

Book of Moses Essay #21: The Teachings of Enoch — “Thus May All Become My Sons” (Moses 6:59, 66–68)

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September 19, 2020

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William Bell Scott, 1811–1890: *The Rending of the Veil*, 1867–1868.^[1] The rending of the veil at the death of Christ thus symbolizes not only renewed access to the divine presence in heaven but also to the knowledge revealed in earthly temples that makes such access possible.^[2]

Significantly, the last verse of Moses 6 includes the words “and thus may all become my sons.”^[3] This statement relating to the exaltation of Adam and Eve and all their posterity provides the doctrinal foundation for the account in the Book of Moses of Enoch’s adoption as a son of God, with a right to God’s throne.^[4] At the end of Moses 7:3 we read: “and as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory.”

In the next set of *Essays*, we will discuss Enoch’s transformation in more detail, including parallels with Jewish Enoch traditions. In this article, we will discuss how the “sonship” described in Moses 6:60 relates to the spiritual rebirth that is represented in ancient and modern temple ordinances.

Spiritual Rebirth within the Succession of Ordinances

Joseph Smith taught that “being born again comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances.”^[5] Indeed, as we progress through the prescribed series of saving ordinances we are repeatedly “reborn,” our nature transformed over and over, as we experience the cleansing justification of “the Spirit of Christ,”^[6] the symbolism of death and resurrection through baptism of water,^[7] the new life granted us when we receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost,^[8] the spiritual and physical “renew[al]”^[9] of the initiatory ordinances, and the unfolding stages of the drama of our existence in the endowment.

Indeed, the endowment itself enacts our individual progress through multiple “rebirths”—from the spirit world to mortal life, and from thence to becoming the sons and daughters of Christ—and ultimately of the Father Himself, receiving all the blessings of the Firstborn^[10] as sons and daughters of God.^[11] According to the OT1 manuscript of Moses 6:59, the ordinances that prepare one for these blessings constitute “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.”^[12]

Similarly, by the end of Moses 6, Adam had been not only born of water and of the Spirit, but also “born of God,” having entered His presence in the same manner described by Alma:^[13]

For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have *seen eye to eye as I have seen*; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as *I do know*; and the knowledge which I have is of God.

Elder Theodore M. Burton’s explanation offers a possible insight into the nature of the occurrence described in verse 68: ^[14]

Thus Adam was sealed a son of God by the priesthood, and this promise was taught among the fathers from that time forth as a glorious hope to men and women on the earth if they would listen and give heed to these promises.

Relating this event to the sequence of ordinances and blessings that led up to it, Hyrum L. Andrus further explains:^[15] “To receive such communion, ordinarily one must be justified, sanctified, and sealed by the powers of the Gospel ‘unto eternal life.’”^[16] In other words, Moses 6:68 witnesses that Adam received such a sealing, something also referred to as “the more sure word of prophecy.”^[17]

Changes in Name and Relationship That Accompany Changes in State

For each change of state that is meant to accompany one’s progression through the ordinances, the Father grants a corresponding change in name and relationship to Him. To paraphrase C. S. Lewis, “God turns tools into servants[, servants into friends,] and [friends] into sons.”^[18] Moses 6:67–68 makes it clear that to receive the fulness of the priesthood is to become, when divinely ratified, “a son of God” “after the order of him who was without beginning of days or end of years.”^[19] This is consistent with the royal rebirth formula of Psalm 2:7: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.”



Minerva Teichert (1888–1976), *King Benjamin's Farewell Address, 1949–1951*^[20]

In Mosiah 5:7, King Benjamin uses a temple setting and context to explain the same general concept: “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.”

