

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SCIENCE AND GENESIS

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As counsel to anyone engaged in well-intentioned but misguided efforts to infer science facts from their readings of Genesis, Elder James E. Talmage wrote the following:¹

The opening chapters of Genesis, and scriptures related thereto, were never intended as a textbook of geology, archaeology, earth-science or man-science. Holy Scripture will endure, while the conceptions of men change with new discoveries. We do not show reverence for the scriptures when we misapply them through faulty interpretation.²

In this chapter, I will explore passages in the first eleven chapters of Genesis and the book of Moses that are sometimes seen falsely as presenting opposing alternatives to the findings of modern science. The first part of the chapter will discuss the book of Genesis as a whole, while the second part will answer questions about specific verses of interest.

Questions about the Book of Genesis as a Whole

1. What is Genesis?

Genesis is a book of history, but not the kind we are accustomed to reading in modern history books. To understand the history presented in Genesis, the reader must supply the missing context, assumptions, religious imagery and sensibilities, and cultural elements that are implicit in the text. As William G. Dever expressed it: “The Bible cannot simply be read at face value as history; nor, of course, can any other ancient text be so read.”³

One thing to which a modern reader of ancient religious history must be attuned is the patterned recurrence of themes that signal authorial intent. For example, in Nephi’s record of his family’s flight from Jerusalem and settlement in the New

World, there is a recurrent theme of obedience to the commandments of the Lord.⁴ Recognizing the prominence of this theme in the writings of Nephi provides an important key to understanding what he wants his readers to learn from his account.

Likewise, Bible scholars have recognized a common thread that ties together the stories in the primeval history found in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. For example, the eminent Genesis scholar Ronald Hendel makes the case that one of the most prominent themes in these stories is “a series of . . . transgressions of boundaries”

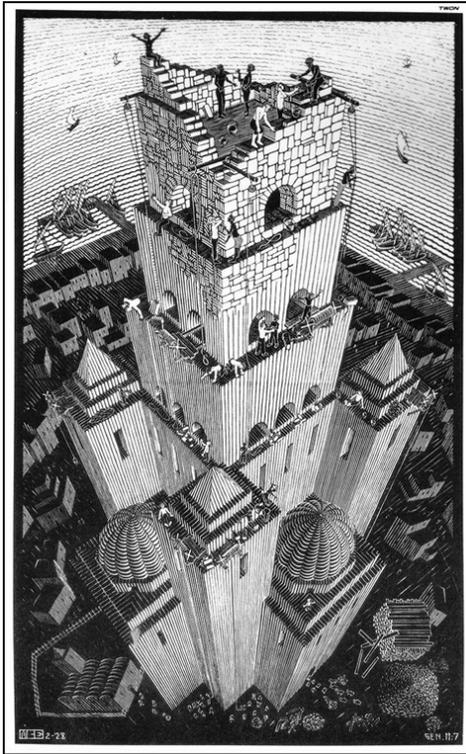


Figure 1: *Tower of Babel*, 1928
M. C. Escher, 1898-1972

that had been set up in the beginning to separate mankind from the dwelling place of Divinity.⁵ David Carr arrived at a similar conclusion, observing that both the pre-flood and post-flood stories of early mankind “end in the same place: a threat to the divine-human boundary and God’s work to reinforce it.”⁶ Tryggve Mettinger also recognized the “stress on a borderline between the divine and human spheres . . . in Genesis 1-11.”⁷ Similarly, Robert Oden highlighted “human aspirations to divine status” as an underlying theme in all these stories, and that such status “is ultimately denied them.”⁸

This general thesis is useful as far as it goes. In the stories of the transgressions of Adam and Eve, of Cain, of Lamech, of the “sons of God” who married the “daughters of men,” and of the builders of the Tower of Babel, we cannot fail to observe the common thread of a God who places strict boundaries between the human and the divine. Surprisingly, however, a significant and opposite theme largely neglected by exegetes is that within some of these same chapters God is also portrayed as having sought to *erase* the divine-human boundary for a righteous few, drawing them into His very presence.⁹ The prime examples of this motif are, of course, Enoch and Noah, of whom it was explicitly said that they “walked with God.”¹⁰

In considering the contrast in Genesis 1-11 between the limits set by God on the approach to the divine by transgressors on the one hand and His ardent efforts to draw the righteous into His immediate presence on the other, it is not without significance that many passages in these eleven chapters allude to the mythos of the temple in the Old Testament, where qualifications of purity and uprightness were integral to the granting of access to places of holiness — whether earthly or heavenly.¹¹ This is one of several reasons why portions of these chapters might be profitably considered as echoes of ancient temple texts.¹²



Figure 2: *Light and Color: The Morning After the Deluge (Goethe's Theory) — Moses Writing the Book of Genesis*, 1843
Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1775-1851

2. Who wrote Genesis?

LDS teachings and scripture clearly imply that Moses learned of the Creation and the Fall in vision and was told to write it. However, most modern scholars find evidence that the book of Genesis as we have it was produced at a much later date than Moses plausibly could have lived. Can these views be reconciled?

In my view, the idea that scriptural figures may sometimes be more accurately regarded as the *authorities* rather than the *direct authors* or scribes for biblical books associated

with their names is not inconsistent with LDS acceptance of the Bible as scripture “as far as it is translated [and transmitted] correctly.”¹³ Though I have no quarrel with the idea that the Old Testament, as we have it, might have been compiled at a relatively late date from many sources of varying perspectives and levels of inspiration, I accept that its major figures were historical and that the sources may go back to authentic traditions (whether oral or written), associated with figures such as Moses as authorities. John H. Walton and D. Brent Sandy express their views of this process as follows:¹⁴

Authority is not dependent on an original autograph or on an author writing a book. Recognition of authority is identifiable in the beliefs of a community of faith (of whom we are heirs) that God’s communications through authoritative figures and traditions have been captured and preserved through a long process of transmission and composition in the literature that has come to be accepted as canonical. That authority can be well represented in translation, though it can be undermined to the extent that interpretation (necessary for a translation to take place) misrepresents the authority. ...

Documents used in the compilation of Genesis are likely identified in the text itself (in eleven occurrences of “This is the account of ...”). No identification of the source of the traditions represented in the individual documents is offered, and this is not unusual. Documents such as those found in the first part of the book (Genesis 1-11) as well as those in the second part (Genesis 12-50) would correspond well, if only generally, to the sort that would be familiar in the ancient world. Likewise no indication is given in the book itself of the time or circumstances

under which these documents were compiled into the book as we know it. Earliest tradition associated the work with Moses, and given the stature of Moses that is not unreasonable, but we need not decide the matter. As discussed above, his role is best understood as tradent [i.e., transmitter of traditions], not likely that of actually generating the traditions (though he may have generated some of them—we particularly think of the creation accounts in this regard). ... Compilation of those documents into the complex literary work we call Genesis may not have happened for many centuries, though the traditions would have been well known.

In a discussion on Bible authorship, it is appropriate to introduce another class of ancient writings known today as pseudepigrapha. The word “pseudepigrapha” is commonly used to refer to “spurious or pseudonymous writings, especially Jewish writings ascribed to various biblical patriarchs and prophets.”¹⁵ Importantly, however, the tenor of these definitions would seem to exclude the following situation:¹⁶

For example, if the sixth-century Daniel was the authority figure¹⁷ who gave oracles that were duly recorded in documents that were saved until the second century, when someone compiled them into the book we have now and perhaps even included some updated or more specific information (provided by recognized authority figures in that time), that would not constitute pseudepigraphy or false attribution.¹⁸ If that sort of process was an accepted norm, the attribution claims are not as specific and comprehensive as we may have thought when we were using more modern models of literary production. Authority is not jeopardized as long as we affirm the claims that the text is actually making using models of understanding that reflect the ancient world.

3. What is the book of Moses?

The book of Moses is an extract from the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) of Genesis.¹⁹

Previous scholars have observed that the Prophet’s Bible translation in general, and the book of Moses in particular, is not a homogeneous production.²⁰ Rather, it is composite in structure and eclectic in its manner of translation: some chapters contain long sections that have little or no direct relationship to the text of Genesis (i.e., the vision of Moses and the story of Enoch), while other chapters are more in the line of clarifying commentary that takes the text of the King James Version as its starting point, incorporating new elements based on Joseph Smith’s



Figure 3: *Moses Seeing Jehovah*, 1998.
Joseph Brickey, 1973-

prophetic understanding.²¹ According to Barlow, the most common type of change consists of “grammatical improvements, technical clarifications, and modernization of terms.”²²

Some revelatory passages in the book of Moses have remarkable congruencies with ancient texts.²³ However, I think it fruitless to rely on JST Genesis as a means for uncovering a Moses *urtext*. Even if, for example, the longer, revelatory passages of chapters 1, 6, and 7 of the book of Moses were found to be direct translations of ancient documents, it is impossible to establish whether or not they once existed as an actual part of some sort of “original” manuscript of Genesis.

Mormons understand that the primary intent of modern revelation is for divine guidance to latter-day readers, not to provide precise matches to texts from other times. Because this is so, we would expect, rather, to find deliberate deviations from the content and wording of ancient manuscripts in Joseph Smith’s translations in the interest of clarity and relevance to modern readers. As one LDS apostle expressed it, “the Holy Spirit does not quote the Scriptures, but gives Scripture.”²⁴ If we keep this perspective in mind, we will be less surprised with the appearance here and there of New Testament terms such as “Jesus Christ” in Joseph Smith’s chapters on Enoch when the title “the Son of Man” would be more in line with ancient Enoch texts.²⁵

4. Is the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis in a “final” form?

Although I do not think it is necessary to believe that every word in our book of Genesis came from the pen of Moses, I am fully persuaded that Joseph Smith made his revisions as the result of his sincere and divinely guided efforts to fulfill a prophetic mandate from God.

However, I think it would be a mistake to assume that this work of scripture is currently in any sort of “final” form — if indeed such perfection in expression could ever be attained within the confines of what Joseph Smith called our “little, narrow prison, almost as it were, total darkness of paper, pen and ink; and a crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language.”²⁶ As Robert J. Matthews, a pioneer of modern scholarship on the Joseph Smith Translation, aptly put it, “any part of the translation might have been further touched upon and improved by additional revelation and emendation by the Prophet.”²⁷

There is another reason we should not think of the book of Moses as being in its “final” form. My study of the translations, teachings, and revelations of Joseph Smith has convinced me that he sometimes knew much more about certain sacred matters than he taught publicly. Indeed, in some cases, we know that the Prophet deliberately delayed the publication of early temple-related revelations connected with his work on the JST until several years after he initially received them.²⁸ Even after Joseph Smith was well along in the translation process, he seems to have believed that God did not intend for him to publish the JST in his lifetime. For example, writing to W. W. Phelps in 1832, he said: “I would inform you that [the Bible translation]

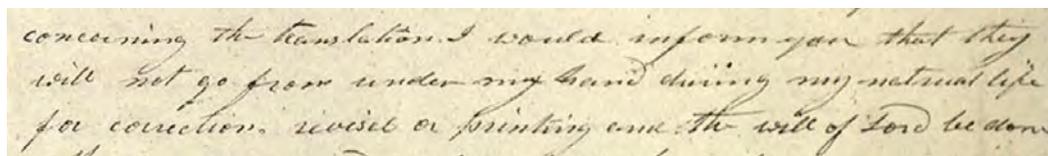


Figure 4: Joseph Smith, Jr. to William W. Phelps, 31 July 1832

will not go from under my hand during my natural life for correction, revisal, or printing and the will of [the] Lord be done.”²⁹ Although in later years Joseph Smith reversed his position and apparently made serious efforts to prepare the manuscript of the JST for publication, his own statement makes clear that initially he did not feel authorized to share publicly all he had produced — and learned — during the translation process. Indeed, a prohibition against indiscriminate sharing of some revelations, which parallels similar cautions found in pseudepigrapha, is explicit in the book of Moses when it says of some particularly sacred portions of the account: “Show them not unto any except them that believe.”³⁰ Such admonitions are consistent with a remembrance of a statement by Joseph Smith that he intended to go back and rework some portions of the Bible translation to add in truths he was previously “restrained ... from giving in plainness and fulness.”³¹

Questions About Specific Verses in Genesis and the Book of Moses

Below are some frequently asked questions about scriptural verses in Genesis that bear on questions of science.³²

5. Moses 1:37-39: Are there other inhabited planets?

Modern revelation affirms the existence of other inhabited planets.

In a vision recorded in the Pearl of Great Price, Moses is given a glimpse of the extent of God’s work:³³

37 And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying: The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine.

38 And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words.

39 For behold, this is my work and my glory — to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

In his scriptural account of the vision of the three degrees of glory, Joseph Smith affirmed that God’s children people at least some of these other worlds:³⁴

23 For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father —

24 That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God.

That the worlds were not only created by the Son but also redeemed by him is made clear by the Prophet's poetic paraphrase of D&C 76:23-24:³⁵

19. And I heard a great voice, bearing record from heav'n,
 “He's the Savior, and only begotten of God —
 By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,
 Even all that career in the heavens so broad,

20. Whose inhabitants, too, from the first to the last,
 Are sav'd by the very same Savior of ours;
 And, of course, are begotten God's daughters and sons,
 By the very same truths, and the very same pow'rs.”

