interpretations, perhaps intentionally. The prophecy could refer primarily to Christ as the revealer of the text in its present form but also to Joseph Smith as the restorer of the text in the

latter days. The reference to Jesus would be primary not only in a chronological sense but also in terms of authorial responsibility, the use of the text, and the typology of prophethood. The content and phraseology would be attributable to Jesus; Joseph Smith, although he was the revealer of the English translation, would not be the author. The performative context in which the book was originally used would also belong to the time just after Jesus's ministry; in our dispensation the book is no longer performed as a ritual text, although it certainly resonates with our modern ordinances. Finally, Joseph Smith as a revealer of the text may be understood as a type of Christ, but not vice versa.

Another reference to the historical context of the Book of Moses is found in Moses 1:23, which refers to things in the book that are not to be had elsewhere. After recounting Moses's encounter with Satan on the mountain, the narrator comments to the audience, "And now of this thing Moses bare record; but because of wickedness it is not had among the children of men." If we interpret this verse along with Moses 1:40–42 as part of the revealed ancient text, it would seem to correlate the future time of wickedness spoken of in verses 40–42 with the circumstances in which the book itself was performed anciently. These passages would make perfect sense in an early Christian context. They assert, in effect, that the present text is the complete account of what Moses saw on the mountain, in contrast to the book of Genesis circulating at the time. This effect is very similar to that achieved in the references to the recording of the revelation and the time of apostasy in Jubilees 1. As in Moses 1, the time of apostasy in Jubilees is spoken of as future, but for the second-century BC audience, it is already in the past and functions as part of the background for the book itself.[61]

3.5. Early Manuscripts of Genesis

Fifteen manuscripts containing substantial portions of the book of Genesis have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran. Seven of these cover the portions of Genesis that parallel the Book of Moses (see table 2). There is no evidence in any of these of a form of Genesis that matches the Book of Moses—or, for that matter, other portions of the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis.[62] For instance, the manuscripts 1Q Gen and 4Q Gen^{b} both contain

Genesis 1:1, which starts at the beginning of the respective scrolls and reads with the familiar words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Table 2. Dead Sea Scrolls manuscripts of Genesis

Number	Name	Verses of Genesis attested
1Q1	1Q Gen	**1:18–21; 3:11–14**; 22:13–15; 23:17–19; 24:22–24
2Q1	2Q Gen	19:27–28; 36:6; 35:35–37
4Q1	4Q Gen-Exod[a]	22:14; 27:38–39, 42–43; 34:17–21; 35:17–36:13; 36:19–27; 37:5–6, 22–27; 39:11–40:1; 45:23; 47:13–14; 48:2–4, 15–22; 49:1–5
4Q2	4Q Gen[b]	**1:1–28; 2:14–19; 4:2–11; 5:13**
4Q3	4Q Gen[c]	40:12–13; 40:18–41:11
4Q4	4Q Gen[d]	**1:18–27**
4Q5	4Q Gen[e]	36:43–37:2; 37:27–30; 40:18–41:8; 41:35–44; 42:17–19; 43:8–14; 49:6–8
4Q6	4Q Gen[f]	48:1–11
4Q7	4Q Gen[g]	**1:1–11, 13–22; 3:6–7**
4Q8a	4Q Gen[h1]	**1:8–10**
4Q8b	4Q Gen[h2]	**2:17–18**
4Q9	4Q Gen[j]	41:15–18, 23–27, 29–36, 38–43; 42:15–22, 38; 43:1–2, 5–8; 45:14–22, 26–28
4Q10	4Q Gen[k]	**1:9, 14–16, 27–28; 2:1–3; 3:1–2**
6Q1	6Q Gen	6:13–21
8Q1	8Q Gen	17:12–19; 18:20–25

This evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, bearing witness to the status of the book of Genesis around the first century BC, has several consequences for the historical contextualization of the Book of Moses. First, if the Book of Moses is the original form of

Genesis, then the loss of Moses 1 and other portions of the text must have occurred long before the first century BC. Second, in this scenario, it is unlikely that the language of the New Testament could have been influenced by any direct connection with the Book of Moses, since the portions of the Book of Moses whose language is similar to the New Testament would have been removed from the text long before the New Testament writers lived. Third, if the Book of Moses is the original form of Genesis, then the "plain and precious things" removed from scripture by the great and abominable church, as described in 1 Nephi 13:20–29, must refer to something other than the portions of the Book of Moses that were restored by Joseph Smith, since those portions were already lost long before the rise of Christianity and the formation of the great and abominable church.

However, the notion that the Book of Moses is an early Christian text accords both with the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls and with an identification of the "plain and precious things" referred to by Nephi as the expansive portions of the Book of Moses. Chronologically, the ancient composition of the Book of Moses would be situated after the Dead Sea Scrolls and before the time when a Bible "proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew" to the Gentiles, containing "the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record," after which time the great and abominable church altered the text (1 Nephi 13:24–26). It should be noted that Nephi's description of the book, quoting the words of the angel in his vision, implies that it was a specifically Christian form of the Bible. In altering the Old Testament portions of the book, the great and abominable church may have sought to reduce the text to what was found in Jewish manuscripts, thereby producing the form of the Old Testament that has circulated in Christendom until the present.

3.6. Joseph Smith on the Original Form of Genesis

In two sermons given in Nauvoo in 1844, Joseph Smith discussed the form of the first verse of Genesis "when the inspired man wrote it."[63] On both occasions the Prophet maintained that the Hebrew word *bereshit*, with which the text currently begins, originally lacked the preposition *be*, meaning "in." According to the Prophet,

the text originally began with a reference to the "head one of the Gods" bringing forth other Gods in a council before the creation of the world. The records of the two sermons preserve several different renderings of the verse itself, some of which appear to be paraphrases; the one that seems to accord best with the Hebrew as reconstructed by the Prophet goes as follows:

> The head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods. (HC 6:307).

Some aspects of the Prophet's reading of Gen. 1:1 are not clear (including the handling of the grammar in the latter part of the verse), but what is clear is that this reading does not match the beginning of the creation account in the Book of Moses. The latter definitely reflects the preposition "in" found in the received text of Genesis:

> I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; by mine Only Begotten I created these things; yea, **in the beginning** I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest. (Moses 2:1; emphasis added)

This passage in the Book of Moses makes no reference to a divine council, and it includes other elements not mentioned by the Prophet in his two Nauvoo sermons. Interestingly, both readings agree on the doctrinal point that "the Beginning" (Hebrew *reshit*, interpreted by the Prophet in his Nauvoo sermons as "the head one") is a title of God. They also agree in positing more than one divine being involved in the creation. But the language in the two readings is quite different. Moses 2:1 is clearly in a New Testament-like style (as discussed above), while the reading presented by the Prophet in his Nauvoo sermons is more evocative of ancient Near Eastern creation accounts.

The notion that the Book of Moses was an early Christian text reconciles these divergent readings of Genesis 1 by placing them in different historical contexts. The form of Genesis 1 described by the Prophet in his Nauvoo sermons would be the original form of the text when it was composed in the first millennium BC (or earlier). The Book of Moses was a different, revealed form of the text that was doctrinally similar but oriented to different historical circumstances.

3.7. Summary

On the basis of the language of the Book of Moses, the book's similarity to apocryphal literature, the book's references to its own historical context, the evidence for the book of Genesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Joseph Smith's statements regarding the original form of Gen. 1:1, I have argued that the Book of Moses is best understood as an early Christian text. A preexilic Israelite context cannot be definitely excluded, but from currently available sources, a historical setting around the end of the first century AD seems most probable.

I have focused here on the portion of the Joseph Smith Translation found in Moses 1–7, which I consider to be a distinct textual unit.[64] However, it is possible that other portions of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament are susceptible to a similar analysis. Such a view would mean that the Joseph Smith Translation from beginning to end restored an early Christian version of the Bible, rather than individual books restored to their points of origin. It is also possible that the Book of Moses, perhaps along with other long portions of the text that were restored (such as Genesis 14:25–40 JST), was originally revealed in its early Christian context in a manner analogous to the latter-day revelation of the text through Joseph Smith.

Thus, in the search for a context of the performance of the book, we may narrow the possibilities to those that fit with an early Christian environment.

4. The Book of Moses and Early Christian Baptism

Beyond the indications discussed so far, the only clues to the performative context of the Book of Moses are the places and events referred to within the narrative. We can inquire whether the setting within the narrative may correspond to something in the setting where the narrative is performed. Comparative evidence from other ancient sources can occasionally be adduced to show that a given scenario fits with the proposed historical context. Naturally, this is a very subjective process. The process is useful, however, because it draws our attention to details in the text that might otherwise escape notice, and it leads us to careful consideration of the possibilities in light of historical sources. The conclusions,

although tentative, are nevertheless more valuable than casual speculation without attention to these things.

In the entirety of the Book of Moses, not a single indoor location features explicitly in the narrative. The events of the narrative take place on mountaintops, in the Garden of Eden, in a field (Moses 5:32), at an unspecified body of water (Moses 6:64), and in several other unnamed locations. This is certainly suggestive; it could, for instance, imply an early Christian context in which worshippers might gather in outdoor locations due to their poverty or to escape persecution. However, some more subtle features of the text caution against jumping to this conclusion. Three times the text uses the phrase "shut out" with reference to being separated from God's presence; this phrase seems to imply some sort of door or gate.[65]

> And they heard the voice of the Lord . . . and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence. (Moses 5:4)
>
> 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. (Moses 5:41)
>
> And men have become carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God. (Moses 6:49)

Also, events in the latter part of Moses 7 may implicitly take place in the built environment of Enoch's Zion, perhaps in a temple. Thus, it would be unwise to give too much weight to the apparent preference for outdoor locations in the narrative; it could be that the performance of the narrative took place in an indoor setting but that participants were meant to imagine the outdoor locations described in the text.

As for the specific ritual context of the book's performance, there is one ritual in early Christianity that fits well with the internal evidence of the book, and that is the baptism of catechumens. The prominence of Adam's baptism in Moses 6, which is doctrinally explained and then described in minute detail, certainly suggests that baptism is the most appropriate fit among Christian rites. Various links between the Book of Moses text and the early sources on baptism support this idea, as I will attempt to show.

Unlike baptism as performed in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints today, early Christian baptism consisted of a whole sequence of initiatory rites. In our dispensation, baptisms are relatively simple services performed in meetinghouses. New converts may receive confirmation on the same day as the baptism or in the next sacrament meeting.[66] They partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in a service separate from the baptism. One year after confirmation, converts may receive initiatory ordinances and the endowment in the temple.[67] In the early centuries AD, however, candidates for baptism (called catechumens) underwent a long period of instruction and testing before being deemed ready for baptism. They then received baptism together with initiatory ordinances and their first Eucharist, all in a single service. This service may also have included elements similar to the modern endowment.

No liturgical book describing baptism in detail has survived from the early centuries of Christianity. To reconstruct the specifics of the rites, we must rely on several different types of sources. First, we have the early Christian Church orders, which are handbooks outlining church doctrine and procedures, similar to our modern General Handbook. Among these, the Didache (probably composed in Syria in the late first or early second century), the Didascalia Apostolorum (Syria, early third century), and the *Apostolic Tradition* ascribed to Hippolytus of Rome (a composite text of which parts may date to the third century) briefly describe parts of the baptismal ritual. Early Church fathers of the second and third centuries, including Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Cyprian, also make reference to baptism in their writings. Also among these early texts are two apocryphal stories from the early third century, namely the Acts of Judas Thomas and the Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, which contain brief descriptions of baptism in the course of their narratives.[68]

In addition to these sources dating from the period before the transformation of Christianity into an imperial religion under Constantine, a group of sermons by the post-Constantinian Church fathers Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia are especially notable because they describe the rites in detail, being designed to instruct recent converts

about the meaning of the rites they had received.[69] Although these sermons contain elements that are likely late additions to the rites, all four agree on core aspects, and some of these core aspects happen to agree with the pre-Constantinian sources.

Almost all the sources agree that baptism consisted of four basic stages. Listed in order, the four stages are as follows:

1. Prebaptismal rites (reading and instruction, renunciation of Satan, profession of faith in Christ)

2. Baptismal rites (including immersion in the water)

3. Anointing rites (laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit, anointing, clothing in white baptismal garment)

4. Eucharist (kiss of peace, hymns, prayers, communion of bread and wine)

The list above mentions only the most frequently attested rites within each stage. Edward Yarnold has attempted a more detailed reconstruction.[70] However, his reconstruction is of the post-Nicene form of the rites; some aspects are also uncertain, particularly the order in which the rites were performed (which varies from one source to the next). My own reconstruction, which is given below, applies to the earliest form of the rites. Table 3 indicates the sources attesting to each rite.