Significantly, King Benjamin not only goes on to say that those who keep the covenant will be “found at the right hand of God,” ^[21]—thus, in essence, receiving the name of their own king (importantly, the name *Benjamin* means “son of the right hand”)—but also that they were taking upon them, as royal sons and daughters, a title of the supreme “Son of the right hand,” namely “Christ.” In so doing, they were also to become, in likeness of Benjamin’s son, little *Mosiahs* (meaning “saviors”) and, in likeness of the Only Begotten Son of God, little *messiahs* (meaning “anointed ones”).^[22] Having thus qualified, the Father might then appropriately “seal” them “his.”^[23]

Elder David A. Bednar has explained: “Purifying and sealing by the Holy Spirit of Promise constitute the culminating steps in the process of being born again.”^[24] Those who are sanctified have “their garments washed white through the blood of the Lamb.”^[25] Note that the Hebrew word for

washing clothes— *kābas* — is very similar in sound to a word for “lamb” — *kebeś* —suggesting a possible word play.



“Worshipping” the High Priest^[26]

Identification of the High Priest with the Lord Himself

To further emphasize that those who enter into the “oath and covenant ... [of] the priesthood”^[27] do so in similitude of the Son of God, we note Margaret Barker’s description of how the concept of becoming a son of God relates both to ordinances in earthly temples and to actual ascents to the heavenly temple:^[28]

The high priests and kings of ancient Jerusalem entered the Holy of Holies and then emerged as messengers, angels of the Lord. They had been raised up, that is, resurrected; they were sons of God, that is, angels; and they were anointed ones, that is, messiahs. ... Human beings could become angels, and then continue to live in the material world. This transformation did not just happen after physical death; it marked the passage from the life in the material world to the life of eternity.

Speaking of the figurative heavenly journey that was enacted in ancient temple ordinances, Matthew Bowen has argued elsewhere that both the king and the high priest, emerging from the Holy of Holies, were seen and worshiped as the symbolic equivalent of Yahweh, the Lord.^[29] Consistent with this identification, Alma 13 specifically states that high priests were ordained “in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to [God’s] Son for redemption.”^[30] Moreover, the reason the ancient ordinances of the high priesthood associated with the temple were given was so “that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God ... for a remission of their sins.”^[31]

Conclusions

In the words of John 3:5, being “born again”—or, rather, being “born from above” or “born of God”^[32]—is not a process that is completed when one is baptized by water and receives the gift of the Holy Ghost. Being ritually reborn requires receiving and keeping all the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood^[33] “to the end.”^[34] Being fully reborn in actuality happens only after traversing the heavenly veil “to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent,”^[35] having both suffered in His likeness^[36] and also having been “lifted up” to “eternal life” and exaltation as He was.

In other words, to qualify for eternal life, each of the Father’s children must be prepared to enter the kingdom of heaven as a son or daughter of God,^[37] having first been born again by water and “by the Spirit of God through ordinances,”^[38] and then, when sanctified, must be received personally by the Father—all this in similitude of their Redeemer, the Son of God,^[39] their peerless, perfect prototype.^[40] This is the essence of Enoch’s teaching in Moses 6:51–68, a revelation that preceded the introduction of the full temple endowment to the Saints in Nauvoo by more than a decade.

This article is adapted from Bradshaw, Jeffrey M., and Matthew L. Bowen. “By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified”: The Symbolic, Salvific, Interrelated, Additive, Retrospective, and Anticipatory Nature of the Ordinances of Spiritual Rebirth in John 3 and Moses 6.” In *Sacred Time, Sacred Space, and Sacred Meaning (Proceedings of the Third Interpreter Foundation Matthew B. Brown Memorial Conference, 5 November 2016)*, edited by Stephen D. Ricks and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw. The Temple on Mount Zion 4, 43–237. Orem and Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2020, pp. 43–54, 95, 99–101.

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Endnotes

[1] Courtesy of Peter Nahum at The Leicester Galleries, <http://www.leicestergalleries.com>.

[2] Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38. In this connection, Nibley writes (H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), p. 444; cf. J. E. Seach, *Ancient Texts* 1995, pp. 870-875; J. E. Seach, *Ancient Texts* 1983, pp. 56-57):

The *Gospel of Philip* depicts the rending of the veil not as the abolition of the temple ordinances, as the church fathers fondly supposed, but of the opening of those ordinances to all the righteous of Israel, "in order that we might enter into ... the truth of it." "The priesthood can still go within the veil with the high priest (i.e., the Lord)." We are allowed to see what is behind the veil, and "we enter into it in our weakness, through signs and tokens which the world despises" (see W. W. Isenberg, *Philip*, 85:1-20, p. 159).

