

## Gospel Doctrine



### Was Noah Drunk or in a Vision?

By [Jeffrey M. Bradshaw](#) · January 31, 2022

*Editor's Note: An Old Testament KnowWhy for Gospel Doctrine Lesson 6: "Noah ... Prepared an Ark to the Saving of His House" (Moses 8:19-30; Genesis 6-9; 11:1-9) (JBOTL06B). See the link to the video supplement to this lesson at the end of this article under "Further Reading."*



*Figure 1. Noah in His Vineyard, Holkham Bible, ca. 1325-1350. Here we see an industrious Noah diligently tending his vineyard, in striking contrast to a later depiction in the same chapter that features him in an inebriated stupor. Scholars have noted the odd inconsistency between these two scenes*

*Question:* In Genesis 6:9, Noah is described as “a just man and perfect in his generations,” a noble patriarch who, like Enoch,<sup>[i]</sup> “walked with God.” However, the story of Noah finishes in a puzzling way. Immediately after Noah makes his covenant with God, his sons find him “drunken” and “uncovered within his tent.”<sup>[ii]</sup> Can these two opposing pictures of Noah be reconciled?

*Summary:* It is difficult to know whether this contradiction is the result of different traditions, textual misunderstanding, or the abbreviated nature of the biblical account.<sup>[iii]</sup> Some scholars even wonder whether there was a deliberate effort to defame or belittle the character of Noah.<sup>[iv]</sup> What seems certain is that the biblical author deliberately framed this sequel to Noah's Creation and Garden story as a replay of the scene of the Adam and Eve's Fall and consequent judgment in Eden. Most often the instigator of this "Fall" is seen to be Noah, who, it is reported, succumbed to the intoxicating influence of wine from his vineyard. However, it is significant that the scriptures omit any hint of wrongdoing by Noah and put all the blame on Ham and his son Canaan. In the admittedly tentative interpretation given in this article, I will discuss the possibility that Ham's wrongdoing consisted in his having approached, without authorization, the inner curtains of the sacred tent where Noah was enwrapped in vision.<sup>[v]</sup> Some ancient traditions viewed Ham's actions as part of an effort to steal Noah's priesthood garment and undermine his authority.

## The Know

**Fall and Judgment.** In Genesis 9, the "fall" and "judgment" scenes, which echo the Fall and Judgment scenes of Adam and Eve, are recounted in six short verses:<sup>[vi]</sup>

20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard:

21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

25 And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

Looking at the passage more closely, however, raises several questions, especially in light of the possibility that some redactors may have been motivated to defame or belittle the character of Noah in the interest of making the role of Moses more prominent or unique.<sup>[vii]</sup>

*Figure 2. Tabernacle at the Foot of Mount Sinai*[\[viii\]](#).

**What tent did Noah enter?** Although the English translation says “*his* tent,” the Hebrew text features a feminine possessive that normally would mean “*her* tent.”[\[ix\]](#) The *Midrash Rabbah* explains this as a reference to the tent of Noah’s wife.[\[x\]](#) For this reason commentators, ancient and modern, have often seized upon this detail to infer that Ham intruded upon his father and mother at a moment of intimacy.[\[xi\]](#)

However, a different explanation is offered by Rabbi Shim’on in the Jewish *Zohar*, who takes the *he* of the feminine possessive in the Hebrew text of the verse to mean “‘the tent of that vineyard,’ namely, the tent of *Shekhinah*.”[\[xii\]](#) *Shekhinah* is the Hebrew term for “the divine feminine”[\[xiii\]](#) that was used to describe the presence of Yahweh in Israelite temples.[\[xiv\]](#) The idea of Noah having set up a sacred “tent of meeting”[\[xv\]](#) is consistent with the previous report that he built an altar[\[xvi\]](#) and established a covenant with the Lord.[\[xvii\]](#) Indeed, in a variant of the same theme, at least one set of modern commentators take the letter *he* in the Hebrew text of Genesis as referring to *Yahweh*, hence reading the term as the “Tent of *Yahweh*,”[\[xviii\]](#) the divine sanctuary.

Because stories of the Flood elsewhere in the ancient Near East often concluded with the founding of a temple over the source of the floodwaters, Blenkinsopp[\[xix\]](#) finds it “safe to assume” that the biblical account of “served ... as the Israelite version of the cosmogonic victory of the deity resulting in the building of a sanctuary for him.” It is significant that in the old Mesopotamian deluge myth that, according to Blenkinsopp, “could and did function as a creation myth in its own right,” this sanctuary is not located at the top of the mountain, but at the edge of a swamp, an *abzu*.[\[xx\]](#) Similarly, Lucian reports that “the temple of Hierapolis on the Euphrates was founded over the flood waters by Deucalion, counterpart of Ziusudra, Utnapishtim, and Noah.”[\[xxi\]](#) Consistent with this theme, Psalm 29:10 “speaks of Yahweh enthroned over the abyss.”[\[xxii\]](#)

Given the many allusions in the story of Noah to the Tabernacle of Moses, the ancient reader would naturally have seen in Noah’s tent at the foot of the mount where the Ark-Temple rested a parallel with the sacred “Tent of Meeting” at the foot of Mount Sinai, at whose top God’s

heavenly tent had been spread.[\[xxiii\]](#)

In light of this evidence, verse 21 might be modified to read: “And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within [*the tent of Yahweh*].

Figure 3. James Tissot, 1836-1902:

Noah in Vision, ca. 1896-1902

**How are we to understand the mention that Noah “was drunken”?** How are we to understand the mention that Noah “was drunken”?

Nibley associated the incident with the eleven-day “Feast of Intoxication”[\[xxiv\]](#) and other rituals related to flood motifs in the ancient world.

[\[xxv\]](#) Given the Mesopotamian context of the Flood story, an even closer connection might be found in the beer-and-liquor-filled celebration that accompanied the completion of Enki’s journey by water to Nibru to visit the god Enlil in which “there is no food—only alcohol is consumed.”[\[xxvi\]](#)

However, most rabbinical sources make no attempt at explanation or justification Noah’s drinking but instead roundly criticize his actions.

[\[xxvii\]](#) However, the Bible itself offers no condemnation for Noah’s supposed drunkenness. Neither does scripture give any hint that Noah is being hypocritical or merely trying to excuse his own behavior when he pronounces a stern judgment upon his grandson Canaan. Joseph Smith likewise refrained from any criticism of Noah — indeed, he is remembered as asserting that Noah “retained all the power of his priesthood”[\[xxviii\]](#) after the incident.

Do we have a better explanation for Noah’s unexpected behavior? Yes. According to a late, secondhand remembrance of a statement by Joseph Smith, Noah “was not drunk, but in a vision.”[\[xxix\]](#) If we only had this statement to go by, it would be reasonable to discount it entirely.

However, the Prophet’s view agrees with the *Genesis Apocryphon* which, immediately after describing a ritual where Noah and his family drank wine, reports in detail a divine dream vision that revealed the fate of Noah’s posterity.[\[xxx\]](#) This agrees with the general content of Enoch’s

revelation in Moses 7:51 where the Lord “covenanted with Enoch, and sware unto him with an oath, that he would stay the floods; that he would call upon the children of Noah.”

In addition, Jewish scholar Yitzak Koler<sup>[xxxii]</sup> from his study of the Hebrew text of Genesis itself, concurred that Noah was enraptured in a vision while in the tent. He commented: “This explains why Shem and [Japheth] refrained from looking at Noah even after they had covered him, significantly ‘*ahorannî*’ [Heb. “backward”] occurs elsewhere with regard to avoidance of looking directly at God in the course of revelation.”

