

# DRAFT

**Tracing Ancient Threads in the Book of Moses  
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**“By The Word of My Power”: The Many Functions of the Divine Word in the Book of Moses  
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## **1. Introduction**

The theme of divine speech or language—the Word, words, and voice that order the creation, decree eternal consequences, transform prophets, declare the doctrine of Christ, become canonized scripture—constitutes a dominant multicolor thread running through what now comprises the canonical Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. The unifying of that thread begins with a three-fold invocation of the unique phrase “by the word of my power (Moses 1:32, 35; 2:5), pointing Moses and the modern reader to Jesus Christ.

The “Vision(s) of Moses” (Moses 1), as a literary unit, begins and ends with an emphasis on the Lord’s “words” to Moses which he commanded Moses to write (Moses 1:1, 40-42; 2:1). The Lord himself characterizes these “words” as unceasing and endless (see Moses 1:4, 38). At this same time, he commissioned Moses to “command” the waters “as if thou wert God” (Moses 1:25), hinting at his future use of the “rod of God” (*maṭṭ ēh hā’ ʾēlohīm*), as the efficacious “word” of God. The Lord foretells the diminution—or “taking” away—of the very words that he then commanded Moses to write, as well as their eventual restoration through one “like unto” Moses (“and they shall be had again,” Moses 1:41, i.e., by a “Joseph”).<sup>1</sup> In the context of the foregoing,

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew L. Bowen, “‘And They Shall Be Had Again’: Onomastic Allusions to Joseph in Moses 1:41 in View of the So-called Canon Formula” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 32 (2019): 297-304.

the divine Speaker describes the Only Begotten and his role as creator using the phrase “the word of my power,” which doubles as a name-title for Jesus Christ as the active agent of creation in Moses 1:32, 35 and 2:5. The Lord thus subsequently describes physical and spiritual creation as transpiring “[even] according to my word” (Moses 2:16; 3:7).

Speech-related terms occur with great frequency the Book of Moses, inviting our careful examination of these usages and a discussion of each of the ways in which they factor into this book’s compelling message. (However, for the sake of time, this presentation will not exhaustively explore these.) “Word” as a singular noun appears seven times, “words” (plural) twenty times. “Speak,” “speaking,” and “spoken” appear a total of fourteen times. “Work” and “words” also appear fourteen times, with “workmanship” occurring another five times. “Command” occurs twice as a singular verbal noun,<sup>2</sup> seventeen times as a verb, and the noun “commandment” occurs seven times. “Voice” with reference to a divine or prophetic voice occurs twenty times. “Decree” occurs four times.

In this study I will further demonstrate how the *divine-work-by-divine-word* creation motif established in Moses 1–2 develops within the Fall narrative and its aftermath as a literary framing device, reiterating the doctrine that the divine, creative “word” can never remain unfulfilled or void: “For as I, the Lord God, liveth, even so my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled” (Moses 4:30); “and the words went forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree; wherefore they must be fulfilled” (Moses 5:15). This

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<sup>2</sup> “Commands” occurs once, but with reference to Satan in Moses 5:30.

literary framing helps us better understand Eve's naming of Cain in terms of a divine creation or acquisition she hoped would obey the Lord's "words" like the elements in the creation itself, and with a full apprehension of their eternal and irrevocable consequences (Moses 5:16; cf. Moses 5:15).

The reiteration of the efficacy of the divine words sets the stage for Enoch's divine progression from the humblest and weakest of orators (see Moses 6:31) to becoming the one who, among all ancient prophets, most nearly speaks forth the divine "word" as if he himself were God.<sup>3</sup> The Lord promises Enoch, "all thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course" (Moses 6:34; cf. further Moses 6:42). As Enoch finds his prophetic voice, "he spake forth the words of God, the people trembled, and could not stand in his presence" (Moses 6:47; cf. Gk. *prophētēs* as "one who speaks forth" the divine word). As God's spokesman, he preeminently proclaims the doctrine of Christ (see Moses 6:48-68). He becomes the one who speaks as if he were the creator ("the word of my power") as the elements respond to his word as to God in the creation, "so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him" (Moses 7:13). Adam's "book of remembrance" becomes a repository for the divine word and divine language (Moses 6:5), as mentioned by Enoch himself (Moses 6:46). And the account of Enoch and his "word" itself constitutes a part of what Enoch himself described as "the words of eternal life" to be

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<sup>3</sup> Compare the Lord's promise to Moses in Moses 1:25, "thou shalt be made stronger than many waters; for they shall obey thy command as if thou wert God."

enjoyed “in this world” as a precursor to “eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory” (Moses 6:59).

Finally, the near-universally negative response to Noah’s “words” (Moses 8:20-2) triggers the Flood, the *uncreation* of the world. The divine “words” that Noah preached (Moses 8:23), like those of Enoch and his other forebearers, included the doctrine of Christ (Moses 8:24). Within the broader context of the JST, the thematic emphasis on the divine Word as creator and as “the word” that cannot not “return void” sets the stage for the stories of Abraham, the Abrahamic covenant, and the surety of divine promises.

Joseph Smith’s text restores or reconstructs not only an *Ursprung*—an upstream source—for the Primeval History but also an ample doctrinal and theological backspace for New Testament christological hymns like the Johannine Prologue (a text manifestly dependent on Genesis 1-2)<sup>4</sup> and the Prologue to the Letter to the Hebrews 1:1-4. Moses 1–8 constitutes something more than “inspired midrash.” It represents Joseph’s “seeric” attempt to recover and “make” the Genesis text and its implications “known” in ways in which they “otherwise could not be known” (Mosiah 8:17).<sup>5</sup> This attempt at textual recovery restores a text that resembles the

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<sup>4</sup> Craig A. Evans (*Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John’s Prologue*, [London: T&T Clark; Sheffield Academic/JSOT Press, 1993], 100) writes: “Genesis 1-2 clearly underlies the first half of the Prologue, especially vv. 1-5.”

<sup>5</sup> Mosiah 8:17: “But a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known.”

types of writings that appear to have existed on the brass plates<sup>6</sup> and thus found their way into the Nephite scriptural tradition. However, the ambitions of Joseph’s translation prove even greater.

## 2. “The Words of God”

Moses 1 itself constitutes a self-contained literary unit and prologue<sup>7</sup> to the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, demarcated by an *inclusio*.<sup>8</sup> This *inclusio* begins with the *incipit*<sup>9</sup> “**The words of God**, which he gave <spake> unto Moses” (Moses 1:1, emphasis in all scriptural citations is mine). Unlike with most literary *inclusios*, however, one can plausibly argue for a closing bracket that occurs in one of three adjacent texts. The first possible closing bracket occurs in Moses 1:40: “And now, **Moses**, my son, **I will speak unto thee** concerning this earth upon which thou standest; and **thou shalt write the things** [words<sup>10</sup>] which I shall speak” (Moses 1:40).