Elder Neal A. Maxwell has written:³⁶

Through [Joseph Smith's] multiple revelations and translations ... came a description of a universe far, far exceeding the astrophysics of the 1830s, a cosmos containing “worlds without number” and advising us further that the “inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters [of] God.”³⁷

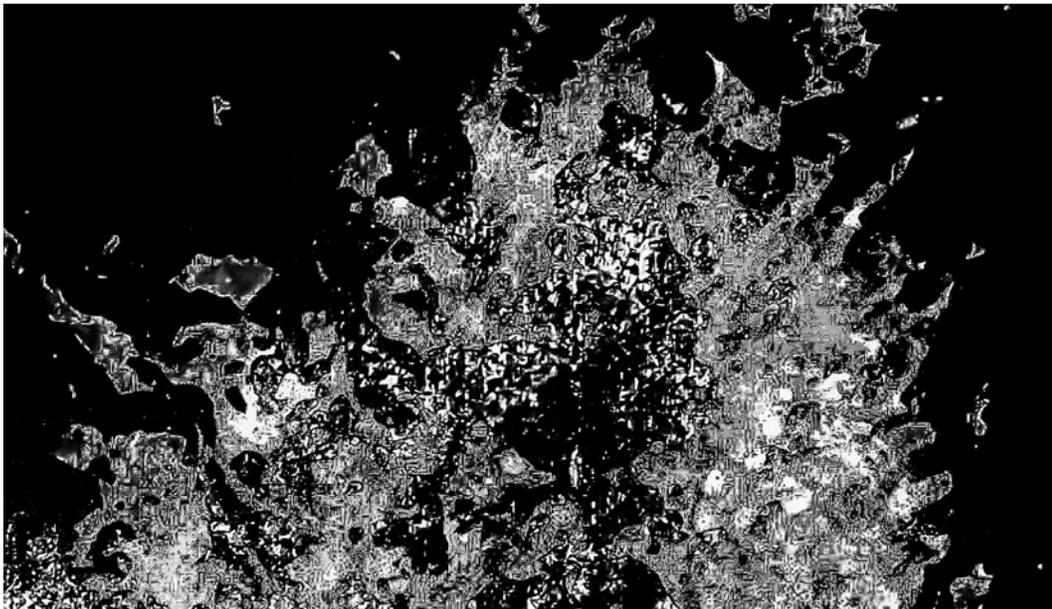


Figure 5: *Abstract No 78 — Creatio Ex Nihilo*, 2015
 Radu Gavrilă, 1977-

6. Moses 2:1: How long did it take to create the earth?

With respect to the creation accounts in scripture, the Latter-day Saints have avoided some of the serious clashes with science that have troubled other religious traditions. For example, members of the Church have no quarrel with the concept of a very old earth whose “days” of creation seem to have been of very long, overlapping, and varying duration.³⁸ Indeed, Joseph Smith himself is remembered as having

taught that the heavenly bodies were created long prior to the earth: “The starry hosts were worlds and suns and universes, some of which had being millions of ages before the earth had physical form.”³⁹ Consistent with this stance, LDS scientists such as David Bailey⁴⁰ have competently summarized scientific inadequacies and theological incompatibilities of the creationist movement in both its “young earth” and “intelligent design” forms. Despite what some advocates of a creationist agenda would have people believe, to question specific features of the theories they have advanced is not tantamount to rejecting the concept of a Divine Creator. Many devout scientists and other scholars have found other ways to reconcile their scientific views on the origin of the universe with their belief in God.⁴¹

7. Moses 2:1: Was the earth created from nothing?

Whereas the idea of God’s organizing the world from preexisting matter was a part of many ancient cosmologies, Jewish scholars began to articulate the alternative doctrine of creation ex nihilo⁴² (literally “out of nothing”) by the later part of the second temple period.⁴³ Ex nihilo creation subsequently became the prevalent interpretation in the Christian tradition.⁴⁴

By way of contrast, Joseph Smith stated that the word “created” should be rendered “formed, or organized.”⁴⁵ This is because, said he, the term “does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize — the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of ... chaotic matter.”⁴⁶ In his analysis of the subject, Kevin Barney concludes that historical and scientific evidence “strongly favors Joseph Smith’s rejection of creatio ex nihilo.”⁴⁷

8. Moses 2:3-4: What was nature of the light that was created in the beginning?

The nature of the light referred to in Moses 2:3 is not explained. Several possibilities have been suggested. Some interpreters see this event as consonant with the prevailing scientific view that describes the birth of our universe as a sudden burst of light and energy of unimaginable scale. Others see this phrase as referring to a “local” event whereby the natural light of the sun was created.⁴⁸ It is, of course, a given that the sun was created prior to the fourth day, though from the vantage point of earth, no light will “appear in the firmament” until that later time.⁴⁹

In contrast to such naturalistic readings, Hugh Nibley’s interpretation seems more consistent with related scriptural passages — namely, that the light referred to was the result of God’s presence: “All this time the Gods had been dwelling in light and glory, but the earth was dark. ... This was not the first creation of light. Wherever light comes into darkness, ‘there is light.’”⁵⁰ Consistent with this view, President John Taylor wrote that God:⁵¹

caused light to shine upon [the earth] before the sun appeared in the firmament; for God is light, and in him there is no darkness.⁵² He is the light of the sun and



Figure 6: *The Creation of Light*, 1913
Gaetano Previati, 1852-1920:

the power thereof by which it was made; he is also the light of the moon and the power by which it was made; he is the light of the stars and the power by which they are made.”

D&C 88:12-13 continues this description to make it clear that this “light” is something over and above mere physical light as generally conceived, since it not only “enlighteneth your eyes” but also “quickeneth your understandings,” governs and “giveth life to all things,” and “proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space.”⁵³ As Isaac Watts expressed in one of his hymns:⁵⁴

In vain the bright, the burning sun
Scatters his feeble light;
'Tis Thy sweet beams create my noon;
If Thou withdraw, 'tis night.

The idea of God Himself as the source of this special “light” is consistent with many ancient sources.⁵⁵ For example, rabbinical commentators saw the light at the beginning of Creation as the splendor of God Himself, who “cloaked himself in it as a cloak” and it “shone forth from one end of the world to the other.”⁵⁶ A corresponding light was said to fill the place of God’s presence in the temple:⁵⁷

The brightness of the Holy of Holies was the light of Day One, before the visible world had been created. ... Those who entered the Holy of Holies entered this place of light, beyond time and matter, which was the presence of “the King of kings and Lord of lords who alone has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light.”⁵⁸ This was the place of glory to which Jesus knew he would return after the crucifixion, “the glory which I had with thee before the world was made.”⁵⁹ In the *Gospel of Thomas*,⁶⁰ Christians are described as the new high priesthood who enter

the light, and Jesus instructed his disciples to say to the guardians [the cherub guardians of Eden?]: “We came from the light, the place where the light came into being on its own accord and established [itself] ...”

9. Moses 2:5: How did “day and night” appear before the sun and moon were created?

A first notion of “time” appears only after the primeval unity was first divided. Note that evening and morning signify respectively, not the earth’s daily sunset and dawning, but rather the suspension and resumption of distinct “times” of divine creativity, corresponding to groups of works performed.⁶¹

Note that like the Egyptian practice (and unlike the system that governs the current Jewish religious calendar) each “day” of Creation begins with the dawn.⁶² Thus Cassuto translates: “And there was evening and there was morning, one day,” and then comments: “When daytime had passed, the period allotted to darkness returned (and there was evening), and when night-time came to an end, the light held sway a second time (and there was morning), and this completed the first calendar day (one day), which had begun with the creation of light.”⁶³ Abraham’s account of the Creation follows the same scheme, though with a difference in how it is formulated.

The Hebrew expression means “Day One,” differing from subsequent periods of Creation that are described using cardinal numbers (e.g., second, third). According to Margaret Barker, some Jewish sages “remembered this as the Day (or the State) in which the Holy One was one with his universe. Day One was thus the state of unity underlying (rather than preceding) all the visible creation ... Those who entered the Holy of Holies[, the place in the temple representing both the state before Creation and the state of oneness that would eventually prevail again,⁶⁴] understood how that original unity had become the diversity of the visible creation ... [where] everything was created distinct, according to its kind.”⁶⁵

10. Moses 2:5: How long was each day of creation?

The Hebrew term for day, *yom*, is not used to refer only to a fixed twenty-four-hour period but also to a period of indeterminate length, as in the expression the “day of the Lord”⁶⁶ or in Moses 3:4, where it is used to signify the entire period of Creation.⁶⁷ Thus, we are not limited to supposing the Creation was accomplished in six solar days or six thousand years, but rather we can view the “week” of Creation as part of seemingly overlapping periods of long and varying length.⁶⁸

Moses 2:6-7: What are the “waters” referred to here? What is meant by the word “firmament”?

The most obvious implication of Abraham 4:2 is that the “waters” correspond to the terrestrial seas that covered the earth following its initial creation. However some



Figure 7: *The Second Day of Creation*, 1925
M. C. Escher, 1898-1972

have associated the term “water” in its singular form with unorganized matter — the unexplained unity that existed prior to the creation process of demarcation, distinction, separation, and naming.⁶⁹ Summarizing the opinion of Jewish sages, Zlotowitz writes:⁷⁰

The “water” mentioned in this verse is not the water that is in the “seas.”⁷¹ It is clear that there was a certain common matter which was called “water.” Afterwards, it was divided into three forms; a part of it became “seas,” another part of it became “firmament”; a third part became that which is above the “firmament” — entirely beyond the earth.⁷² Perhaps this is why ... water is invariably in the plural form — suggestive of this pluralistic division.

Genesis Rabbah suggests that a “watery” origin of all things is behind the etymology of the plural term “heavens”: “And God called the firmament heaven (*sha*).”⁷³ Rav said: *Shamayim* is a composite of *esh* (‘fire’) and *mayim* (‘water’). The Holy One took fire and water, and worked them into each other, and out of the two, heaven was made.”⁷⁴

From the point of view of the physical creation, Moses 2:6-7 seems to be describing how the waters were “‘divided’ between the surface of the earth and the atmospheric heavens that surround it.”⁷⁵ However, in the cosmic temple symbolism of Creation, the “firmament” that separated heaven from earth symbolizes the veil that divided off the Holy of Holies in the earthly temple.⁷⁶

The Prophet's translation of Abraham 4:6 (which reads "expanse" instead of "firmament") may have been informed by his study of Hebrew in Kirtland, where a more precise rendering of Genesis into English would be: "And Elohim said, Let there be an *expanse* in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters and the waters."⁷⁷ Joshua Seixas' *Grammar*, which was the basis of Joseph Smith's study, notes "expanse" as the meaning of the corresponding Hebrew term for the כַּיִם "firmament."⁷⁸ "The verbal form is often used for hammering out metal or flattening out earth, which suggests a basic meaning of 'extending,'"⁷⁹ and could well apply to the spreading out of a curtain or veil.

11. Abraham 4:10, 12, 18, 21, 25: Do the words "the Gods watched those things which they had ordered until they obeyed" (4:18) imply that every created thing exercised its own volition in complying with divine governance?

With respect to mankind, the theme of obedience to the commandments of God is introduced in Abraham 3:24-25: "We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." Elsewhere in scripture, the perfect compliance of the elements is contrasted to the disobedience of man:⁸⁰ "O how great is the nothingness of the children of men; yea, even they are less than the dust of the earth. For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God."

That said, it should be noted that the definition of "obey" in Noah Webster's 1828 *Dictionary*, a near-contemporary publication to the scriptures and revelations of Joseph Smith, includes a sense that describes the "obedience" of inanimate elements in terms of the effects of natural law by which such objects of necessity comply:⁸¹ "To yield to the impulse, power or operation of; as, to *obey* stimulus. 'Relentless time, destroying power, Whom stone and brass *obey*.'" Thus, in the context of scripture, the idea that the elements "obeyed" need mean no more than that they were subject to divinely ordained laws that governed their operations without requiring the notion that there was an exercise of willful volition on their part.

12. Moses 2:11, 12, 21, 24, 25: What are we to understand by the expression that each living creature was to multiply "after his kind"?

Elder Boyd K. Packer has written: "No lesson is more manifest in nature than that all living things do as the Lord commanded in the Creation. They reproduce 'after their own kind.'⁸² They follow the pattern of their parentage."⁸³ The Prophet Joseph Smith said that it is a "fixed and unalterable ... decree of the Lord that every tree, fruit, or herb bearing seed should bring forth after its kind, and cannot come forth after any other law or principle."⁸⁴ From a scientific perspective, this "decree" is expressed within the elegant economy of the laws of genetics and the effects of natural selection, all in conformance with the foreknowledge and governing power of God. Thus, it is unnecessary to interpret relevant scriptures to mean that, once

created, the descendants of any kind of “living thing” will be forever immutable in form. The sophisticated formulations of concepts relating natural kinds and species in modern biology⁸⁵ do not correspond to the commonsense notion of “kinds” in Genesis.

13. Abraham 4:21, 24: What is the significance of the passages in the book of Abraham that say that “the Gods prepared the waters that they might bring forth great whales” (4:21) and that “the Gods prepared the earth to bring forth the living creature” (4:24)?

Hugh Nibley gives his view as follows:⁸⁶

[W]hat [the Gods] ordered was not the completed product, but the process to bring it about, providing a scheme under which life might expand. ... Note the future tense: the [earth is] so treated that [it] will have the capacity. The Gods did not make [grass] on the spot but arranged it so that in time they might appear. They created the potential.



Figure 8: *The Garden of Eden*, ca.1828
Thomas Cole, 1801-1848

14. Moses 3:2-3: What are we to understand by the fact that God “rested on the seventh day from all [his] work”?

In the Bible as well as in other ancient Near East creation accounts, “rest” is conceived as the culminating event of Creation, when order and divine dominion achieve their final triumph over chaos. Thus, in the biblical account, as in *Enuma Elish*,⁸⁷

God rests when His work is finished.⁸⁸ When He does so, taking His place in the midst of creation and ascending to His throne, a temple-universe made with divine hands comes into full existence as a functional sanctuary⁸⁹ — a “control room of the cosmos,”⁹⁰ as John Walton terms it. This current scholarly understanding of the process outlined in Genesis 1 as the organization⁹¹ of a world fit to serve as a dwelling place for God is in contrast to the now scientifically⁹² and theologically⁹³ discredited traditional view that the biblical story merely describes in poetic terms the discrete steps of an *ex nihilo* material creation followed by a simple cessation of activity. Instead, from this updated perspective we can regard the seventh day of creation as the enthronement of God and the culmination of all prior creation events.⁹⁴ True rest is finally achieved only when God rules supreme in His divine temple — and His righteous and duly-appointed king rules on earth. This state of rest existed for a time when the earth was first created, and will recur at the end of the earth’s temporal mission when the earth is celestialized as part of a new Creation.⁹⁵

15. Moses 3:5: What is meant by the scripture that says that God “created all things, of which I have spoken, spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth”?

