

31 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.**

32 (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.)

- e to keep the way of the tree of life.** The mention of a *via sacra* leading from the place of Adam's exile back to the Garden ends the story on a note of hope. The cherubim will open the way for man once he is prepared to enter the Celestial Paradise and eat of the Tree of Life.⁶⁹⁸ Hirsch comments that the scriptural phrase “can mean to protect and preserve the way so that it shall not be lost for mankind, so that he will be able to find it again and ultimately go back on it... He finds support for this in the fact that this task was entrusted to Cherubim, using the same word used to describe the golden protectors of the Holy Ark in the Tabernacle and Temple.”⁶⁹⁹ A rabbinic tradition has it that the last divine word that rang in the ears of Adam and Eve as they left the Garden of Eden was *tashub*, meaning “You shall return!”⁷⁰⁰

Note that the Hebrew term for “to keep” (*shamar* = keep, watch, guard, preserve) is identical to the earlier term describing one of the two duties given to Adam when he was originally placed in the Garden.⁷⁰¹ Adam's former function “to keep the Garden”—which, of course, equates to the task of keeping “the way to the tree of life”—will henceforth be assumed by the cherubim.⁷⁰² However, since no one is now appointed to fulfill the duty to “dress” the Garden (*abad* = work, serve within it as the archetypical Levite), it must remain unoccupied and unworked until man, prepared with “intelligence and knowledge” gained through “diligence and obedience,” is ready to enter its sacred precincts.⁷⁰³

At last, when man is fully prepared, he will be able to truly “stand in holy places and be not moved.”⁷⁰⁴ Zornberg explains that to “hold [one's] ground in the presence of God” is the meaning of being itself—“*kiyyum*: to rise up (*la-koom*), to be tall (*koma zokufa*) in the presence of God. To be banished from the Garden is to lose a particular standing ground.” Adam's redemption will vanquish spiritual death, allowing him to stand again in God's presence. By way of contrast, consider Cain's protest: “Since I am to be a restless wanderer, I cannot *stand in one place*—that is what banishment from the soil means—I have no place of rest. ‘And I must avoid Your presence’—for I cannot stand before You to pray.” Likewise, when Israel heard the voices at Sinai “they moved backwards and stood at a distance: they were repelled to the rear a distance of twelve miles—that is the whole length of the camp. Then the angels came and helped them forward again.’ If this happened at each of the Ten Commandments, the people are imagined as traveling 240 miles in order to stand in place!”

Of the Tree of Life that awaits the returning exiles, *I Enoch* says that “its fruit will be as food for the chosen [elect],” its “fragrances will be in their bones” (“it is possible that the author is thinking of resurrection to the body,” comments Nickelsburg), and “they will live a long life upon the earth.”⁷⁰⁵ As a fitting sequel to this narrative sequence, Moses 5-7 will describe the unfolding revelation of the “plan of redemption” to Adam and Eve and their posterity that will make possible their return to Paradise and to the presence of God.⁷⁰⁶

32 a See thou show them unto no man. See Commentary 1:42-a, p. 69.

- 698 Revelation 2:7, 22:14; G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, 44:4, p. 71E; M. D. Johnson, *Life*, 28:4, p. 285; S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, 38:2, p. 41; H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, p. 320; M. E. Stone, *Fall of Satan*, pp. 49-53; G. Weil, *Legends*, p. 36; B. M. Wheeler, *Prophets*, p. 29; cf. T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 416-417.
- 699 Cited in R. M. Zlotowitz, *et al.*, *Bereishis*, pp. 140-141. See Commentary 5:4-b, p. 357.
- 700 A. LaCocque, *Trial*, 31.
- 701 Commentary 3:15-b, p. 173.
- 702 Cf. U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, p. 174. See also D. I. Block, *Ezekiel 25-48*, p. 113.
- 703 D&C 130:18-19; see *Excursus 27: Diligence, Obedience, and Friendship*, p. 597.
- 704 D&C 87:8; cf. D&C 45:32. See A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, pp. 8, 16, 20-22, 27-28, 32-33.
- 705 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *I Enoch*, 24:4-6, p. 312, 315.
- 706 Alma 12:23-34.