It should be emphasized at the outset that details of this reconstruction, beyond the four basic stages of the ritual and the rite of baptism by immersion itself, are subjective. The process of extrapolating these details from the sources and deciding how these rites may have changed over time unavoidably involves educated guesswork. This is particularly true of the order in which the rites were performed within each stage. Nevertheless, each of the details described below is grounded in ancient sources and makes sense in terms of the overall development of the liturgy.

First, the bishop, priests, deacons, and members would gather with the candidate at a sacred place for an all-night vigil. The candidate would be read to and instructed. Then, while the candidate was engaged in prayer, the deacons would come to him or her in the role of angels to announce, "Your prayer has been heard." They would instruct the candidate to face west, stretch out

one hand, and renounce Satan to break the former covenant with him. Then the candidate would face east, kneel, stretch out both hands in prayer, and profess faith in Christ and a commitment to follow him.

For the second stage, the whole company would form a procession and go down to the river, holding torches to light the way. By the riverside, the candidate's eyes would be anointed with clay. He or she would then be baptized by immersion, and the bishop would declare the baptized person to be a son or child of God, using words similar to Ps. 2:7, "You are my son, this day I have begotten you."

The procession would then return to the sacred place for the third stage of the rites. The candidate's newly dirtied feet would be washed. In the Syrian tradition, the gift of the Holy Spirit was given in the water, but other traditions would do that at this stage. The candidate would then be anointed on the head and on different parts of the body, then clothed in a pure white baptismal garment. One ancient source mentions the giving of a new name at this stage of the rites.

In the final stage, a procession would accompany the candidate into an assembly hall for the Eucharist. The priests would form a circle around the altar of the Eucharist and would pray for members of the community, including the living and the dead. The members would exchange the "kiss of peace." After the singing of hymns, a prayer would be offered for the Holy Spirit to descend and sanctify the Eucharist bread and wine. Then the candidate and other members would come forward to the altar to receive the communion.

Table 3. Baptismal rites according to early Christian sources

	D	JM	T	DA	AJT	AXP	C	AT	CJ	A	JC	TM
Prebaptismal rites												
Reading and instruction	x	x						x				
Renunciation of Satan			x					x	x	x	x	x

	D	JM	T	DA	AJT	AXP	C	AT	CJ	A	JC	TM
Profession of faith		x							x		x	x
Baptismal rites												
Procession		x										
Anointing eyes with clay										x		
Baptism by immersion	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Declaration of sonship		x		x								
Anointing rites												
Washing of feet						x				x		
Laying on of hand(s) for gift of Holy Spirit			x	x			x	x		x		
Anointing			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Clothing in baptismal garment									x	x		x
New name						x						
Eucharist												
Procession		x										
Prayer circle		x						x	x			x
Kiss of peace		x						x	x			x
Hymns	x								x			x
Epiclesis									x	x		x
Communion	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x

Abbreviations: D = Didache; JM = Justin Martyr; T = Tertullian; DA = Didascalia Apostolorum; AJT = Acts of Judas Thomas; AXP = Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena; C = Cyprian; AT = *Apostolic Tradition* ascribed to Hippolytus of Rome; CJ = Cyril of Jerusalem; A = Ambrose; JC = John Chrysostom; TM = Theodore of Mopsuestia

Parts of the Book of Moses show similarities to these rites. In some cases, the people in the Book of Moses perform actions that are analogous to the rites. The clearest example of this is Adam's baptism in Moses 6, the details of which are very close to those described in early Christian sources. In other cases, the dialogue of the book seems to echo aspects of the rites or teachings associated with baptism in the early sources, such as when Adam is taught to pray in the name of the Son for redemption. One could understand these latter cases as allusions to the rites, such as would help a baptismal candidate to place the rites in a doctrinal context. Remarkably, the similarities in the Book of Moses and in the four stages of the baptismal rites follow the same order. Therefore, these similarities may suggest that each section of the Book of Moses was read before a corresponding stage of the baptismal ritual, thus providing an ancient precedent and doctrinal context for the rite that would follow.[71] I will explain these similarities in more detail in the sections below.

One issue with this proposal is how to explain the many passages in the Book of Moses that do not relate directly to the baptismal rites. Such passages include the narrative of Moses's experiences on the mountaintop in Moses 1:3–39, the account of the journeys of Enoch in Moses 6:26–47, and Enoch's vision of the conflicts of nations in Moses 7:4–10. It is important to remember that even if a passage does not relate directly to a ritual, it might still serve a function that is tied to the ritual in indirect ways. Liturgies in Judaism, Christianity, and many other religions contain narratives to be recited (as well as poetry and other types of texts) that are only indirectly related to the ritual, such as readings from the Pentateuch in the synagogue liturgy and readings from the Gospels during the Eucharist. In many cases, the non-ritual passages in the Book of Moses could serve functions such as the following:

(1) They reinforce the authority of the manner of performing the ritual. For instance, the ritual of baptism described in the latter part of Moses 6 is placed within a divine revelation to Adam, which is in turn placed within a sermon of Enoch, which is in turn placed within the revelation of God to Moses on the mountain. These nested accounts lend triple authority to the description of the ritual.

(2) By providing descriptive context, they help ritual participants imagine the ancient events that constitute the precedent for the ritual. Ritual dramas in the world's religions can be quite elaborate, using built environments, costumes, and choreography that help audiences identify with ancient events that are portrayed. In modern times, technology can also be used for this purpose. But early Christian communities were relatively humble, sometimes even persecuted, and may not have had the resources to create elaborate stage productions. Verbal description in the performance, however, would have been one way of compensating in this regard. Just as the technique of ekphrasis can draw an audience's mind to something that is present in the context of a performance, references to physical environments and to historical events can draw an audience's imagination and help fill in the picture of the more essential events described. This could explain why Mount Simeon and other locations are mentioned by name and why events like the enemies of God standing afar off (Moses 7:14–15) are mentioned.

(3) They illustrate the blessings associated with receiving the rites, as well as the consequences of breaking the covenants that are entered into during the rites. The account of the apostasy of Cain and his descendants, for example, may have served as a warning to those who might choose the way of evil after confessing Christ through baptism. The account of Enoch's face-to-face encounter with God and of the miracles he performed in Moses 7:1–18 could have illustrated the Priesthood power associated with the anointing rites, which rites may have been received after the reading of this section.

With the foregoing points in mind, I will focus in the sections below on those elements in the Book of Moses that seem to relate most directly to a baptismal ritual context. I will explain how these elements compare with the details of baptism as described in the ancient sources. In addition, I will discuss physical spaces both within the narrative and in the proposed ritual context that are important to the main arguments.

4.1. "An Exceedingly High Mountain"

The narrative of Moses 1 takes place on an unnamed mountain:

> The words of God, which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain. (Moses 1:1)
>
> These words were spoken unto Moses in the mount, the name of which shall not be known among the children of men. (Moses 1:42)

The text assumes that this mountain is located someplace on earth and not in heaven. God tells Moses, "for thou art in the world" (Moses 1:7); he also mentions "this earth upon which thou standest" (Moses 1:40). Thus, people hearing the text would naturally wonder about the location of the mountain; the fact that it is unnamed heightens the sense of mystery in the narrative.

A first-century audience would be familiar with the motif of an unnamed sacred mountain as found in the Book of Moses. In the book of Jubilees, the unnamed "mountain of the East" is one of the four sacred places of the Lord, along with Eden, Sinai, and Zion (Jubilees 4:26).[72] According to Matt. 4:8, the devil took Jesus into an "exceeding high mountain" to show him a vision of the kingdoms of the world.[73] Various passages in the Gospels mention "the mountain" (*to oros*) as the location of various sacred events; it is possible that all these passages refer to a single unnamed mountain in Galilee known to Jesus and the disciples.[74] The events that occur on "the mountain" include the following:

> Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1)
>
> Ordination of the Twelve (Mark 3:13; Luke 6:12–13)
>
> Jesus resorting there to be alone and pray (Matt. 14:23; Luke 6:12; John 6:15)
>
> Teaching multitudes and performing miracles (Matt. 15:29; John 6:3)
>
> Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1, 9; Mark 9:2, 9; Luke 9:28)[75]

> Post-resurrection appearance and commission to the Twelve (Matt. 28:16)[76]

In Rev. 21:10, an angel transports John to "a great and high mountain," where John then sees a vision of the New Jerusalem descending from heaven.[77]

Moses 1 provides the narrative frame for the vision that constitutes the rest of the Book of Moses. The mountain on which Moses receives his vision may therefore correspond symbolically to the location of the ritual in which the book would have been read. In biblical tradition both before and after the Babylonian exile, the temple is described in symbolic terms as "the mountain of the Lord" (Gen. 22:14; Isa. 2:3; 30:29; Micah 4:2; Zech. 8:3). Isaiah 2:2 characterizes the future "mountain of the Lord's house" as an especially high location, "exalted above the hills," in Ezek. 40:2, God sets the prophet upon "a very high mountain," where he is given a tour of the future temple and its environs (Ezek. 40–48). Thus, it would make sense for the ritual setting of the Book of Moses to have been located at a temple.

In a recent study, I have argued that some early Christian communities had places of worship that were categorized as temples.[78] An example of such a temple may have been located at Edessa, where one ancient source mentioned "the temple of the church of the Christians."[79] The Christian building at Dura Europos, which featured an elaborate baptistry, an upper room, and an assembly hall for the Eucharist, may have been another example of an early Christian temple. The Didache and the Didascalia Apostolorum provide important evidence in this regard. According to the Didache, baptism for the living is to be performed in "living water"—that is, in the flowing water of a river—whenever possible.[80] Both Edessa and Dura Europos were located next to rivers (the Daisan and the Euphrates respectively), so the Christian communities in those cities presumably used the rivers to perform baptisms (although, as I will explain below, the other baptismal rites were likely performed indoors). This means that the baptismal font in the baptistry at Dura Europos may have been used for a different purpose. Based on Doctrine and Covenants 124:29–33, in which the Lord states that the temple is the proper place for the ordinance of baptism for the dead, it is possible that the Christian

building at Dura was a temple and that the font in that building was used for this ordinance.[81] The Didascalia Apostolorum refers to the place where the Eucharist was celebrated as "the house of the Lord," or simply "the house," terms used in the Old Testament Peshitta for the Temple of Solomon. Since the building at Dura includes an assembly hall that corresponds in other ways to the descriptions in the Didascalia Apostolorum, it is likely that this building was understood as a "house of the Lord," a temple like the Temple of Solomon.

Therefore, early Christian believers may have gathered at sacred houses of worship, known to them as temples or houses of the Lord, to perform baptisms for the living and the dead. In the case of baptisms for the living, part of the ritual (the second stage, including the actual baptism) may have taken place at a river if there was one nearby. As the ritual began, the baptismal candidate would hear the account of Moses's vision in Moses 1 being read to him or her. The candidate would be able to imagine himself or herself in the position of Moses on the mountain, about to receive knowledge of primordial events (Moses 1:30–35, 40). Just as Moses received his vision on a mountain, the candidate would be receiving the rites in a temple, "the mountain of the Lord."

4.2. "A Garden Eastward"

In Moses 2–4, the Lord narrates to Moses the events of the creation and the Garden of Eden. At the beginning and end of the garden narrative, there are indicators of direction:

> And I, the Lord God, planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there I put the man whom I had formed. (Moses 3:8; compare Gen. 2:8)

> So I drove out the man, and I placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. (Moses 4:31; compare Gen. 3:24)

The reference to "a garden eastward in Eden" in Moses 3:8 implies that the speaker, God, is located in a specific place.[82] Since the narrator and the voice of God overlap in the Book of Moses, this reference to "a garden eastward" must also make sense in relation

to the ritual setting in which the text would be read. In other words, the reading of the text must have taken place in a setting in which there was something eastward that could represent the Garden of Eden. Otherwise, the reference to the garden in Moses 3:8 would beg the question, "Eastward of what?"

Donald Parry has noted the correspondence between the cherubim placed to the east of the Garden of Eden to guard the way toward the tree of life (Gen. 3:24) and the cherubim that decorated the eastward-facing doors of the ancient Israelite temple.[83] As a priest entered the temple doors to minister in the holy place, he symbolically reversed the displacement of the fall of Adam, passing by the cherubic guardians into God's presence.[84] Early Christian sacred architecture was also typologically linked to the Garden of Eden, but the directions were reversed. In the Christian building at Dura Europos, the focal point of the assembly hall, the dais on which the bishop's throne stood, was at the east end. Likewise, in the later basilica church, the sanctuary and the altar for the Eucharist were at the east end of the building, while the entrance was on the west. Worshippers would thus pray toward the east and approach eastward to partake of the Eucharist. Christian retellings of the Garden of Eden narrative correspondingly describe Adam being expelled from the garden westward.[85] The Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible), which was the form of the Old Testament used by Greek-speaking Christians in the early centuries AD, rendered Genesis 3:24 without reference to a cardinal direction, thus permitting this reversal of direction:

> And he cast out Adam and settled him opposite the garden of delight, and he commanded the cherubim and the flaming sword that turns about to guard the way of the tree of life. (Septuagint, Gen. 3:24)

Moses 4:31 is closer to the Hebrew Bible, preserving the reference to the eastern location of the cherubim. The wording of the underlying Hebrew phrase in Genesis 3:24, *miqqedem legan 'eden*, literally "eastward of the garden of Eden," does imply that the cherubim were placed in a location adjoining the garden to the east. Yet even in this case, there is room for interpretation. Targum Neofiti, a Palestinian Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch dating

to the early centuries AD,[86] interprets the verse in a way that would support the early Christian reversal of direction:

> And he banished Adam and caused the glory of his Shekhinah to dwell from the beginning eastward of the Garden of Eden, between the two cherubim. (Targum Neofiti, Genesis 3:24)

According to this translation, the cherubim referred to are the ones placed over the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, and the divine presence over the mercy seat is said to be "eastward of the Garden of Eden." This seems to employ the typological connection between the Garden of Eden and the temple; however, it also seems to imply that the holiest part of both was to the east.

