

reflects God’s very own image. Genesis is not only about the origins of sin; it is also about the foundations of human perfection. The work that God has begun in Creation He will bring to completion.... [E]arly Jewish and Christian readers [were] aware of this while most of their modern counterparts have not been.”⁷ The clarity with which the fundamental doctrines, laws, and ordinances of the Gospel begin to unfold in Moses 5 fully justifies Nibley in calling it “the greatest of all chapters” in scripture.⁸

Consistent with the overall developmental themes of perfection and corruption throughout the remainder of the book of Moses, chapter 5 is structured into a series of stories highlighting the contrast between those who would and would not hearken to the voice of God.⁹ We read the record of Adam and Eve’s obedience to the “second commandments”¹⁰ given after the Fall and of the angel’s explanation of the law of sacrifice.¹¹ We also are provided with an extended account of how, with the tragedy of Cain and Abel,¹² “the rebellion in the heavens was transmitted to a rebellion on the earth.”¹³ Following the brief genealogies of the posterity of Cain,¹⁴ we encounter the story of Lamech’s rise to the pinnacle of wickedness through the murder of his rivals,¹⁵ an account that foreshadows the sad notice of the complete parting of the ways between the righteous and the wicked.¹⁶

Moses 5 fills in many details that are missing from Genesis, such as the reason why Cain’s offering was rejected,¹⁷ and the fact that there were descendants born to Adam and Eve prior to Cain and Abel.¹⁸ It was from among these descendants that Cain chose a wife¹⁹—and, later, it was from among these same family members he had reason to fear vengeance for his crime against Abel.²⁰ Sarna argues that many details of this sort were no doubt originally contained in an independent narrative, of which the traditional text of Genesis preserves only the “bare bones of the story.”²¹ Thus, it is not surprising that valuable text and commentary relating to themes missing in Genesis but found in the book of Moses have survived in fragmentary form within Jewish, Islamic, early Christian, and other sources—though, not unexpectedly, seemingly genuine ancient material is mixed with material of more dubious provenance.²² Robinson summarizes some of the significant parallels between such literature and the prophetic additions to Genesis provided in the book of Moses:

Among the extracanonical themes found in the writings of Joseph Smith—themes confirmed to be ancient ones in light of the literature discovered only after his death—are the heavenly messengers, the raising of Adam, Adam’s detection of Satan disguised as an angel of light (a false messenger), the promise to Adam of a coming Savior, the gathering of Adam’s righteous posterity to receive his final blessing or testament, and Adam’s prediction of future world history. In addition, the doctrine of the two Adams—the divine, heavenly Adam and the

7 G. A. Anderson, *Perfection*, p. 8. See *Endnote 5-3*, p. 432.

8 H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 19, p. 231.

9 See Moses 5:16, 17, 23, 57.

10 Alma 12:37. See also Alma 12:29-35, Moses 6:56.

11 Moses 5:1-12.

12 Moses 5:13-41.

13 J. Taylor, *Mediation*, 1882, p. 68; J. Taylor, *Gospel Kingdom*, 1882, p. 101.

14 Moses 5:42-46.

15 Moses 5:47-54.

16 Moses 5:55-59.

17 Moses 5:18-26.

18 Moses 5:2.

19 Moses 5:28.

20 Moses 5:39.

21 N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 31. See *Endnote 5-4*, p. 432.

22 S. E. Robinson, *Lying*. See *Excursus 29: The Development of Extracanonical Literature on Adam and Eve*, p. 601.