*Figure 4. Arnold Friberg (1913-2010): The Brother of Jared Sees the Finger of the Lord*<sup>[xxxii]</sup>

The reputation of Noah as a visionary is reinforced by the insights of modern scripture. There we find parallels among Noah, the brother of Jared, and Joseph Smith in their use of stones in connection with their seership. Remember that the brother of Jared was faced with a similar challenge to Noah when he was commanded to build eight barges. He prepared “sixteen small stones”<sup>[xxxiii]</sup> and asked the Lord to touch them with His finger so that they would provide light to his people as they crossed the ocean. In astonishing resemblance to this Book of Mormon story, some Jewish traditions assert that light was provided in Noah’s ark by “shining stones.”<sup>[xxxiv]</sup>

In her penetrating essay, M. Catherine Thomas made it clear that the stones prepared for the brother of Jared provided “not only practical light, but spiritual light as well.”<sup>[xxxv]</sup> This is confirmed by the fact that two of these stones were set apart for use as “interpreters”<sup>[xxxvi]</sup> in the translation of sacred records, suggesting the imagery of the “Urim and Thummim”<sup>[xxxvii]</sup> and “white stone”<sup>[xxxviii]</sup> mentioned in the Bible. Similarly, Gazelem “a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light”<sup>[xxxix]</sup> was provided to aid Joseph Smith in his role as a translator, seer, and revelator.<sup>[xl]</sup> Following the incident with the stones, the brother of Jared experienced a sacred, personal encounter with the Lord. He had manifested such a degree of faith that “the Lord could not withhold anything from his sight; wherefore he showed him all things, for he could no longer be kept without the veil.”<sup>[xli]</sup> If the parallel between Noah and the brother of Jared holds, it would not have been at all out of

character for Noah to have received a similar vision.

Noah's fitness to experience the glory of God is explored in detail by Michal Morales.<sup>[xlii]</sup> "In every sense," writes Morales, "Noah is defined as the one able 'to enter'"<sup>[xliii]</sup> into the presence of the Lord. He concludes:<sup>[xliv]</sup>

As the righteous man, Noah not only passes through the [door] of the Ark sanctuary,<sup>[xlv]</sup> but is able to approach the mount of Yahweh for worship.... As the priestly figure able to ascend the mountain of Yahweh..., Noah stands as a new Adam, the primordial man who dwells in the divine Presence—*homo liturgicus*. As such, he foreshadows the high priest of the Tabernacle cultus who alone will enter the paradisiacal holy of holies.

In light of this evidence, verse 21 might be modified to read: "And he drank of the wine, and was [*in a vision*]; and he was uncovered within [*the tent of Yahweh*]."

*Figure 5. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902: The Offerings of Melchizedek, ca. 1896-1902*<sup>[xlv]</sup>

**How does wine play into the picture?** It should be remembered that a sacramental libation was an element of the highest ordinances of the priesthood as much in ancient times as today. For example, five chapters after the end of the Flood story, we read that Melchizedek "brought forth bread and wine"<sup>[xlvii]</sup> to Abraham as part of the ordinance that was to make him a king and a priest after Melchizedek's holy order.<sup>[xlviii]</sup> Just as Melchizedek then blessed the "most high God, which had delivered thine enemies into thine hand,"<sup>[xlix]</sup> so Noah, after partaking of the wine with his family in the *Genesis Apocryphon*, blessed "the God Most High, who had delivered us from the destruction."<sup>[l]</sup> The book of *Jubilees* provides further evidence that Noah's drinking of the wine should be seen in a ritual context and not merely as a spontaneous indulgence that occurred at the end of a particularly wearying day. Indeed, in that text we are specifically told that Noah "guarded" the wine until the time of the fifth New Year festival, the "first day on the first of the first month," when he "made a feast with rejoicing. And he made a burnt offering to the Lord."<sup>[li]</sup>

We find greater detail about an analogous event within the *Testament of Levi*.<sup>[lji]</sup> There we read that as Levi was made a king and a priest, he was anointed, washed, and given “bread and holy wine” prior to his being arrayed in a “holy and glorious vestment.” Note also that the themes of anointing,<sup>[liii]</sup> the removal of outer clothing,<sup>[liv]</sup> the washing of the feet,<sup>[lv]</sup> and the ritual partaking of bread and wine<sup>[lvi]</sup> were prominent in the events surrounding the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with the Apostles. Indeed, we are told all the righteous may joyfully anticipate participation in a similar event when the Lord returns: “for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth.”<sup>[lvii]</sup>

In light of this evidence, verse 21 might be modified to read: “And [*as part of the ordinance*] he drank of the wine, and was [*in a vision*]; and he was uncovered within [*the tent of Yahweh*].

**How do we make sense of Noah’s being “uncovered” during his vision?** Perhaps the closest Old Testament parallel to this practice is when Saul, like the prophets who were with him, “stripped off his clothes... and prophesied before Samuel... and lay down naked all that day and all that night.”<sup>[lviii]</sup> Jamieson<sup>[lix]</sup> clarifies that “lay down naked” in this instance means only that he was “divested of his armor and outer robes.” In a similar sense, when we read in John 21:7 that Peter “was naked” as he was fishing, it simply means that “he had laid off his outer garment, and had on only his inner garment or tunic.”<sup>[lx]</sup>

In light of this evidence, verse 21 might be modified to read: “And [*as part of the ordinance*] he drank of the wine, and was [*in a vision*]; and he was [*divested of his outer clothing*] within [*the tent of Yahweh*].

Figure 6. James Tissot, 1836-1902: Noah’s Drunkenness (detail), ca. 1896-1902

**What was it that Ham was condemned for seeing?** Reluctant to attribute the apparent gravity of Ham’s misdeed to the mere act of *seeing*, readers have often concluded in addition that Ham must have *done* something.<sup>[lxi]</sup> For example, a popular proposal is that Ham committed unspeakable crimes against his mother<sup>[lxii]</sup> or his father.<sup>[lxiii]</sup>

Wenham, however, wisely observes that “these and other suggestions are disproved by the next verse” that recounts how Shem and Japheth covered their father: [\[lxiv\]](#)

As Cassuto [\[lxv\]](#) points out: “If the covering was an adequate remedy, it follows that the misdemeanor was confined to seeing.” The elaborate efforts Shem and Japheth made to avoid looking at their father demonstrate that this was all Ham did in the tent. [\[lxvi\]](#)

This is consistent with the proposal that the misdeed of Ham was in that he intrusively entered the Tent of Yahweh and saw Noah in the presence of God while the latter was “in the course of revelation.” [\[lxvii\]](#) This idea also fits well with what Hendel, Carr, Mettinger, Oden, and others have identified as an underlying theme throughout Genesis 1-11, namely “transgressions of boundaries” [\[lxviii\]](#) that had been set up in the beginning to separate the general run of mankind from the dwelling place of Divinity. Noah the righteous and blameless (an exception to those in his generation [\[lxix\]](#)) was in a position to speak with God face-to-face, however Ham was neither qualified nor authorized to see (let alone enter) a place of divine glory.

In light of this evidence, verse 22 might be modified to read: “And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father [*while Noah was beholding the glory of God*].