Therefore, the spatial indications in this part of the text could make sense in the context of a performance at an early Christian building oriented with the holiest part to the east. Cyril of Jerusalem, in describing the baptismal rites, assumes this kind of spatial layout. In the renouncing of Satan, when the baptismal candidate turns from west to east, he or she faces toward the gates of paradise, "that garden which God planted in the east, and from which our first parent was expelled for his transgression."[87] The later liturgical drama *The Cherub and the Thief*, which was performed in Chaldean churches at Easter, ended with the deacons who played the role of the cherubim carrying the person representing the penitent thief crucified with Jesus into the sanctuary at the east end of the church, thus signifying the thief's entrance into paradise.[88]

Early Christian sources do not explicitly describe a performance of the creation and Garden of Eden narratives as part of the baptismal ritual. However, they do refer to the administration of sacred teachings at the beginning of the ritual. According to the *Apostolic Tradition* ascribed to Hippolytus of Rome, the baptismal rites began with an all-night vigil during which the catechumens would be "read to and instructed."[89] It is certainly reasonable to suppose that the reading included a review of the events of the creation and the fall as found in Moses 2–4, underscoring the need for Christ's sacrifice and the saving ordinance of baptism. These teachings were sacred and not to be shared indiscriminately, as we know from Moses 4:32: "See thou show them unto no man, until I

command you, except to them that believe." This could explain why none of the sources mention a reading of these chapters specifically.

It is, however, noteworthy that three of the four post-Nicene fathers who prepared homilies on the mystery of baptism for initiates teach that the initiate has taken on the role of Adam in the garden. Cyril of Jerusalem and Theodore of Mopsuestia both relate the removal of the candidate's clothing before baptism to Adam's naked state in the garden; in Cyril's words, "You truly mirrored our first-created parent Adam, who stood naked in Paradise and was not ashamed."[90] Cyril further teaches that the anointing on the forehead after baptism is "so that you might lose the shame which Adam, the first transgressor, everywhere bore with him."[91] Ambrose makes an equation between the experience of Adam and that of the initiate:

> Adam was tripped and thrown by the devil, so that the devil's poison infected his feet; so you have your feet washed, in order to receive the special help of sanctification in the place where the serpent lay in ambush so that he cannot trip you up again.[92]

Ambrose similarly teaches that the initiate, by being immersed in water in the similitude of the grave, fulfills the sentence passed upon Adam that he would return to dust.[93] These teachings could, perhaps, be explained in terms of humanity bearing the effects of Adam's fall. However, the fact that each of these fathers refers to the events of the Garden of Eden narrative in the context of baptismal rites, and specifically in a way that emphasizes a typological connection between the candidate and Adam, would fit with the assumption that a performance of the Garden of Eden narrative took place during the baptismal rites.

4.3. "The Way toward the Garden"

Moses 5 describes the gospel of Jesus Christ being preached to Adam and his family through the ministry of angels, beginning with an angel teaching Adam that his animal sacrifice was "a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father" (Moses 5:7). The angel commands Adam to "call upon God in the name of the Son" (Moses 5:8), which Adam and Eve do (Moses 5:16). The Holy Ghost confirms to Adam, "as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed,

and all mankind, even as many as will" (Moses 5:8). In contrast to this redemptive path, the chapter also describes the unbelief and apostasy of some of Adam's descendants, who enter into a covenant with Satan (Moses 5:29–30, 49, 52). The phrase "loved Satan more than God" occurs three times in this chapter, and only in this chapter (Moses 5:13, 18, 28). Moses 5:14–15 encapsulates the contrast between these two paths:

> And the Lord God called upon men by the Holy Ghost everywhere and commanded them that they should repent; 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.

The opening events in this chapter take place outside the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve receive God's commandment "from the way toward the Garden of Eden," although they cannot see him, since they are "shut out from his presence" (Moses 5:4). Cain, after murdering Abel, travels in a different direction, dwelling in the land of Nod (Moses 5:41). The phrase "on the east of Eden" in this verse is a rendering of the Hebrew phrase *qidmat-'eden* (Gen. 4:16). Even though most major translations render this phrase as "east of Eden," the phrase may actually mean "in front of Eden" or "over against Eden," as it is rendered in the Septuagint; in fact, according to Brown, Driver, and Briggs, the word *qidmah* is "really, on geographical grounds, west of" the garden.[94] I am not certain that this analysis is correct for the original meaning in Gen. 4:16, whose interpretation should be considered in relation to the Israelite temple; however, it is quite appropriate for the meaning of Moses 5:41, which I would interpret in an early Christian context. In terms of the physical space of the performance of the Book of Moses, chapter 5 could have been read aloud in a space adjoining that in which the garden narrative took place.

Moses 5 corresponds to the first stage of the early Christian baptism ritual. This stage consisted of two main events. The first included sacred instruction. As mentioned above, part of this instruction may have been a reading of the creation and Garden of Eden narratives (Moses 2–4). The narrative of Moses 5 may also

have been part of this. According to the Didache, before being baptized, the candidate was to be taught the doctrine of the two ways: the way of life and the way of death. The first commandment of the way of life was to love God, while the way of death was "evil and completely cursed," consisting of murders and all sorts of wickedness.[95] Moses 5 deals extensively with these two contrasting ways. Cyril of Jerusalem and Theodore of Mopsuestia both teach that there was a covenant made with Satan that affects the Gentile nations and puts individuals in a state of bondage; one seeking baptism must break this covenant as he or she enters into a saving covenant with God.[96]

The second event included a renunciation of Satan and a profession of faith. The combined witness of the post-Nicene fathers Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Theodore of Mopsuestia allows us to reconstruct these rites in detail, although there are some minor discrepancies between the descriptions. First, the candidate is instructed what to do. According to Theodore of Mopsuestia, while the candidate is engaged in prayer, "appointed ministers" come to the candidate, playing the part of the angel who came to Cornelius to announce, "Your prayer has been heard" (Acts 10:30–31). They then instruct the candidate to perform the renunciation of Satan.[97] Next, the candidate faces west, stretches out his or her hand, and renounces Satan. Finally, the candidate turns to face east, kneels, stretches out both hands, and confesses faith in Christ and a commitment to obey him.[98] Broadly speaking, these actions fit with the description of Adam's angelic visitation in Moses 5:6–9. Thus, if a performance of Moses 5 was followed by the candidate's renunciation of Satan and profession of faith, the candidate would be able to identify with Adam.

4.4. "Down into the Water"

Moses 6 introduces the account of Enoch and his preaching, starting in verse 26. The latter part of the chapter, from verse 40 through verse 68, consists of a sermon given by Enoch in answer to a question by one Mahijah (the sermon actually continues through the first verse of chapter 7). In this sermon, Enoch briefly recounts his own call as a prophet (the fuller account is given earlier in the

chapter, verses 26–36). He then describes in detail a revelation to Adam concerning baptism and gives an account of Adam's baptism.

There are two important settings in this chapter, both of which are near water. The first is the location where Enoch receives his call as a prophet. In his brief account of this experience in verse 42, Enoch says that it occurred on the way "from the land of Cainan, by the sea east." This may be a reference to the Dead Sea, which was known in antiquity as the "sea east," since it marked part of the eastern boundary of the traditional land of Israel (Jos. 12:3; 15:5; Ezek. 47:18; Joel 2:20). The longer account of Enoch's call in verses 26–36 does not mention the location, but the fact that Enoch is told to "anoint [his] eyes with clay, and wash them" agrees with the notion that it took place close to the sea, where wet clay and water would be found. The second setting is the place of Adam's baptism. This is obviously near the water, for the Spirit carries Adam "down into the water" to baptize him by immersion.

These locations in the narrative correspond to the location of the second stage of baptism. In the case of baptism for the living, this stage began with a torchlit procession from the place of gathering down to a river. In the case of baptism for the dead, the location is a matter of speculation; if it is true that buildings like the one at Dura Europos functioned as temples, as I have suggested, then the baptismal font within the sacred building would be used for this purpose. The procession would thus be much shorter in this case, from the instruction room to the baptistry.[99]

Four aspects of Moses 6 show striking similarities to the baptismal rites as described in early sources. First, God commands Enoch to anoint his eyes with clay and wash them; after this, Enoch is able to see spirits and other "things which were not visible to the natural eye" (Moses 6:35–36). This, of course, recalls the miracle of Jesus recounted in John 9:1–7, in which Jesus spits on clay to moisten it, then anoints the eyes of the blind man with the clay and commands him to wash in the pool of Siloam. Ambrose is our main source for the anointing of the eyes with clay during the baptismal rites. According to him, this "mystery," which is prefigured in Jesus's miracle in John 9, is performed sometime previous to the entrance into the assembly hall for the Eucharist. The purpose of this rite, according to Ambrose, is to allow the candidate to see spiritual

things and thereby recognize what the sacramental emblems on the altar represent.[100] This purpose coincides perfectly with the result of Enoch's action in Moses 6:35–36. Ambrose's brief and somewhat cryptic description is sufficient to suggest both the antiquity of the rite and its placement during the second stage, since the natural place for anointing the eyes with clay and washing it off would be by a river. Having performed this rite before being baptized, the candidate would be able to witness with spiritual eyes the descent of the Spirit after emerging from the water. The rite would also prepare the candidate to understand with greater clarity the later stages of the ritual.

Second, before Adam's baptism as recounted by Enoch, God teaches Adam the doctrine associated with baptism. The earliest text of Moses 6:59, as preserved in the original manuscript, reads as follows:

> in as much as they were born in to the world by the fall which bringeth death by water and blood and the spirit which I have made and so became of dust a living soul even so ye must be born again of water and the spirit and cleansed by blood even the blood of mine only begotten into the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven that ye may be Sanctified from all sin and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world and eternal life in the world to come even immortal glory

The language here, especially the use of the word *mysteries*, is very similar to descriptions of the baptismal rites in the early sources. Cyril of Jerusalem, for example, refers to the baptismal rites as "these spiritual and celestial mysteries" and "initiation into the mysteries."[101]

Third, Adam's baptism itself is described in unusual detail, as would be appropriate for a ritual text meant to prepare initiates for the rite:

> And it came to pass, when the Lord had spoken with Adam, our father, that Adam cried unto the Lord, and he was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. (Moses 6:64)

Note that Adam receives the Holy Spirit immediately after coming out of the water; there is no separate ordinance of confirmation. Early Christian sources from Syria describe the reception of the Holy Spirit in an almost identical way. On the basis of these sources, Yarnold speculates that the giving of the Holy Spirit with the officiator's hand placed on the baptized person's head during the immersion itself "seems to have been the original pattern for initiation in the Syrian churches."[102] This could help further contextualize the ritual elements of the Book of Moses in a Syrian environment, which would fit with the evidence for the existence of Christian temples in Syria as described above.

Fourth, immediately after being baptized, Adam hears "a voice out of heaven" telling him that he is "baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost" (Moses 6:66). The voice then says, "Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God" (Moses 6:68). Two very early sources describe a similar occurrence in which initiates were declared to be sons of God, just like Christ at his baptism.[103] Justin Martyr writes as follows:

> When [Jesus] had stepped into the water, a fire was kindled in the Jordan; and when he came out of the water, the Holy Spirit lighted on him like a dove . . . and there came at the same instant from the heavens a voice . . . You are my Son; this day I have begotten you; [the Father] saying that his generation would take place for all people, at the time when they would become acquainted with him: You are my son; this day I have begotten you. (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 88)[104]

Justin quotes the declaration of sonship from Ps. 2:7. The statement that Christ's "generation" (that is, as the Son of God) "would take place for all people," indicating that the declaration was received by all who were baptized, resembles Moses 6:68: "Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons." According to the Didascalia Apostolorum, which likely reflects Syrian practice, it was the bishop who represented the Lord in making this declaration:

> If then one who should say any of these things to a layman is found to fall under so great a condemnation, how much more if he should dare to say aught against the deacon, or against the

> bishop . . . through whom in baptism, through the imposition of the bishop's hand, the Lord bore witness to each of you and uttered his holy voice, saying, Thou art my son, this day I have begotten you. (Didascalia Apostolorum, 9.2.32)[105]

The narrative in Moses 6, therefore, corresponds to what early Christian baptismal candidates would experience in the second stage of baptism. If this chapter were read in the sacred house immediately before the procession to the river, the candidate would be able to imagine himself or herself reenacting Enoch's opening of his spiritual eyes and Adam's baptism. On emerging from the water and being declared a son of God, the baptized person would be able to feel a connection to Adam, who first followed "the example of the Son of the living God" (2 Nephi 31:16).