By “spiritual creation” is not meant, in this instance, a separate creation of entities made of “spirit” corresponding to each created thing, but rather the premortal creation of “all things” in their spiritual *state*, including the physical creation of Eden and everything in it. This is consistent with the view of Elder Bruce R. McConkie, who “conceded that the word ‘spiritual’” in Moses 3 has “a dual meaning and applies to both the premortal life and the paradisiacal creation ... [while emphasizing] that the ‘more pointed and important meaning’ is that of a ‘paradisiacal creation.’”⁹⁶

Some readers see the planning process for the formation of the heavens and the earth as resulting in a “blueprint” that can be taken as constituting a sort of spiritual creation.⁹⁷ Though advance planning doubtless took place, such a process is never referred to in scripture as a form of spiritual creation.

Note that the period of of time mentioned in D&C 77:6 refers to “the seven thousand years” of the earth’s “temporal existence,” rather than to the period of its existence in a spiritual state. Thus, this seven thousand year period does not include the timeframe of the physical Creation of the earth in its spiritual state, nor the time that led up to the Fall of Adam and Eve. Therefore, the rough characterization of time periods in D&C 77:6 is not inconsistent with a creation process that began billions of years ago.

16. Moses 3:5: What do we know from scripture about the creation of mankind?

Joseph Smith taught that there is some aspect of the spirit’s existence that was not created, although the exact nature of this eternal part of man has not been authoritatively settled.⁹⁸ In the book of Moses, we are told very little about the

premortal creation of human spirits and the physical creation of the human body. The fact that all mankind existed as spirits in “heaven” before they came to earth is stated in simple terms.⁹⁹ The formation of man’s physical body from the “dust of the earth” and woman’s from the “rib” of the man are described in figurative terms.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, the book of Abraham makes it clear that when God breathed the “breath of life” into man, it meant that He took Adam’s spirit and associated it with his body.¹⁰¹

With respect to the premortal life of man’s spirit, the phrase “and all the host of them” that follows the statement that “the heaven and the earth were finished” has long been a subject of discussion and speculation. The belief that “angels,” “sons of God,” and/or “the souls of humanity” were part of that “host” and that they were created prior to everything else appears in the book of Job,¹⁰² in extracanonical books such as *Jubilees*,¹⁰³ and in the teachings of Elder Joseph Fielding Smith.¹⁰⁴

The Prophet summarized: “The organization of the spiritual and heavenly worlds, and of spiritual and heavenly beings, was agreeable to the most perfect order and harmony: their limits and bounds were fixed irrevocably, and voluntarily subscribed to in their heavenly estate by themselves, and were by our first parents subscribed to upon the earth.”¹⁰⁵ Thus, “Father Adam, the Ancient of Days and father of all, and our glorious Mother Eve,” among the “noble and great ones” who excelled in intelligence in their premortal life, were foreordained to their mortal roles.¹⁰⁶ Having received perfect physical bodies, Adam and Eve were placed in a specially prepared proving ground where, until the time of their transgression, they would live in a spiritual state.



Figure 9: “*There Went Up a Mist from the Earth*,” 2011
Ignasi Montserrat i Quevedo

17. Moses 3:6: What is meant by the phrase “there went up a mist from the earth”?

Moses 3:5 says that “the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the face of the earth ... and not yet a man to till the ground.” Apparently, water in the Garden of Eden was to be provided by natural irrigation and not by rain.

The English term “mist” seems out of place here, however there is evidence that the obscure Hebrew *‘ed* and the Akkadian *edu*, “flood, waves, swell” might be connected.¹⁰⁷ Thus one might translate this phrase as: “a flow [or ‘spring’¹⁰⁸] would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth.”¹⁰⁹ This is consistent with being told later that “the Lord God caused a river to go out of Eden to water the garden.”¹¹⁰ Unlike the uncertain flows of the desert *wadi* that swelled when God provided rain and dried up when rain was withheld, the continuous flow of water from the deep assured the garden of unfailing fertility.¹¹¹ Moreover, in connection with the figurative account of man’s creation in v. 7, some commentators conclude that the resulting mixture of soil and water provided, poetically, “the raw material with the proper consistency for being molded into man.”¹¹²

18. Moses 3:7: What does the term “living soul” mean? Does everything that God created possess an individual spirit?

D&C 88:15 explains that “the spirit and the body are the soul of man.” The book of Moses specifies further that man,¹¹³ the trees,¹¹⁴ and the animals¹¹⁵ in the Garden became “living souls” once the result of their prior spiritual creation was combined with natural elements. However, the fact that the trees of the garden became “living souls” does not necessarily imply that each tree possessed an individual spirit in the same sense that man and animals do.

The book of Moses says nothing directly about the process of the creation of individual spirits. Later revelation and teachings of Church leaders have made it clear that both humans and animals¹¹⁶ possess individual spirits that predated their physical bodies.¹¹⁷ The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes.”¹¹⁸

D&C 77:2 states that “the spirit of man [is] in the likeness of his person, as also the spirit of the beast, and every other creature which God has created.”¹¹⁹ On this specific matter, there can be little disagreement. However, it is clear from other prophetic teachings that this “likeness” is only general in nature and that, for example, we cannot infer the precise form of the spirit from the physical body it inhabits on earth.¹²⁰ In addition, what constitutes a “beast” or a “creature”¹²¹ in the context of D&C 77:2 has sometimes been debated. For example, Stephens and Meldrum ask whether the fact that everything was created spiritually in the beginning necessarily implies that every form of microscopic life possesses an individual spirit, an idea that on the face of it seems absurd.¹²² Moreover, though some early Church leaders believed that there was some sense in which there is “life” in all matter “independent of the spirit given of God to undergo this probation,”¹²³ we need not conclude that elemental matter possesses “intelligence” or individual volition. Moreover, the idea that every instance of plant life possesses an individual spirit in the likeness of its physical form seems unreasonable.¹²⁴ Notably, in Moses and Abraham, the compound term “living creature” is reserved for animals.¹²⁵

Note that some LDS commentators have interpreted the account of Moses 2 as referring to the creation of all things in spirit form.¹²⁶ In a more limited way, others have associated Moses 2:26-27 with the creation of the spirits of all mankind.¹²⁷ Such ideas, however, have fallen into general disfavor. In any case, LDS teachings seem to be in agreement that the account given in Moses 3:6-7 describes, though in a figurative manner, the creation of a perfect physical body for Adam. Following the creation of his body, Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, a “spiritual” realm of the terrestrial order.

19. Moses 3:7: Does the description of Adam as being “the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also” imply that he was created before any living creature? Does it necessarily imply “special creation” of man?

This verse has long been an interpretive problem for LDS readers, since at face value the phrase seems to be saying that man’s appearance on earth preceded that of the animals — and thus strongly implying that man’s body must have been formed through “special creation.”¹²⁸ However, adopting the most common way this verse has been understood in recent times, Draper et al., comment: “Flesh’ here, of course, refers to mortality — Adam was the first mortal human being on the earth.”¹²⁹ This interpretation is consistent with the majority of scriptural references to the term “flesh.”¹³⁰ Elder Joseph Fielding Smith agreed, arguing that the phrase should not be interpreted to mean that animal life was not present on earth prior to Adam’s coming to live there.¹³¹

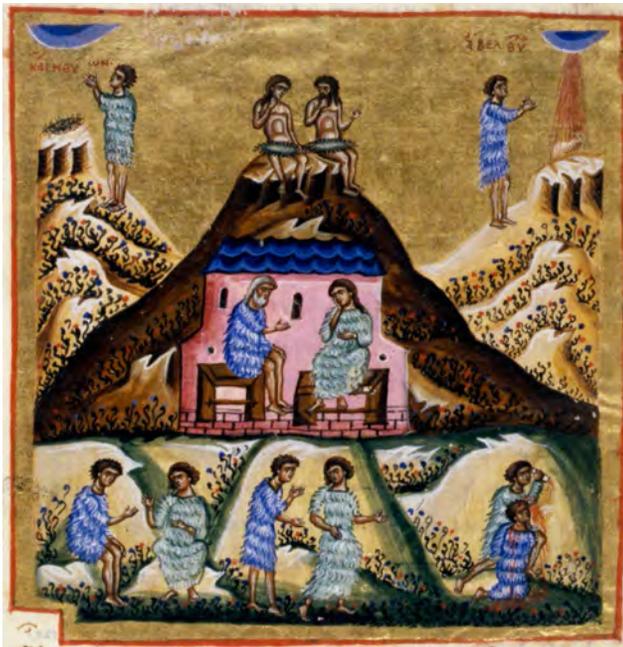


Figure 10: *Adam and Eve in Paradise (top) and in the Cave of Treasures (middle). Cain and Abel Sacrificing and in Conflict (bottom and top left/right)*, 12th century

20. Moses 3:8: What is meant by the phrase “eastward in Eden”?

There is reason to believe that “eastward” may refer to the Garden of Eden’s position relative to the Creator as laid out in the spiritual coordinates which describe that realm. The initial separation of Adam and Eve from God occurs when they are removed from His presence to be placed in the Garden “eastward in Eden” — that is, downward and eastward from the top of the “mountain” where, in some representations of the sacred geography of Paradise, He is said to dwell.¹³² In some early Christian accounts, Adam

and Eve, after the Fall, dwelt in a temple-like retreat in the heart of the mountain of God that was called the “Cave of Treasures” — the “treasures” referring to sacred

objects associated with the priesthood that were restored to the Christ child by the Magi after His birth.

Later events repeatedly associate eastward movement with increasing distance from God.¹³³ For example, after God's voice of judgment visits Adam and Eve "from the west,"¹³⁴ they experience an additional degree of separation when they are expelled through the Garden's eastern gate.¹³⁵ Cain was "shut out from the presence of the Lord" as he resumed the journey eastward to dwell "in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden,"¹³⁶ a journey that eventually continued "from the east" to the "land of Shinar" where the Tower of Babel was constructed.¹³⁷ Finally, Lot traveled east toward Sodom and Gomorrah when he separated himself from Abraham.¹³⁸ On the other hand, Abraham's subsequent "return from the east is [a] return to the Promised Land and ... the city of Salem,"¹³⁹ being "directed toward blessing."¹⁴⁰ The Magi of the Nativity likewise came "from the east" to Bethlehem.¹⁴¹



Figure 11: Adam's Peak, 1780

From Antoine-François Prévost, *Voïages*

To an ancient reader in the Mesopotamian milieu, the phrase "eastward in Eden" might also be taken as meaning that the Garden of Eden sits at the dawn horizon — the meeting place of heaven and earth — symbolic imagery associated with ancient temples. The pseudepigraphal *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* skillfully paints such a picture: "On the third day, God planted the Garden in the east of the earth, on the border of the world eastward, beyond which, towards the sun-rising, one finds nothing but water, that encompasses the whole world, and reaches unto the borders of heaven."¹⁴² This idea corresponds to the Egyptian *akhet*, the specific place where the sun god rose every morning and returned every evening, and also to the Mandaean "ideal world" which was held to hang "between heaven and earth."¹⁴³ The Chinese *K'un-lun* also "appears as a place not located on the earth, but poised between heaven and earth."¹⁴⁴ The gardens of *Gilgamesh* and the Ugaritic Baal and Mot were liminally located at the "edges of the world" or, in other words, "at the

borders between the divine and the human world.”¹⁴⁵ Similarly, *2 Enoch* locates paradise “between the corruptible [earth] and the incorruptible [heaven].”¹⁴⁶

By its very nature, the horizon is not a final end point but rather a portal, a place of two-way transition between the heavens and the earth. Writes Nibley: “Egyptians ... never ... speak of [the land beyond the grave] as an earthly paradise; it is only to be reached by the dead.’ ... [It] is neither heaven nor earth but lies between them. ... In a Hebrew Enoch apocryphon, the Lord, in visiting the earth, rests in the Garden of Eden and, moving in the reverse direction, passes through ‘the Garden to the firmament.’¹⁴⁷ ... Every transition must be provided with such a setting, not only from here to heaven, but in the reverse direction in the beginning.”¹⁴⁸

“The passage from world to world and from horizon to horizon is dramatized in the ordinances of the temple, which itself is called the horizon.”¹⁴⁹ Situating this concept with respect to the story of Adam and Eve, the idea is that the Garden “was placed between heaven and earth, below the firmament [i.e., the celestial world] and above the earth [i.e., the telestial world], and that God placed it there ... so that, if [Adam] kept [God’s] commands He might lift him up to heaven, but if he transgressed them, He might cast him down to this earth.”¹⁵⁰

21. Moses 3:8: Where was the Garden of Eden located?

While it would be foolish to speak of any final solution to the problem of reconciling science and scripture on specifics relating to the Garden of Eden and the nature of life before the Fall, three groups of general possibilities are briefly considered below.

1. *Eden located on the earth as a place where special conditions prevailed.*

This scenario, advocated by Draper et al., posits that Eden existed at a specific location on the earth, and that “spiritual” conditions governed life in the Garden before the Fall while, at the same time, “natural” conditions prevailed elsewhere on the earth.¹⁵¹ Such a proposal accords well with a common LDS view that attributes a continuous identity of the physical earth from its creation in a spiritual state, to its “Fall” to a telestial one, to its eventual transformation to a paradisiacal millennial state, and ultimately to a glorified celestial status.¹⁵² It also provides an explanation for ancient fossil remains by allowing for death and disease to have taken place for an indefinite period of time outside the Garden, while deathless conditions are seen as having prevailed before the Fall for Adam and Eve and all else within Eden’s precincts.¹⁵³ On the other hand, nothing in the scriptural description of the Garden’s four rivers springing from one head seems to correlate easily with the geography of Missouri (or anywhere else on the earth, for that matter), either present or past. Moreover, it seems awkward to try to think of a single earth existing in a hybrid state — partly spiritual and partly natural.¹⁵⁴ Finally, this proposal offers no guidance about how to reconcile current scientific thinking with statements from scripture and early Church leaders

that seem to imply that the earth was moved from one location in the universe to another (more on this in the next question below).