**How did Ham’s actions parallel the transgression of Adam and Eve?** The sin of Ham seems to be a striking parallel to the transgression of Adam and Eve, [\[lxx\]](#) though in the case of Adam and Eve we know that the Fall was followed by an upward step. Noah was positioned directly in front of or perhaps even seated upon a representation of the throne of God. [\[lxxi\]](#) Without proper invitation, Ham approached the curtains of the “tent of Yaweh,” [\[lxxii\]](#) and attempted to look at the glory of God that was “uncovered within” [\[lxxiii\]](#) — literally “in the midst of” [\[lxxiv\]](#) — the tent, just as Eve “cleared a path” for herself so she could “come close to the Tree of Life” [\[lxxv\]](#) that was located “in the midst of” [\[lxxvi\]](#) the Garden. Emerging from the tent, Noah cursed Canaan, [\[lxxvii\]](#) who, as a second party to the violation, is likened in the *Zohar* to the “primordial serpent” [\[lxxviii\]](#) that was cursed by God in Eden. Elaborating on rabbinic commentary about similarities in the nature of the curse itself, Daniel Matt notes that: [\[lxxix\]](#)

The curse uttered against Canaan parallels the curse pronounced upon the serpent in the Garden. As the serpent is more cursed than all other animals, who are themselves enslaved to humanity, so Canaan is doomed to be a “slave of slaves.” [\[lxxx\]](#)

More will be said about the nature of the curse below.

By way of contrast to Ham and Canaan, *Targum Neofiti* asserts that the specific blessing given by Noah to his birthright son Shem is to have the immediate presence of the Lord with him and with his posterity: [\[lxxxii\]](#) “[M]ay the Glory of his *Shekhinah* dwell in the midst of the tents of Shem.”

**What is meant by the “nakedness” of Noah?** As with Noah’s drinking of the wine, some readers see his “nakedness” as shameful and interpret this verse etiologically as an explanation for later guidelines in the Mosaic code that were designed to prevent anyone from seeing the nakedness of the temple priests. [\[lxxxiii\]](#) However, as an alternative, what has just been outlined about Ham’s intrusive look at the divine Presence may be sufficient explanation for the description.

Going further, however, Nibley [\[lxxxiii\]](#) argues from the interpretations of some ancient readers [\[lxxxiv\]](#) that the Hebrew term for “nakedness” in this verse, *’erwat*, may be better rendered as “skins,” *’orot*—in other words, an animal-skin garment corresponding in this instance to the “coats of skins” [\[lxxxv\]](#) *[kuttonet ‘or]* given to Adam and Eve for their protection after the Fall. The two Hebrew words *’erwat* and *’orot* would have looked nearly identical in their original unpointed forms. After tracing the traditions concerning the “coat of skins” that Adam wore, Louis Ginzberg asserts that they “served to the former generations [i.e., to those who lived before the time of Moses] as priestly garments.” [\[lxxxvi\]](#) Indeed, *Midrash Rabbah* specifically asserts that the garment of Adam had been handed down to Noah, who wore it when he offered sacrifice.

[\[xxxvii\]](#)

### Figure 7. Tabernacle Coverings and Curtains

In the current context, the possibility signaled by Morales[\[xxxviii\]](#) that “the ‘covering [*mikseh*] of the Ark’[\[xxxix\]](#) establishes a link to the [skin] ‘covering of the Tabernacle’”[\[xc\]](#) is significant.[\[xci\]](#) The idea that not only the Ark and the Tabernacle but also Noah himself might have been covered in a priestly garment of skins is intriguing when we consider Philonenko’s observation that “the temple is [itself] considered as a person and the veil of the temple as a garment that is worn, as a personification of the sanctuary itself.”[\[xcii\]](#) Could it be that just as it is specifically pointed out in scripture that Noah “removed the [skin] covering of the Ark” in Genesis 8:13, he subsequently removed his own ritual covering of skins? This “garment of repentance,”[\[xciii\]](#) which, by the way, was worn in those times as outer rather than inner clothing, was taken off by Noah in preparation for his being “clothed upon with glory.”[\[xciv\]](#)

In light of this evidence, verse 22 might be modified to read: “And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the [*skin garment*] of his father [*while Noah was beholding the glory of God*].

**Is there evidence that Ham did more than merely see the skin garment?** Some ancient readers state that Ham not only *saw* but also *took* the “skin garment” of his father, intending to usurp his priesthood authority. Though the tradition may be older, the prime extant sources for this idea are the *Babylonian Talmud Pesahim* 44b and *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, in which Rabbi Judah said:[\[xcv\]](#)

The tunic that the Holy One, blessed be His Name, made for Adam and his wife was with Noah in the Ark; when they left the Ark, Ham, the son of Noah, took it, and left with it, then passed it on to Nimrod.

The fact that this account is embedded in the story of Nimrod rather than appearing in the expected place within the story of Noah strengthens the argument that it is an independent tradition. In a statement made prior to the English publication of any sources that mention the stolen garment, Heber C. Kimball, a member of Brigham Young’s First Presidency, gave his view that Ham was cursed because he “pulled the clothing off from his father Noah.”[\[xcvi\]](#)

*Rabbi Eliezer*, among others, continues the intrigues of the stolen garment forward to the time of Esau, who murdered Nimrod for it, and to Jacob, who had been enjoined by Rebekah to wear it, as she supposed, in order to obtain Isaac’s blessing.[\[xcvii\]](#) In turn, Nibley traces the theme backward to traditions telling of how Satan conspired to get the garment from Adam and Eve[\[xcviii\]](#) and to accounts of the premortal fight in heaven for the possession of the garment of light.[\[xcix\]](#)

Incidentally, the rabbis disagreed over the nature of Noah’s garment:[\[c\]](#) “‘It’s a cloak,’ according to Rabbi Yudan; ‘An undergarment,’[\[ci\]](#) according to Rabbi Huna.” In either case, our translator is quick to point out that Noah’s garment served as a protection[\[cii\]](#) for the body of its wearer—and that as a result of Shem’s obedience, his descendants would merit the safety that the garment afforded, whereas the posterity of

Canaan would be deprived of the same.[\[ciii\]](#)

Afterward, Shem is said to have received the reward of the “fringed cloak [*tallit*],”[\[civ\]](#) while Japheth received the *pallium*, “a cloak with clasps and buttons on the shoulder.”[\[cv\]](#) John Tvednes observed that “Ham’s descendants, by this account, were left naked.”[\[cvi\]](#) Hugh Nibley explained the rabbinic confusion about the nature of Noah’s garment was in that there were two articles of clothing in the episode: whereas Ham reportedly took a “coat of skins” from Noah, Shem and Japheth used a woven cloak to cover Noah.[\[cvii\]](#)

In light of this evidence, verse 22 might be modified to read: “And Ham, the father of Canaan, [*took*] the [*skin garment*] of his father [*while Noah was beholding the glory of God*].

**How are we to understand the curse of Canaan?** In Moses 7:9, the Lord instructs Enoch to tell his hearers: “Repent, lest I come out and smite them with a curse.” The Lord’s requirement that individuals and peoples repent or be cursed is found throughout scripture. For example, the commandments given to Israel in Deuteronomy 28 include blessings and cursings conditioned on obedience. The result of continued rebellion is destruction or death.[\[cviii\]](#) This is the basic meaning of Noah’s stern words to his grandson in Genesis 9:25: “Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.”