Figure 1. Ṭūr Šimʿon ("Mount Simeon") in the Nahal Sorek west of Jerusalem, possibly the Mount Simeon of Moses 7:2. Image from Wikimedia Commons.

4.5. "Upon the Mount Simeon"

The first part of Moses 7 recounts a mountaintop vision of Enoch (Moses 7:2–11) and continues the account of Enoch's ministry. In Moses 7:2, the Lord tells Enoch to go up to "the mount Simeon." There is a mount Simeon in Palestine that would have been known to a first-century Christian audience. The mountain known in rabbinic sources as Ṭūr Šimʿon is the modern Khirbet Sammuniyeh, located

in the Nahal Sorek west of Jerusalem.[106] The mountain is named after Simon the Hasmonean, a Jewish leader of the second century BC.[107] An archaeological survey of the site revealed evidence of occupation from the early Second Temple period to the Byzantine period.[108] This mountain overlooks the traditional land of Canaan and the plain of Sharon to the northwest, which would correspond to the "people of Canaan" and the "land of Sharon" that Enoch saw from the mountain (Moses 7:6, 9). The "people of Shum" mentioned in Moses 7:5 could be a reference to the "men of renown" mentioned in Gen. 6:4 as understood in the first century AD. The underlying Hebrew phrase in this verse is *'anše haššem*, literally "people of the name"; in the Aramaic translation of Targum Onkelos, the phrase is rendered as *'enāšīn dišmā*, where the last word is the definite form of the Aramaic word for "name," *šum*. If this last word were read as a proper name, the Aramaic phrase could be understood as "the people of Shum." The narrative in the first part of Moses 7 could therefore help to set the scene in the Levant in the distant past.[109]

For the third stage of the baptismal rites, the newly baptized person and the saints gathered for the event would return from the river to the sacred building where the first stage of the rites had taken place. The precise location of this third stage within the building is uncertain. The Christian building at Dura Europos had an upper room above the baptistry, which may have been an appropriate place, given the similarity between some of the rites and those performed in the upper room of the Last Supper as described in the Gospels (particularly the washing of the feet). The ascent from the river back to the building, and possibly a further ascent within the building, would reflect Enoch's ascent to the mount Simeon.

The narrative in the first part of Moses 7 includes several aspects that may relate to the third stage of the baptismal rites. First, note that this chapter mentions various actions of Enoch in a particular order. There is mention of Enoch "standing upon" two different places (Moses 7:2–3), the only uses of the phrase "stand upon" in the Book of Moses. Then Enoch's visual experience is mentioned:

> And it came to pass that I turned and went up on the mount; and as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory; and I saw the Lord; and

> he stood before my face, and he talked with me, even as a man talketh one with another, face to face; and he said unto me: Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations. (Moses 7:3–4)

At the end of this passage and in the following verses, Enoch hears the Lord speaking to him. Finally, the text emphasizes Enoch's speech, first as he calls upon the people to repent (Moses 7:12) and then as he leads the people of God to battle against their enemies (Moses 7:13).

The third stage of the rites began with the washing of the feet, as appropriate immediately after entering the sacred house, and as would be appropriate for "standing upon" sacred locations (Moses 7:2–3).[110] The anointing with scented oil (myron) followed. Cyril of Jerusalem gives the most detailed description of this rite:

> First you were anointed on the forehead so that you might lose the shame which Adam, the first transgressor, everywhere bore with him, and so that you might "with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Next you were anointed on the ears, that you might acquire ears which will hear those divine mysteries of which Isaiah said, "The Lord has given me an ear to hear with" (Isa. 50:4) . . . Then you were anointed on the nostrils, so that after receiving the divine chrism you might say, "We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved" (2 Cor. 2:15). After that, you were anointed on the chest, so that "having put on the breastplate of righteousness" (Eph. 6:14), "you might stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11).[111]

Here the anointing is explicitly related to the actions of seeing the Lord and hearing his word, in the same order as in Moses 7. Further, Cyril goes on to connect the anointing to having power over the adversary, just as Moses 7 describes Enoch having power over enemies after his mountaintop experience:

> Just as Christ after his baptism and visitation by the Holy Spirit went out and successfully wrestled with the enemy, so you also, after your holy baptism and sacramental anointing, put on the armor of the Holy Spirit, confront the power of the enemy, and reduce it saying, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)[112]

Enoch's reference to his having been "clothed upon with glory" (Moses 7:3) could allude to the rite of clothing in the baptismal garment, which accompanied the anointing. All the early sources that mention this rite make a point of the fact that this garment was pure white.[113] Cyril of Jerusalem quotes Isa. 61:10 to assert that the whiteness of the garment symbolized salvation and gladness.[114] Both in the context of the Book of Moses narrative and in the baptismal rites, the clothing reverses the nakedness of Adam and Eve associated with the fall (Moses 4:13).

Finally, Moses 7:18 states that the Lord "called his people Zion." One source, the apocryphal Acts of Xanthippe and Polyxena, suggests that a new name was given to a person during the baptismal rites in conjunction with the washing of the feet and the anointing with oil.[115] The Lord's action of giving a name to his people would fit with the naming at baptism.

4.6. "The City of Holiness, Even Zion"

The latter part of Moses 7 gives an account of Enoch's heavenly ascent and apocalyptic vision. The location from which Enoch begins his prayer and ascends is not explicit; however, the beginning of this part of Moses 7 could imply that the location was in Enoch's city of Zion:

> And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion. And it came to pass that Enoch talked with the Lord; and he said unto the Lord: Surely Zion shall dwell in safety forever. But the Lord said unto Enoch: Zion have I blessed, but the residue of the people have I cursed. (Moses 7:19–20)

Zion plays a large role in the ensuing narrative, being mentioned several times in the prayer and vision (Moses 7:20–21, 23, 27, 31, 47, 53, 62, 64). In all, there are eighteen occurrences of the name *Zion* in the latter part of Moses 7, and this is the only part of the Book of Moses that mentions the name. This part both begins and ends with references to Enoch's city of Zion; the last verse of the chapter mentions the city in an expansion of Gen. 5:24:

> And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom; and from thence went forth the saying, Zion is Fled. (Moses 7:69)

Around the first century, Zion was understood to be a physical location in Jerusalem. Although this name traditionally referred to the temple mount, some sources imply that first-century Jews and possibly Christians understood Mount Zion to be the western hill of Jerusalem, where the Church of the Holy Sepulcher came to be situated.[116] One could understand Enoch's city to have been located in the same place as Jerusalem but to have been taken up into heaven before Jerusalem was built.

Conceptions of Zion in the first century accord well with the motif of Zion in the Book of Moses. Mount Zion features prominently in Jewish and Christian apocryphal literature.[117] Jubilees 1:27–29 describes the eschatological Zion, where the Lord's sanctuary will be, and from which he shall reign. In Jubilees 4:26, Mount Zion is mentioned as one of the four sacred places of the Lord. Here Mount Zion is best interpreted as identical with the "mountain of incense" (Mount Qater), where Enoch offers incense to the Lord.[118] The text says about Mount Zion that it "will be sanctified in the new creation for the sanctification of the earth. On account of this the earth will be sanctified from all sin and from pollution throughout eternal generations." This sanctification seems to be associated here with the offering of incense instituted by Enoch. The portrayal of Mount Zion in Jubilees 4, then, would be parallel to the portrayal of Zion in Moses 7, as the place where Enoch prays and receives promises concerning the latter days.

Early Christianity inherited from Second Temple Judaism a juxtaposition of Mount Sinai as the place of the Lord's appearance to Moses, and Mount Zion as the place of the Lord's appearance enthroned between the cherubim in his temple. Early Christian interpreters added to this juxtaposition the identity of the Lord of these theophanies as Jesus Christ, who also manifested himself in his divine glory to the Apostles on the mount of transfiguration.[119] In this light, it is significant that a mountaintop theophany to Moses (Moses 1) and a parallel theophany on Mount Zion (Moses

7) function together as an inclusio of what can be considered a literary unit, Moses 1–7.

The early Christian understanding of Zion was linked to the crucifixion of Jesus on mount Golgotha through a messianic interpretation of Psalm 2, which Psalm describes the enthronement of the Lord's anointed on Mount Zion.[120] This accords with the fact that Moses 7:53–56 combines an account of Enoch beholding the crucifixion and a self-proclamation by the Lord as "Messiah, the King of Zion." This passage also proclaims blessedness for those who enter at the "gate" and climb up by Christ, just as Psalm 2 ends with a proclamation of blessedness for those who trust in the Son.

Another prominent aspect of the early Christian understanding of Zion was the idea of the Lamb, representing the crucified Christ, standing on mount Zion in the company of his redeemed people, based on Rev. 5:6 and 14:1.[121] Similarly, Moses 7:47 brings together the images of "the Lamb . . . slain from the foundation of the world" (cf. Rev. 13:8) and the redeemed people of Zion.

Moses 7 portrays Zion not only as a city but also as a community living together in perfect unity, righteousness, and holiness (see Moses 7:18–19). This portrayal fits with the gathering of the community of saints for the Eucharist in the final stage of baptism. The Lord's words to Enoch in Moses 7:53 refer to those who have been baptized:

> Whoso cometh in at the gate and climbeth up by me shall never fall; wherefore, blessed are they of whom I have spoken, for they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy.

This would make perfect sense in the context of the Eucharist after baptism, in which the newly baptized person would literally sing hymns and "come forth" to the altar of the Eucharist to partake of the bread and wine.

The earliest source on the Christian Eucharist, the Didache, which may date as early as the first century, surprisingly contains

none of the prayers or gestures associated with the Eucharist liturgy in later times. Instead, the focus of all three of the short sacrament hymns contained in the Didache is on eschatology: the events of the end times. This coincides with Enoch's apocalypse in the latter part of Moses 7. An especially striking example is the divine promise of gathering the elect from the four quarters of the earth in Moses 7:62, which closely resembles the hymns in Didache 9 and 10:

> to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City (Moses 7:62)

> Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and was gathered and became one, so may your church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom (Didache 9:4)

> Remember, Lord, your church . . . and gather the sanctified from the four winds, into your kingdom, which you have prepared for it. (Didache 10:5)

Finally, the "kiss of peace" exchanged between saints during the Eucharist may have taken on eschatological meaning in light of Moses 7:63, which describes the greeting exchanged between the Lord's redeemed people at the beginning of the thousand-year period of rest: "and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other."

4.7. Summary

The foregoing comparison of elements in the Book of Moses and in early Christian sources on baptism demonstrates what seems to be an extensive correlation covering Moses chapters 1 through 7. Remarkably, the similarities in the Book of Moses and in the sources on baptism follow the same order, each section of the Book of Moses corresponding to one of the four stages of baptism. The geographical locations in which events take place in the Book of Moses may also relate symbolically to the locations where events of the baptism ritual were performed. The main parallels are laid out in table 4.

Table 4. Parallels between the Book of Moses and early Christian baptism

Book of Moses	Early Christian baptism
Prebaptismal rites	
Location of frame narrative: "an exceedingly high mountain" (Moses 1:1)	Location of the rites: a temple
Garden narrative (Moses 3–4)	Candidate assumed to have experienced what Adam and Eve experienced in the garden
Righteous posterity of Adam and Eve contrasted with wicked posterity of Cain	Doctrine of the two ways taught to the candidate
Covenant with Satan, ministry of angels, repentance	Renunciation of Satan
Calling upon God	Profession of faith
Baptismal rites	
Most of the action takes place near water	Rites take place by a river
Enoch commanded to anoint eyes with clay in order to see spiritual things (Moses 6:35–36)	Anointing eyes with clay in order to see things of the Spirit (Ambrose)
Baptism described as being "born again" and "cleansed . . . into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Moses 6:59)	Baptism described as "initiation into" the "spiritual and celestial mysteries" (Cyril of Jerusalem)
Adam baptized with fire and the Holy Ghost immediately after coming out of the water (Moses 6:65–66)	Syrian rite involves bestowal of the Holy Spirit in the water immediately after immersion
God's voice from heaven declares Adam to be a son of God (Moses 6:66–68)	Bishop, representing God, declares candidate to be a son of God

Anointing rites	
Enoch goes up to mount Simeon (Moses 7:2–3)	Baptized person and congregation return to the temple
Enoch is "clothed upon with glory" (Moses 7:3)	Clothing in pure white baptismal garment
Enoch sees the Lord and talks with him "face to face" (Moses 7:4)	Anointing of the forehead so one can "with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord" (Cyril of Jerusalem)
Eucharist	
"they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy" (Moses 7:53)	Hymns before coming forth to receive communion
"to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City" (Moses 7:62)	"and gather the sanctified from the four winds, into your kingdom, which you have prepared for it" (Eucharist hymn, Didache 10:5)
"and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other" (Moses 7:63)	Kiss of Peace

5. Excursus: A More Ancient Version?

It is possible that the Book of Moses existed in some form in preexilic Israel. The book itself asserts that it is a restoration of a revelation given to Moses (see Moses 1:40–42). Just as Joseph Smith restored the book in the form in which we have it today, the book may have anciently (around the first century AD, as I have argued) restored an even earlier text.