2. *Eden situated in a different place or “state” than the earth as we know it.* A second possibility is that the events of the Fall did not take place on the earth as we know it. For example, the bodies of Adam and Eve could have been prepared in some manner beforehand on the earth¹⁵⁵ and afterward the couple could have been temporarily placed in a terrestrial environment to experience the events of the Garden of Eden.¹⁵⁶ As with the first possibility discussed above, this interpretation of the story would be consistent with the implication of Moses 3:8 that the bodies of Adam and Eve were created outside the Garden (i.e., on the earth?¹⁵⁷) and only later placed in Paradise (“there I put the man whom I had formed”¹⁵⁸). In this view, special conditions, perhaps paralleling those that characterize worlds where translated beings dwell,¹⁵⁹ would have been required as part of the design of the Garden of Eden.¹⁶⁰ An important consequence of this view is that the subsequent Fall would not have required the movement of an entire planet from one place to another, but only the removal of Adam and Eve from the state or place of Eden to the terrestrial earth (a form of “reverse translation”) — an earth where natural conditions (including death and “time”) had already prevailed from the beginning of its creation.¹⁶¹ A strong point of this proposal is that it allows for an earth consistent with scientific findings of a long and continuous biological, geographical, and planetary history. Finally, several ancient parallels can be taken as suggesting the idea that the Garden was not on the earth but rather in a place of a higher order or “sphere” to which Adam and Eve were “transplanted” from the earth.¹⁶²
3. *Eden as a place whose description includes figurative elements.* The blend of figurative elements in the stories of the Creation, the Fall, and the Garden of Eden provides a powerful means to teach complex ideas that would be difficult to comprehend and recall if presented in purely abstract terms. Though affirming the identity of Adam and Eve as historical figures, the reality of the Fall, and the tangible nature of the “sacred space” of Eden, Joseph Fielding McConkie is not troubled by the presence of symbols and metaphors in scriptural accounts:¹⁶³

What, then, do we conclude of the Eden story? Was it figurative or literal? We answer by way of comparison. It, like the temple ceremony, combines a rich blend of both. Our temples are real, the priesthood is real, the covenants we enter into are real, and the blessings we are promised by obedience are real; yet the teaching device may be metaphorical. We are as actors on a stage. We role-play and imagine. We do not actually advance from one world to another in the temple, but rather are taught with figurative representations of what can and will be. ... In the story of man’s earthly origin we find the rich blend of figurative and literal that is so typical of the Bible, of

the teachings of Christ, and of our daily experience — this that the story might unfold according to the faith and wisdom that we bring to it. Like all scriptural texts, its interpretation becomes a measure of our maturity and our spiritual integrity.

In support of the third view above, which is not necessarily incompatible with the other interpretations discussed above, it should be admitted that the scriptural details of locations and specific events in Moses 3-4 are obscure, and that there is a strong symbolic component of many of the descriptions of the places, characters, props, and events of Eden. In fact, Faulconer explains that reading scripture “typologically, figurally, anagogically, or allegorically” is not what a premodern would have done.¹⁶⁴

instead of or in addition to reading literally. Such readings are part and parcel of a literal reading. Premodern understanding does not reduce the biblical story to a reference to or representation of something else, though it also does not deny that there may be an important representative element in scripture.¹⁶⁵ Instead, premoderns believe that to understand the story of Israel is essentially to understand history — actual history, the real events of the world — as incarnation, a continuing incarnation, as types and shadows.

22. Moses 3:9: After the Fall, was the earth physically moved from a place near Kolob to its current location?

In a single brief enigmatic reference, Moses 3:9 elaborates on the spiritual state of existence that applied to all things in the Garden: “it was spiritual in the day that I created it; for it remaineth in the sphere in which I, God, created it.” The use of “for” to introduce the dependent clause of this verse seems to imply that the spiritual state of the Garden was due to the fact that it had remained in a particular “sphere.” This raises the question as to what is meant by the term “sphere.”

The first thing to notice is that the Prophet Joseph Smith never used “sphere” in the contemporary English sense of a “globe” or a “celestial body,” preferring the terms “world” or “planet” when that meaning was intended. In his revelations and teachings, “sphere” always refers to one of three things:

1. the orbit or order of a heavenly body;¹⁶⁶
2. a domain of thought;¹⁶⁷
3. a realm of activity, power, or influence.¹⁶⁸

In the context of Moses 3:9, only the first and third of the senses could reasonably apply. However, since the book of Abraham¹⁶⁹ strongly correlates increases in proximity of orbit with higher orders of celestial governance, these two senses, in fact, converge. Taken together with Abraham 5:13 and D&C 130:4 — which imply that the “reckoning” of time of the Garden in its spiritual state was “after the Lord’s time, which was after the time of Kolob”¹⁷⁰ — the implication seems to be that the

prelapsarian Garden of Eden was “nigh unto Kolob,”¹⁷¹ with events after the Fall occurring in another sphere — and hence in a different state.¹⁷²

This interpretation immediately raises serious issues. For one thing, a view that the earth was physically transported from one position in space to another is impossible to harmonize with current planetary science unless one makes the very doubtful assumption, as does Hyrum Andrus,¹⁷³ that under the special conditions prevailing at the time of Creation “it may have been possible to move the earth in space at a great speed without the disruption that might otherwise accompany such a move.” For such a view to be plausible, not only would the movement of Earth itself have to be considered, but also the fact that “the solar system is a multiple body system with many complex interactions taking place.”¹⁷⁴ Equally problematic is the fact that all lines of scientific evidence support the conclusion that both the sun and the earth were created at about the same time from the same source, and that the earth was part of our solar system from its beginning.

23. 2 Nephi 2:22-23: Does the Book of Mormon imply that there was no death before the Fall?

Scriptural descriptions of the Garden of Eden not only seem to imply that something about its “time,” but also its “state,” and “sphere,” differed from the postlapsarian environment of Adam and Eve. Lehi explained that had it not been for the Fall, “All things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.”¹⁷⁵ Some readers take this verse as an argument that death did not occur before the Fall. However, there are other ways of interpreting this passage of scripture. In this connection, Stephens and Meldrum ask:¹⁷⁶

What does the term “all things” refer to? Verse 23 appears to refer to Adam and Eve only, and verse 24 uses the term “all things” twice to refer to concepts. Can we be certain that “all things” in verse 22 means Adam, Eve, all the animals, and all the plants? Could the term “things” simply mean conditions? ... If Adam had not transgressed, his condition of immortality in the Garden would have continued indefinitely.

Perhaps more convincingly, Robert W. Clayton observes:¹⁷⁷

The meaning of [2 Nephi 2:22-23] must be carefully evaluated. “The state in which they were after they were created” (for plants and animals) is not defined anywhere in scripture. “And had no end” does not necessarily mean eternal life, just a continuation of state. It could mean the creations were mortal and would have continued mortal forever, with no hope of eternal continuance. The word “they” refers to Adam and Eve throughout the chapter, but the meaning of “they” is grammatically unclear in verse 22. Verse 23 picks right back up with “they” referring to Adam and Eve, suggesting it is Adam and Eve in verse 22 who would have “remained forever and had no end.”

In light of Clayton's conjectures, I propose that these verses should be punctuated as follows:

22 And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden, and all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created.

23 And they must have remained forever, and had no end, and they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence.

Expressing a related idea, Moses 3:9 says that, "all things which I prepared for the use of man" were "spiritual" when they were created, for they remained "in the sphere in which I, God, created [them]." Everything placed in the Garden of Eden was, of course, also considered "spiritual." We are told in Moses 3 that man, the trees, and the animals became "living souls" when they were formed from a combination of spiritual and natural elements.¹⁷⁸ All things were considered "spiritual" in the sense that they were in a state of relative perfection before the Fall.¹⁷⁹



Harold B. Lee
1899-1973



James E. Talmage
1862-1933



Harvey Fletcher
1884-1981

There is a wide spectrum of beliefs in the Church regarding the question of how death entered the world.¹⁸⁰ President Harold B. Lee gave the following description of the effects of Adam and Eve's transgression on the rest of creation:¹⁸¹

Besides the Fall having had to do with Adam and Eve, causing a change to come over them, that change affected all human nature, all of the natural creations, all of the creation of animals, plants — all kinds of life were changed. The earth itself became subject to death. . . . How it took place no one can explain, and anyone who would attempt to make an explanation would be going far beyond anything the Lord has told us. But a change was wrought over the whole face of the creation, which up to that time had not been subject to death. From that time henceforth all in nature was in a state of gradual dissolution until mortal death was to come, after which there would be required a restoration in a resurrected state.

President Lee’s clear statement about the effects of the Fall is difficult to reconcile with the presence of ancient fossils predating man’s arrival arranged in progressive complexity in the earth’s strata. By way of contrast, Elder James E. Talmage of the Quorum of the Twelve, a geologist by training, expressed the following observations in a pamphlet published by the Church in 1931.¹⁸²

The oldest ... rocks thus far identified in land masses reveal the fossilized remains of once living organisms, plant and animal. ... These lived and died, age after age, while the earth was yet unfit for human habitation. From the fossilized remains of plants and animals found in the rocks, the scientist points to a very definite order in the sequence of life embodiment, for older rocks, the earlier formations, reveal to us organisms of simplest structure only, whether of plants or animals. These primitive species were aquatic; land forms were of later development.

Those who, like President Lee, have made statements strongly expressing the view that no death existed on earth before the Fall should not be portrayed as intrinsically unsympathetic to science but more fundamentally as resisting any views that compromise authoritatively expressed doctrines relating to the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. Likewise, scientifically inclined people of faith such as Elder Talmage are not seeking to subordinate the claims of faith to the program of science but naturally desire to circumscribe their understanding of truth — the results of learning by “study and also by faith”¹⁸³ — into “one great whole.”¹⁸⁴

In 1910, the First Presidency affirmed that to the extent that demonstrated scientific findings can be harmonized with “divine revelation [and] good common sense,” they are accepted “with joy.”¹⁸⁵ In this regard, Elder Lee spoke approvingly of a story recounted by LDS scientist Harvey Fletcher about President Joseph F. Smith’s reply to questions posed to him at BYU about the topic of evolution:¹⁸⁶

After listening patiently he replied: “Brethren, I don’t know very much about science. It has not been my privilege to study ... deeply ... any of the sciences, but this I do know, that God lives, and that His Son instituted this church here upon the earth for the salvation of men. Now Brethren, you have that testimony, and I’ve heard you bear it. It’s your job to try and see how these seeming difficulties can be overcome.”

24. Moses 3:9: What kind of fruit grew on the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil”?

Before speaking of the fruit itself, a few observations should be made about the symbolism of the Tree of Knowledge. The Hebrew expression “knowledge of good and evil” can mean knowledge of what is good and bad, or of happiness and misery — or, most arguably, of “everything,” if “good and evil” can be taken to mean the totality of all that is, was, or is yet to be.¹⁸⁷ The kind of understanding implied by the phrase “knowledge of good and evil” is, as Claus Westermann concludes:¹⁸⁸

concerned with knowledge (or wisdom) in the general, comprehensive sense. Any limitation of the meaning of “the knowledge of good and evil” is thereby excluded. It can mean neither moral nor sexual¹⁵¹ nor any other partial knowledge, but only

that knowledge which includes and determines human existence as a whole, [the ability to master] ... one's own existence.

Consistent with this reading of the phrase, LDS scripture refers to the ability to know “good *from* evil,”¹⁹⁰ which presupposes “man’s power to choose the sweet even when it is harmful and reject the bitter even when beneficial.”¹⁹¹

LDS teachings about the nature of the “forbidden fruit” include a wide variety of opinions. For example, while President Brigham Young¹⁹² and Elder James E. Talmage¹⁹³ understood the scriptures as describing a literal ingestion of “food” of some sort, Elder Bruce R. McConkie left the door open for a figurative interpretation: “What is meant by partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil is that our first parents complied with whatever laws were involved so that their bodies would change from their state of paradisiacal immortality to a state of natural mortality.”¹⁹⁴

Given the pervasiveness of the temple themes in the early chapters of Genesis, it would be surprising if temple symbolism were not somehow connected to the Tree of Knowledge. Whether speaking of the heavenly temple or of its earthly models, the theme of access to revealed knowledge is inseparably connected with the passage through the veil.¹⁹⁵ Consistent with this general idea about the nature of the forbidden fruit, Islamic traditions insist that the reason Satan was condemned after the Fall was because he had claimed that he would reveal a knowledge of certain things to Adam and Eve.¹⁹⁶

Hugh Nibley succinctly summed up the situation: “Satan disobeyed orders when he revealed certain secrets to Adam and Eve, not because they were not known and done in other worlds, but because he was not authorized in that time and place to convey them.”¹⁹⁷ Although Satan had “given the fruit to Adam and Eve, it was not his prerogative to do so — regardless of what had been done in other worlds. (When the time comes for such fruit, it will be given us legitimately.)”¹⁹⁸



Figure 15: *The Great High Priest*, 2015
Benjamin Pack, 1985-

25. Moses 3:9: Did the “Tree of Life” confer biological immortality on Adam and Eve?

Since the Tree of Life is not specifically prohibited to Adam and Eve, readers have often speculated on the question of whether Adam and Eve can be presumed to have eaten from it in order to prolong their lives so long as they remained in the Garden. However, a careful reading of Genesis itself seems to run counter to this view. For example, the use of the term “also” in Genesis 3:22 (Hebrew *gam*; “and take *also* of the tree of life”) suggests that they had not yet partaken of the fruit of the Tree of Life at the time these words were spoken.

