

*16 And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to call upon God. And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said: I have gotten a man **from the Lord; wherefore he may not reject his words.** But behold, Cain hearkened not, saying: Who is the Lord that I should know him?*

*17 And she again conceived and bare his brother Abel. And Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.*

There was hope that Cain would be the right one, that he wouldn't reject the words. He would put things back on the track. But he didn't.<sup>419</sup>

Further supporting the idea of Cain's special potential are traditions of unusual circumstances surrounding his birth. In some accounts, the newborn Cain is described as "a glorious person"<sup>420</sup> being "like the color of stars,"<sup>421</sup> a designation which associates Cain with the angels.<sup>422</sup> This description can be compared to that of the newborn Noah<sup>423</sup>—or, on the other hand, to "Satan himself."<sup>424</sup>

f **wherefore he may not reject his words.** The theme of obedience—which formed both the hinge of the plot of Moses 4 and the central motif of the story of Adam and Eve after their expulsion in Moses 5—is once again highlighted by the hopeful words of Eve. Sadly, Eve's children had already begun to reject God's words.<sup>425</sup>

g **Cain hearkened not.** Contrast *Commentary* 5:17-d, p. 370.

OT1 reads: "But, behold, also Cain hearkened not."<sup>426</sup>

h **Who is the Lord that I should know him?** Draper, *et al.*<sup>427</sup> note that "Cain's arrogant question will be mirrored later by that of Pharaoh,<sup>428</sup> as well as that of King Noah" in the Book of Mormon.<sup>429</sup> The recurrence of the word "know"<sup>430</sup> fittingly recalls the covenant relationship between Adam, Eve, and God that resulted in Cain's birth—the type of "covenant relationship that Cain refuses to enter."<sup>431</sup>

17 a **Abel.** The announcement of a second birth cues the reader to one of the many occurrences of the OT pattern of sibling rivalry, where the younger son is the one favored of God.<sup>432</sup>

For reasons that are not stated, Eve gives an explanation for Cain's name but not for Abel's. The Hebrew term for Abel's name appears in Ecclesiastes 1:2 and 12:8 in the well-known phrase "vanity of vanities" (*hevel hevelim*, i.e., the greatest vanity or "vanity of vanities" as it is rendered in the KJV).<sup>433</sup> It can also be translated as "breath" or "nothingness."<sup>434</sup> Sarna comments: "The name may augur his destiny... *Hevel* is often used to express the fleeting nature of life. The name may alternatively, or perhaps simultaneously, contain a reference to his vocation in that Syriac *hablā* means a 'herdsman'."<sup>435</sup>

419 H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 19, p. 238.

420 *Ibid.*, 19, p. 241.

421 G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, Armenian 21:3a, p. 24E.

422 J. Tromp, *Cain*, pp. 290–291.

423 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 106:2–6, p. 536.

424 H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 19, p. 241.

425 Moses 5:13.

426 S. H. Faulring *et al.*, *Original Manuscripts*, p. 93.

427 R. D. Draper *et al.*, *Commentary*, p. 65.

428 See Exodus 5:2.

429 Mosiah 11:27.

430 Moses 5:16.

431 See *Commentary* 5:34-b, p. 382.

432 See *Commentary* 6:2-d, p. 476.

433 V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis*, p. 222.

434 Cf. "sorrow," J. Smith, Jr., 13 April 1843, as reported in E. England, *Laub*, p. 25.

435 N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 32.