The language of this earlier book may have been different—less like the New Testament and early Christian literature and more like the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature—although the doctrines taught in the book would have been similar. Like the Book of Moses revealed through Joseph Smith, this hypothetical preexilic book may have been used in a ritual context, possibly an initiation

ritual analogous to early Christian baptism. Likely candidates for such a ritual context would be the consecration of priests and the coronation of kings, both of which were performed at the temple and involved rites of anointing and investiture.[122] Indeed, it is possible that this hypothetical earlier form of the book included both a liturgy for the installation of priests in the first part of the book (compare the Aaronic Priesthood rites of sacrifice and baptism in Moses 5–6) and a liturgy for the coronation of kings in the latter part (compare the declaration of sonship at the end of Moses 6, corresponding to the coronation text of Psalm 2, and the ascent of Enoch and his face-to-face encounter with God in Moses 7).

The ritual of the consecration of priests provides especially instructive elements for comparison with the Book of Moses. This ritual is described in Ex. 29:1–37; 40:12–15; and Leviticus 8. The ritual lasted seven days, recalling the seven days of the creation (Ex. 29:35; Lev. 8:33–35; compare Ezek. 43:26). The primary location of the rite was "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Ex. 29:4, 10–11, 32), presumably corresponding to the temple porch in the temple of Solomon. First, the one performing the rites would need to prepare for the ritual by bringing the animals and other materials to offer (Ex. 29:1–3). Those who were to be consecrated would be brought to the door of the temple (Ex. 29:4; 40:12). They would be washed with water, clothed in the various articles of priestly clothing, and then anointed with a special compound of anointing oil (Ex. 29:4–9; 40:12–15). Then came the last part of the ritual, which consisted of the offering of animal sacrifices followed by a sacred meal of meat and bread eaten before the Lord (Ex. 29:10–28, 31–34).

Some parts of the Book of Moses would fit better or equally well in an ancient Israelite ritual context. Perhaps most obviously, the portions of Moses 2–4 that read precisely like the Masoretic text of Gen. 1–3 point to an ancient Israelite historical environment. The creation account in Genesis 1 is widely considered to be priestly in style and ideology. Donald Parry has pointed out aspects of the Garden of Eden narrative that invoke priestly matters, including sacred vestments.[123] As has been mentioned above, the spatial layout of the garden and the placement of the cherubim correspond to the Israelite temple.[124]

In addition, the overall positioning of Moses 5 and 6, dealing with the rites of sacrifice and baptism respectively, could correlate with the two main features of the temple court: the altar of sacrifice and the giant laver. The fact that Adam and Eve offer sacrifice only after being shut out from the Garden of Eden (Moses 5:4–5) may relate to the outdoor location of the altar of sacrifice.[125]

The prominence of animal sacrifice in the Book of Moses also fits much better in an Old Testament context than an early Christian one. There are three animal sacrifices in the Book of Moses: Adam's sacrifice of an unspecified animal (Moses 5:4–8); Abel's sacrifice of sheep (Moses 5:17, 20); and Seth's sacrifice, which is said to be "like unto his brother Abel" (Moses 6:3). Although it is not certain what kind of animal Adam sacrificed, rabbinic sources mention Adam sacrificing a bull soon after his expulsion from the Garden of Eden.[126] These three sacrifices could correspond to the three sacrifices of the consecration rite for priests: a bull, then a ram, and then a second ram (Ex. 29:10–28).

Aside from explicit references to animal sacrifice, references to blood in the Book of Moses would seem at home in ancient Israelite ritual, in which blood played a more important role than it later would in Christian ritual. For instance, the reference to Abel's blood crying from the ground, which had "opened her mouth to receive" the blood (Moses 5:35–36; Genesis 4:10–11), recalls the pouring of the blood of the sacrificial bullock on the ground by the altar during the consecration rites (Ex. 29:12). The Lord's statement in Moses 6:60, "For by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified, and by the blood ye are sanctified," is also interesting. As discussed above, both the justification by the Spirit and the general collocation of water, spirit, and blood are found in the New Testament. The idea of being sanctified by blood, interpreted in a Christian context, could refer to the wine of the Eucharist. However, the only collocation of the concepts of sanctification and blood in the scriptures is in the priestly laws of the Old Testament: one is washed with water and then "sanctified" (a word derived from the Hebrew root *qdš*) by blood (Ex. 29:1, 20–21; 40:12–13).

These elements of the Book of Moses could have been part of a preexilic Israelite version of the book and could have been retained

when the book was revealed in early Christian times. These elements would serve as a subtle indicator of the book's earlier history. They would also help Christians appreciate the continuity between their own rites and those of earlier Israel. In fact, some first-century Jewish Christians would likely have seen the rites of the temple in Jerusalem before it was destroyed in AD 70.

Beyond the internal evidence of the Book of Moses, it may be possible to reconstruct some aspects of an earlier form of the Book of Moses based on outside sources. It is a reasonable assumption that this earlier form of the book corresponds to the original form of Genesis described by Joseph Smith in his Nauvoo sermons, and that this form of Genesis was found on the plates of brass mentioned and quoted in the Book of Mormon. These sources all point to a text that was doctrinally similar to the Book of Moses but different from it in language and in matters of detail. The following three brief soundings into these sources illustrate some of the differences that may be indicative of the more ancient version of the book.

(1) Joseph Smith's Nauvoo sermons presuppose an ancient Hebrew text beginning with what corresponds to Gen. 1:1. Note that God's commandment in the first part of Moses 2:1, "write the words which I speak," indicates that the latter part of the verse (the part corresponding to Gen. 1:1) was originally the start of the written text. The first chapter of Moses and the first part of Moses 2:1, which refer to Moses in the third person, would not have been part of the original written text but may have been transmitted orally when the text was ritually performed.

The beginning of the text would have read without the Hebrew preposition *be*; the text would thus have started with the words *reshit 'elohim* "the head one of the gods," referring to a divine council, as explained by Joseph Smith in his Nauvoo sermons. As mentioned above, the reference to a divine council echoes ancient Near Eastern concepts of the creation.

(2) Among the parts of the Book of Mormon that make reference to the plates of brass is Lehi's discourse to his son Jacob in 2 Nephi 2, in which discourse Lehi recounts some of the events in the Garden of Eden. Lehi gives various indications that he is quoting from the plates of brass, including "according to the things which I have read" (2 Nephi 2:17) and "I have chosen the good

part [of the account], according to the words of the prophet" (2 Nephi 2:30). Lehi's account includes some details that expand on the Masoretic text in ways similar to the Book of Moses but that differ from the Book of Moses in significant details.[127] For instance, Lehi says that the adversary was "an angel of God" who "had fallen from heaven; wherefore, he became a devil" (2 Nephi 2:17). In my discussion of New Testament language, I noted that the use of the term "the devil" to refer to Satan (Moses 4:4) is characteristic of New Testament language. While the Old Testament contains no references to "the devil," the King James Version of the Old Testament does use the generic noun "devils," always in the plural, to translate the Hebrew words *šedim* "demons" and *śeʿirim* "goat-demons" (Lev. 17:7; Deut. 32:17; 2 Chron. 11:15; Ps. 106:37). Thus Lehi's statement, perhaps following the text on the plates of brass, uses the generic noun as would be appropriate in an ancient Israelite context. Further, in Lehi's account, the adversary is identical with the serpent: "Wherefore, he said unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil" (here the definite article before the word *devil* may be used to refer back to the devil mentioned in the previous verse). This differs from the Book of Moses, in which the serpent is the devil's ally but is not identical to him (Moses 4:6). The account transmitted by Lehi resonates with ancient Near Eastern notions of a consubstantial serpentine/human adversary,[128] while the account in Moses 4 resonates with first-century apocryphal literature.[129]

(3) Alma, in his discourse to the people of Ammonihah, also describes events that overlap with the Book of Moses (Alma 12–13). It is impossible to know how much of Alma's description of events is quoted from a written account and how much is Alma's own explanation. However, while Alma's account closely resembles the Book of Moses in some ways, it also includes some differences. Alma clearly demarcates the order of events after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden:

5. God sends angels to converse with men (Alma 12:28–29).
6. Men begin to call on the name of God (Alma 12:30; compare Gen. 4:26).
7. God converses with men and makes known to them the plan of redemption (Alma 12:30).

8. God gives men commandments to refrain from evil, to repent, and not to harden their hearts; those who keep these commandments are promised that they will enter into God's rest, but God swears in his wrath that those who harden their hearts and do iniquity will not enter into his rest (Alma 12:31–35; compare Ps. 95:7–11).
9. God ordains priests to teach these things to the people (Alma 13:1).

This account includes the same doctrinal elements found in the Book of Moses, but it differs significantly in matters of detail. Alma's account refers to "men" in general, leaving off the account of Adam after he is barred from the tree of life (Alma 12:22–23), while the Book of Moses focuses on Adam's redemption (Moses 5:1–12; 59; 6:51–68). In the Book of Moses, calling upon God is the catalyst that starts the redemptive process (Moses 5:4); after Adam and Eve call upon God, they receive commandments directly from him (Moses 5:5), and only after Adam's obedience to these commandments does an angel appear to him and teach him of the plan of redemption (Moses 5:6–10). Adam and Eve teach these things to their children, after which "the Lord God call[s] upon men by the Holy Ghost everywhere and command[s] them that they should repent" (Moses 5:14). The commandments mentioned by Alma include "that they should not do evil" (Alma 12:32) and to "repent and harden not your hearts" (Alma 12:33), which commandments could fit in an Old Testament context (Ex. 23:2; 1 Kings 8:47; Ps. 95:8). In contrast, the commandments to "believe in the Son and repent of their sins" (Moses 5:15) seem more appropriate in a first-century context (Mark 1:4; 2:17; John 3:16, 36).

The ordination of priests, which Alma says took place at "the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children" (Alma 13:1), is particularly significant. Alma discusses this ordination at length (Alma 13:2–9); his description focuses on the manner of ordination as a type of Christ (Alma 13:2) and ends with the word *amen* (Alma 13:9).[130] Although it is unclear how much of this description is quoted from the written account, it seems analogous to the descriptions of ordinances in the Book of Moses (see Moses 5:6–7, 59; 6:52, 59–60, 68), which may suggest that the account Alma is paraphrasing was designed to establish an ancient

precedent and doctrinal basis for the rite of priestly ordination, just as the Book of Moses establishes an ancient precedent and doctrinal basis for the baptism ritual.

Therefore, we may picture an ancient Israelite version of Genesis that read differently from the current Masoretic text. This ancient version corresponded in some ways to the Book of Moses, particularly in terms of doctrine, but it included language and motifs appropriate to an ancient Near Eastern historical context. Instead of being designed for use in a baptism ritual, this ancient version may have been designed for an analogous ritual such as the consecration of priests or the coronation of kings.

Throughout this essay, I have assumed that the language of the book as revealed by Joseph Smith accurately reflects the ancient language of the book. The idea that the modern revelation accurately reflects ancient language, while the ancient revelation includes significant modifications from a preceding version, is not as incongruent as it may initially seem. In modern times, including Joseph Smith's nineteenth-century environment, the assumption that an edition or translation of an ancient text should accurately reflect the original has prevailed in Western culture. However, ancient notions of the transmission of sacred texts allowed for a wider range of innovation, as a comparison between the various ancient versions of the Bible demonstrates. The ancient and modern restorations of the Book of Moses could, therefore, have conformed to prevalent notions of textual transmission current in their respective eras. Of course, some have argued that Joseph Smith's translation process allowed for a wide range of innovation, such as the addition of his own inspired commentary. However, I find no evidence of exclusively modern vocabulary, institutions, or cultural concepts in the Book of Moses, and I find a great deal that I think fits more comfortably in an ancient historical context than in a modern one. Thus, if any of the text of the Book of Moses is modern, then it was made to seem ancient—and further, with a remarkably convincing orientation to first-century language and culture.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the evidence of the language, genre, internal references, and textual status of the Book of Moses is enough to believe that an early Christian context close to the first century AD is likely. Further, some features of the book may fit with a baptismal ritual context. This could suggest that what Joseph Smith revealed through his inspired translation of the Bible was a distinctively Christian text belonging to the Church of the Lamb in the meridian of time, rather than a retrojection of each book to its point of origin.