Evidence for the use of *gam* in the sense of “new and additional activity” is provided in Genesis 3:6 as well (“and *also* gave to her husband”).¹⁹⁹ Additionally, Barr studied 131 cases of “lest” (Hebrew *pen*; “lest he put for his hand ... and eat”) in the Bible “and found none which means ‘lest someone continue to do what they are already doing.’”²⁰⁰ Specifically affirming such a reading is a unique Samaritan exegesis of Genesis 2:16 that specifically excludes the Tree of Life from the original permission given to Adam and Eve to eat from the trees of the Garden.²⁰¹

In contrast to the common idea that eating the fruit of the Tree of Life was merely a way to provide biological immortality, Elder Bruce R. McConkie maintained that its purpose was to confer the glory of “eternal life”²⁰² — the kind of life that God lives — in whatever degree, of course, those who partake are qualified to receive it.²⁰³ Non-Mormon scholar Vos concurs, concluding that “the tree was associated with the higher, the unchangeable, the eternal life to be secured by obedience throughout the probation.”²⁰⁴ Consistent with ancient temple imagery associated with the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve would not have been permitted to partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life at their own discretion. Like each one of us, Adam and Eve’s only approach to the Tree of Life was by way of leaving the Garden of Eden to pass into mortality, and finally returning at last to taste of the sweet fruit only when they had progressed on their probationary journey to the point they could be authoritatively invited to do so.²⁰⁵



Figure 16: *The Creation of Eve*, 1510
Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1475-1564

26. Moses 3:22: Was Eve created from a rib?

President Spencer W. Kimball taught that: “The story of the rib, of course, is figurative.”²⁰⁶ As Nahum Sarna describes: “The mystery of the intimacy between husband and wife and the indispensable role that the woman ideally plays in the life of man are symbolically described in terms of her creation out of his body. The rib taken from man’s side thus connotes physical union and signifies that she is his companion and partner, ever at his side.”²⁰⁷

In Mesopotamian literature, Ea, the god of wisdom, is “described as ‘the ear of [the god] Ninurta’ because the ear was regarded as the seat of intelligence. In Greek mythology, Athena, the goddess of wisdom, sprang from the forehead of Zeus, the seat of the brain.”²⁰⁸ In the Bible, by way of contrast, the use of the word rib “expresses the ultimate in proximity, intimacy, and identity.”²⁰⁹ Writes Nibley: “The rib in Arabic is the *urka* or *silka*. It is the expression for anything as close to you as a thing can possibly be.”²¹⁰ Note that in the Sumerian myth of Enki and Ninhusag, Ninti is the name of a deity who cures Enki’s rib — her name meaning both “the lady of the rib” and “the lady who makes life.”²¹¹

27. Moses 7:21: By what means was the whole city of Zion “taken up into heaven”?

Note that scripture does not say that the “city” of Moses 7:19 was taken up into heaven. Rather, it says that “Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven,” meaning that its inhabitants were gradually translated.

Although some early Church leaders taught that a physical city of Zion was taken up into heaven,²¹² it should be remembered that the primary definition of Zion is as a *people*.²¹³ When Moses 7:63 describes the return of the “city” of Zion, it speaks of the warm fellowship of affection between its heavenly and earthly inhabitants, not of a restoration of ancient buildings, streets, and gardens.

28. Moses 7:48: Does the fact that Enoch hears a voice from the bowels of the earth mean that it is alive?

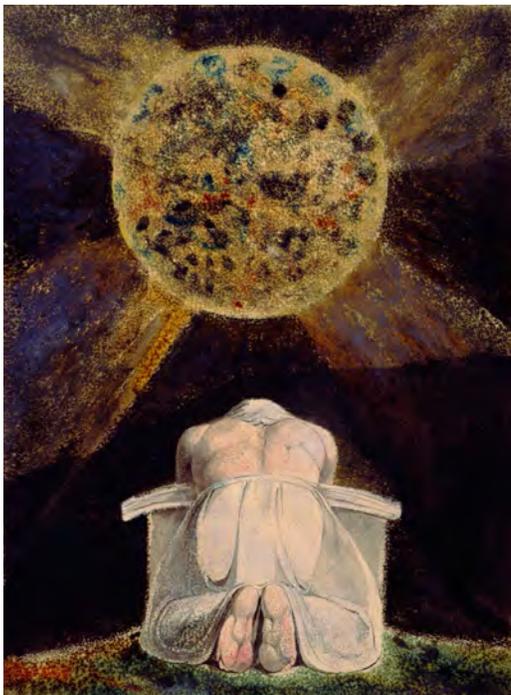


Figure 17: Plate from *The Song of Los*, 1795
William Blake, 1757-1827

The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob makes a clear distinction between those parts of God’s creation that act, and those that are merely acted upon.²¹⁴ Unlike the earth and other inanimate objects, men “are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon, save it be by the punishment of the law at the great and last day.”²¹⁵

The verse in question should be taken as a poetic reference to the mourning of all creation at mankind’s destructive and self-destructive tendencies.²¹⁶ O. Glade Hunsaker notes the beauty of the imagery:²¹⁷ “the poetry of Moses is striking. For example, Enoch hears and describes the personified soul of the earth alliteratively as the ‘mother of men’ agonizing from the bowels of the earth that she is ‘weary’ of ‘wickedness.’²¹⁸

The tension of the drama resolves itself as the voice uses assonance in pleading for ‘righteousness’ to ‘abide’ for a season.”

29, Moses 8:13, 21; Genesis 6:4: What is to be understood by references to the “sons of God” in Genesis and the book of Moses? Were they divine beings that married human women?

The term “sons of God,” as it occurs in the enigmatic episode of mismatched marriages in the Bible²¹⁹ and in passages in *1 Enoch*,²²⁰ has been the source of no end of discussion among scholars.²²¹ Contradicting traditions that depict these husbands as fallen angels, the book of Moses and some ancient exegetes portray them as mere mortals.²²² Following what became the standard tradition in the Syriac Church, that saw the “sons of God” as righteous Sethites and the “daughters of men” as wicked Cainites,²²³ Ephrem the Syrian interpreted these traditions to mean that: “[T]hose who lived on higher ground,²²⁴ who were called ‘the children of God,’ left their own region and came down to take wives from the daughters of Cain down below.”²²⁵ An Islamic source likewise asserts: “But one errs and misunderstands [if] he says that ‘angels’ descended to ‘mortal women.’ Instead, it is the sons of Seth who descend from the holy mountain to the daughters of Cain the accursed. For it was on account of their saintliness [chastity?] and dwelling place upon the holy mountain that the sons of Seth were called *banu ‘elohim*; that is, ‘sons of God.’”²²⁶

Modern revelation makes it clear that one can become a “son of God” through receiving the ordinances of the priesthood. Adam’s acceptance of the ordinance of baptism of the water and the Spirit is explicitly described in the book of Moses,²²⁷ as are allusions to subsequent priesthood ordinances that were intended to lead him — and his posterity — to the glorious end of the pathway of exaltation. Thus, we are told that Adam was “after the order of him who was without beginning of days,” and that he was “one” in God, “a son of God.”²²⁸ Through this same process — both having received every priesthood ordinance and covenant, and also having successfully completed the probationary tests of earth life — all may become sons of God.²²⁹

30. Moses 8:30: Did God literally “destroy all flesh from off the earth” in the flood of Noah?

Walter Bradley summarizes some of the difficulties in the idea of a universal flood:²³⁰

The terminology used in Genesis 6-9 seems to favor a global flood. ... [However, t]he use of such biblical language in other stories may help us to understand the intention here. In Genesis 41:56, we are told, “The famine was spread over all the face of the earth.” We normally interpret this famine as devastating the lands of the ancient Near East around Egypt and do not assume that American Indians and Australian Aborigines came to buy grain from Joseph. 1 Kings 10:24 states that “the whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.” Surely Inca Indians from South America or Maoris from New Zealand had not heard of Solomon and sought his audience.



Figure 18: *The Evening of the Deluge*, ca. 1843
Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1775-1851

The Hebrew word *eretz* used in Genesis 7:19 is usually translated “earth” or “world” but does not generally refer to the entire planet. Depending on the context, it is often translated “country” or “land” to make this clear. References to the entire planet are found in Genesis 1:1; 2:1; and 14:22, for example. However, more typical references might be Genesis 1:10; 2:11; or 2:13, where *eretz* is translated “land.” In Genesis 12:1, Abram was told to leave his *eretz*. He was obviously not told to leave the planet but rather to leave his country. ... A final helpful

comparison to obtain a proper interpretation of Genesis 7:19 involves Deuteronomy 2:25, which talks about all the nations “under the heavens” being fearful of the Israelites. Obviously, all nations “under the heavens” was not intended to mean all on planet Earth.

The Hebrew word translated “covered” in Genesis 7:19 is *kasah*. It can mean “residing upon,” “running over,” or “falling upon.” Twenty feet of water running over or falling upon the mountains (or hills) is quite different from that amount residing upon them, although either event could destroy human and animal life in its path. ...

If the entire Mesopotamian valley was flooded, and the water receded slowly, then Noah might have seen only water with distant mountain ranges over the horizon. God’s use of wind in Genesis 8:1 to cause the flood to subside would be reasonable for a local flooding of this huge valley. It would not make sense for a flood that left water to a depth of thirty thousand feet, sufficient to cover Mount Everest. Genesis 8:4 indicates that the Ark came to rest on the hills or mountains of Ararat, not specifically Mount Ararat, which is seventeen thousand feet tall. This complex mountain range extends north and east of Mount Ararat down to the foothills skirting the Mesopotamian plain. If the Ark had landed near the top of Mount Ararat, it is difficult to imagine how Noah and his family as well as the animals would have been able to descend to the base of the mountain, given the considerable difficulty mountain climbers have today in attempting to reach the locations where the Ark is thought (I believe, incorrectly) to have landed.

Further evidence for a local flood is found in Genesis 8:5, where it is noted that the water receded until the tenth month, when the tops of the mountains (or hills) became visible for the first time. The reference here seems to be what Noah could see, not the entire world.

In Genesis 8:11, the dove returns with an olive leaf. Since olive trees don’t grow at higher elevations, a flood that covered all the mountains would not give this type

of evidence of receding. One can estimate the total amount of water that would be needed to cover all the mountains on the face of the earth and compare this to the total water reserves that we know of on planet Earth in all lakes, oceans, and subterranean aquifers. A flood that covered all mountains on earth would require 4.5 times the total water resources that exist on planet Earth.

Addressing the question of the Flood, Elder John A. Widtsoe, writing in 1943, stated:²³¹

We should remember that when inspired writers deal with historical incidents they relate that which they have seen or that which may have been told them, unless indeed the past is opened to them by revelation.

[For example, t]he details in the story of the Flood are undoubtedly drawn from the experiences of the writer. . . . The writer of Genesis made a faithful report of the facts known to him concerning the Flood. In other localities the depth of the water might have been more or less.

31. Genesis 6:14-16: What are we to make of the large size and strange shape of Noah's Ark?

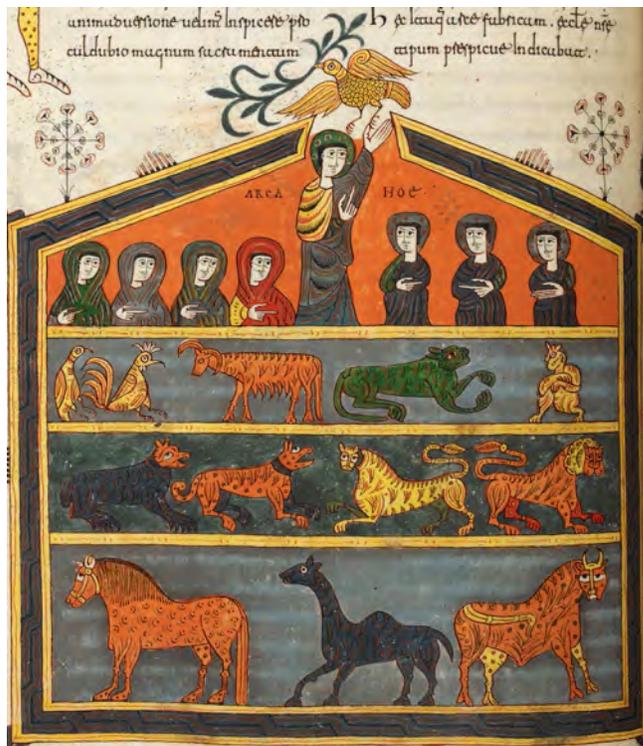


Figure 19: *The Ark and Its Occupants*, 1109, Petrus

The story of the Flood replays with significant variation many of the themes found in the earlier chapters of Genesis, including stories of a creation, a garden, and a fall.²³² Predictably, it also resonates with temple motifs.

It is significant that, apart from the Tabernacle of Moses²³³ and the Temple of Solomon,²³⁴ Noah's Ark is the only manmade structure mentioned in the Bible whose design was directly revealed by God.²³⁵ Noah's Ark seems to have been "designed as a temple,"²³⁶ specifically a prefiguration of the Tabernacle, as argued by Morales.²³⁷

The Ark's three decks suggest both the three divisions of the Tabernacle and the threefold layout of the Garden of Eden.²³⁸ Indeed, each of the decks of Noah's Ark was exactly "the same height as the Tabernacle and three times the area of the Tabernacle court."²³⁹ Note that Noah's Ark is shaped with a flat bottom like a box or coffer. The ratio of the width to the height of both Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Covenant is 3:5.²⁴⁰

The biblical account makes clear that the Ark “was not shaped like a ship, and it had no oars,” “accentuating the fact that Noah’s deliverance was not dependent on navigating skills, [but rather happened] entirely by God’s will,”²⁴¹ its movement solely determined by “the thrust of the water and wind.”²⁴² Likewise, whether the dimensions of the seven-storied ark (or “temple”²⁴³) in the Mesopotamian story of *Gilgamesh*²⁴⁴ are imagined to represent the shape of “a sea-going ziggurat”²⁴⁵ or instead a “floating *microcosm*”²⁴⁶ in the form of a gigantic cube, the nautical improbability of such a vessel is meant to affirm the miraculous nature of the rescue in the context of temple symbolism.

32. Genesis 9:16: Did the first rainbow appear in the time of Noah?

About the rainbow that betokened the covenant between God and Noah, Hugh Nibley asked:²⁴⁷

Why do Christians insist on calling it the first rainbow, just because it is the first mentioned? Who says that water drops did not refract light until that day? Well, my old Sunday School teacher, for one, used to say it. The rainbow, like the sunrise, is strictly the product of a point of view, for which the beholder must stand in a particular place while it is raining in another particular place and the sun is in a third particular place, if he is to see it at all. It is a lesson in relativity.