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<sup>6</sup> Noel B. Reynolds, “The Brass Plates Version of Genesis,” in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday, 27 March 1990*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT; Salt Lake City: FARMS and Deseret Book, 1990), 2:136-173; Jeff Lindsay, “‘Arise from the Dust’: Insights from Dust-Related Themes in the Book of Mormon, Part 1: Tracks from the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 22 (2016): 179-232.

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Mark J. Johnson, “The Lost Prologue: Reading Moses Chapter One as an Ancient Text,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 36 (2020): 145-186.

<sup>8</sup> David Bokovoy, “‘The Book Which Thou Shalt Write’: The Book of Moses as Prophetic Midrash,” in *The Expanded Canon: Perspectives on Mormonism and Sacred Texts*, ed. Blair G. Van Dyke, Brian D. Birch, and Boyd J. Petersen; Johnson, “The Lost Prologue,” 156.

<sup>9</sup> From the Latin word, *incipit*, which means “it begins.” An *incipit*—or an incipit title—is a title drawn from the opening word or words of a text in the absence of an official name or title for a work.

<sup>10</sup> Hebrew *dābār* can denote both “word” and “thing.” See, e.g., Paul Y. Hoskisson, “Straightening Things Out: The Use of Strait and Straight in the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12/2 (2003) 71. The same is true of Egyptian *md.t* (later *mt.t*).

The second bracket candidate comprises part of the parenthetical statement in Moses 1:42 “These words were spoken unto Moses in the mount” (Moses 1:42).<sup>11</sup> This option works if one counts these words as part of the vision. The third potential closing bracket is found in Moses 2:1a: “write the words which I speak.”<sup>12</sup> Under any of these three scenarios, the Moses 1 (or Moses 1:1-2:1a) text with its *inclusio* establishes a dominant theme that threads its way throughout the early chapters of JST Genesis, namely the divine “word” and its efficacy.

The opening phrase “The words of God, which he spake unto Moses” looks and functions like the incipit of the Book of Deuteronomy, “These [are] the words” (Hebrew *’ēlleh haddēbārīm*) from the book’s opening line, “These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel” (Deuteronomy 1:1). In both Deuteronomy and the Vision of Moses the incipit title establishes a claim of divine authority for what follows. In the Vision of Moses, “the words of God” claims divine authority for not only the account of Moses’s vision, but also the subsequent revelation and its inspired textual recuperations. Moreover, the incipit “the words of God which he spake unto Moses” together with the subsequent temporal clause “at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain” establishes a *temple* context for the vision recorded in vv. 2-9, the temptation that follows in vv. 12-23, and the second, grander vision which begins thereafter in vv. 24-41.

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<sup>11</sup> David M. Calabro, “Joseph Smith and the Architecture of Genesis,” in *The Temple: Ancient and Restored*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Interpreter, 2016), 169.

<sup>12</sup> Johnson, “The Lost Prologue,” 156.

Additional phraseological repetition within Moses 1 emphasizes that the “endlessness” of Gods *works* is mirrored in the “ceaselessness” or “endlessness” of God’s *words*. This tight generative pairing begins with the Lord’s declaration to Moses in the first vision, “And, behold, **thou art my son**; wherefore look, and I will show thee **the workmanship** of mine hands; but not all, **for my works are without end, and also my words, for they never cease**” (Moses 1:4). The use of the expression “workmanship of mine hands” here links to three additional uses in Enoch’s vision of the Lord as recorded in Moses 7:32, 36-37, 40, where the Lord so describes human beings as a part of his wider creation. The Hebrew term behind “workmanship” in the KJV is *mēlā’kâ*/  
*mēle’ket* (“trade mission, business journey”; “business, work”; “handiwork, craftsmanship”),<sup>13</sup> a term closely related to *mal’āk*, (“messenger, angel”). The noun *mēlā’kâ* is used in Exodus to describe the “workmanship” or “work” of the tabernacle-temple and its components in their making,<sup>14</sup> which also has implications for the human body as “workmanship” and a tabernacle-temple. This same term is also used to describe the “work” from which God “rested (or “ceased”) on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2-3), the “work” from which humankind was also commanded to cease on the Sabbath,<sup>15</sup> and the “work” of the tabernacle construction from which Israel was

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<sup>13</sup> Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2001), 586.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Exodus 31:3, 5, 14-15; 35:2, 21, 24, 29, 31, 33, 35; 36:1-8; 38:24; 39:43; 40:33; 1 Kings 5:16; 7:14; 22, 40; 9:23; 2 Kings 12:11, 14-15; 22:5, 9; .

<sup>15</sup> Exodus 12:16; 20:10; Deuteronomy 5:14 [MT ]; Mosiah 13:18; cf. Numbers 29:7.

commanded to end by the Sabbath, having completed it.<sup>16</sup> Thus the Lord’s use of the phrase “workmanship of my hands” in connection with his “words” and “works” in Moses 1, provides additional, essential temple context for his informing Moses as his “son” in “in the similitude of mine Only Begotten”: “I have a work [*mēlā ’kâ*] for thee.”<sup>17</sup> Moses’s work (and the function of his “word”) will be to “create” and “deliver” Israel<sup>18</sup>—a christological type. All of this helps us to appreciate the Genesis description of the creation as the Lord’s setting-up of a great tabernacle-temple through words as his “workmanship” (compare Genesis 1:1–2:3 with Exodus 25–40).<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, we can better appreciate the doctrinal depth and theological richness of the Lord’s words to Moses in the second vision, “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**. For behold this is **my work** [cf. Heb. *\*mēla’ktî*] to my glory to the immortality & the eternal life of man” (Moses 1:38-39 following OT1).<sup>20</sup> The generative relationship between divine “works” and

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<sup>16</sup> See Exodus 35:2 in the context of Exodus 35:21, 24, 29-35.

<sup>17</sup> Moses 1:6.

<sup>18</sup> The Lord later says to Moses: “And lo, I am with thee, even unto the end of thy days; for thou shalt deliver my people from bondage, even Israel my chosen”(Moses 1:26).

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Structure of P,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28 (1976): 275–292; Peter J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25–40,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89 (1977): 375–387.

<sup>20</sup> Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2004), 86.