The Book of Moses includes some elements that seem to be directly connected to the book's ritual context. These elements include the asides to the audience at the ends of chapters, the angel's instructions to Adam in Moses 5, the revelation to Adam on the doctrine of baptism in Moses 6, and the detailed description of Adam's baptism. Adam's reception of the Holy Ghost immediately after his immersion, without a separate rite of confirmation, may point to a Syrian origin of these ritual elements. This would accord with the evidence of temples in early Christian Syria, including the Christian buildings at Edessa and Dura Europos. There are also portions of the text, such as the conflicts of nations in the first half of Moses 7, that build up the narrative and relate only indirectly to the ritual context. Geographical names mentioned in these portions (the sea east, Mount Simeon, Sharon, and Canaan) may point to an origin in the environs of Jerusalem. The character Mahijah's connection to the Book of Giants would also fit with a Judean origin. Thus, it is possible to understand the Book of Moses as an early Syrian Christian ritual text that incorporates a reworked version of Genesis with fragments of Judean apocryphal narratives.

As with any unprovenanced ancient text, conclusions will always be tentative to some degree. Indeed, as we are dealing with a text revealed in modern times, the fact that the text is ancient will always be a matter of faith, unless an ancient manuscript bearing the same text happens to be found. In the meantime, we are limited to reconstructions of what we believe to be likely scenarios. But this study underscores the importance of accounting for the language and other features of the text from a historical standpoint. The question is not just whether a particular scenario is possible but whether it is likely compared to other possible scenarios. Thus,

while individual New Testament-like phrases in the book might be traceable to Old Testament antecedents, it is the high concentration of such phrases in the Book of Moses, and nowhere else in the Old Testament, that suggests the probability of a first-century origin of the book. This evidence seems to agree with the book's own references to its historical context and with the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Every element of the Book of Moses, as far as I have been able to determine, would fit comfortably within an early Christian context, and particularly within the ritual context of baptism as reconstructed from the available sources.

Whitney Shiner's suggestion that the Gospel of Mark was performed at the water's edge as part of the baptismal rites provides an interesting complement to the arguments I have made here. If his suggestion is correct, it could be that the Gospel of Mark was used in baptisms for the living in parts of Christendom that did not have access to temples. In places that had temples, the Book of Moses would be used instead.

Just as Joseph Smith restored the text in modern times, the early Christian text may also have been a restoration of a much earlier text, although reformulated in language appropriate to the times (compare 2 Nephi 31:3; Doctrine and Covenants 1:24). This earlier text, which may be identical with the original form of Genesis, may also have been used in a ritual context, possibly in the consecration of priests or the coronation of kings.

This study has some implications for Latter-day Saint approaches to biblical scholarship. Some recent discussion has noted the apparent conflict between the Book of Moses and the four-source hypothesis for the composition of the Pentateuch.[131] If the Book of Moses in its current form is a first-century text, then it does not necessarily present a challenge to the four-source hypothesis, since that hypothesis deals with the much earlier origins of the text. However, with regard to the first two chapters of Genesis in particular, this study does offer a counterpoint to the notion that there are two creation accounts of separate origin. I have argued that the original form of Genesis, as composed in the preexilic period, may have been an analogue to the Book of Moses, used in a similar ritual context and containing similar doctrines. This supports an interpretation of the first two chapters that has already

been put forward by myself and others.[132] Briefly stated, this interpretation is that what appear to be two conflicting accounts of the creation represent two stages of a ritual: a dramatization of the heavenly council and of the creation as viewed from heaven (Genesis 1:1–2:3), then a representation of events on earth (Genesis 2:4–25). Thus, the different divine names in the two sections, which the source-critical approach has interpreted as evidence for different sources, could simply refer to different divine beings: the Elohim or gods of the divine council in the first stage, and Yahweh Elohim, the god commissioned to carry out the council's decisions by forming the world, in the second stage. The events of creation are mentioned in a different order in the second stage according to the role they play in the ritual. Of course, this interpretation does not exclude the possibility that the texts for these two stages are brought together from originally disparate sources. But at least for these chapters, it removes the necessity of positing different sources to explain seeming conflicts between the accounts. Both Genesis 1 and Genesis 2–3 contain priestly terminology and reflect priestly concerns, so both pericopes are easily attributable to a single priestly source.[133]

Further, this study may help to understand the incremental restoration of Priesthood ordinances through Joseph Smith in terms of a cross-historical pattern of Gospel dispensations. Joseph Smith restored the Book of Moses in its first-century form (albeit in English translation). The text was abstracted from its original performative context, but the markers of that context were left intact, allowing modern believers (including Joseph Smith himself) to imagine God's influence on his children through ordinances in a previous dispensation. Later, Joseph Smith revealed the ordinances of the temple for the latter-day dispensation. These ordinances are closely analogous to the Book of Moses in terms of the revealed transmission, overall structure, relationship between narrative and performance, and doctrinal content. However, they are quite different from the Book of Moses in terms of specific content, language, and ritual context. I have also suggested, on the basis of a comparison of the Book of Moses with other sources, that there may have been a preexilic Israelite text similar to the Book of Moses in some ways but different in terms of language and ritual use. If

this suggestion is correct, then the relationship between the Book of Moses and the revealed latter-day ordinances is precisely like the relationship between the preexilic text and the first-century Book of Moses. In each dispensation, we see the revelation of a new ritual text that parallels those of previous dispensations but that is adapted to the unique cultural context of the new dispensation. Just as evidence of a preexilic form of the text is discernible in the Book of Moses, our modern ordinances bear traces of the texts of previous dispensations, allowing perceptive participants to glimpse the awesome antiquity of the rites. All of this suggests that we have only begun to understand the intricacies of Restoration scripture.

Discussion

Jo Ann H. Seely:

David, you have presented an interesting way of looking at the text and context of the Book of Moses. I thought your analysis of the text as a performative text, pointing out the elements that lend themselves to this interpretation, was very interesting. You have discussed what this might look like in the earlier piece of your work. Could you briefly describe what you think a performance might look like for the Book of Moses text and who this would involve—priests or people—and where it might have taken place?

David Calabro:

That's a great question. The way I imagine this—and I think there are a number of ways to approach this, and there's nothing ironclad about this way of looking at it—but the way I imagine it is that before each stage of the ritual, a portion of what we have as the Book of Moses would be read aloud and heard by the baptismal candidate and by the congregation. And with that reading would perhaps be a minimal dramatization of parts of it. And then the portion of the ritual pertaining to that reading would be performed. And then they would go to a new stage of the ritual with a new reading, and then that portion of the ritual would be acted out. That's kind of how I imagine it as I'm thinking about it. This is evolving, so there could be other insights to be gained there.

Ritual dramas in the religions of the world can be quite elaborate. In Richard Bushman's keynote address earlier, he mentioned Auerbach's book *Mimesis*, where Auerbach compares Homer's *Odyssey* and the Hebrew Bible. Later in that same book, Auerbach studies a medieval mystery play about Adam and Eve. These religious dramas were spectacular, with symbolic props and costumes in addition to the scripting and choreography. But I tend to assume that early Christian ritual drama would have been plainer, given their humble circumstances.

As for who would be involved, we have a few indications in the sources I mentioned in the paper: deacons playing the role of angels in the prebaptismal rites, and the bishop playing the role of God the

Father in declaring the baptized person to be a son of God. Other than that, I think it would be reasonable to assume that the priest would be the one reading the text, thus playing the double role of the narrator and Jehovah. And the baptismal candidate would also play the role of Adam, or perhaps Eve if the candidate was a woman.

Jo Ann:

Do you think that as the Book of Moses appears to be a later book, could the Book of Abraham be the same thing, namely from a much later date?

David:

Yes. I think this approach to the Book of Moses actually encourages us to take a view of the Book of Abraham that fits with the Egyptian religious environment in the Ptolemaic period, which is the period of the Joseph Smith Papyri. Abraham was a known figure during this period in Egypt, and I think the Book of Abraham would fit with the environment of religious diversity and syncretism that we see there during that time. It's possible that the Book of Abraham reflects a ritual drama that could have been practiced by some people living in Egypt in Ptolemaic times. It would be great to do more research from this standpoint, looking for evidence of an appropriate setting in life, similar to what I've been doing with the Book of Moses.

One interesting thing about the Book of Abraham is that the language is very different from the Book of Moses. For example, none of that New Testament language that I find in the Book of Moses is in the Book of Abraham. In fact, nowhere in the Book of Abraham does it include the words *believe* or *faith*, which are both common in the Book of Moses. This is interesting because it underscores the fact that Joseph Smith was dealing very intentionally with language, at least in his revelations of ancient texts. To me, this indicates that Joseph Smith was revealing ancient records that came from different historical environments.

Jo Ann:

Your research highlights the importance of experiencing the text aurally. Perhaps you could comment a bit on how this experience is different from reading the text and what this suggests to us in terms of our experience with the scriptures?

David:

Sure. In the printed version of my talk, I refer to the work of Whitney Shiner. He is famous for his work on "experiencing" the Gospel of Mark, what it is like to hear the book being read instead of reading it from the written page. Hearing is a different experience from reading: when you don't have the text before you, you can't do detailed analysis and comparison of the words. If you get distracted by analyzing the words, you've already missed part of the speech. But you do tend to focus more on repeated themes. And you definitely tend to concentrate more on visualizing the narrative than on the individual words.

In our modern world, where there is really high literacy and we're constantly exposed to the written word, we tend to underestimate the importance of nonverbal communication—the gestures we use, facial expression, voice inflection, even the amount of physical distance between you and the one you're talking to. There are many scriptures that could take on different meanings depending on how we imagine the text sounding or being presented. So the lesson for us when we read the scriptures is to use our imaginations, to think of different ways the text could be performed. And also, go to the temple! The temple ordinances are important for us like they were for people in ancient times, because they allow us to experience the word at a deeper, more personal level than just reading from a book.

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Notes

1. David Calabro, "Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis," in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2016), 165–81.
2. Whitney Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003), 51–52.
3. Charlotte Roueché, "A World Full of Stories," in *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown*, ed. Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 177–85; Fabrizio Pennachietti, *Il ladrone e il cherubino: dramma liturgico cristiano orientale in siriaco e neoaramaico* (Zamorani, 1993); Sebastian Brock, "The Dispute between the Cherub and the Thief," *Hugoye* 5, no. 2 (2002): 169–93; Laura S. Lieber, "The Rhetoric of Participation: Experiential Elements of Early Hebrew Liturgical Poetry," *Journal of Religion* 90, no. 2 (2010): 119–47; Laura S. Lieber, "Setting the Stage: The Theatricality of Jewish Aramaic Poetry from Late Antiquity," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 104, no. 4 (2014): 537–72; Laura S. Lieber, "Theater of the Holy: Performative Elements of Late Antique Hymnography," *Harvard Theological Review* 108, no. 3 (2015): 327–55; Laura S. Lieber, "Stages of Grief: Enacting Lamentation in Late Ancient Hymnography," *AJS Review* 40, no. 1 (2016): 101–24.
4. Ophir Münz-Manor, "In Situ: Liturgical Poetry and Sacred Space in Late Antiquity," in *Placing Ancient Texts: The Ritual and Rhetorical Use of Space*, ed. Mika Ahuvia and Alexander Kocar (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 87–99; Kathleen McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 91–121.
5. Noel B. Reynolds, "The Brass Plates Version of Genesis," in *By Study and also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 2:136–73, reprinted in *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 34 (2019): 63–96.