[3] Cf. John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-21; D&C 39:4.

[4] See Moses 7:59. Compare P. S. Alexander, 3 Enoch, 10:1, 3, pp. 263-64.

[5] J. Smith, Jr., *Words, Willard Richards Pocket Companion*, Before 8 August 1839 (1), p. 23. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 2 July 1839, p. 162. See also D&C 84:19-25; JST Exodus 34:1-2.

[6] D&C 20:37.

[7] See Romans 6:4–6; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843–1844, 9 July 1843, p. 56. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 9 July 1843, p. 314.

[8] Acts 8:15, 19; 2 Nephi 31:13; 32:5; 3 Nephi 28:18; 4 Nephi 1:1; D&C 25:8; 84:74; Moses 8:24.

[9] D&C 20:37.

[10] Truman G. Madsen explains (T. G. Madsen, *Foundations*, pp. 2, 5–6):

You have all been born as spirit children, and as such have a divine nature. You have now been born of mortal parents, and have been privileged, then, with a body, which is a step forward in your progression, not a step back. . . . We are . . . to proceed to watch and pray, that it may be developed into the very likeness of our spirits, which are divine, and ultimately, then, to become, as it were, a product of another birth, which is the birth we call Jesus, who becomes, in the process of ordinances, our father. That's a proper use of the word "father" for Jesus, for He says in [D&C] 93:22, "all those who are begotten through me (through the ordinances) are partakers of the glory of the same (meaning His role as first-born), and are the Church of the Firstborn." Imagine. He has sacrificed for us in order that we can inherit what He alone could have claimed to be, the first-born. He's saying, "It will be as if you were [the Firstborn]; all of the blessings and powers that have been bestowed upon Me are now transmitted to you, if you are willing to come to Me." They are "begotten through me" and are "partakers of the glory of the same." . . .

[T]here will be another birth ahead of us, and that's called the resurrection. And then the promise that we can be like Him will be literal and complete.

[11] See Moses 6:68.

[12] S. H. Faulring *et al.*, *Original Manuscripts*, OT1 Page 14 (Moses 6:52–64), p. 102. For more on this, see J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *God's Image 2*, *Commentary Moses 6:59–a*, p. 79 and J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 97–98.

[13] Alma 36:26; cf. Mosiah 27:28. By way of contrast, 1 John 3:9 and 5:1 seem to use the term "born of God" with a more general meaning.

Alma described the experience of being "born of God" in terms that emphasize the personal nature of the encounter that accompanies this experience. After telling of his vision of "God sitting upon his throne" and his subsequent missionary labors (Alma 36:22–24), he testifies that "many have been born of God, and have tasted [of exceeding joy] as I have tasted, and have seen [God] eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God" (Alma 36:26; cf. Mosiah 27:28; D&C 84:22). Describing the knowledge that can be had only through keeping every ordinance of the Melchizedek priesthood, which ordinances hold "the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God" (D&C 84:19), Joseph Smith taught: "No one can truly say he knows God until he has handled something, and this can only be in the holiest of holies" (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 1 May 1842, 4:608. Cf. J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1841–1843, 1 May 1842, p. 53. See also J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, Charge to the Twelve by Oliver Cowdery, February 1835, 2:195–196, 198; B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 492; B. R. McConkie, *Promised Messiah*, pp. 582–584, 594–595; Luke 24:39; John 20:19–29; 3 Nephi 11:14–15).

[14] T. M. Burton, *Work of Elijah*, p. 532.

[15] H. L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith*, p. 122.

[16] D&C 131:5.

[17] D&C 131:5. See also 2 Peter 1:19. For a detailed analysis and commentary on Joseph Smith's 21 May 1843 discourse on 2 Peter 1 where he discusses the "more sure word of prophecy," see J. M. Bradshaw, *Now That We Have the Words*.

[18] C. S. Lewis, *Screwtape*, Preface [1961 edition], p. 9. The original statement reads: "God turns tools into servants and servants into sons, so that they may be at last reunited to Him in the perfect freedom of a love offered from the height of the utter individualities which he has liberated them to be." For more on this topic, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 75–79.