“words”<sup>21</sup> reiterated and reinforced to Moses and evident in the creation account to follow, as a theme, begins as a theme here. Creation as a “temple” and “canon” remains endlessly expanding and open (see especially Moses 7:30).

Thus one of the most noteworthy aspects of the divine word/language theme in the Book of Moses is that the narrative directly links the “endlessness” of God’s “works” and “words” to the notion of endless scriptural “words.” This theme directly bears on what we recognize today as the notion of scriptural *canon*. The Lord commanded Moses to write the words spoken on this occasion, words with intrinsic sacral<sup>22</sup> and authoritative character: “And now, Moses, my son, **I will speak unto thee** concerning this earth upon which thou standest; and **thou shalt write the things** [words] which I shall speak” (Moses 1:40). Nevertheless, he also anticipated the human diminution of those written words during a process of textual transmission at the hands of unbelieving tradents:

- A     And in a day when **the children of men shall esteem my words as naught**
- B       **and take many of them** from the book which thou shalt write,
- C       behold, I will raise up another like unto thee;
- B’     and **they shall be had again**

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Psalm 19:1-4 [MT 2-5], where God’s “handiwork,” in turn, declares his “words.” The infinitude or endlessness of God’s “law” or “instruction” (*tôrâ*) “is stressed in the cognate Psalm 119” (Samuel Zinner, personal communication, notes in the possession of the author).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. The Lord’s words to Oliver Cowdery in D&C 9:9: “you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.”

A' among **the children of men**—among **as many as shall believe**. (Moses 1:41)

As has been noted elsewhere,<sup>23</sup> the Lord's words in Moses 1:41 anticipate a future "taking [away]" or diminution of those same words similar to the diminution of the divine "word" anticipated in the Deuteronomic iterations of the so-called "canon formula." Moses charges Israel: "Ye shall not add [*lō' tōsipû*] unto the word which I command you, **neither shall ye diminish** ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2; see also Deuteronomy 12:32 [MT 13:1]; cf. 5:22 [MT 18]). This type of text has sometimes been called a "canon-formula," because it "makes it clear that its intent is to preclude both literary and doctrinal innovation by safeguarding the textual status quo."<sup>24</sup> Some scholars also refer to it as a *Textsicherungsformel*, literally a "text-securing-formula."

The Deuteronomic canon-formula, in turn, constitutes the source of the more famous canon-formula in Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the [tree<sup>25</sup>] of life, and out of the holy

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<sup>23</sup> Matthew L. Bowen, "And They Shall Be Had Again': Onomastic Allusions to Joseph in Moses 1:41 in View of the So-called Canon Formula" *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 32 (2019): 297-304.

<sup>24</sup> Bernard M. Levinson, "You Must Not Add Anything to What I Command You: Paradoxes of Canon and Authorship in Ancient Israel," *Numen* 50 (2003): 7.

<sup>25</sup> See Bowen, "And They Shall Be Had Again," 298.

city, and from the things which are written in this book.” In recent centuries, the canonical position of the book of Revelation has had the practical effect of making its canon-formula (possibly itself an addition to the text of Revelation) a *de facto* canon-formula for the entire biblical corpus, as viewed by some Protestants who also embrace the notion of *sola scriptura* (“by scripture alone”). As Bernard Levinson notes, “The association [of the “canon-formula”] with any notion of canon ... marks a post-biblical development.”<sup>26</sup>

The Lord’s earlier statements that his “words” that have “no end” and “never cease” become the basis for his promise that that “they shall be had again”—i.e., re-added. By implication, human efforts “to take many of them” away from “the book which [Moses would] write” and from future repositories of divine words (see, e.g., 1 Nephi 13:26-29) or otherwise limit them through a closed “canon” will ultimately fail. In sum, the view of the written “word” presented at the outset of the Book of Moses is that the Lord’s words can be “taken” away or otherwise diminished in their human repositories by human custodians. Nevertheless, these words “shall be had again” (Moses 1:41). And, as this revelation will later emphasize, they must be fulfilled.

### **3. “By the Word of My Power, Have I Created Them” (Moses 1:31-33): Christ as Divine Word and Creation By Speech**

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<sup>26</sup> Levinson, “You Must Not Add,” 6.

We now proceed to an examination of the Book of Moses’s presentation of Christ as the “Word” of divine power. We will explore the typological ramifications for Moses’s own future calling and possible implications of the Book of Moses text for the New Testament “hymns” which also depict Jesus Christ as the divine “Word.”

Following his encounter with Satan (Moses 1:12-23), Moses’s second, greater vision commences with the Lord promising Moses divine authority in word-of-command: “and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters; for **they shall obey thy command** as if thou wert God.” As Daniel Belnap notes, “While Moses’s use of this power readily reminds the reader of the parting of the Red Sea, God’s power over water is also demonstrated in the Creation of the earth ... thereby beginning the means by which Moses can truly understand his work.”<sup>27</sup> In other words, the Lord promised Moses the authority and power of his “word” as used in creation. It was necessary for Moses in some measure to comprehend the Lord’s “work to my glory to the immortality and eternal life of man,”<sup>28</sup> so that he might comprehend his own work in “gathering”<sup>29</sup> (sc. organizing and creating) and delivering Israel as a type of the work of the Only Begotten (“And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son...” Moses 1:6). Like Enoch’s prophetic

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<sup>27</sup> Dan Belnap, “Where Is Thy Glory? Moses 1, the Nature of Truth, and the Plan of Salvation,” *Religious Educator* 10/2 (2009): 171.

<sup>28</sup> OT1 Moses 1:39.

<sup>29</sup> See Exodus 3:16; 4:29. D&C 110:11 records that Moses possessed “the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth” and that he conferred them upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple.

calling, Moses’s “work” would be to serve as the Lord’s vice-regent and prophet, one who “speaks forth” the divine word with divine authority.

In the biblical narrative, Moses’s “rod”—the “rod of God” (*maṭṭēh hā’ ʿēlohîm*, Exodus 4:20; 17:9)—came to serve as the symbol and focus of divine power and authority (cf. 2 Nephi 3:17, “I will raise up a Moses; and **I will give power unto him in a rod** [cf. Heb. *maṭṭēh*]”).<sup>30</sup> At the Reed Sea, the Lord directed Moses, “But lift thou up **thy rod**, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea” (Exodus 14:16; cf. v. 21). Later at Kadesh it is recorded that “Moses lifted up his hand, and **with his rod** [*bēmaṭṭēh ʿehû*] he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly” (Numbers 20:11; cf. Exodus 17:6).