6. Kent P. Jackson, "Behold I," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 169–75; Kent P. Jackson, "'If . . . And': A Hebrew Construction in the Book of Moses," in *Bountiful Harvest: Essays in Honor of S. Kent Brown*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner, D. Morgan Davis, and Carl Griffin (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 2011), 205–10. An additional example of a Hebraism is cited by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ryan Dahle, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch? Recent Updates on a Persistent Question," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 33 (2019): 305–74, on pages 349–50, note 2.
7. Stephen O. Smoot, "'I Am a Son of God': Moses' Ascension into the Divine Council," in 2012 BYU Religious Education Student Symposium (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2012), 129-43, posits an ancient Israelite origin for Moses 1 within the broader context of the ancient Near East. Mark J. Johnson, "The Lost Prologue: Reading Moses Chapter One as an Ancient Text," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 36 (2020): 145-86, assumes an ancient Hebrew background of Moses 1 contemporary with the Hebrew Bible, although he does not articulate this position in detail.
8. John W. Welch and Jackson Abhau, "The Priestly Interests of Moses the Levite," in this proceedings.
9. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *In God's Likeness and Image: Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Book of Moses* (Salt Lake City: Eborn, 2014), 37: "The details of Moses' experience in chapter 1 place it squarely in the tradition of ancient 'heavenly ascent' literature and its relationship to temple theology, rites, and ordinances." Bradshaw and Dahle, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts," focus on the need for an extensive analysis of the "ancient literary affinities" found in the Book of Moses. "It would be no surprise," they write, "if long, revealed passages such as Moses 1, 6, and 7 were to provide plausible evidence of having been drawn, at least in part, from a common well of ancient textual and oral traditions" (330).
10. Calabro, "Architecture of Genesis."
11. All biblical references are cited from the King James Version (KJV) unless otherwise noted.
12. Robert A. Snyder, "The Divine Name in the Gospel of John," in *For It Stands in Scripture: Essays in Honor of W. Edward Glenny*, ed. Ardel B. Caneday with Anna Rask and Greg Rosauer (St. Paul: The University of Northwestern Bernsten Library, 2019), 101–25, traces this phrase to the description of God in Exodus 34:6 as "abundant in goodness and truth" (Hebrew *rab ḥesed we-emet*). As Snyder notes, John's Greek phrase differs from the Greek rendering of Exodus 34:6 in the Septuagint. John's phrase would thus seem to be his own adaptation of the Hebrew.
13. Both phrases, however, are absent from the Book of Abraham.

14. The closest analogue to this phrase in the Old Testament is in Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12, where God is called "the First and the Last"—names that also appear in Revelation alongside "the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 1:11, 17; 2:8; 22:13). Analogous phrases have also been noted in the writings of Plato and in rabbinic literature. For a full treatment of the background of this phrase, see W. C. van Unnik, "The Divine Predicate 'The Beginning and the End' in Flavius Josephus and the Apocalypse of John," in *Sparsa Collecta: The Collected Essays of W. C. van Unnik*, Part Four, ed. Cilliers Breytenbach and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 158–235.
15. In the Old Testament, "my chosen" refers to David as God's servant (Ps. 89:3) or to Israel (Isa. 43:20; 65:15). This, too, compares well with usage in the Book of Moses (see Moses 1:25, 26).
16. Some early manuscript witnesses of Matthew 6 lack this clause, and some text-critical analyses therefore exclude it. However, the clause is found in the Lord's prayer in 3 Nephi 13:13, which suggests that it is original to the text. An Old Testament parallel is found in 1 Chron. 29:11 ("Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty"), but it lacks the adverb "forever" found in Moses 4:2.
17. The idea of the blood of a sacrificial animal being able to cleanse is found in the Old Testament in priestly laws pertaining to the purification of temple personnel and of sacred space (Lev. 14:14, 25, 52; 16:19; Ezek. 43:20); however, the language referring to the blood of the Son has its closest parallel in 1 John 1. Elsewhere the Old Testament refers to being cleansed *from* blood, since blood is usually viewed as defiling (Lev. 12:7; Num. 35:33; Joel 3:21).
18. James R. Harrison, "The Brothers as the 'Glory of Christ' (2 Corinthians 8:23): Paul's Doxa Terminology in Its Ancient Benefaction Context," *Novum Testamentum* 52 (2010): 164, note 30; John Chrysostom, homilies 1 and 41 on 1 Corinthians.
19. The word *comforter* occurs in the KJV Old Testament, translating the Hebrew word *menaḥem* (Ecc. 4:1; Lam. 1:9, 16), but nowhere in the Old Testament does the term refer to the Holy Spirit.
20. The New Testament verses differ somewhat in the KJV, but the underlying Greek uses the same phrase, *ho esō anthrōpos*.
21. The same concept is conveyed using different language in Lev. 19:18: "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This Old Testament commandment is frequently quoted in the New Testament (Matthew 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; James 2:8).
22. The concept of the Messiah as a "lamb" is expressed as a simile in Isa. 53:7. The symbolism of the sacrificial lamb in the law of Moses is also relevant as background to the New Testament usage.

23. The phrase as found in the Book of Moses is also attested in the Book of Mormon, in Mosiah 16:3 and Alma 42:10. Noel Reynolds cites this as one of the phrases pointing to the influence of the Book of Moses on the language of the Book of Mormon. See Reynolds, "Brass Plates," 154–55. He notes the presence of the similar phrase in James 3:15 without further comment, but following his approach as seen in other instances (Reynolds, "Brass Plates," 148–50), the resemblance would presumably be due to the New Testament inheriting the phrase through a distant connection to the Book of Moses.
24. Some have suggested that the Greek word *mustērion* derives from the Semitic root *s-t-r*, "to hide, to conceal," but the more widely accepted etymology is from Greek *mueō*, "to initiate into the mysteries." The emphatic second root letter in the later Hebrew and Aramaic word *misṭērīn* shows that this form is derived from the Greek. Nevertheless, related concepts using different terminology are found in older Hebrew and Semitic literature. See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 711–12; Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, revised ninth edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 1150, 1156; Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York: Judaica Press, 1971), 2:806; Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 56–57; Raymond E. Brown, "The Pre-Christian Semitic Concept of 'Mystery,'" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1958): 417–43; Brown, "The Semitic Background of the New Testament *Mysterion* (I)," *Biblica* 39, no. 4 (1958): 426–48; Brown, "The Semitic Background of the New Testament *Mysterion* (II)," *Biblica* 40, no. 1 (1959): 70–87.
25. On the history of this phrase, see Ana-Stanca Tabarasi-Hoffmann, "Kierkegaards Begriff der 'Stärkung im inwendigen Menschen': Eine philosophische Metapher und ihre Vorgeschichte," *Revue Roumaine de Philosophie* 57, no. 1 (2013): 43–62; Halil Kayikci, "Saint Augustine's Invention of the Inner-Man: A Short Journey to the History of the Internality of the West," *European Journal of Language and Literature Studies* 1, no. 3 (2015): 138–55.
26. The Hebrew idiom here is *panim el-panim*. In the New Testament, the KJV "face to face" in the context of speaking translates Greek *stoma pros stoma*, literally "mouth to mouth" (the equivalent Hebrew idiom, *peh el-peh*, occurs in reference to Moses speaking with God in Num. 12:8). The Greek idiom *prosōpon pros prosōpon*, literally "face to face," is used in the context of seeing in 1 Cor. 13:12. But neither of these Greek idioms is used in the New Testament in the context of a theophany or

in reference to Moses. In Ex. 33:11 LXX, a different Greek idiom is used, *enōpios enōpiō*, an idiom not found in the Greek New Testament.

27. Cited from Edward Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994), 125.
28. Reynolds, "Brass Plates"; Jeff Lindsay and Noel B. Reynolds, "'Strong Like unto Moses': The Case for Ancient Roots in the Book of Moses Based on Book of Mormon Usage of Related Content Apparently from the Brass Plates," in this proceedings.
29. James H. Charlesworth makes a similar suggestion in his article "Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha and the Book of Mormon," in *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels, Papers Delivered at the Religious Studies Center Symposium, Brigham Young University, March 10-11, 1978*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978), 124–25.
30. 1 Nephi 1:2 and Mosiah 1:4 refer to "the language of the Egyptians," while Moroni states that he and his father wrote in "the reformed Egyptian" (Mormon 9:32).
31. In Acts 7:21, the word *nourished* in the King James Version translates the Greek *anethrepsato*, from the verb *anatrephō*. The verb means "bring up, cherish, educate," but it comes from a root having to do with feeding and nursing, hence the translation in the King James Version. See Liddell, Scott, and Jones, *Lexicon*, 124, 1814, 1827–28.
32. See the notes accompanying the list at the beginning of this section for discussion of the Old Testament background of these phrases.
33. Other than a reference to "the fall" in Ether 3:2, the book of Ether contains none of the phrases identified above. This excludes Moroni's inserted commentary, which does contain New Testament language. In the Book of Abraham, there are two instances of the word *Gospel* and one of the phrase "life eternal," all in Abraham 2:10–11. Otherwise, none of the New Testament-like phrases identified above appear.
34. The classic work on Aramaic influence in the language of the Gospels and Acts is Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); see in particular pages 50–92. The specific constructions discussed above are not among those Black discusses.
35. Kent P. Jackson, "Behold I," *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 169–75.
36. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 244, left column.
37. See Edward M. Cook, *Dictionary of Qumran Aramaic* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2015), 60.
38. For the discussion of the "if . . . and" construction in the original manuscript as a Hebraism, see Kent P. Jackson, "'If . . . And': A Hebrew Construction in the Book of Moses," in *Bountiful Harvest: Essays in Honor of S. Kent Brown*, ed. Andrew C. Skinner, D. Morgan Davis,

and Carl Griffin (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2011), 205–10. The construction "as I was . . . and" is cited by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ryan Dahle, "Could Joseph Smith Have Drawn on Ancient Manuscripts When He Translated the Story of Enoch? Recent Updates on a Persistent Question," *Interpreter* 33 (2019): 305–74, on pages 349–50n2. For the use of the conjunction *w-* "and" to introduce a main clause following a conditional or circumstantial clause, see T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Qumran Aramaic* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 257 (§84c).

39. Matthew L. Bowen, "'And They Shall Be Had Again': Onomastic Allusions to Joseph in Moses 1:41 in View of the So-called Canon Formula," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 32 (2019): 297–304. On the root *ysp*, see Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 414–15.
40. Matthew L. Bowen, "Getting Cain and Gain," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 15 (2015): 115–41. See also Jonathon M. Riley, "Hebraisms in the Book of Moses: Laying Groundwork and Finding a Way Forward" (citing a suggestion by Jackson Abhau).
41. See Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 889.
42. See Michael Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University Press, 1992), 497; Jessie Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 511.
43. Bowen, "Getting Cain and Gain," 125–39, points out that the Nephites seem to have had knowledge of a wordplay between Cain and "gain" in the Genesis account. Their knowledge was presumably based on the plates of brass. This could suggest that we have here a remarkable example of a wordplay being preserved through multiple languages: the Hebrew or Egyptian language of the plates of brass, Aramaic, Greek, and English.
44. The idea of angels declaring a gospel is also found in Gal. 1:8 and Rev. 14:6.
45. Matthew Bowen (personal communication) points out that similar references to angels are found in Alma 13:22-23; 39:19; Helaman 13:7; 16:14. In every case, these passages use the word *tidings* (a word found in the Old Testament) instead of *Gospel*.
46. The Greek writing system has no way of representing the *sh* sound nor the medial or final *h*, all of which are common in Hebrew and Aramaic.
47. The word *meḥā* is attested in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic and in Syriac. See Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 299; Payne Smith, *Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 263. The definite plural form of the noun is also attested in the Aramaic of the Dead Sea Scrolls; see Cook, *Dictionary of Qumran Aramaic*, 136.

48. For a recent review of the discussion with many new contributions on this issue, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Matthew L. Bowen, and Ryan Dahle, "Where Did the Names Mahaway and Mahujah Come From? A Response to Colby Townsend's 'Returning to the Sources," Part 2 of 2, *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 40 (2020): 181–242.
49. Like the term *myth*, the terms *apocrypha* and *apocryphal* now have a negative connotation, implying that the narrative is unreliable or outside of scriptural truth. Originally, the term *apocrypha* simply meant hidden texts that have been brought to light, and it is in this sense that I use the term here.
50. Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, David J. Larsen, and Stephen T. Whitlock, "Moses 1 and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: Twin Sons of Different Mothers?," in this proceedings.
51. See Jeffrey Bradshaw, "Moses 6–7 and the *Book of Giants*: Remarkable Witnesses of Enoch's Ministry," in this proceedings.
52. For a description of the "Reworked Pentateuch" manuscripts, see Sidnie White Crawford, "Genesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 354–57.
53. David Calabro, "This Thing Is a Similitude: A Typological Approach to Moses 5:4–15 and Ancient Apocryphal Literature," in this proceedings.
54. The medieval apocrypha tend to employ a more fabular narrative style and to include more discursive content, including belabored expressions of humility and long theological asides. By contrast, the late antique apocrypha, like the Book of Moses, employ a dry, scriptural narrative style.
55. In modern editions, the aside in verse 42 is enclosed in parentheses, giving the impression that the aside is extraneous to the ancient text; in the original manuscript, however, no parentheses were used here.
56. Quoted from O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, ed.* James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 2:54.
57. See H. Donl Peterson, *The Pearl of Great Price: A History and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 109–10.
58. The prophecy in 3 Nephi 20:23–24 may be ambiguous like Moses 1:41. When Jesus says, "I am he of whom Moses spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me" (3 Nephi 20:23), he may be saying that he is that prophet who will be raised up or that he is "the Lord your God" who will raise up that prophet. The prophecy of Joseph in 2 Nephi 3:9–11 and Genesis 50:29–30 JST refers to the latter-day seer Joseph Smith, whom God will "raise up," as one "great like unto Moses."