Unfortunately, this verse has been used historically to justify slavery and the withholding of various protections and privileges of the law due to race. However, statements by current leaders of the Church have made it clear that there is no room in the church for any form of racial prejudice and have explicitly disavowed theories that were formulated to explain racial differences or to justify Church policies prior to 1978.  
[\[cix\]](#)

Genesis 9:25 has also been discussed historically in connection with the mark of Cain mentioned in Genesis 4:15. However, LDS scholars Draper, Brown, and Rhodes explain: “The mark is not the same as the curse, which carried multiple penalties,”[\[cx\]](#) the most serious being “shut out from the presence of the Lord.”[\[cxi\]](#) Moreover, though Bible readers have often assumed that the mark was a dark skin, the text of the verse itself fails to give warrant for any particular conclusion about the nature of the mark given to Cain.[\[cxii\]](#) Nor is the verse explicit about whether the mark was passed on to his descendants. Indeed, several sources completely disavow this idea.[\[cxiii\]](#)

Consistent with the view that Cain’s posterity did not carry a visible mark is Al-Kisa’i’s report of a tradition that Lamech,[\[cxiv\]](#) a descendant of Seth, married Methuselcha, a descendant of Cain. Though acknowledging an “enmity that existed between the children of Seth and the children of Cain,” the story implies that there was nothing in the outward appearance of these two peoples that would identify them as being of different lineages, since Lamech had to tell Methuselcha about his parentage explicitly. Described in wholly positive terms, Methuselcha was said in this tradition to have become Noah’s mother.[\[cxv\]](#)

## The Why

The story of Noah not only recapitulates the stories of the Creation,[\[cxvi\]](#) the Garden,[\[cxvii\]](#) and the Fall of Adam and Eve[\[cxviii\]](#) but also seems to replay the temple themes in these accounts. To that much many LDS and non-LDS scholars today would agree.

In addition, based on the cumulative consistency of other clues summarized above (and in more detail elsewhere[\[cxix\]](#)), we have proposed the following tentative interpretation of Genesis 9:21-22:

And [*as part of the ordinance*] he drank of the wine, and was [*in a vision*]; and he was [*divested of his outer clothing*] within [*the tent of Yahweh*].

And Ham, the father of Canaan, [*took*] the [*skin garment*] of his father [*while Noah was beholding the glory of God*].

*Figure 8. The First Presidency is ONE. [\[cxy\]](#)*

As to the many unsolved mysteries of scripture and tradition, I am confident that further light and knowledge will come through the appointed channels as needed. Note that by rearranging the letters in this image of the First Presidency so it follows the order of their respective offices (president, first counselor, second counselor), we arrive at the name of Noé — Noah in French. For this reason, I am sure we can expect a “flood” of revelation on the topics that matter most for our time in days to come.

*Thanks to Chris Miasnik and Stephen T. Whitlock for their careful proofreading and other valuable suggestions.*

## **Further Study**

As a video supplement to this lesson, see Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “The Ark and the Tent: Temple Symbolism in the Story of Noah” on the YouTube Interpreter Foundation channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kIfArfB54Mk> ). For additional material on temple symbolism in the story of Noah, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Ark and Tent*, available as a free pdf download at [www.TempleThemes.net](http://www.TempleThemes.net).

For a verse-by-verse commentary on the story of Noah in Genesis and the book of Moses, see J. M. Bradshaw, *et al.*, *God's Image 2*, pp. 199-

294. The book is available for purchase in print at Amazon.com and as a free pdf download at [www.TempleThemes.net](http://www.TempleThemes.net).

For my review of Aronofsky's fascinating but ultimately disappointing 2014 film version of the story of Noah, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Noah Like No Other*.

For more about the role of shining stones in providing physical and spiritual light, see Book of Mormon Central, "Where did the Brother of Jared get the idea of shining stones?" KnoWhy 240 (November 28, 2016). 2016. <https://knowwhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/where-did-the-brother-of-jared-get-the-idea-of-shining-stones>. (accessed January 30, 2018). See also Book of Mormon Central, "Why Was a Stone Used as an Aid in Translating the Book of Mormon? (Alma 37:23)," KnoWhy 145 (July 18, 2016). See also, Book of Mormon Central, "Why Is a Seer Greater Than a Prophet? (Mosiah 8:15)," KnoWhy 86 (August 26, 2016).

For a scripture roundtable video from The Interpreter Foundation on the subject of Gospel Doctrine lesson 6, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vvrupSqzBIQ>.

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## Endnotes

[i] Genesis 5:22, Moses 6:39. In Moses 7:69, the same is said of Enoch's people.

[ii] Genesis 9:21.

[iii] See, for example, Gordon Wenham writes (G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 198 n. 21.): "So striking is the contrast between Noah the saint who survived the Flood and Noah the inebriated vintner that many commentators argue that the two traditions are completely incompatible and must be of independent origin."

[iv] See, e.g., A. A. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, pp. 306-320.

[v] Review of Y. Koler, *Story of Noah* in F. E. Greenspahn, *Abstract of Y. Koler*, as quoted in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, p. 567 n. 31.

[vi] Genesis 9:20-25.

[vii] See, e.g., A. A. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, pp. 306-320.

[viii] <https://revelationclock.org/images/Picture1.png>.

[ix] I.e.: "In the biblical text the final letter of *oholoh*, his tent, is a *he*, rather than the normal masculine possessive suffix (*vav*). The suffix *he* usually denotes the feminine possessive, *her*" (D. C. Matt, *Zohar 1*, 1:73a-b, p. 434 n. 700).

[x] J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah 2*, 36:3, p. 30: "The word for 'his tent' is written as if it were to be read 'in her tent,' namely , in the tent of his wife."

[xi] For example, Cohen, having explored the "symbolic meaning of wine in ancient cultures," concludes that Noah's actions in this regard have been completely misunderstood, the result of "biblical scholarship's failure" in explaining the meaning of the enigmatic incident. Summarizing Cohen's view, Haynes writes (S. R. Haynes, *Curse*, pp. 188-189; see H. H. Cohen, *Drunkness*, pp. 8, 12):

Cohen explores Israelite and other traditions to elucidate a complex relationship between alcohol, fire, and sexuality. Drawing on this connection, he surmises that Noah's drunkenness is indicative not of a deficiency in character but of a good-faith attempt to replenish the earth following the Flood. Indeed, Noah's "determination to maintain his procreative ability at full strength resulted in drinking himself into a state of helpless intoxication." How ironic, Cohen notes, that in acceding to the divine command to renew the earth's population, Noah suffered the opprobrium of drunkenness. In Cohen's view, he "deserves not censure but acclaim for having played so well the role of God's devoted servant."

[xii] D. C. Matt, *Zohar 1*, 1:73a-b, p. 434 n. 700. Cf. related references in the *Zohar* to the same concept in the story of Abraham (*ibid.*, 1:80a, p. 18, 184a, p. 34).

[xiii] D. C. Matt, *Zohar 2*, 1:84a, p. 34.

[xiv] Indeed, the Hebrew term for Tabernacle, *mishkan* (literally "dwelling place"), comes from the same root as Shekinah. The idea of the

Tabernacle being a “tent of meeting” is clearly expressed in Exodus 29:42 where the Lord says it is a place “where I will meet you [i.e., the children of Israel], to speak there unto thee [i.e., Moses].” In other places in scripture (e.g., Exodus 25:8), the Tabernacle is sometimes called a *mikdash* (= “sanctuary”), emphasizing its role as a holy place.

[xv] Leviticus 16:16. The Hebrew term is rendered more difficultly as “tabernacle of the congregation” in the King James Version. For a review of the structures and functions of tent sanctuaries, both large and small, in Israel and elsewhere in the ancient Near East, see D. E. Fleming, *Mari’s Large Public Tent*.

[xvi] Genesis 8:20.

[xvii] See Genesis 9:9-17.