When Nephi recounts these same biblical events to his recalcitrant brothers, he states that they were accomplished through Moses’s “word”: “and ye know that **by his word** the waters of the Red Sea were divided hither and thither, and they passed through on dry ground” (1 Nephi 17:26); “Yea, and ye also know that Moses, **by his word** according to the power of God which was in him, smote the rock, and there came forth water, that the children of Israel might quench their thirst” (1 Nephi 17:29). Beginning on Nephi’s side of things, the interchangeability of “rod” with “word” in these passages can be explained by the convergence of “rod” and “word” in Egyptian,

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<sup>30</sup> 2 Nephi 3:17: “And the Lord hath said: I will raise up a Moses; and I will give power unto him in **a rod**; and I will give judgment unto him in writing. Yet I will not loose his tongue, that he shall speak much, for **I will not make him mighty in speaking**. But I will write unto him my law, by the finger of mine own hand; and I will make a **spokesman** for him...”

in the lexeme *mdw*.<sup>31</sup> Derived noun forms of this word, *md.t* > Demotic *mt.t*,<sup>32</sup> would have been virtual homonyms of Hebrew *maṭṭēh* (“rod,” “staff”). Moreover, some scholars believe Hebrew *maṭṭēh* (“rod,” “staff”) derives from Egyptian *mdw* (“rod, staff”)<sup>33</sup> rather than directly from Hebrew *nṯh*.<sup>34</sup> Nephi was also familiar with similar imagery from Isaiah 11:4 where Isaiah describes the tongue of the Davidic messianic figure, and thus his divine authority, metaphorically as “the rod [šēbeṭ] of his mouth”<sup>35</sup> (cf. Nephi 7:8, “I will smite [mine adversary] with the strength of my mouth”; see also the Davidic “rod of iron” in Psalm 2:9). Nephi was probably also familiar with Psalms 110:2-4, which describes the “Melchizedek” priesthood authority of the Davidic king as “the rod of thy strength [*maṭṭēh-‘uzzēkā*].” In any case, one can easily see the Hebrew collocation *maṭṭēh hā’ ʾōhīm*—Moses’s “rod of God”<sup>36</sup>—functioning as a calque of or play on the Egyptian collocation *mdw-nṯr* (“word of God”).

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew L. Bowen, “What Meaneth the Rod of Iron?” *Insights* 25/2 (2005): 2-3.

<sup>32</sup> Janet Johnson, ed. *The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Volume M* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2001-2013), 264-269.  
[https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/CDD\\_M.pdf](https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/docs/CDD_M.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., J.M.A. Janssen, “Égyptologie et Bible,” in *L’Ancien Testament et L’Orient* (Louvain, 1957), 40; R.J. Williams, “Egypt and Israel,” in *The Legacy of Egypt*, ed. John R. Harris (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 263.

<sup>34</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 639-641. Compare Lehi’s apparent wordplay on *maṭṭēh* (“rod”) in terms of *nṯh* (“stretch out, spread out, extend”) in 1 Nephi 8:19: “And I beheld a **rod of iron**, and it **extended** along the bank of the river, and led to the tree by which I stood.

<sup>35</sup> The Hebrew nouns *šēbeṭ* and *maṭṭēh* are used as matching terms in Hebrew poetry (see, e.g., Isaiah 9:4 [MT 3]; 10:5, 15, 24; and 14:5). Nephi would have been familiar with all of these passages.

<sup>36</sup> Exodus 4:20; 17:9.

The Lord's subjugation of the primordial chaos in the creation provides the backdrop against which Moses's dividing the waters in the Exodus is meant to be understood.<sup>37</sup> The Book of Moses reverses this dynamic. The conceptual framework of the divine word-of-command to which the elements respond in Moses 1:25 serves as a backdrop for the expansive Christological "word" through which Yahweh-Elohim ("the Lord God") creates "worlds without number":

And behold, the glory of the Lord was upon Moses, so that Moses stood in the presence of God [*lipnê hā' ʿĕlōhîm*],<sup>38</sup> and talked with him **face to face** [cf. Heb. *pānîm 'el-pānîm*].<sup>39</sup> And the Lord God **said** unto Moses: For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me. And **by the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten Son**, who is full of grace and truth [*wərab-ḥesed we ʿemet*],<sup>40</sup> Exodus 34:6 = *plērēs charitos kai alētheias*, John 1:14].<sup>41</sup> And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and **by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten** (Moses 1:31-33).

Creation through the divine Son/Word also constitutes a key theme of several christological hymns of the New Testament. It is impossible to miss the doctrinal and phraseological similarities between Moses 1:31-33 and the prologue to the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners **spake** in time past unto the fathers

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<sup>37</sup> In addition to Genesis 1, see Job 26:12-13. Isaiah 51:9-10 specifically describes in the exodus event in the mythic language of Yahweh's defeat and subjugation of "monsters" who represent the primordial chaos.

<sup>38</sup> See Genesis 6:11.

<sup>39</sup> See e.g., Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 34:10. See also Genesis 32:30.

<sup>40</sup> Belnap, "Where Is Thy Glory?," 166-167.

<sup>41</sup> The Book of Moses text (Moses 1:6, 32) brings the "grace formula"—*rab ḥesed we ʿemet* = *charitos kai alētheias*—forward from Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18 (*rab ḥesed*); Psalm 86:15; 103:8; Jonah 4:2; Joel 2:13; and John 1:14, 16-17 into the Vision of Moses and the creation.

by the prophets, hath in these last days **spoken unto us by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, **by whom also he made the worlds** [*di' hou kai epoiēsen tous aiōnas*]<sup>42</sup>; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding all things by the word of his power** [*tō rhēmati tēs dýnameōs autou*]. when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Hebrews 1:1-3; cf. 1 Colossians 1:14-17).<sup>43</sup>

Hebrews 11:3, reflecting back on this christological prologue, states: “Through faith we understand that **the worlds were framed by the word of God** [*katērtisthai tous aiōnas rhēmati theou*], so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” God speaking and creating and framing “worlds” by the Son, “the word of his power” exactly matches the doctrinal picture presented in Moses 1–2.

We find similar resonance in the Johannine prologue: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the word was God ... all things were made by him...” (John 1:1-18); or, “In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word ... all things were made by him”). Much of the Johannine scholarship of the previous century on John 1 has analyzed the relationship of the Prologue and the Johannine *logos* with Philo’s middle-

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 8:6.

<sup>43</sup> 1 Colossians 1:4-7: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: **for by him were all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him, and for him**: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist [*synestēken*; or, ‘in him all things hold together’].”