Note that within modern revelation, the highest order of the priesthood is known by different names. For example, in the Doctrine and Covenants we read about "they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory" (D&C 76:56). They are described in relation to variously named orders as being "after the order of Melchizedek, which was after the order of Enoch, which was [ultimately] after the order of the Only Begotten Son" (D&C 76:57. Compare B. Young, 26 June 1874, p. 113).

[19] See also J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 53–65; B. R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 1:229; B. R. McConkie, *Ten Blessings*, p. 33.

[20] Courtesy of Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Appears in J. W. Welch *et al.*, *Book of Mormon Paintings*, p. 85. © Brigham Young University Museum of Art. Permission granted with the kind assistance of Clyda Ludlow and Trevor Weight, MOA Registration Department.

[21] Mosiah 5:9.

[22] See M. L. Bowen, *Onomastic Wordplay*, p. 269; J. W. Welch, *What Was a 'Mosiah'?*.

[23] Mosiah 5:15; Alma 34:35.

[24] D. A. Bednar, *Ye Must Be Born Again*, p. 22.

[25] Alma 13:11. See also Exodus 19:10, 14; Ether 13:11; Revelation 7:14. For more on this subject, see N. B. Reynolds, *Understanding Christian Baptism*, pp. 14–16.

[26] http://www.templeinstitute.org/beged/priestly_garments-2.htm (accessed November 19, 2016). No known copyright restrictions. This work may be in the public domain in the United States.

[27] D&C 84:39.

[28] M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 5, 12. Compare W. J. Hamblin, *Sôd of YHWH*, pp. 147, 151.

[29] M. L. Bowen, *They Came*, pp. 72–73:

How closely [was] the dynastic son of 2 Samuel 7 (Solomon), who became Yahweh's own "son" (v. 4), . . . identified with Yahweh himself[?] Margaret Barker has observed how in the Chronicler's account of Solomon's enthronement the people "worship Yahweh and the king" (1 Chronicles 29:20) and how Solomon "was enthroned upon the throne of Yahweh" (1 Chronicles 29:23; translations mine). Barker proposes that on this occasion the king *was* Yahweh (the Lord). Conceptual support for this can be seen in Psalms 45 and 72 and the royal, theophanic appearance of Simon the High Priest in Ben Sira 50:1–21[, which is reminiscent of 3 Nephi 11–19; 17:9–10; and Hebrews 1:5; 5:1–10; 7:1–28; 9:1–28]. This would explain how the earliest Christians were prepared to think of Jesus as being both Yahweh their God and the Davidic king.

[30] Alma 13:2.

[31] Alma 13:16. Some Latter-day Saint scholars have conjectured narrative portions of temple liturgy in former times may have been derived in part

from an ancient text somewhat like the Book of Moses (J. M. Bradshaw, LDS Book of Enoch; D. Calabro, Joseph Smith and the Architecture; M. J. Johnson, The lost prologue: Moses chapter one and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible as ancient text). The second half of Alma 12, which opens with a question about the resurrection of the dead and a reference to the “mysteries of God” (Alma 12:8–9), segues to the story of Adam and Eve’s transgression in the Garden of Eden (cf. Moses 3–4), the plan of redemption as revealed by angels to them (Alma 12:28–35; cf. Moses 5:5–8, 58), and the ordinances of the high priesthood after the order of the son of God (Alma 13:1–20; cf. Moses 5:59; 6:59, 66–68). A careful study of the relationship between the Book of Moses and Alma 12–13 is overdue.

[32] 1 John 3:9; 5:1; Mosiah 27:28; Alma 36:26. For a detailed discussion of Jesus’ nighttime discussion with Nicodemus in John 3 that is consistent with this interpretation, see J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified* (TMZ 4), pp. 43–54.