[xviii] Review of Y. Koler, *Story of Noah* in F. E. Greenspahn, *Abstract of Y. Koler*, as discussed in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, pp. 566-567. Cf., e.g., D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 2, 1:80a, p. 18 n. 128: “Rabbi Shim’on interprets the final *he*... as an allusion to the divine, because *Shekhinah* is symbolized by the final *he* of the name *YHVH*, or because the letter *he* stands for *ha-shem*, “the [divine] name.” See also *ibid.*, 1:84a, p. 34.

[xix] J. Blenkinsopp, *The structure of P*, p. 285.

[xx] E.g., E. A. Speiser, *Creation Epic*, 1:69-79, pp. 61-62.

[xxi] J. Blenkinsopp, *The structure of P*, p. 285. See Pseudo-Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, 13, p. 34.

[xxii] J. Blenkinsopp, *The structure of P*, p. 285. See also S. W. Holloway, *What Ship*, p. 334-335, which cites Patai’s account of related rabbinic legends about the capping of the Deep with the foundation stone of the temple, on which was written the forty-two letters of the ineffable Name of God.

[xxiii] For the wider context of this concept, see R. J. Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, p. 123. See also p. 191.

[xxiv] H. W. Nibley, *Leiden*, 3:10, p. 1.

[xxv] H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), pp. 308-309. H. W. Nibley, *Abraham* 2000, p. 475 cites an account by Pindar as evidence of a Greek version of this celebration:

The festival of Deucalion (Noah) was celebrated in wine with songs about the great storms and the destruction of the world by the force of the black waters, and about how Zeus suddenly dried up the waters and the race of Japetus (Japheth) came forth to repopulate the earth.

[xxvi] J. A. Black *et al.*, *Literature of Ancient Sumer*, p. 330. See J. A. Black *et al.*, *Enki’s Journey*, 104-116, p. 333.

[xxvii] E.g., J. Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah* 1, 36:3, pp. 28-29; M. J. B. bin Gorion *et al.*, *Mimekor*, 1:24.

[xxviii] J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 7 November 1841, p. 193. The context of the statement was a talk where he urged the Saints to give up petty faultfinding. Wilford Woodruff’s journal recorded: “he spoke of the curse of ham for laughing at Noah while in his wine but doing no harm” (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 7 November 1841, p. 80). Later historians filled out the statement to express their recollection of the entire thought expressed: “Noah was a righteous man, and yet he drank wine and became intoxicated; the Lord did not forsake him in consequence thereof, for he retained all the power of his priesthood.” Westermann agrees that “Noah’s behavior was regarded as quite acceptable in biblical times” (C. Westermann, *Genesis* 1-11, p. 487 n. 9:21, as summarized by G. J. Wenham, *Genesis* 1-15, p. 198 n. 21). It seems that the Prophet eventually received more revelation on the subject and revised his belief that Noah was drunk — see below.

[[xxix](#)] Joseph Smith, Jr., as reported by William Allen to Charles Lowell Walker (C. L. Walker, Diary, 12 May 1881, 2:554).

[[xxx](#)] J. A. Fitzmyer, Genesis Apocryphon, 13:8-15:20, pp. 89-93.

[[xxxix](#)] Review of Y. Koler, Story of Noah in F. E. Greenspahn, Abstract of Y. Koler, as quoted in W. Vogels, Cham Découvre, p. 567 n. 31.

[[xxxix](#)] <https://www.lds.org/media-library/images/brother-of-jared-seeing-finger-of-lord-39668?lang=eng> .

[[xxxiii](#)] Ether 3:1.

[[xxxiv](#)] Genesis 6:16/Moses 8:16 reads: “A window shalt thou make to the ark.” Others translate the obscure Hebrew term *tsohar* as “roof” (e.g., V. P. Hamilton, Genesis 1-17, pp. 282-283; G. J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, p. 173).

However, from a variety of ancient sources, Hugh Nibley documented understandings of the term *tsohar* that refer to traditions of “shining stones.” Such stones are said to have been found both in the Jaredite boats (Ether 3:1-6, 6:3) and also in the Ark of Noah (H. W. Nibley, Babylonian Background, pp. 364-379; H. W. Nibley, Approach, pp. 337-339, 348-358; H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 4:288-289. Cf. J. A. Tvedtnes, Glowing stones in ancient and medieval lore; B. A. Gardner, Second Witness, 6:195-199. Jewish sources include, e.g., *Midrash Rabbah* of Genesis, 31:11; *Pirke d’ Rabbi Eliezer*, 23. *Babylonian Talmud*: Tractate Sanhedrin 108b; B. Bava Batra 16b; Rashi on Genesis 16:66:16; *Zohar* 1:11a–11b. For more on these traditions, see H. Schwartz, Tree, pp. 85–88, 332). Similarly, the Vara of the Avestan “flood” hero Yima contained “a variety of sources of artificial light which make a year seem like a day” (J. M. Silverman, It’s a Craft, p. 195. See F. M. Müller, Vendidad, Fargard 2, 2:39 (129)-2:40 (131), p. 20).

Research in radioluminescence has provided insights into some of the possibilities by which light could be generated over long periods without an external power source (N. Read *et al.*, New Light).

Those who saw Aronofsky’s disappointing 2014 film version of the story of Noah will remember the character Tubal-Cain’s relentless quest to amass wealth through the mining of a luminous mineral called *tsohar*. See my review of the film in J. M. Bradshaw, Noah Like No Other).

For more on this topic, see Where Did the Brother of Jared, Where Did the Brother of Jared.

[[xxxv](#)] M. C. Thomas, Brother of Jared, p. 391.

[[xxxvi](#)] Ether 4:5. See also 3:22-23, 38.

[[xxxvii](#)] Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65.

[[xxxviii](#)] Revelation 2:17. Cf. D&C 130:10-11.

[[xxxix](#)] Alma 37:23.

[[xl](#)] R. E. Turley, Jr. *et al.*, Joseph the Seer; M. H. MacKay *et al.*, From Darkness; R. Nicholson, Spectacles; B. A. Gardner, Gift and Power.

[[xli](#)] Ether 12:21. Cf. Ether 3:19-20, 25-26.

[[xlii](#)] L. M. Morales, Tabernacle Pre-Figured, pp. 171-203.

[[xliii](#)] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

[[xliv](#)] *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 203.

[xliv] Ibid., p. 185 writes:

Given the analogy between the Garden [of Eden] and the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle/temple, and that between the Ark and the Tabernacle/temple, Noah's entrance may be understood as that of a high priest... ascending the cosmic mountain of Yahweh—an idea “fleshed out,” as it were, when Noah walks the summit of the Ararat mount. The veil separating off the Holy of Holies served as an “objective and material witness to the conceptual boundary drawn between the area behind it and all other areas,” a manifest function of the Ark door.

[xlvi] J. J. Tissot, *Old Testament*, 1:47. The Jewish Museum, No. 52-94. In the public domain. See Genesis 14:18-20.

[xlvii] Genesis 14:18.

[xlviii] JST Genesis 14:25-40. Cf. Genesis 14:17-24. See J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 53-58.

[xlix] Genesis 14:20.

[l] J. A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 12:17, p. 87.

[li] O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 7:2, p. 69. Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, 12:13-17, p. 87. In the same scene, the *Genesis Apocryphon* has Noah saying: “I blessed the Lord of Heaven, God Most High, the Great Holy One, who had delivered us from the destruction” (ibid., 12:17, p. 87). Ostensibly, Noah is referring to his preservation in the Flood (cf. O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 7:34, p. 71), but J. A. Fitzmyer, *Genesis Apocryphon*, p. 163 notes that there are multiple OT connotations to the Hebrew term used for “destruction.”

[lii] H. C. Kee, *Testaments*, Levi 8:4-6, p. 791.