Platonic concept of the *logos* with which it shares numerous parallels.<sup>44</sup> However, Philo's interpretive notion of the *logos* and creation also has its ultimate source in Genesis and Wisdom present in creation in Proverbs 8:22-31. The Johannine Logos and the Philonic Logos both reflect the Jewish thought evident in the Targums' use of *mêmrā*' (Aramaic "the Word"),<sup>45</sup> and all of them are conceptually compatible (at least broadly) with the divine Only Begotten acting as "the word of my power" in Moses 1-2.

Any discussion of the concept of the divine word must also account for Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: **but the word of our God** [*ûdēbar- 'ēlōhênû*; LXX *rhēma tou theou*] **shall stand** [*yāqûm*] for ever." The notion of the efficacious word of God, expressed more concretely later in Isaiah 55:10-11 is already present here. One could also render Hebrew *yāqûm* with deontic modality: "the word of our God *must* stand forever." The JST Genesis/Book of Moses text casts a theological and doctrinal backspace broad enough and rich enough to fruitfully engage all of the foregoing.

#### 4. "Many Worlds ... Have Passed Away By the Word of My Power" (Moses 1:35)

We will now examine the Book of Moses's cosmic view of Jesus's Christ's role in creation as divine "Word" that is truly cosmic in its sweep and scope. The Lord's description of the cosmic scale and endless continuum on which creation by the divine word transpires constitutes one of

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<sup>44</sup> See Evans, *Word and Glory*, 100-114.

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of Genesis 1:27; 19:24; Targum Onkelos of Genesis 9:17; 17:7; 28:20-21; Jerusalem Targum of Genesis 22:14.

the most stunning aspects of the Vision of Moses. As noted previously, Hebrews 1:2 and 11:3 mention “worlds” in plural, but the phrases “world without number” (Moses 1:33), “many worlds” (“Moses 1:35) and later “millions of earths like this” (Moses 7:30) belong to the Book of Moses. This concept, as Draper, Brown, and Rhodes note, “was not a part of traditional Christian teaching”<sup>46</sup> and a “doctrine unknown in the days of Joseph Smith.”<sup>47</sup> These expressions and the statements in which they occur correspond to the chronological infinitude expressed by the Isaianic expression ‘*ad-’ôlmê’ ad* (Isaiah 45:17; cf. Ephesians 3:21)<sup>48</sup>—sometimes translated “world without end” (KJV), “worlds without end,”<sup>49</sup> or “to all eternity” (NRSV). They more nearly approach the cosmic picture being given us by contemporary astronomy and the deep-space telescopes than anything else that we find in ancient scripture. The Lord mentions “many worlds” that are “innumerable ... unto man” but “numbered unto me”—worlds cycling through a course of creation and uncreation:

But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are **many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power**. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for **they are mine and I know them**. ... The heavens, they are many, and they cannot be numbered unto man; but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine. And **as**

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<sup>46</sup> Richard D. Draper, S. Kent Brown, Michael D. Rhodes, *The Pearl of Great Price: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2005), 33.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Isaiah 45:17: “But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded **world without end** [‘*ad-’ôlmê’ ad*, NRSV: ‘to all eternity’].” Cf. Ephesians 3:21: “Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end [‘*tou aiōnos ton aiōnōn*, NRSV, ‘forever and ever’]. Amen.” Strictly speaking, ‘*ôlām* and ‘*aiōn* are chronological terms meaning “age.”

<sup>49</sup> D&C 76:112 pluralizes KJV “world without end” as “worlds without end.”

**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.** (Moses 1:35, 37-38)

This language also resonates with Jesus’s words to his disciples as recorded in Matthew 24: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35), or as clarified in the JST text: “Although, the days will come, that heaven and earth shall pass away; yet my words shall not pass away, but **all shall be fulfilled**” (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:35). That last phrase, “but all shall be fulfilled,” added to the JST Matthew text represents one of the most important thematic aspects of the divine “word” in the Book of Moses (see below). A revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith “beginning September 26, 1830,”<sup>50</sup> quotes or paraphrases the text of Moses 1 revealed just months earlier: “But remember that all my judgments are not given unto men; **and as the words have gone forth out of my mouth even so shall they be fulfilled,** that the first shall be last, and that the last shall be first in all things **whatsoever I have created by the word of my power, which is the power of my Spirit**” (D&C 29:30). The Lord’s “words” in premortality, mortality, and postmortality *are* the ongoing creative process in the cosmos. He is the creative force.

Thus, the revelation to Moses of an endless procession of “earth[s] ... and the heavens thereof” forestalls the notion that the “heavens and the earth [being] finished” in the forthcoming creation account somehow amounts to an end to divine creative activity, as Genesis 3:1 and the notion of “Sabbath”—from the Hebrew verb *šābat*, “cease,” “come to the end of an activity”<sup>51</sup>—

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<sup>50</sup> From the heading to Doctrine and Covenants 29 (2013 edition).

might seem to imply.<sup>52</sup> When challenged regarding his Sabbath day activities, Jesus stated: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17; cf. Odes of Solomon 4:4).<sup>53</sup> The Book of Moses’s view of the creative “Word” parallels its view of the written “words” of God with its implicit notion of “canon”: “there is no end to my works, neither to my words.” There is no end to

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<sup>51</sup> John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 72-73. Walton writes, “The Hebrew verb *šābat* (Gen 2:2) from which our term “sabbath” is derived has the basic meaning of ‘ceasing’ (Josh 5:12; Job 32:1). Semantically it refers to the completion of certain activity with which one had been occupied. This cessation leads into a new state which is described by another set of words, the verb *nûḥa* and its associated noun *mēnûḥā*. The verb involves entering a position of safety, security, or stability, and the noun refers to the place where that is found. The verb *šābat* describes a transition into the activity or inactivity of *nûḥa*. We know that when God rests (ceases, *šābat*) on the seventh day in Genesis 2, he also transitions into the condition of stability (*nûḥa*) because that is the terminology used in Exodus 20:11. The only other occurrence of the verb *šābat* with God as the subject is in Exodus 31:17. The most important verses to draw all of this information together are found in Psalm 132:7-8, 13-14:

Let us go to his dwelling place  
 Let us worship at his footstool—  
 ‘Arise, O Lord, and come to your resting place,  
 you, and the ark of your might.’

For the Lord has chosen Zion,  
 he has desired it for his dwelling:  
 ‘This is my resting place for ever and ever;  
 here I will sit enthroned for I have desired it.’