[33] Joseph Smith taught that to qualify for eternal life, each of God’s children must be born again into the kingdom of heaven as a son or daughter of God (Moses 5:7) through the atonement of Christ, and “by keeping all the ordinances of the house of the Lord” (J. Smith, Jr., Words, 11 June 1843, Wilford Woodruff Journal, p. 213. Compare J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 11 June 1843, p. 308; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, Journals, 1843–1844, 11 June 1843, p. 32. See also J. W. Welch, Sermon, pp. 77–78).

Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook note (in J. Smith, Jr., Words, p. 286 n. 25):

Undoubtedly the Church historians decided to amplify this statement based on D&C 124:28, and their knowledge of the Prophet’s teachings on temple ordinances: “If a man gets a fullness of the *priesthood* of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping *all the commandments and obeying* all the ordinances of the house of the Lord” (J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 11 June 1843, p. 308; changed words italicized). The essence of the Church historians’ amplification, which is confirmed by the Franklin D. Richards report, is additionally supported in the following statement of Brigham Young in the Nauvoo Temple which includes the Prophet’s teachings on the highest ordinances of the Temple:

Those who come in here and have received their washing & anointing will [later] be ordained Kings & Priests, and will then have received the fullness of the Priesthood, all that can be given on earth. For Brother Joseph said he had given us all that could be given to man on the earth (Heber C. Kimball Journal kept by William Clayton, 26 December 1845, Church Archives).

[34] Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; Romans 6:22; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Hebrews 3:6, 14; 6:11; James 5:11; 1 Peter 1:13; Revelation 2:26; 1 Nephi 13:37; 22:31; 2 Nephi 9:24; 31:16, 20; 33:4, 9; Omni 1:26; Mosiah 2:41; 26:23; Alma 12:27; 27:27; 32:13, 15; 38:2; 3 Nephi 15:9; 27:6; 27:11, 16, 17, 19; Mormon 9:29; Moroni 3:3; 6:3; 8:3, 26; D&C 10:4; 14:7; 18:22; 20:25, 29, 37; 31:13; 53:7; 66:12; 75:11, 13, 14; 76:5; 81:6; 100:12; 105:41; 121:32. The many scriptures cited above, which implicitly define “the end” as the end of probation or the time of judgment, can be contrasted with a smaller set of scriptures Mosiah 4:6, 30; 5:8; Alma 34:33; 41:6 which instead describe this end more generally as the end of mortal life.

[35] D&C 132:24. Cf. John 17:3.

[36] E.g., Matthew 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; 10:21; Luke 9:23; 14:27; Acts 5:41; 9:16; Romans 8:17; Philippians 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:12; 3:12; Jacob 1:8; 3 Nephi 12:30; D&C 23:6; 56:2; 101:35; 112:14. Nevertheless, the followers of Christ are not called to endure the suffering for sin that has already been borne by Jesus Christ (D&C 19:16), though they are sometimes required to suffer “anguish of soul because of the wickedness of the people” (Alma 8:14).

The mourning of the righteous for sin should be contrasted with the mourning of the wicked (Matthew 24:30; Luke 6:25; D&C 45:49; 87:6; 97:21; Revelation 18:11). The “sorrowing of the damned” is attributed by Mormon to their realization that “the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin” (Mormon 2:13).

[37] Mosiah 5:7. See also Psalm 2:7; 110:4; John 1:12–13; Romans 8:19; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 7:3; 1 John 3:1–3; 3 Nephi 9:17; Moroni 7:48; D&C 128:23; Moses 6:22, 68; 7:1; 8:13.

[38] J. Smith, Jr., Words, Willard Richards Pocket Companion, Before 8 August 1839 (1), p. 12. Cf. J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, 2 July 1839, p. 162. See D&C 52:13–20; 84:19–25; Moses 6:57–68; JST Exodus 34:1–2.

[39] Daniel 3:25; Matthew 4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; 27:54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 15:39; Luke 4:3, 9, 41; 8:28; 22:70; John 1:34; 5:25; 9:35; 11:4; 20:31; Acts 8:37; 9:20; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 4:14; 6:6; 7:3; 10:29; 1 John 3:8; 4:15; 5:5, 10–13; 20; Revelation 2:18.

[40] E.g., Matthew 5:48; Luke 18:22; John 13:36; 14:6; 21:19; 3 Nephi 12:48.