[liii] John 12:3-7.

[liv] John 13:4.

[lv] John 13:4-17. See also John 12:3.

[lvi] Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:14-20.

[lvii] D&C 27:5. For more on the anticipation and fulfillment of this heavenly feast, see J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *By the Blood Ye Are Sanctified*, pp. 183-192.

[lviii] 1 Samuel 19:24. Butterworth (E. A. S. Butterworth, *Tree*, pp. 76-77), citing Meuli, discusses this incident in connection with ancient Greek practices that associate “the generation of bodily heat and sweating with the ascetic exercises involved in attaining the ecstatic stage of shamanizing.” But there is no textual evidence in these verses, nor in the story of Noah, to support such an interpretation.

[lix] R. Jamieson *et al.*, *Commentary*, pp. 219-220 n. 24. Cf. D. T. Tsumura, *1 Samuel*, p. 499.

[lx] E. Robinson, *Dictionary*, p. 302 s.v. Naked.

[lxi] Cf. G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. 200: “Westerners who are strangers to a world where discretion and filial loyalty are supreme virtues have often felt that there must be something more to Ham's offense than appears on the surface.” Ross explains the heinousness of the act of seeing one's father's nakedness in cultural context (A. P. Ross, *Creation*, p. 215):

By mentioning that Ham entered and saw his father's nakedness, the text emphasizes that this seeing was the disgusting thing. Ham's errant looking, a moral flaw, represented the first step in the abandonment of a moral code. This violation of a boundary destroyed the honor of Noah. (For similar taboos against such "looking," cf. Genesis 19:26; Exodus 33:20; Judges 13:22; 1 Samuel 16:19). Ham desecrated a natural and sacred barrier. His going out to tell his brothers about it without covering the old man aggravated the act. Because of this breach of domestic and filial propriety (the expositor must keep in mind that these are not little boys), Ham could expect nothing less than the oracle against his own family's honor.

[[lxii](#)] I.e., maternal incest, drawing on the prohibition in Leviticus 18:7-8 that equates the act of uncovering "the nakedness of [one's] mother" with the idea of having uncovered the nakedness of one's father. See, e.g., J. S. Bergsma *et al.*, Noah's Nakedness. For related precedents for such actions, see the incident of Reuben with his father's concubine (Genesis 35:22, 49:3-4) and Absalom's attempt "to secure his hold on the kingdom by going in to his father's concubines (2 Samuel 16:20-23)" (G. J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, p. 200). For a refutation of this interpretation, see, e.g., A. P. Ross, *Creation*, pp. 214-215.

[[lxiii](#)] I.e., castration or homosexual relations. On the former, see, e.g., M.-A. Ouaknin *et al.*, Rabbi Éliézer, 23, p. 142; *Talmud Sanh.* 70a. On the latter, see, e.g., D. Steinmetz, *Vineyard*, pp. 198-199; J. L. Kugel, *Traditions*, p. 222.

[[lxiv](#)] G. J. Wenham, Genesis 1-15, p. 200.

[[lxv](#)] U. Cassuto, Noah to Abraham, p. 151. Cf. C. Westermann, Genesis 1-11, p. 488 n. 9:22: "All... conjectures [of a more grave sin] have missed the point. They have not seen that Ham's outrage consists in not covering his father."

[[lxvi](#)] After having reviewed the evidence for the various views, Embry vigorously argues against proponents of the idea that Ham committed a "sexually deviant act" and produces evidence for the assertion that the "voyeuristic position is the likely explanation for Noah's reaction against Ham: it was simply the act of seeing Noah uncovered that warranted the cursing from Noah" (B. Embry, *Naked Narrative*, p. 417). After considering the alternatives, Ross concludes (A. P. Ross, *Creation*, p. 215): "There is... no clear evidence that Ham actually did anything other than see the nakedness of his father." W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, p. 568 likewise concludes that there is "nothing in the statement that Ham 'saw the nakedness of his father' that hints at a sexual act."

[[lxvii](#)] Koler and Greenspahn, quoted in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, p. 567 n. 31.

[[lxviii](#)] R. S. Hendel, *Demigods*, p. 23.

[[lxix](#)] See Genesis 7:1.

[[lxx](#)] J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *Mormonism's Satan*, pp. 18-19.

[[lxxi](#)] By analogy to the layout of the Garden of Eden. For those who take the Tree of Life to be a representation within the Holy of Holies, it is natural to see the tree itself as the locus of God's throne (Revelation 22:1-3, G. A. Anderson *et al.*, *Synopsis*, Greek 22:4, p. 62E). "[T]he Garden, at the center of which stands the throne of glory, is the royal audience room, which only those admitted to the sovereign's presence can enter" (G. B. Eden, *Mystical Architecture*, p. 22).

[[lxxii](#)] Koler and Greenspahn, as discussed in W. Vogels, *Cham Découvre*, pp. 566-567. Cf., e.g., D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 1, 1:73a-b, p. 434 n. 700: "'the tent of the vineyard,' namely the tent of *Shekhinah*."

[[lxxiii](#)] Genesis 9:21.

[[lxxiv](#)] Compare Moses 3:9; 4:9, 14.

[[lxxv](#)] M. Zlotowitz *et al.*, Bereishis, p. 101, cf. p. 96. See also L. Ginzberg, Legends, 1:70, 5:91 n. 50.

[[lxxvi](#)] Genesis 3:9.

[[lxxvii](#)] T. L. Brodie, Dialogue, p. 192.

[[lxxviii](#)] D. C. Matt, Zohar 1, 1:73a, p. 431. A. J. Tomasino, History, p. 130 elaborates on the role of the “serpent” in the Garden of Eden and in Noah’s garden:

When he saw his father’s nakedness, Ham went and told (*wayyagged*) his brothers about it (Genesis 9:22). When Adam and Eve told Yahweh God that they had hidden because they were naked, God asked, “Who told (*higgid*) you that you were naked?” (Genesis 3:1). The source of this information turned out to be the serpent. Furthermore, when Ham told his brothers about their father’s nudity, he was undoubtedly tempting them with forbidden knowledge (the opportunity to see their father’s nakedness). Finally, for his part in the Fall, the serpent was cursed (*‘arur*) more than any of the other creatures (Genesis 3:14). His offspring were doomed to be subject to the woman’s offspring (Genesis 3:15). Ham’s offspring, too, became cursed (*‘arur*), doomed to subjugation to the offspring of his brothers (Genesis 9:25).

[[lxxix](#)] D. C. Matt, Zohar 1, 1:73b, p. 435 n. 708. For more discussion on the curse of slavery, see D. M. Goldenberg, What Did Ham; D. M. Goldenberg, Curse, pp. 157-167. For a broad survey of the way in which Genesis 9:25 and other biblical texts were appropriated to justify the practice of American slavery, see S. R. Haynes, Curse.

[[lxxx](#)] See Genesis 9:25.

[[lxxxi](#)] M. McNamara, Targum Neofiti, 9:27, pp. 80-81.

[[lxxxii](#)] See Exodus 20:26, 28:72. Cf., e.g., B. Embry, Naked Narrative, pp. 431-432.

[[lxxxiii](#)] H. W. Nibley, Twilight World, pp. 169-170.

[[lxxxiv](#)] E.g., M.-A. Ouaknin *et al.*, Rabbi Éliézer, 24, pp. 145-146.

[[lxxxv](#)] Genesis 3:21.