Here the ‘dwelling place’ of God translates a term that describes the tabernacle and temple, and it is where his footstool (the ark) is located. ... Thus, this Psalm pulls together the ideas of divine rest, temple, and enthronement. God’s ‘ceasing’ (*šābat*) on the seventh day in Genesis 2:2 leads to his ‘rest’ (*nûḥa*), associated with the seventh day in Exodus 2:11. His ‘rest’ is located in his ‘resting place’ (*mēnûḥā*) in Psalm 132. After creation, God takes up his rest and rules from his residence. This is not new theology for the ancient world—it is what all people understood about their gods and their temples.

<sup>52</sup> Samuel Zinner (personal communication, notes in possession of author) observes: “Similarly, according to rabbinic teaching Gen 1:1 does not mark the beginning of God’s creative activity, for there were many worlds created before this one.” He cites Genesis Rabbah 9:2 in which Rabbi Tanhuma suggests that multiple worlds were created and destroyed before this one.

<sup>53</sup> Odes of Solomon 4:4: “Never will You be idle, nor will You be without fruits.”

creation. There is no end to scripture or revelation—the revealed word.<sup>54</sup> *The universe is an open canon.*

##### 5. “This I Did By the Word of My Power, and It Was Done as I Spake” (Moses 2:5)

The Book of Moses transitions from the initial “Visions of Moses” to Joseph Smith’s inspired revision of the Genesis 1 creation account—which constitutes a continuation of the preceding vision—with the Lord commanding Moses to write his “words” and reemphasizing the executive role of the Only Begotten in a *never-ending* creation process: “And it came to pass that **the Lord spake unto Moses**, saying: Behold, I reveal unto you concerning this heaven, and this earth; **write the words** [things] **which I speak**. I am the Beginning and the End, the Almighty God; **by mine Only Begotten I created these things**; yea, in the beginning I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standest” (Moses 2:1). The Lord’s ongoing words to Moses represent a continuation of his endless “words” and a never-ending creation—his “works.” This establishes the framework for the creation account in which the spoken word and the creative process remain eminently intertwined.

Kathleen Flake has observed that “like the Book of Mormon’s Israelite exodus to America, the JST’s creation narrative has always informed the LDS ethos.”<sup>55</sup> The Lord’s words in Moses 2:1 breathe new life into the abstract opening statement of the Hebrew Bible: “In

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<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., Jeffrey R. Holland, “‘My Words . . . Never Cease,’” *Ensign*, May 2008, 91-94.

<sup>55</sup> Kathleen Flake, “Translating Time: The Nature and Function of Joseph Smith’s Narrative Canon,” *Journal of Religion* 87/3 (2007): 503.

the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The Lord himself appropriates “the beginning”—Hebrew *rē’ šīt*—as a name-title for himself. Here too he is the subject of the verb “create”—Hebrew *bārā’* (“create,” “construct,”<sup>56</sup> or “organize”<sup>57</sup>), the verb of which God is always the subject or implied agent in the Bible<sup>58</sup>—but he takes personal ownership of his creative acts through the 1<sup>st</sup> person verb form. This invites comparison to the Isaianic creation scenes in Isaiah 40-66,<sup>59</sup> and the use of the first person in Isaiah 43:7, 45:8, 12; 54:16 (compare especially Isaiah 45:8, 12). Joseph Smith’s Genesis revision restores a backdrop that accommodates other creation texts in the Hebrew Bible like Psalms 148:5, 8: “for **he commanded** [*šiwā’*], **and they were created** [*wēnibrā’ū*] ... Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind **fulfilling his word** [*’ōšâ dēbārô*].”

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<sup>56</sup> Bob Becking and Marjo C.A. Korpel, “To Create, to Separate, or to Construct: An Alternative to a Resent Proposal as to the Interpretation of אָרַב in Gen 1:1–2:4a,” *Journal of the Hebrew Scriptures* 10/3 (2010). Online: [http://jhsonline.org/Articles/article\\_131.pdf](http://jhsonline.org/Articles/article_131.pdf). “This is a temple oriented theology. Just as the temple in Jerusalem had been built by human hands, YHWH is imagined as having “constructed” the cosmos as his temple.”

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Smith, Discourse, Nauvoo, Hancock Co., IL, 7 Apr. 1844. Featured version printed in “Conference Minutes,” *Times and Seasons*, 15 Aug. 1844, 5:612-617. Joseph Smith is recorded (p. 615) to have said: “The word create came from the word *baurau*; it does not mean so; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize a ship. Hence we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos; chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time he had. The pure principles of element, are principles that can never be destroyed. They may be organized and re-organized; but not destroyed.”

<sup>58</sup> Genesis 1:5, 21, 27; 2:3-4; 5:1-2; 6:7; Exodus 34:10 (God implied subject of passive verb forms); Numbers 16:30; Deuteronomy 4:32; Psalm 51:10; 89:12, 47; 102:18; 104:30; 148:5; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 4:5; 40:26, 28; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7-8, 12, 18; 48:7; 54:16; 57:19; 65:17-18; Jeremiah 31:22; Ezekiel 21:19, 30; 28:13, 15; Amos 4:13; Malachi 2:10.

<sup>59</sup> See, e.g., Isaiah 40:6, 8; 41:20; 42:5; 43:1, 7, 15; 45:7-8, 12, 18; 48:7; 54:16; 57:19; 65:17-18.

The closely correlated “works” and “words” of Moses 1:4-5, 48—“works” and “words” brought to pass through the “Word of my power”<sup>60</sup> (Moses 1:32, 35; 2:5)—supplies additional revelatory context for the creation by the divinely spoken *yĕhî*, “Let there be” (Moses 2:3, 6, 9, 14), widely familiar from the Genesis account (Genesis 1:3, 6, 14). The tight pairing of the jussive *yĕhî*, “Let there be...” and *wayhî* “and there was” paints a dramatic verbal picture of the generative relationship between “words” and “work.”<sup>61</sup>

The Septuagint (LXX) rendered the Hebrew jussive form *yĕhî* with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person 2<sup>nd</sup> aorist passive imperative verb *genĕthĕtō* (hence the name of the book “Genesis”). The Vulgate rendered Greek *genĕthĕtō* with the Latin 3<sup>rd</sup> person present passive subjunctive form “fiat,” whence the theological notion expressed as “creation by fiat.” Recognition of this verb form helps us to appreciate nature the Lord’s Prayer as a quasi-“creation” text: “Thy will be done [*genĕthĕtō to thelēma sou*] in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2). Moreover, such recognition reframes Jesus’s prayer in Gethsemane as a quasi-“creation” text: “thy will be done [*genĕthĕtō to thelēma sou*]” (Matthew 26:42). Matthew certainly intended his audience to see the Lord’s prayer and Jesus’s prayer to the Father in Gethsemane as inextricably linked by the shared phrase *genĕthĕtō to thelēma sou*.