33. Genesis 9:19: Were there others besides Noah and his family who survived the Flood?

Results of genetic studies seem to indicate that both the nearest common male and female ancestors of mankind lived long before Adam and Eve entered mortality²⁴⁸ — or, for that matter, at a more distant period than Noah, whose sons traditionally have been understood to be the sole male survivors of the Flood. Some biblical scholars have studied ancient manuscripts that seem to provide support for the idea that there were “other people ‘out there’ when God created Adam and Eve, but they ... weren’t [considered to be] fully human in the sense that Adam and Eve were.”²⁴⁹

Drawing on the richer sources of scripture produced through modern revelation, Hugh Nibley has raised a series of questions with an eye to finding scriptural support for surviving non-Noachian lineages that might help explain such findings.²⁵⁰ Nibley no doubt was wondering whether some of these shadowy peoples described in scripture might be neither descendants of Noah nor of Adam but rather distantly related contemporaries whose descendants may have mixed at various times with the Adamic lineage.²⁵¹ Of relevance is the reminder by Ryan Parr that promised blessings from patriarchs such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are of necessity driven by covenant and lineal descent, not by genetics, since specific “nuclear DNA finding its way from any one of these progenitors to any descendent of today is extremely unlikely from a biological perspective.”²⁵²

34. Genesis 10:25: What does the phrase mean that says the earth was divided in the days of Peleg?

Concerning the meaning of the statement that “the earth [was] divided,” LDS scholar B. Kent Harrison observes:²⁵³ “This division ... is, of course, suggestive of continental drift,²⁵⁴ but the time scales are all wrong. ... It has also been suggested that the splitting is only political.”²⁵⁵ Something like the latter interpretation is suggested by the wording of the Joseph Smith Translation, which seems to posit a causal connection between Peleg’s might and the division of the earth: “Peleg was a mighty man, for in his days was the earth divided.”²⁵⁶ Note that the description of Peleg as “a mighty man”²⁵⁷ recalls the figure of Nimrod.²⁵⁸

35. Genesis 11:9: How are we to understand the Lord’s confounding the language of the builders of the Tower of Babel in light of historical linguistics?

If we take the “one language” of Genesis 11:1 as being Sumerian, Akkadian, or even (as a long shot) Aramaic²⁵⁹ rather than a supposed universal proto-language,²⁶⁰ some of the puzzling aspects of the biblical account become more intelligible. For example, “Genesis 10 and 11 would make linguistic sense in their current sequence. In addition to the local languages of each nation,²⁶¹ there existed ‘one language’²⁶² which made communication possible throughout the world”²⁶³ — or, perhaps more accurately, throughout the land.²⁶⁴ “Strictly speaking, the biblical text does not refer to a plurality of languages but to the ‘destruction of language as an instrument of communication.’”²⁶⁵

Hamilton²⁶⁶ presents a reasonable view when he writes that it “is unlikely that Genesis 11:1-9 can contribute much, if anything, to the origin of languages. ... [T]he diversification of languages is a slow process, not something catastrophic as Genesis 11 might indicate.”²⁶⁷ The commonly received interpretation of Genesis 11 provides “a most incredible and naïve explanation of language diversification. If, however, the narrative refers to the dissolution of a Babylonian lingua franca, or something like that, the need to see Genesis 11:1-9 as a highly imaginative explanation of language diffusion becomes unnecessary.”²⁶⁸

Brant Gardner summarizes the take-home lesson of the Tower of Babel story:²⁶⁹ “[T]he confounding of languages is related to the mixing (confounding) of different peoples in creating this great tower in Babylon. From such a mixing of people who were attempting to build a temple to the heavens, Yahweh removed some of His believers [e.g., the Jaredites] for His own purposes.”

Like the other stories in the first eleven chapters of Genesis, the story of the Tower of Babel is woven throughout with temple themes. The Tower can be seen as a sort of anti-temple wherein the Babylonians attempt to “make ... a name” for themselves.²⁷⁰

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Endnotes

1. J. E. Talmage, *Earth and Man*, p. 244.
2. A similar view is eloquently echoed and elaborated by John H. Walton, a well-respected scholar of Genesis who takes the divinely inspired nature of the Bible seriously (J. H. Walton, *Lost World of Adam and Eve*, pp. 17, 18-19, 21):

[W]e are obliged to respect the text [of the Bible] by recognizing the sort of text that it is and the nature of the message that it offers. In that regard, we have long recognized that the Bible is not a scientific textbook. That is,

God's intention is not to teach science or to reveal science. He *does* reveal His work in the world, but He *doesn't* reveal how the world works. ...

[T]he authority of the text is not respected when statements in the Bible that are part of ancient science are used as if they are God's descriptions of modern scientific understanding. When the text talks about thinking with our hearts or intestines, it is not proposing scientific ideas that we must confirm if we wish to take biblical authority seriously. ... This is simply communications in the context of ancient science. In the same way, when the text talks about the water below the vault and the water above the vault (Genesis 1:6) we do not have to construct a cosmic system that has waters above and waters below. Everyone in the ancient world believed there were waters above because when it rained water came down. ...

Every aspect of the regular operations of the world as described in the Bible reflects the perspectives and ideas of the ancient world — ideas that Israel along with everyone else in the ancient world already believed. Though the text has much revelation to offer about the nature of God and his character and work, there is not a single incidence of new information being offered by God to the Israelites about the regular operation of the world (what we would call natural science). The text is thoroughly ancient and communicates in that context.

That said, we should allow our interpretation of scripture to benefit from whatever sort of sound perspective we can bring to it — whether scientific, cultural, historical, or spiritual — so long as such perspectives do not inhibit the text from speaking for itself (*ibid.*, p. 14):

We are not compelled to bring the Bible into conformity either with its cultural context or with modern science, but if an interpretation of Genesis, for example, coincides with what seem to be sound scientific conclusions, all the better. Even in a Bible-first approach (in contrast to a science-first or even extrabiblical-first approach), we can be attentive to the ancient world or to modern science without compromising our convictions about the Bible. Either information from the literature of the ancient world or new insights from scientific investigation may appropriately prompt us to go back to the Bible to reconsider our interpretations. This does not mean that we blindly force the text to conform to demand from other fields. The Bible must retain its autonomy and speak for itself. But that is also true when we hold traditional interpretations up to the Bible. The biblical text must retain its autonomy from tradition. We must always be willing to return to the text and consider it with fresh eyes.

3. W. G. Dever, *Artifacts*, p. 5, cited in B. A. Gardner, *Traditions*, p. 36.

4. 1 Nephi 2:10, 20, 22; 3:5, 7, 16, 21; 4:1, 11, 14-15, 17, 34; 5:20-21; 6:6; 8:38; 9:3; 15:10-11, 25; 16:4, 8; 17:3, 13, 15 22; 19:3-4; 20:18; 22:30; 22:31; 2 Nephi 1:7, 9-10, 20, 24, 32; 2:21, 26, 28; 3:2, 7-8; 4:4; 5:10, 19, 31; 9:27; 25:25; 26:10; 30:1, 31:7, 10, 14, 18.

5. R. S. Hendel, *Demigods*, p. 23. See J. M. Bradshaw and D. J. Larsen, *God's Image 2*, OVERVIEW Genesis 11, p. 379. See also the discussion by Hendel of Genesis 6:1-4 in H. W. Attridge et al., *HarperCollins Study Bible*, p. 13, where he specifically includes the Garden of Eden, the mating of the sons of God with the daughters of men, and the Tower of Babel as examples of such transgressions in Genesis 1-11.
6. D. M. Carr, *Reading*, p. 239.
7. T. N. D. Mettinger, *Eden*, p. 127.
8. R. A. Oden, Jr., Divine aspirations in Atrahasis and in Genesis 1-11, pp. 211, 215.
9. See J. M. Bradshaw and D. J. Larsen, *God's Image 2*, ENDNOTE 0-4, p. 24.
10. Regarding the application of this phrase to Enoch and his people, see Moses 6:39, 7:69. Regarding Noah and his sons, see Moses 8:27. In addition, Abraham is commanded by the Lord to "walk before me" in Genesis 17:1, and Isaac speaks of "The Lord, before whom I walk" in Genesis 24:40. About possible reasons for the overlap and confusion between the characters of Noah, Enoch, and other patriarchs in the ancient literature, see H. W. Nibley, *Enoch*, pp. 22-55.
11. See, e.g., the discussion in J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 234-240. For a preliminary discussion of these contrasting themes, see *ibid.*, pp. 342-351. On the Flood in the context of purification, see E. A. Harper, *It's a Washout*; L. M. Morales, *Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, pp. 128-129.
12. For a more complete discussion of the book of Moses as a temple text, see J. M. Bradshaw, *LDS Book of Enoch. Demonstrating how far careful scripture readers of other faiths have come in recognizing the importance of temple-related ideas in providing and guiding the context of interpretation for the Old and New Testaments*, the eminent theologian N. T. Wright asserts (in J. H. Walton, *Lost World of Adam and Eve*, p. 175):

One of the great gains of biblical scholarship this last generation, not least because of our new understanding of first-temple Judaism, is our realization that the temple was central to the Jewish worldview.
13. Articles of Faith 1:8. In this connection, President Gordon B. Hinckley wrote (G. B. Hinckley, *Great Things*, p. 81):

The Christian world accepts the Bible as the word of God. Most have no idea of how it came to us.

I have just completed reading a newly published book by a renowned scholar. It is apparent from information which he gives that the various books of the Bible were brought together in what appears to have been an unsystematic fashion. In some cases, the writings were not produced until long after the events they describe. One is led to ask, "Is the Bible true? Is it really the word of God?"

We reply that it is, insofar as it is translated correctly. The hand of the Lord was in its making.

14. Walton and Sandy, *Lost World of Scripture*, pp. 68, 69. With respect to Genesis in particular, “it is fairly obvious that the book of Genesis serves as a kind of introduction or prologue to what follows in Exodus through Deuteronomy” (*ibid.*, p. 29). “Nevertheless,” continues Schmid in his highlighting of one prominent theme in the most recent thinking on the topic (*ibid.*, pp. 30, 32, 45):

the function of Genesis to the Pentateuch is apparently not exhausted by describing it as an introduction to the Moses story. ... Genesis ... shows ... clear signs of having existed as a stand-alone literary unit for some portion of its literary growth. Genesis is a special book within the Pentateuch: it is the most self-sufficient one. ... In current scholarship, it is no longer possible to explain the composition of the book of Genesis from the outset within the framework of the Documentary Hypothesis.

15. *American Heritage Dictionary*. The definition adds: “but composed within approximately 200 years of the birth of Jesus Christ.” This is a typical criterion for inclusion in modern collections of pseudepigrapha.

16. Walton and Sandy, *Lost World of Scripture*, p. 305.

17. It should be noted that many scholars see Daniel as a fictional character.

18. In a footnote, Walton refers to Craig Blomberg’s term: “benign pseudonymity.”

19. For a brief overview of the background of the JST and its relationship to the book of Moses, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 1–9.

20. P. L. Barlow, *Bible (2013)*, pp. 55–57.

21. Ben McGuire cautions against the adoption of extremes at either end of the spectrum with respect to translation issues (personal communication):

On the one end of the spectrum we could (as believers) hold to a view in which [the Books of Moses and Abraham] are modern pseudepigrapha—a notion which contradicts what appears to be the opinion of the text held by Joseph Smith and his contemporaries (and this makes us appropriately uncomfortable...). On the other end, the view that they are wholly revealed translations of ancient texts seems, at least on the surface, to be unsupportable.

22. P. L. Barlow, *Bible (2013)*, p. 57.

23. For numerous examples, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1* and J. M. Bradshaw and D. J. Larsen, *God’s Image 2*.

24. H. M. Smith et al., *Commentary*, p. 350.

25. Compare Gardner's analysis of Book of Mormon usage of the name/title "Jesus Christ" (Gardner, *Gift and Power*, pp. 241–242). For more on this issue, see the discussion of Moses 6–7 below. Note that acceptance of the general primacy of conceptual rather than literal equivalence in translation undercuts one of the primary tools of the textual critic, i.e., vocabulary analysis (*ibid.*, pp. 233–239).
26. J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 27 November 1832, 1:299.
27. R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*, p. 215.
28. For example, Bachman has argued convincingly that most of the substance of D&C 132 was revealed to the Prophet as he worked on the first half of JST Genesis (D. W. Bachman, *New Light*). This was more than a decade before 1843, when the revelation was shared with Joseph Smith's close associates.
29. J. Smith, Jr., *Writings 2002*, 31 July 1832, p. 273.
30. Moses 1:43. See also Moses 4:32: "See thou show them unto no man, until I command you, except to them that believe."
31. The quoted words are from Mormon Apostle George Q. Cannon's remembrance (G. Q. Cannon, *Life [1907]*, p. 129 n.): "We have heard President Brigham Young state that the Prophet before his death had spoken to him about going through the translation of the scriptures again and perfecting it upon points of doctrine which the Lord had restrained him from giving in plainness and fulness at the time of which we write."

This is consistent with George Q. Cannon's statement about the Prophet's intentions to "seal up" the work for "a later day" after he completed the main work of Bible translation on 2 February 1833 (*ibid.*, p. 129):

No endeavor was made at that time to print the work. It was sealed up with the expectation that it would be brought forth at a later day with other of the scriptures [see D&C 42:56-58]. ... [T]he labor was its own reward, bringing in the performance a special blessing of broadened comprehension to the Prophet and a general blessing of enlightenment to the people through his subsequent teachings.

I have elsewhere argued the likelihood that the focus of the divine tutorial that took place during Joseph Smith's Bible translation effort was on temple and priesthood matters — hence the restriction on general dissemination of these teachings during the Prophet's early ministry.

32. For more detailed discussion of these verses, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*; J. M. Bradshaw and David J. Larsen, *God's Image 2*.
33. Moses 1:37-39.
34. D&C 76:23-24.