[[lxxxvi](#)] L. Ginzberg, Legends, 5:199 n. 79; J. T. Townsend, Tanhuma, 1:24, pp. 16-17; H. Freedman *et al.*, Midrash, 4:8 (Numbers 3:45), pp. 101-103. See H. W. Nibley, Vestments, pp. 100-102, 124-126; J. A. Tvedtnes, Clothing, pp. 649-662; S. D. Ricks, Garment, pp. 710-714 for discussions of Egyptian, Jewish, Greek, and Christian traditions surrounding the leather garment.

Ginzberg draws on Jewish tradition to further explain that, in the case of Joseph, the popular understanding that the garment had “many colors” is incorrect, and that the description is meant to convey “an upper garment in which figures are woven” (L. Ginzberg, Legends, 5:329 n. 43, citing Mishanic understandings). The notion of “figures” that were woven into the garment of Joseph recalls the account in the *Book of Adam and Eve*, where in making the skin garment they placed palm-thorns through the skins and prayed that the thorns would “be hidden, so as to be, as it were, sewn with one thread” (S. C. Malan, Adam and Eve, 1:52, pp. 56-57).

[[lxxxvii](#)] H. Freedman *et al.*, Midrash, 4:8 (Numbers 3:45), pp. 101-102. The Mandaean *Book of John* asserts that the “garment of repentance” of Adam was passed down to Noah’s son Shem, and eventually came down to John the Baptist (cf. Matthew 3:4; Mark 1:6) so that he might

make his ascent: “*Das Gewand, das das erste Leben Adam, dem Manne, gegeben hat, das Gewand, das das erste Leben Râm, dem Manne, gegeben hat, das Gewand, das das erste Leben Surbai, dem Manne, gegeben hat, das Gewand das das erste Leben Sum bar Nu gegeben hat, hat es jetzt dir gegeben. Es hat es dir gegeben, Jahja, damit du emporsteigest und mit dir emporsteige.*” [The garment that the First Life gave to Adam, the Man [= the Celestial Man or Adam of Light (G. R. S. Mead, Mandaean John-Book, p. 41 n. 6)], the garment that the First Life gave to Râm [= Râm the Great, coupled also with Bîhrâm, also Bahrâm = Avestan Verethragna (ibid., p. 41 n. 7)], the Man, the garment that the First Life gave to Shurbai [not identified (ibid., p. 42 n. 1)], the Man, the garment that the First Life gave to Shem, son of Noah [according to the Mandaeans, the first world age was that of Adam, the second of Râm and Rûd, the third of Shurbai and Sharhab-el, and the fourth was that of the Flood (ibid., p. 42 n. 2)]—he has now given you. It has been given you, Yahya [John], so that you may ascend and that those may ascend with you.] (M. Lidzbarski, Johannesbuch, John-Jonah, p. 83. See S. D. Ricks, *Garment*, pp. 711-712, 729 n. 38).

[[xxxviii](#)] L. M. Morales, *Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, p. 157.

[[xxxix](#)] Genesis 8:13.

[[xc](#)] Exodus 40:19.

[[xci](#)] L. M. Morales, *Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, p. 157 notes that “the Ark [is] the only exception to the term’s otherwise exclusive usage in reference to the tent of meeting.”

[[xcii](#)] Quoted in H. W. Nibley, *Return*, p. 81. Drawing on a retrospective interview of Joseph Smith, Sr. by Fayette Lapham (L. F. Lapham, *Interview*, p. 466), D. Bradley, Piercing has explored a purported Book of Mormon account of revelation through the use of divine interpreters whereby their possessors would, put them on as spectacles and then put their face inside a “skin.” The conversation that revealed this manner of receiving knowledge is said to have occurred through an exchange of human and divine voices inside a Nephite “Tabernacle,” recalling the account of the brother of Jared at the “veil” in Ether 3 and the conversation of Moses with the Lord in Exodus 4. For a good summary, see B. Haymond, *Earliest*.

The danger of looking beyond the veil for someone who is unready and unauthorized is described by a petitioner in the Islamic mystical text, *The Mother of Books*, who is warned by God that if someone were to move “the curtain and the veil the slightest bit [to] make the high king visible... their spirit would leave their body” (W. Barnstone *et al.*, *Mother*, p. 672). By way of contrast, the Armenian *Descendants of Adam* (M. E. Stone, *Descendants*, 14-22, p. 85) says that the righteous Enoch refrained from looking at the heavens—which is equated to the fact that he did not eat of the:

... tree of meat [i.e., the tree of knowledge] ... And he drew linen over his face, and did not look at the heavens, on account of the sin of Adam. And he said, “When of the servant, there is trouble, the servant does not to look at the crown. And he quickly becomes sweet. And I, on account of the sin of Adam, I dare not look at the heavens, that God may have mercy upon Adam.” And God had mercy upon Enoch and transferred him to immortality.

In some texts Enoch is seen as having reversed the Fall of Adam (A. A. Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron*, p. 248). For a discussion of a wider redemptive role attributed to Enoch, see A. A. Orlov, *Redeeming Role*; A. A. Orlov, *Polemical Nature*.

In some respects, the fall of Satan, who said, aspiringly, “I will ascend into heaven... I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14\_ and “sought that [God] should give unto him [His] own power” (Moses 4:3), parallels the Fall of Adam. The fifteenth-century *Adamgirk* text has Satan saying: “I fell, exiled from the heavens, Without fruit [from the Tree of Life], like Eve” (M. E. Stone, *Adamgirk*, 3:7:3, p. 65). Nibley remarks that “dire consequences” may result from transgression of divinely-set bounds: “Pistis Sophia went beyond her ‘degree’ and, becoming ambitious, ‘looked behind the veil’ [and] fell from glory” (H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), p. 443. See C. Schmidt, *Pistis*, 1:29-30, pp. 83-91; G.

R. S. Mead, *Pistis*, 1:29-30, pp. 33-36. For a general discussion of such dangers, see J. Dan, *Mysticism*, 1:261-309).

[xciii] H. W. Nibley, *Return*, p. 126.

[xciv] Moses 7:3. Cf. H. W. Nibley, *Vestments*, pp. 118-119:

Why the insistence on [the idea of being “clothed upon with glory”]? Enoch says, “I was clothed upon with glory. Therefore I could stand in the presence of God” (cf. Moses 1:2, 31). Otherwise he could not. It is the garment that gives confidence in the presence of God; one does not feel too exposed (2 Nephi 9:14). That garment is the garment... of divinity. So as Enoch says, “I was clothed upon with glory, and I saw the Lord” (Moses 7:3-4), just as Moses saw Him “face to face, ... and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence (Moses 1:2). In 2 *Enoch*, discovered in 1892, we read, “The Lord spoke to me with his own mouth: ... ‘Take Enoch and remove his earthly garments and anoint him with holy oil and clothe him in his garment of glory.’ ... And I looked at myself, and I looked like one of the glorious ones” (see F. I. Andersen, 2 *Enoch*, 22:5, 8, 10, pp. 137, 139). Being no different from him in appearance, he is qualified now, in the manner of initiation. He can go back and join them because he has received a particular garment of glory.