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<sup>60</sup> Word” in “Word of my power” is capitalized in OT1 at Moses 2:5.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Daniel J. Wilson, “*Wayhî* and Theticity in Biblical Hebrew,” *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 45/1 (2019) 89-118.

Notably, two JST passages further help us envisage the Lord's prayer and Jesus's prayer(s) in Gethsemane as quasi-“creation” texts. First, from the cross JST Matthew 27:54 records “Jesus ... cried again with a loud voice, saying, Father, **it is finished** [*tetelestai*, John 19:30<sup>62</sup>], **thy will is done**, yielded up the ghost.” John 19:30 employs the same verbal root *-teleō* as the LXX creation account (“And the heavens and the earth and all their order [*kosmos*] **were finished** [*synetelesthesan*] ... And God finished [*synetelesen*] on the seventh day”). Jesus reports to the Father as he “finishes” a new creation before entering into “rest” on the Sabbath.<sup>63</sup> The second passage returns the creation language of Jesus's prayers to the premortal existence and the council in heaven (“in the beginning”) where Jesus, the Father's “Beloved and Chosen from the beginning,” humbled himself before the Father: “Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever” (Moses 4:2). The close relationship between Jesus Christ's roles as Creator and Redeemer, between creation and redemption, suddenly comes into stark focus.

The thematic use of the creation-by-word verb *yēhî* in Genesis 1 inevitably ties the creative process to the divine name or Tetragrammaton, Yhwh (often rendered Jehovah or more recently Yahweh) and its meaning. Frank Moore Cross explains the form of the name Yhwh as “a

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<sup>62</sup> John 19:28-30: “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

<sup>63</sup> This observation holds whether Jesus died on Friday (traditional) or on Thursday as argued recently in Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “Dating the Death of Jesus Christ,” *BYU Studies* 54/4 (2015): 135-191. See also Mark 15:42; Luke 23:54-56; John 19:31.



causative imperfect of the Canaanite-Proto-Hebrew verb *hwh/hwy* ‘to be’<sup>64</sup> with the basic meaning “He creates” or “he who cause to happen.”<sup>65</sup> David Noel Freedman and Michael P. O’Connor insist that “In Hebrew ... yahweh must be a causative, since the dissimilation of *yaqʔal* to *yiqʔal* did not apply in Amorite [i.e., West Semitic], while it was obligatory in Hebrew. The name *yahweh* must therefore be a hiphil. Although the causative of *hwy* is otherwise unknown in Northwest Semitic (with the exception of Syriac, which is of little relevance here), it seems to be attested in the name of the God of Israel.”<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the precise origin of the name *yhwh* and its possible relationship to the Mesopotamian deity Ea (Enki) remains a matter of discussion and exploration.<sup>67</sup>

Whatever the case, the onomastic wordplay on Yhwh in terms of the verb form *’ehyeh* (“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM [*’ehyeh ’ăšer ’ehyeh*]: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM [*’ehyeh*] hath sent me unto you”) confirms that ancient Israelites thought of the name Yhwh in terms of the verb *hwy/hyy*, whatever the origin of the

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<sup>64</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1973), 65.

<sup>65</sup> Margaret Barker, *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel’s Second God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 104.

<sup>66</sup> David Noel Freedman and Michael P. O’Connor, “YHWH” in *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 5:513.

<sup>67</sup> Tony Ormond Nugent, *Star-god: Enki/Ea and the Biblical God as Expressions of a Common Ancient Near Eastern Astral-theological Symbol System* (Ph.D. Dissertation; Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, 1993). John Gee, “The geography of Aramaean and Luwian Gods” presented at *Aramaeans Borders Defining Aramaean Territories in the 10th – 8th Centuries BCE Conference Organized as Part of the Research Project GA ČR P401/12/G168 “History and Interpretation of the Bible”*, held at the Protestant Theological Faculty, Charles University in Prague, Černá 9, 115 55 Praha 1, April 22-23, 2016.

name Yhwh (or Yah). This constitutes the conceptual backdrop against which the foregoing jussive creation fiat (“let there be...”) should be understood: a name expressing the idea of creating or bringing to pass through the speaking of the very word of which the name itself is a manifestation.

In this vein, the text of Moses 2 reiterates the executive role of the Son in his accomplishing the divine will by means of the phrase ““this I did by the word of my power”:

“And I, God, **called** the light Day; and the darkness, I called Night; **and this I did by the Word of my power, and it was done as I spake**; and the evening and the morning were the first day [or, Day One, *yôm ’eḥād*].” (Moses 2:5). The phrase “and it was done as I spake” here preserves and replicates the tight cause-effect relationship between word and work evident the tight pairing of “I, God, said let there be ... and there was”). Jeffrey M. Bradshaw suggests that the added phrase “this I did by the Word of my power” functions “as a more or less synonymous parallel to the expression that ‘it was done as I spake.’”<sup>68</sup> The reiterated variants of the stereotyped Genesis 1 phrase “and it was so [*wayhî kēn*]” in Moses 2—“and it was done” (v. 6); “and it was so even as I

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<sup>68</sup> Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *In God’s Image and Likeness: Creation Fall and the Story of Adam and Eve*. 1<sup>st</sup> updated ed. (Salt Lake City, UT: Eborn Books, 2014), 102. Bradshaw writes, “Two interpretations are possible. On the one hand, this phrase, added in the book of Moses, can be seen as a more or less synonymous parallel to the expression that ‘it was done as I spake.’ On the other hand, it could be taken to indicate that the light and darkness were ‘made’ in a different fashion than the entities created on subsequent days.”

spake” (v. 7, 11, 31); “and it was so” (v. 9, 15, 24)—further emphasize the power of the divine “word” to bring to pass each divine “work.”<sup>69</sup>

#### 6. “And the Stars Also Were Made Even According to My Word” (Moses 2:16)

Here we further note that the “worlds” themselves do not stand alone in having been created by the divine “word.” In addition to the “worlds without number” or “many worlds” which the Lord claims as his creations in Moses 1:33, 35, in the Book of Moses he avers his creation of the great luminaries in the heavens upon which those worlds necessarily depend, by his “word.” He makes the following geocentric cosmological statement regarding the creation of the luminaries: “And I, God, made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and the greater light was the sun, and the lesser light was the moon; and **the stars also were made even according to my word**” (Moses 2:14). This statement, like previous statements, is both christological and points to creation as a process.