35. J. Smith, Jr. (or W. W. Phelps), *A Vision*, 1 February 1843, stanzas 19-20, cited in L. E. Dahl, *Vision*, p. 298.
36. N. A. Maxwell, *How Choice*, p. 100.
37. Moses 1:33; D&C 76:24.
38. See the J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, overview of Moses 2, p. 84 and COMMENTARY 2:5-e, p. 103.
39. E. W. Tullidge, *Women*, p. 178
40. See <http://www.dhbailey.com>.
41. For examples of views from Mormon scholars and scientists, see <http://mormonscholarstestify.org/>.
42. Erroneously inferred from Psalm 33:6, 9 and 2 Esdras 6:38.
43. S. Sandmel et al., *New English Bible*, 7:28, p. 243.
44. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 5.
45. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 5 January 1841, p. 181, consistent with Abraham 4:1.
46. *Ibid.*, 7 April 1844, pp. 350-351.
47. K. L. Barney, *Six*, pp. 108-112. See also H. R. Johnson, *Big Bang*; K. E. Norman, *Ex Nihilo*; B. T. Ostler, *Nothing*; S. D. Ricks, *Ex Nihilo*. "The primary transition is not from nothingness to being but from chaos to order" (T. L. Brodie, *Dialogue*, p. 133). Consistent with this biblical perspective, Teppo describes the "central theme" of the Mesopotamian creation account, *Enuma Elish*, as being "organizing, putting things in their correct places" (S. Teppo, *Sacred Marriage*, p. 90).
48. R. D. Draper et al., *Commentary*, p. 193.
49. Moses 2:14-19. See, e.g., F. B. Salisbury, *Creation*, p. 71.
50. H. W. Nibley, *Before Adam*, p. 69.
51. J. Taylor, 31 December 1876, p. 327.
52. See D&C 88:7-9. See 1 John 1:5; cf. Psalm 104:2.
53. Cf. Psalm 36:9.
54. I. Watts, *Hymns*, *God, my only Happiness* (Psalm 73:25), 2:94, p. 432.
55. See, e.g., J. L. Kugel, *Instances*, pp. 157-160.

56. J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah 1*, 3:4, p. 29; cf. Psalm 104:2. Note that the darkness mentioned in Moses 2:2 (“I caused darkness to come up upon the face of the deep”) seems to be entirely without negative connotation. On the contrary, according to Wyatt’s brilliant exposition of related Ugaritic and OT passages (N. Wyatt, *Darkness*, pp. 95-96, 97), the:

passage paradoxically makes darkness the locus of the invisibility, and therefore perhaps of the spiritual essence, of the deity. Furthermore, it links darkness explicitly with the waters, and, I suspect, with the primordial waters in mind, as the extraterrestrial location of God. Indeed, the chiasmic structure of the bicolon cleverly envelops the dwelling (str, skh) in the darkness and the darkness of the waters, a graphical verbal presentation of the secrecy of the divine abode. ...

This process involves the initial stages in the self-manifestation of the deity. It is, in somewhat unusual form, an account of a theophany. It describes three stages in it: first, there is the seemingly improbable condition of primordial chaos in which it is to occur [*thw wbhww*]. Secondly, there is the inchoate medium of revelation: the darkness. And thirdly, there is the spirit of God intuited rather than seen traversing waters as yet unordered.

57. M. Barker, *Revelation*, p. 22; cf. H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, pp. 440-441.
58. 1 Timothy 6:16.
59. John 17:5.
60. H. Koester et al., *Thomas*, 50, p. 132.
61. Cf. Abraham 4:5, 8, 13, ff.
62. U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, pp. 28-30; N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 8.
63. U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, p. 28.
64. Ephesians 1:10; D&C 27:13; 128:18.
65. M. Barker, *Temple Theology*, pp. 24-25. See also P. H. Reardon, *Reflections*, pp. 32-33.
66. E.g., Isaiah 2:12; 13:5, 9; Jeremiah 46:10; Ezekiel 13:5; Amos 5:18, 20.
67. W. Bradley, *Why*, p. 168.
68. Alma 40:8; B. R. McConkie, *Christ and the Creation*, p. 11; B. Young, 17 September 1876, p. 231; R. M. Nelson, *Creation*.
69. C. Roy, *Liquide*.
70. M. Zlotowitz et al., *Bereishis*, p. 38. See D. Kimhi’s commentary on Genesis, excerpted in E. Munk, *Hachut*.

71. Moses 2:10.
72. See M. Maimonides, *Guide*, 2:30, 2:352-353.
73. Moses 2:8.
74. H. N. Bialik et al., *Legends*, 18, p. 9; J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah 1*, 4:7, p. 43; cf. J. Hirschman, *Baraita*, p. 6.
75. B. R. McConkie, *Christ and the Creation*, p. 11; R. M. Nelson, *Creation*.
76. L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 1:51. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *Tree of Knowledge*.
77. P. L. Barlow, *Bible*, p. 70.
78. J. Seixas, *Manual*, p. 21.
79. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 8.
80. Helaman 12:7-8.
81. N. Webster, *Dictionary*, s.v. obey.
82. See Moses 2:12.
83. B. K. Packer, *Pattern*, p. 289.
84. J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 20 March 1842, p. 107.
85. See Natural Kinds for a good summary of issues in relating the concept of natural kinds to the idea of species in biology.
86. H. W. Nibley, *Before Adam*, p. 70.
87. E. A. Speiser, *Creation Epic*, 1:75, p. 61.
88. See V. Hurowitz, *I Have Built*, pp. 95, 330-331.
89. J. H. Walton, *Lost World*, pp. 84, 88; J. H. Walton, *Genesis 1*, pp. 116-118.
90. J. H. Walton, *Genesis 1*, p. 115.
91. See J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God's Image 2*, ENDNOTE M8-18, p. 246.
92. J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, p. 538.
93. *Ibid.*, COMMENTARY Moses 2:1-f, pp. 94-95.
94. J. H. Walton, *Lost World*, pp. 72-73, 75; J. H. Walton, *Genesis 1*, pp. 116-117, 178-184.
95. See e.g., Revelation 21:1.

96. Cited in C. R. Harrell, Preexistence, p. 20. This article contains additional discussion of approaches to interpreting the term “spiritual creation” as described in the early revelations of Joseph Smith.
97. See, e.g., citations in J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, EXCURSUS 8: The Origin and Premortal Existence of Human Spirits, p. 540.
98. K. W. Godfrey, Intelligence; P. N. Hyde, Intelligences. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, EXCURSUS 8: The Origin and Premortal Existence of Human Spirits, p. 540.
99. Moses 3:5. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-14, p. 200.
100. Moses 3:6. See chapter in this volume that contains selected statements about the origin of man.
101. Abraham 5:7; cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 17 May 1843, p. 301. This idea does not imply that Mormons need accept the traditional form of philosophical dualism (personal communication from James E. Faulconer).
102. Job 38:4, 7.
103. O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 2:2, p. 55.
104. J. F. Smith, Jr., *Answers*, 1966, 5:182-184; cf. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 2 May 1844, p. 365. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Commentary 2:2-b, p. 99, 2:4-c, p. 101, 3:1-b, p. 151, Excursus 8: The Origin and Premortal Existence of Human Spirits, p. 540.
105. J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 9 October 1843, p. 325.
106. D&C 138:38-39; Abraham 3:22-23; S. W. Kimball, *Righteous Women*, p. 102; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 12 May 1844, p. 371; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 12 May 1844, p. 365.
107. V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, p. 155.
108. R. J. V. Hiebert, *Septuagint*, p. 2.
109. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 17.
110. J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Commentary 3:10-a, p. 170.
111. Cf. JST Genesis 13:10; U. Cassuto, *Documentary*, p. 104.
112. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 17; contrast C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, pp. 203-207. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, COMMENTARY 3:7-c, p. 157.
113. Moses 3:7.
114. Moses 3:9.

115. Moses 3:19.
116. See discussion in J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-10, p. 199.
117. See, e.g., J. F. Smith, Jr., *Doctrines*, 15 February 1941, 1:62.
118. D&C 131:7.
119. Cf. J. F. Smith et al., *Origin*, 4:203-205.
120. As an apostle, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr. taught that we “were all mature spirits before we were born” (J. F. Smith, Jr., *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:54), so it is apparent that when a child is born the mature spirit must accommodate an infant body.

Likewise, in the resurrection, “the child that was buried in its infancy will come up in the form of the child that it was when it was laid down; then it will begin to develop. From the day of the resurrection, the body will develop until it reaches the full measure of the stature of its spirit, whether it be male or female” (J. F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 1906-1907, p. 24. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 453-457; J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, Wilford Woodruff Journal, 7 April 1844, p. 347; Thomas Bullock Report, 12 May 1844, p. 269).

In addition, President Joseph F. Smith taught that the way a spirit appears to human view is conditioned by circumstances: “If you see one of your children that has passed away it may appear to you in the form in which you would recognize it, the form of childhood; but if it came to you as a messenger bearing some important truth, it would perhaps come ... in the stature of full-grown manhood” (J. F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 1918, p. 455).

121. The first definition of “beast” in Noah Webster’s 1828 *Dictionary* is: “Any four-footed animal, which may be used for labor, food, or sport; distinguished from fowls, insects, fishes, and man; as beasts of burden, beasts of the chase, beasts of the forest. It is usually applied to large animals” (N. Webster, *Dictionary*, s. v. beast). Genesis 1:24 makes somewhat different and finer distinctions as it describes three categories of “living creatures”: “cattle, that is, living creatures whom man can domesticate or tame; creeping things, to wit, small creatures that creep about on the ground, or even big animals that have no legs, or have very short legs, so that they appear to be walking on their bellies; beasts of the earth: four-legged creatures that can never be domesticated or tamed” (U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, p. 54).

With respect to the word “creature,” it should be noted that while the current meaning encompasses both animals and people, the archaic sense derived from the Latin is more general, signifying “anything that has been created.” However, with one exception, every usage in the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants refers to people (e.g., “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mormon 9:22); “justice claimeth the creature” (Alma 42:22)). Significantly,

the sole exception to this rule uses the word in the archaic sense: “that the church may stand independent above all other creatures,” the context implying that the Church itself is a “creature” (i.e., a creation) since it was created by God (D&C 78:14).

122. T. D. Stephens et al., *Evolution*, p. 124.
123. B. Young, 23 March 1856, p. 277.
124. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, COMMENTARY 2:20-a, p. 109 and 3:7-e, p. 159; Moses 7:48.
125. Moses 2:20-25, 3:19; Abraham 4:24-25, 5:20. Cf. Rashi, *Genesis Commentary*, p. 13.
126. E.g., R. O. Cowan, *Answers*, p. 94; O. Pratt, 12 November 1879, p. 200; B. H. Roberts, *The Truth*, pp. 289-296; E. N. Skousen, *Earth*, pp. 298-302.
127. See, e.g., citations in J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, COMMENTARY 2:26-a, p. 111.
128. E.g., O. Pratt, 12 November 1879, pp. 200-201.
129. R. D. Draper et al., *Commentary*, p. 223; cf. Moses 3:5. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-56, p. 210.
130. E.g., 2 Nephi 4:34; 28:31; Jeremiah 17:5; Isaiah 40:6; 1 Nephi 22:23; Galatians 5:19; 1 John 2:16. A notable exception is a mention of the resurrected body of Christ in Luke 24:39. See R. J. Matthews, *Fall*, pp. 47-48.
131. J. F. Smith, Jr., *Origin*, p. 328.
132. J. M. Bradshaw, *Tree of Knowledge*.
133. J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, pp. 41-42; T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 267-268.
134. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Commentary 4:14-c, p. 259.
135. Moses 4:31.
136. Moses 5:41.
137. Genesis 11:2.
138. Genesis 13:11.
139. J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 59 and Genesis 14:17-20.
140. T. L. Brodie, *Dialogue*, p. 117.
141. Matthew 2:1. For more on the symbolism of this event, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Adam, Eve, Three Wise Men*.

142. S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, 1:1, p. 1. Eastward orientation is not only associated with the rising sun, but also with its passage from east to west as a metaphor for time (N. Wyatt, *Space*, pp. 35-52). The Hebrew phrase *mi-kedem* ('in the east') in the Genesis account could also be translated "in the beginning" or "in primeval times" (T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 261-270; cf. Habakkuk 1:12). Likewise, for the Egyptians, the West, the direction of sunset, was the land of the dead — hence the many tombs built on the west bank of the Nile.
143. E. S. Drower, *Mandaeans*, p. 56; E. Lupieri, *Mandaeans*, p. 128.
144. J. S. Major, *Heaven*, p. 156.
145. T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 285-286.
146. *Ibid.*, pp. 285-286.
147. See P. Alexander, 3 Enoch, 5:5, p. 260. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-57, p. 210.
148. H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*, pp. 294-295. See also H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 16, pp. 198-199.
149. Siegfried Schott, cited in H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 16, p. 199.
150. Shelemon, *Book of the Bee*, 15, p. 20.
151. R. D. Draper et al., *Commentary*, p. 227.
152. E.g., J. F. Smith, Jr., *Doctrines*, October 1928, 1:73-74.
153. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-31, p. 203.
154. See *ibid.*, ENDNOTE 3-32, p. 203.
155. See *ibid.*, ENDNOTE 3-33, p. 204.
156. Cf. S. D. Ricks, Adam's Fall, pp. 598-599; S. E. Robinson, *Book of Adam*, p. 141; O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 3:9, p. 59.
157. The fifteenth-century Creation and Fall speaks of Adam having been created from the "common earth" rather than the "earth of Paradise" where he was later placed (M. Herbert et al., *Irish Apocrypha*, p. 3).
158. Cf. M. Zlotowitz et al., *Bereishis*, p. 94.
159. J. Taylor, *Mediation*, 1882, pp. 75-78.
160. H. L. Andrus, *God*, p. 381 n. 88. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-34, p. 204.
161. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-35, p. 204.

162. See *ibid.*, pp. 142-144.
163. J. F. McConkie, *Eden*, pp. 29, 35.
164. J. E. Faulconer, *Incarnation*, p. 48. See J. S. Tanner, *World and Word*, pp. 226-230; M. Barker, *Christmas*, pp. 29-30. Regarding types and shadows, see, e.g., Mosiah 3:15. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-47, p. 208; J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God's Image 2*, pp. 8-12.
165. Cf. H. W. Nibley, *Treasures*, pp. 179-180; H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 16, p. 203; J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, EXCURSUS 13: Some Perspectives on Historicity, p. 552.
166. For specific references, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 3-24, p. 202.
167. For specific references, see *ibid.*, ENDNOTE 3-25, p. 202.
168. For specific references, see *ibid.*, ENDNOTE 3-26, p. 202.
169. Abraham 3:9, 16.
170. See also J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 9 March 1841, pp. 64-65.
171. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, EXCURSUS 18: Kolob, p. 565 and EXCURSUS 19: "If You Could Hie to Kolob," p. 566.
172. See *ibid.*, ENDNOTE 3-27, p. 203.
173. H. L. Andrus, *God*, pp. 314-315.
174. H. K. Hansen, *Astronomy*, p. 188.
175. 2 Nephi 2:22.
176. T. D. Stephens et al., *Evolution*, p. 135. See D. Boyce, *Of Science*, pp. 200-203 for a rebuttal of this view.
177. R. W. Clayton, *Questions*.
178. Moses 3:7, 9, 19. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, Endnote 3-12, p. 200.
179. See J. F. Smith, Jr., *Doctrines*, 1954, 1:76.
180. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, Endnote 3-28, p. 203.
181. H. B. Lee, *Teachings 2000*, 23 June 1954, p. 20.
182. J. E. Talmage, *Earth and Man*, p. 242. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, Endnote 3-29, p. 203.
183. D&C 88:118.