59. Hugh Nibley, "Evangelium Quadraginta Dierum: The Forty-Day Mission of Christ—The Forgotten Heritage," in *Mormonism and Early Christianity, Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* 4 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 10–44.
60. For an introduction to the fascinating Book of Rolls, see Barbara Roggema, "Biblical Exegesis and Interreligious Polemics in the Arabic Apocalypse of Peter—The Book of the Rolls," in *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 131–50. There are many versions that differ greatly in length; some manuscripts containing the longer (ca. 800-page) version are located at the National Library of France in Paris (BnF ar 76), the Vatican Library (Vat ar 165), the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin, Turkey (CFMM 1052), and the Church of Saint George in Aleppo, Syria (SOAA 51 K).
61. The references in the Book of Moses to a time of wickedness, like the reference to a future prophet who will be like Moses, may have a double meaning. Moses 7 refers to both the meridian of time and the last days as "the days of wickedness and vengeance" (Moses 7:45–46, 60).
62. Unfortunately, the portions of Genesis preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls do not include witnesses to Genesis 14 or 50, in which the Joseph Smith Translation contains large expansions. However, 4Q Gen-Exod[a] and 4Q Gen[f] attest to Genesis 48, and they do not contain the large expansion of this chapter found in Genesis JST.
63. King Follett Sermon, *History of the Church*, 6:307 (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 348–49); sermon in the East Grove, *History of the Church*, 6:475 (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 371).
64. See Calabro, "Architecture of Genesis," 159–61.
65. Other phrases could have been used that do not have the same implication. For instance, Alma refers to Adam and Eve being "sent forth from the garden of Eden" and "cut off from the tree of life" (Alma 42:2, 6–7), and both the Book of Moses and the received text of Genesis refer to Adam and Eve being "sent forth" and "driven out" (Genesis 3:23–24; Moses 4:29, 31).
66. General Handbook, 38.2.3.2 (accessed April 10, 2021).
67. General Handbook, 27.2.1.1 (accessed April 10, 2021).
68. These ante-Nicene sources on baptism are conveniently gathered by E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, revised and expanded by Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 1–22.
69. For these baptismal homilies, see Edward Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994), 67–250.
70. Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 17–54.
71. Hugh Nibley, in *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed., *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* 16 (Provo, UT:

Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2005), 515–22, includes a breakdown of Cyril of Jerusalem's baptismal description, relating it to the Genesis drama as found in the Book of Abraham and the Book of Moses. His understanding of the rites is very similar to mine. However, my analysis of the individual rites and of the parts of the narrative to which they correspond differs from his.

72. Wintermute, in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:63, note n, suggests that this "mountain of the East" is identical with Mount Qater, where Enoch offers incense. However, a better interpretation is that Mount Qater is identical with Mount Zion, the last-named sacred place in the list, the only one of the four that the text elaborates on. The portrayal of the "mountain of the East," then, is even more mysterious than Wintermute suggests.
73. The Joseph Smith Translation changes this so that it is the Spirit who takes Jesus into the mountain and shows him the vision. The parallels to this verse in Mark and Luke lack the adverb *exceeding*.
74. Most translations render the definite article in these references as indefinite: "a mountain."
75. Both Matthew and Mark refer to this mountain first as "a high mountain," with no definite article (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2), but Luke 9:28 refers to it as "the mountain," with the definite article and no adjective.
76. Most major translations render the relative clause at the end of this verse as restrictive: "into the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them" or similar. But the clause could also be rendered non-restrictively: "into the mountain, where Jesus had arranged to meet them." Translating it thus would imply that "the mountain" was a location already known to the disciples.
77. Nephi is also transported "into an exceedingly high mountain" (1 Nephi 11:1), where he sees a vision that is explicitly linked to that of John (1 Nephi 14:18–27). One wonders if this could have been the same mountain. Unlike the mountain in Moses 1, the mountain(s) referred to by Nephi and by John the Revelator may have been in a heavenly location. Compare also 2 Nephi 4:25, in which Nephi mentions being transported to "exceedingly high mountains" and seeing visions; the plural implies that the experience described in 1 Nephi 11:1 was one of several.
78. David Calabro, "Early Christian Temples and Baptism for the Dead: Defining Sacred Space in the Late Antique Near East," in *The Temple: Past, Present, and Future*.
79. *Chronicle of Edessa* 1.
80. Didache 7.1.
81. Paul mentions the practice of baptism for the dead in 1 Cor. 15:29, and other sources attest to the existence of the practice as late as the fourth century.

82. Of course, this is true not only of the Book of Moses but of the parallel passage in the Hebrew Bible.
83. Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 126–51, esp. pages 132–33, 139.
84. See the illustration by Michael Lyon in Parry, "Garden of Eden," 134–35.
85. Examples include the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* and the Hexaemeron of Pseudo-Epiphanius.
86. See Martin McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 43–45.
87. Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 74.
88. W. A. Wigram, quoted in Brock, "Dispute between the Cherub and the Thief," 173.
89. Whitaker, *Documents*, 6.
90. See Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 76–77, 184–85.
91. Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 83.
92. Quoted in Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 123.
93. Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 116–17.
94. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 870.
95. The doctrine is explained in Didache 1–6. In Didache 7.1, baptism was to be performed "after reviewing all these things," referring to the doctrine explained in the previous sections.
96. Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 73–74 (Cyril), 171 (Theodore). Gary A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 182–86, refers to "the drama of baptism," including the conflict with Satan and the redemption of Adam and Eve, as the "specific *liturgical context* in which this story [of Adam and Eve] is retold, interpreted, and expanded" (emphasis in the original)
97. Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 169–70. Theodore says that it is the deacons who play this role, but John Chrysostom says it is "the priests who introduce" the candidate who play this role (Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 158). On officiators playing the part of angels, compare Ambrose (Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 102–3).
98. Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 70–75 (Cyril), 102–3 (Ambrose), 158–59 (John Chrysostom), 169–77 (Theodore of Mopsuestia).
99. Interestingly, this would mean that baptism for the dead provided the model for the manner in which baptism for the living was performed during the post-Nicene period. Cyril of Jerusalem, for example, describes the entrance of the candidate from the forecourt to the "holy of holies" (the baptistry), where he or she was "conducted by the hand to the holy pool of sacred baptism" (the font) and immersed. See Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 75, 77–78.

100. See Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 125; also compare Yarnold's discussion on page 18.
101. See Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 70, 75.
102. See Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 37, 161, 161 n. 37.
103. The sources do not indicate whether women would be declared daughters of God or whether they, like the men, would be given the title *Son*. Moses 6:68, "and thus may all become my sons," seems to support the latter possibility. However, the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words corresponding to the English plural *sons* can also refer to a mixed group of male and female children; thus, the meaning in the original language would have been ambiguous.
104. Quoted from Whitaker, *Documents*, 3–4.
105. Quoted from R. Hugh Connolly, Didascalia Apostolorum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), 93. The doctrine that the person being baptized becomes a son of God was also taught by Theodore of Mopsuestia, although the rite itself had evidently changed by his time; see Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 195–97.
106. See Talmud Yerushalmi, Taanit 4:5; Midrash Rabba, Eicha Rabba 2:5. These sources describe Ṭūr Šimʿon as a place of great agricultural productivity but one known for the wickedness of its inhabitants. The narrative in Moses 7 makes no mention of inhabitants on the mountain; the narrative takes place in the distant past, presumably before the mountain was occupied.
107. Simeon, Simon, and Šimʿon are variant spellings of the same Hebrew name. The name comes from the root *šmʿ*, "to hear," which may relate to the mountain's function in the Book of Moses as a place of revelation.
108. See Boaz Zissu, "The Hellenistic Fortress at Ḥorvat Tura in the Jerusalem Hills and Identification of Tur Shimon," *Cathedra: For the History of Eretz Israel and Its Yishuv* 112 (2004): 5–18 (in Hebrew).
109. Some may object that the references to Mount Simeon, Sharon, and Canaan would be anachronistic for the antediluvian period. Some may also object that this proposal locating these sites in the Old World conflicts with early Latter-day Saint sources placing the antediluvian events in the Americas. For instance, Wilford Woodruff recorded a statement by Joseph Smith that the city of Enoch was located in what is now the Gulf of Mexico (Journal of Wilford Woodruff, March 30, 1873). However, just as the names of locations associated with the Garden of Eden were familiar to ancient Israelite readers of Genesis in terms of their own environment (see Gen. 2:10–14), the locations in Moses 6–7 could easily have been given names that were familiar to the ancient audience, which would help the audience feel a connection to the narrative.

110. Ambrose specifically points out that the washing of the feet was not done in Rome, but it was done elsewhere. See Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 121–23.
111. Quoted from Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 83–84.
112. Quoted from Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 84.
113. For references to the clothing by Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, and John Chrysostom, see Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 88–89, 129–30, 159, and 161. The clearest description of the rite is that of Theodore of Mopsuestia; see Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 197–98.
114. See Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 89.
115. See Whitaker, *Documents*, 21–22. The "laver of water" mentioned here likely refers to the laver used in the washing of the feet; it is probably not a laver used for baptism by sprinkling, since baptism in this text is by immersion.
116. According to Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5.137, the western hill of Jerusalem was called by David the "Citadel" or "Fortress," distinct from the eastern hill that was the site of the temple. However, it is not until the fourth century that the sources (including the Bordeaux Pilgrim and Cyril of Jerusalem) reveal a clear concept of the western hill as the location of Mount Zion and as the site of the upper room in which the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:13; 2:1–2).
117. See, for example, Jubilees 1:27–29; 4:26; 8:19; 19:12–13; 4 Ezra 2:42–48; 13:32–38.
118. This differs from Wintermute's interpretation in *OTP*, 2:63, note n.
119. See Bogdan G. Bucur, "Sinai, Zion, and Tabor: An Entry into the Christian Bible," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 4, no. 1 (2010): 33–52.
120. See Tucker S. Ferda, "Matthew's *Titulus* and Psalm 2's King on Mount Zion," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 3 (2014): 561–81.
121. See Reidar Hvalvik, "Christ Proclaiming His Law to the Apostles: The *Traditio Legis*-Motif in Early Christian Art and Literature," in *The New Testament and Early Christian Literature in Greco-Roman Context: Studies in Honor of David E. Aune*, ed. John Fotopoulos (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 405–37, especially pages 426–28.
122. According to Cyril of Jerusalem, baptism and anointing were prefigured by the washing and anointing of priests and the washing and anointing of kings in ancient Israel. See Yarnold, *Awe-Inspiring Rites*, 84.
123. See Parry, "Garden of Eden," 141–45.
124. See Parry, "Garden of Eden," 131–33, 139, and the illustration on pages 134–35.
125. See Calabro, "Architecture of Genesis," 165–67.
126. The word *flocks* in Moses 5:5 could correspond to at least two Hebrew words: *ṣo'n* and *'adarim*. The word *ṣo'n* means specifically flocks of sheep, but *'adarim* can refer to flocks of sheep or herds of cattle.

Rabbinic sources referring to Adam's sacrifice of a bull include Avot of Rabbi Nathan 1:8 and Talmud Bavli *Avodah Zarah* 8a. For discussion, see Calabro, "This Thing Is a Similitude."

127. In addition to the differences noted here, see David Calabro, "Lehi's Dream and the Garden of Eden," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 26 (2017): 269–296, esp. pages 292–95.
128. See Terry Fenton, "Baal au foudre: Of Snakes and Mountains, Myth and Message," in *Ugarit, Religion and Culture*, ed. Nicolas Wyatt, W. G. E. Watson, and J. B. Lloyd (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996), 49–64, esp. page 58.
129. See, for example, Greek Life of Adam and Eve, 16.1–5; 17.4; English translation in Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:277, 279. The motif also persists in medieval Christian apocryphal literature such as the Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan, Jewish aggadic midrash, and Islamic stories of the prophets.
130. In the original text of the Book of Mormon, there was a chapter division after Alma 13:9, so the word *amen* occurs at the end of the original chapter (compare Moses 5:59; 6:68). Moses 8:19 mentions that "the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and declare his Gospel unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch." This compares well with some aspects of Alma's discourse. However, Moses 1–7 does not mention priests or ordination; there is only one reference to "priesthood," which occurs in the context of writing scripture by inspiration (Moses 6:7).
131. See David Bokovoy's response to an article by A. Keith Thompson in "Apologetics and the Documentary Hypothesis: A Response," on the blog Worlds without End: A Mormon Studies Roundtable, http://www.withoutend.org/apologetics-documentary-hypothesis-response/ (accessed June 8, 2021).
132. Calabro, "Architecture of Genesis," 169; Jeffrey Bradshaw, "Did Moses Write the Book of Genesis?" In Interpreter Foundation Old Testament KnoWhy JBOTL03B. interpreterfoundation.org/knowhy-otl03b-did-moses-write-the-book-of-genesis/ (accessed June 24, 2021).
133. Parry, "Garden of Eden," 137–38, 143–45.