It appears that the ritual garment of skins was needed only for a protection during one’s probation on earth. Ephrem the Syrian asserted that when Adam “returned to his former glory, ... [he] no longer had any need of [fig] leaves or garments of skin” (*Commentary on the Diatessaron*, cited in M. Barker, *Hidden*, p. 34). Note also Joseph Smith’s careful description of the angel Moroni (JS-H 1:31): “I could discover that he had no other clothing on but this robe, as it was open, so that I could see into his bosom.” We infer that Moroni had forever laid aside his “garment of repentance,” since he was now permanently clothed with glory. The protection provided by the garment was accompanied by a promise of heavenly assistance. In this connection, Nibley paraphrases a passage from the Mandaean *Ginza*: “... when Adam stood praying for light and knowledge a helper came to him, gave him a garment, and told him, ‘Those men who gave you the garment will assist you throughout your life until you are ready to leave earth’” (H. W. Nibley, *Apocryphal*, p. 299. The German reads: “*Wie Adam dasteht und sich aufzuklären sucht, kam der Mann, sein Helfer. Der hohe Helfer kam zu ihm, der ihn in ein Stück reichen Glanzes hineinrug. Er sprach zu ihm: ‘Ziehe dein Gewand an... Die Männer, die dein Gewand geschaffen, dienen dir, bis du abscheidest’*” (M. Lidzbarski, *Ginza*, GL 2:19, p. 488)).

When this time of probation ended, the garment of light or glory that was previously had in the heavenly realms was to be returned to the righteous. As Nibley explained (H. W. Nibley, *Message* (2005), p. 489. See also E. Hennecke *et al.*, *Acts of Thomas*, 108.9-15, pp. 498-499; B. T. Ostler, *Clothed*, p. 4):

The garment [of light] represents the preexistent glory of the candidate... When he leaves on his earthly mission, it is laid up for him in heaven to await his return. It thus serves as security and lends urgency and weight to the need for following righteous ways on earth. For if one fails here, one loses not only one’s glorious future in the eternities to come, but also the whole accumulation of past deeds and accomplishments in the long ages of preexistence.

While Noah had not yet finished his probation when he spoke with Deity in the tent, he and others of the prophets experienced a temporary transfiguration that clothed them with glory and allowed them to endure God’s presence (see, e.g., Moses 1:12-14, 31; 7:3). A conjecture consistent with this view is that Ham took the garment of skins that Noah had laid temporarily aside during his transfiguration.

[xcv] M.-A. Ouaknin *et al.*, *Rabbi Éliézer*, 24, pp. 145-146. Cf. M. M. Noah, *Jasher*, 7:27, p. 15, which, according to Ginzberg, derived its version of the story from Rabbi Eliezer (L. Ginzberg, *Legends*, 5:199 n. 78). See also M. J. bin Gorion (Berdichevsky), *Die Sagen* (1997), p. 211: “*Doch in der Zeit, da er die Arche verliess, stahl Ham seinem Vater jenes Kleid weg und verwahrte es vor seinen Brüdern* [After he left the Ark, Ham stole his father’s garment and hid it from his brothers].”

[xcvi] H. C. Kimball, 11 January 1857, p. 172. Like the previously cited statement by Joseph Smith (J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 7 November 1841,

p. 193), President Kimball's comments were made in the context of a talk where he urged the Saints to give up finding fault in petty matters, as in the case of Noah who in this instance "drank a little too much wine."

[xcvii] M.-A. Ouaknin *et al.*, Rabbi Éliézer, 24, p. 148. See J. A. Tvedtnes, Clothing, pp. 654-659 for a discussion of Jewish traditions relating to the stolen garment. *Midrash Rabbah*, on the other hand, says that Noah's garment was passed on to Shem and then eventually to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (H. Freedman *et al.*, Midrash, 4:8 (Numbers 3:45), pp. 102-103). Al-Tha'labi tells of how when (A. I. A. I. M. I. I. al-Tha'labi, Lives, p. 190):

Abraham was stripped of his clothes and thrown into the fire naked, Gabriel brought him a shirt made from the silk of the Garden [of Eden] and clothed him in it. That shirt remained with Abraham, and when he died, Isaac inherited it. When Isaac died, Jacob inherited it from him, and when Joseph grew up, Jacob put that shirt in an amulet and placed it on Joseph's neck to protect him from the evil eye. He never parted with it. When he was thrown into the pit naked, the angel came to him with the amulet. He took out the shirt, dressed Joseph in it, and kept him company by day.

Later, when Joseph learned that his aged father had lost his eyesight (*ibid.*, p. 228):

... he gave them his hisrt. Al-Dahhak said that that shirt was woven in Paradise, and it had the smell of Paradise. When it only touched an afflicted or ailing man, that man would be restored to health and be cured... [Joseph] said to them, "Take this shirt of mine and cast it on my father's face, he will again be able to see" (*Qur'an* 12:93)...

[xcviii] S. C. Malan, Adam and Eve, 1:50-51, pp. 55-56, cf. 2:17, p. 128.

[xcix] G. R. S. Mead, Pistis, 1:55:18-24, p. 89. Cf. *Psalms of Thomas* 2; cf. C. R. C. A. Allberry, Psalm-Book, 2:205, quoted in H. W. Nibley, Vestments, p. 128.

[c] B. Maruani *et al.*, Midrach Rabba, Genèse 1, 36:6, p. 275.

[ci] I.e., breeches (H. Freedman *et al.*, Midrash, 1:292 n. 5).

[cii] For ancient traditions respecting protection and wisdom afforded by the garment, see J. A. Tvedtnes, Clothing, pp. 659-662.

[ciii] B. Maruani *et al.*, Midrach Rabba, Genèse 1, p. 375 n. 21.

[civ] J. Neusner, Genesis Rabbah 2, 36:6:1, p. 31.

[cv] H. W. Nibley, Vestments, p. 129.

[cvi] J. A. Tvedtnes, Clothing, p. 659. Cf. sources cited in L. Ginzberg, Legends, 5:192 n. 61.

[cvii] H. W. Nibley, Twilight World, pp. 169-170 observed that Hebrew term for the clothing used by Shem and Japheth, *simlah*, "means only a woven garment and can hardly refer to the original skin article" that was stolen by Ham.

[cviii] See, e.g., Deuteronomy 11:26-28; 30:19; 2 King 22:16-19; Malachi 3:8-12; 4:5-6; Matthew 25:31-46; 1 Nephi 17:38; Jacob 2:29; 3:3; Alma 3:19; Alma 17:15; 45:16; D&C 41:1; Moses 5:25, 52; 7:9, 15, 20.

[cix] Race and the Priesthood, Race and the Priesthood.

[cx] R. D. Draper *et al.*, Commentary, p. 73. See Moses 5:36-37, 41.

[\[cxi\]](#) Moses 5:41. Cf. 2 Nephi 5:20.

[\[cxii\]](#) For other explanations of the mark, see, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 386-388.

[\[cxiii\]](#) For arguments to the that it was not passed on, see, e.g., U. Cassuto, *Adam to Noah*, pp. 227-228; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, pp. 312-313.

[\[cxiv\]](#) This Lamech was said to be the son of the Sethite Methuselah — not to be confused with the Cainite Lamech of Moses 5:43-54.

[\[cxv\]](#) See M. i. A. A. al-Kisa'i, *Tales*, pp. 91-93.

[\[cxvi\]](#) See, e.g., J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 94 n. 8:20-9:17.

[\[cxvii\]](#) See, e.g., A. J. Tomasino, *History*, p. 129.

[\[cxviii\]](#) See, e.g., J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 80; A. J. Tomasino, *History*, pp. 129-130.

[\[cxix\]](#) See J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *God's Image 2*, pp. 297-336.

[\[cxx\]](#) Original image at <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/russell-m-nelson-17th-church-president> (accessed January 30, 2018). The source for the annotation is Gemma Rodwell Godivala who said this on the LDSQueensland Facebook page: "It was me. I did it very quickly without access to my usual graphics tools. If I'd known how popular it was going to be I'd have done it much better." Thanks to Chris Miasnik for sourcing this attribution.

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