184. H. W. Hunter, *Teachings 1997*, 30 August 1984, p. 182.
185. J. F. Smith et al., *Words in Season*.
186. H. B. Lee, *Teachings 1996*, 6 June 1953, p. 340. See also H. B. Lee, *Place*.
187. See D&C 93:24.
188. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, pp. 247-248; cf. T. N. D. Mettinger, *Eden*, pp. 61-63.
189. Sarna writes: "Against the interpretation that [the fruit represented carnal knowledge] is the fact ... that sexual differentiation is made by God Himself [Moses 2:27], that the institution of marriage is looked upon ... as part of the divinely ordained order [Moses 2:25], and that ... 'knowledge of good and bad' is a divine characteristic" (N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 19; see Moses 4:11, 28). Westermann concurs, concluding that the opening of the eyes experienced by Adam and Eve in Moses 4:13 "does not mean that they become conscious of sexuality" (C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, p. 251). It is later, immediately following the account of their expulsion from Eden, that we are given the significant detail that "Adam knew his wife, and she bare unto him sons and daughters" (Moses 5:2. See J. E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 30).
190. In contrast to the Bible, which exclusively employs the term "good and evil," (Genesis 2:9, 17; Genesis 3:5, 22; Deuteronomy 1:39; 2 Samuel 19:35; Proverbs 31:12; Isaiah 5:20; Jeremiah 24:3; Amos 5:14; Matthew 12:35; Luke 6:45; Hebrews 5:14; cf. 2 Nephi 2:18, 15:20; Alma 29:5, 42:3; Moses 3:9, 17; Moses 4:11, 28; Moses 5:11; Abraham 5:9, 13; JS-H 1:33), the Book of Mormon and the book of Moses contain nine instances of the similar phrase "good from evil" (2 Nephi 2:5, 26; Alma 12:31, 29:5; Helaman 14:31; Moroni 7:15-16, 19; Moses 6:56). Though, admittedly, the difference in connotation between these terms is not entirely consistent across all scriptural references to them (see e.g., Alma 12:31 and Moses 4:28), one might still argue for a distinction between the knowledge Adam and Eve attempted to acquire when they determined to eat the forbidden fruit (and would eventually receive in its fullness when they had successfully finished their probation), and that which they gained later through the experience of repeated choice in a fallen world. Unlike the former attempt to gain knowledge that had come in response to Satan's deception and as the result of moral autonomy exercised in transgression of divine instruction, the essential knowledge attained gradually by Adam and Eve during their later period of mortal probation would depend on their hearkening to the "Spirit of Christ" (Moroni 7:16, 19), mercifully made available to them through the power of redemption (2 Nephi 2:26), and enabling them to "know good from evil ... with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night" (Moroni 7:15).
191. A. Cohen, *Chumash*, p. 10.

192. B. Young, 8 October 1854, p. 98. President Young taught that Adam and Eve “partook of the fruit of the Earth, until their systems were charged with the nature of Earth.”
193. J. E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 19. Elder Talmage describes Eve’s transgression as “indulgence in food unsuited to [her] nature.”
194. B. R. McConkie, *Sermons*, p. 189.
195. J. M. Bradshaw, *Tree of Knowledge*.
196. G. Weil, *Legends*, pp. 26, 30.
197. H. W. Nibley, *Return*, 63.
198. H. W. Nibley, *Gifts*, 92.
199. V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, p. 209. See also T. N. D. Mettinger, *Eden*, p. 20.
200. T. Stordalen, *Echoes*, pp. 230-231. However, slightly weakening Barr’s claim, there are two exceptions among the 131 instances: Exodus 1:9 and 2 Samuel 12:27.
201. S. Lowy, *Principles*, p. 403.
202. B. R. McConkie, *New Witness*, p. 86; cf. A. Gileadi, *Studies*, p. 10; B. C. Hafen, *Broken*, p. 30.
203. D&C 88:28-32; R. J. Matthews, *Probationary Nature*, p. 56.
204. Cited in V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, p. 209 n. 6.
205. D&C 88:68. The vision of Lehi witnesses that it is possible to “taste” of this fruit in mortal life. Elder David A. Bednar observes: “Pressing forward to and partaking of the fruit of the tree [2 Nephi 31:17] may represent the receiving of additional ordinances and covenants whereby the Atonement can become fully efficacious in our lives” (D. A. Bednar, *Power to Become*, p. 77). However, the “tasting” that Lehi describes does not assure exaltation, since some, “after they had tasted of the fruit ... were ashamed ... and ... fell away” (1 Nephi 8:28).
206. S. W. Kimball, *Blessings*, p. 71.
207. N. M. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 22.
208. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
209. H. W. Nibley, *Patriarchy*, p. 87.
210. H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 18, pp. 229-230.
211. G. Greenberg, *Myths*, p. 55. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, COMMENTARY 4:26-a, p. 273.
212. See W. Mace, *Autobiography*; C. L. Walker, *Diary*, 10 March 1881, 2:540; E. R. Snow, *Address to Earth*; B. Young, 20 April 1856, p. 320; W. Woodruff, *Life*,

- 1867, p. 448; O. Pratt, 19 July 1874, p. 147. For a discussion of these and related cosmological ideas in early Mormon thought, see E. R. Paul, *Science*, pp. 75-126.
213. Moses 7:18-19. This accords with the third definition of “city” in Webster’s 1828 dictionary as: “The collective body of citizens, or the inhabitants of a city; as when we say, the *city* voted to establish a market, and the *city* repealed the vote” (N. Webster, *Dictionary*, s.v. city, p. 38). The *Online Etymological Dictionary* (<http://etymonline.com>) comments on the evolution of the original meaning of the term: “The sense [of city] has been transferred from the inhabitants to the place. The Latin word for “city” was *urbs*, but a resident was *civis*. *Civitas* seems to have replaced *urbs* as Rome (the ultimate *urbs*) lost its prestige.”
214. 2 Nephi 2:13-14.
215. 2 Nephi 2:26.
216. For an extended discussion of the weeping of the heavens and the mourning of the earth in the vision of Enoch, see J. M. Bradshaw et al., *Revisiting*.
217. O. G. Hunsaker, *Literature*.
218. Earlier in the verse, the term “Wo, wo” introduces the same alliteration.
219. Genesis 6:1-2.
220. See J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2*, Endnote M8-7, p. 244. See also J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, Excursus 24: The Watchers, pp. 585-590.
221. For a summary, see, e.g., A. T. Wright, *Evil Spirits*, pp. 61-75; J. J. Collins, *Sons of God*, pp. 261-263. See also J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2*, Endnote M8-35, p. 250.
222. R. D. Draper et al., *Commentary*, pp. 161-164.
223. Sebastian Brock in Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 189 n. 1:11.
224. Cf. Moses 7:17.
225. Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, 1:11, pp. 81-82. See S. C. Malan, *Adam and Eve*, 3:4, p. 147; H. W. Nibley, *Enoch*, pp. 178-193; J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, *Commentary* Moses 5:41-b, p. 388.
226. J. C. Reeves, *Eutychiei*. See J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2*, Endnote M8-9, p. 244.
227. See *ibid.*, *Commentary* Moses 8:13-a, p. 225 and Moses 6:68-a, p. 84; J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 53-65. Cf. H. W. Nibley, *Enoch*, p. 180.
228. Moses 6:64-66.

229. Moses 6:67–68.
230. W. Bradley, *Why*, pp. 177-179.
231. J. A. Widtsoe, *Evidences*, p. 127.
232. J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God's Image 2*, p. 204.
233. Exodus 25:8-40.
234. 1 Chronicles 28:11-12, 19.
235. Genesis 6:14-16. Cf. E. A. Harper, *You Shall Make*, pp. 55-56; L. M. Morales, *Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, pp. 155-156.
236. C. H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Glory*, p. 41. See also Wyatt's discussion of the arks of Noah and Moses, the Ark of the Covenant, and the story of Utnapishtim in *Gilgamesh* (N. Wyatt, *Water*, pp. 214-216).
237. L. M. Morales, *Tabernacle Pre-Figured*.
238. J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, pp. 77-87. Cf. Ephrem the Syrian, *Paradise*, p. 53; A. S.-M. Ri, *Caverne Syriaque*, p. 208. See the discussion in E. A. Harper, *You Shall Make*, p. 50 of readings of Genesis 6:16 in the Targums and the Septuagint, and for a description of parallels in 1 Kings 6:6 and Ezekiel 41:7.
239. J. D. G. Dunn et al., *Commentary*, p. 44. In other words, the dimensions of the Tabernacle courtyard have "the same width [as the Ark] but one-third the length and height" (Ronald Hendel in H. W. Attridge et al., *HarperCollins Study Bible*, p. 14 n. 6:14-16).
240. See Genesis 6:15 and Exodus 25:10.
241. M. Zlotowitz et al., *Bereishis*, p. 230; cf. U. Cassuto, *Noah to Abraham*, pp. 60-61; L. M. Morales, *Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, p. 155.
242. U. Cassuto, *Noah to Abraham*, p. 60. This recalls the ancient Sumerian story of Enki's Journey to Nibru, where the boat's movement is not directed by its captain, but rather it "departs of its own accord" (J. A. Black et al., *Enki's Journey*, 83-92, p. 332).
243. I.e., *ekallu* (11:96). See Mallowan, cited in N. Wyatt, *Water*, p. 215.
244. A. George, *Gilgamesh*, Standard Version 11:57-62, p. 90.
245. S. W. Holloway, *What Ship*, p. 346. Holloway's new proposal for the shape of Utnapishtim's ark met with opposition by Hendel (R. S. Hendel, *Shape*), to which Holloway published a rejoinder (S. W. Holloway, *ibid.*). As Wyatt

concludes, “Hendel’s objection was on a matter of a technicality, and he readily conceded the overall significance of the ark” (N. Wyatt, *Water*, p. 216).

246. Jean Bottéro, cited in R. S. Hendel, *Shape*, p. 129.
247. H. W. Nibley, *Before Adam*, p. 66.
248. E.g., F. S. Collins, *Language*, p. 126.
249. M. J. W. Leith, *Who Did Cain Marry?*, p. 22. In addition to what limited arguments can be made from biblical sources, Leith cites Egyptologist Gerald Moers, who “has observed that in ancient Egypt, the word for ‘Egyptian’ was also the word for ‘human.’ Foreigners/outsideers were inhuman or subhuman and represented injustice and chaos: Non-Egyptians were ‘barbaric ... [with] monstrous bodies ... animal-like, and a proper pharaoh kept them firmly under his foot.”
250. H. W. Nibley, *Before Adam*, p. 79.
251. With reference to a much earlier time (no later than approximately 30,000 BCE), there is a growing consensus among researchers that there was a limited amount of interbreeding between the ancestors of today’s humans and Neanderthals that led to modern humans carrying 1-4% of Neanderthal genes (Interbreeding?). The authors of one study believe they have “pinpointed the skeletal remains of the first known human-Neanderthal hybrid ... The finding came from northern Italy, where some 40,000 years ago scientists believe Neanderthals and humans lived near each other, but developed separate and distinctly different cultures” (500,000-Year-Old Neanderthal). Other researchers “suggest that interbreeding went on between the members of several ancient human-like groups living in Europe and Asia more than 30,000 years ago, including an as-yet unknown human ancestor from Asia” (E. Callaway, *Ancient Humans*).
252. R. Parr, *Missing*, pp. 94-97.
253. B. K. Harrison, *Truth*, p. 174.
254. See, e.g., J. F. Smith, Jr., *Doctrines*, 3:74-75.
255. George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl conclude that the “division” “evidently refers to the allotment of the habitable portions of the earth to various families, tongues, and nations after the flood, under patriarchal inspiration” (G. Reynolds et al., *Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, 2:319).
256. S. H. Faulring et al., *Original Manuscripts*, pp. 119, 633.
257. Cf. Hebrew *gibbor*. See J. M. Bradshaw et al., *God’s Image 2*, p. 41.
258. See *ibid.*, COMMENTARY Genesis 10:8-c, p. 361.

259. Aramaic would presume a setting for the story no earlier than the beginning of the first millennium BCE.
260. Whether one thinks about this in terms of the LDS tradition of an “Adamic language” or in some other way.
261. Genesis 10:5, 20, 31.
262. Genesis 11:1, 6. It may be significant that the JST for these verses reads: “the same language,” not “one language.”
263. V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, p. 350. Drawing a modern comparison, Nibley quipped that it was “like some of these space thrillers on the TV where everybody knows English. No matter where you go in the universe, they all speak the same language” (H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 4:266).
264. See quote by Nibley above on *eretz*.
265. A. LaCocque, *Captivity of Innocence*, p. 66, citing Paul Ricoeur.
266. V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, p. 358.
267. Drawing a rough analogue between the development of genetic and linguistic differences, Cavalli-Sforza writes (cited in R. T. Pennock, *Tower*, p. 143):
- During modern humanity’s expansion, breakaway groups settled in new locations and occupied new continents [cf. the Jaredites]; from these, other groups broke away and traveled to more distant regions. These schisms and shifts took humanity to very remote areas where contact with the original areas and peoples became difficult or impossible. The isolation of numerous groups had two inevitable consequences: the formation of genetic differences and the formation of linguistic differences. Both take their own path and have their own rules, but the sequence of divisions that caused diversification is common to both. Their history, whether reconstructed using language or genes, is that of their migrations and fissions and is therefore inevitably the same.
268. V. P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, p. 358.
269. B. A. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 6:165.
270. See Genesis 11:4. For more on temple themes in the story of the Tower of Babel, see J. M. Bradshaw and D. J. Larsen, *God’s Image 2*, pp. 390-396.