Some scholars believe that the names of the great lights have been suppressed in the Genesis account, possibly due to the onomastic connections of *šemeš* (“sun”; Ugaritic *špš*) and *yārēah* (“moon”) with the divinized Sun (Shammash) and the divinized Moon (*yrḥ*; cf. the Ammonite theophoric names *‘bdyrḥ*, “servant of the moon [god]” and *yrḥ‘zr*, “the moon [god] is help” or “the moon [god] has helped; cf. also Akkadian *Sîn*, “servant of [the moon-god] *Sîn*”), which were widely worshipped in the ancient near East. Suppression of the names “sun” and

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<sup>69</sup> On the broader occurrence of the word-creation mytheme in other ancient cultures, see Ernst Cassirer, *Language and Myth*, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York: Dover, 1953), 44-61.

“moon” in the biblical text is rendered superfluous in Book of Moses text with the declaration that the sun, moon, and stars all came into being “even according to my word.” God and his divine Word are the only deities that the text has in view. The divine passive, “were made according to my word” further allows for a very lengthy creative process. We see something similar in the Lord’s subsequent description of spiritual creation.

#### 7. “Spiritually Were They Created and Made According to My Word” (Moses 3:7): Spiritual Creation and the Process of Divine Direction

We now briefly turn our attention to how the Book of Moses text further describes the physical and spiritual creation of humankind as coming to pass according to the divine word. As part of his description of humankind’s creation, the Lord revealed the following: “And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also; nevertheless, **all things were before created; but spiritually were they created and made according to my word**” (Moses 3:7)

The premortal existence of humankind and all other life upon the earth is here mentioned for the first time. This statement need not—and should not—be interpreted to mean that the Lord called spirits into existence *ex nihilo* or assembled them from preexistent spirit matter or essence. As with the aspects of creation heretofore discussed, it is helpful to envision the language “[they were] created and made according to my word” as describing a *process* rather than *event*. Alma’s comparison of the divine “word” and its growth to “a seed” (Alma 32:28)

suggests this line of interpretation. Nobody would describe the growth of any seed into a tree as an event. Alma strenuously emphasizes the necessity of “nourishing” the tree with “great care” (Alma 32:37-42) in order for the “seed”—which “bringeth forth unto its own likeness” (Alma 32:31)—to fulfill its potential in growing into a “tree of life” (Alma 32:40-42). In this vein, it is also useful to see premortal spiritual development or being “made according to my word” as the Lord’s process of “try[ing] the experiment of [the] goodness” of his “seed”—us (cf. Alma 34:4; Abraham 3:22-26).<sup>70</sup> The spiritual growth and development of humankind as individuals and in family arrangements in mortality represents a similar “experiment” on the “word” (cf. Abraham 3:22-26).

As recorded in revelation in Johannine language to the Prophet Joseph Smith nearly three years later: “Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth” (D&C 93:21); “Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be” (D&C 93:29). That same revelation described Jesus as the Christological “word”: “Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation” (D&C 93:8). Preexistent human spirits and of other living beings grew and developed under divine direction and guidance—“according to his word.” One way of interpreting this phrase is that progression occurred among the spirit children of God to the degree that they hearkened to the “the gospel [that was] preached through the Son”—i.e., “the gospel [that] was the word” (JST John 1:1).

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<sup>70</sup> See also Alma 32:27, 33, 36.

The process model of creation in Moses 2:16 and here in Moses 3:7 reflected in the divine passive circumlocution “were ... made [even] according to my word” restores the conceptual framework for Jacob’s priestly declaration regarding the power of the divine “word”: “For behold, **by the power of his word** man came upon the face of the earth, which earth was created **by the power of his word**. Wherefore, if God being able **to speak and the world was, and to speak and man was created**, O then, why not able to **command the earth**, or the workmanship of his hands upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure?” (Jacob 4:9). Moroni’s language similarly summarizes the creation: “Who shall say that it was not a miracle that **by his word** the heaven and the earth should be; and **by the power of his word** man was created of the dust of the earth; and **by the power of his word** have miracles been wrought?” (Mormon 9:17).

#### 8. “Even So My Words Cannot Return Void” (Moses 4:28-32)

Near the end of the Fall pericope in Moses 4 we encounter one of the most significant developments in the divine “word” theme: the doctrine of the immutability and efficacy of the divine “word,” to which we now turn our attention. The declaration of this doctrine serves as a closing bracket for the episode of the Fall of humankind. What the creation accounts left somewhat implicit regarding the efficacy of the divine word becomes explicit in Moses 4:28-30:

Genesis 3:22-23	Moses 4:28-30
And <b>the LORD God</b> [ <i>yhw̄h ’ēlōhîm</i> ] said, Behold, <b>the man is become</b> [ <i>hāyâ</i> ] as one of us [i.e., as gods, <i>’ēlōhîm</i> ], to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and	And <b>I, the Lord God</b> [cf. Heb. <i>yhw̄h ’ēlōhîm</i> , said unto mine Only Begotten: Behold, <b>the man is become</b> as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put

<p>take also <b>of the tree of life</b>, and eat, and <b>live for ever</b>: therefore <b>the LORD God</b> sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till <b>the ground</b> [<i>hā`ādāmā</i>] from whence he was taken.</p>	<p>forth his hand and partake also of <b>the tree of life</b>, and eat and <b>live forever</b>, Therefore I, the Lord God, will send him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till <b>the ground</b> [<i>hā`ādāmā</i>] from whence he was taken; For as I, the Lord God [<i>yhwh`ēlōhîm</i>], liveth, <b>even so my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled.</b></p>
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The divine title used in the Genesis 2–3 account is *yhwh`ēlōhîm*, rendered “LORD God” in the KJV. On analogy with Hebrew *yhwh-šēbā`ōt* William H. Brownlee has proposed that the name-title *yhwh`ēlōhîm*, prominent in Genesis 2–3, and thus also prominent here means “He creates gods”<sup>71</sup> or “he brings gods to pass.” Here, the JST text directly links the process of divine progress—becoming like *ēlōhîm*—with the efficacy of the divine word, further advancing the idea that spiritual “creation,” or rather spiritual development, transpired as a process rather than an event, “according to my word” (Moses 3:7).

The KJV Genesis text has no equivalent to Moses 4:30: “For as I, the Lord God, liveth, even so my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled.” This fact, together with the placement of this insertion, recommends it as an important doctrinal statement. Jeff Lindsey<sup>72</sup> has noted the clear intertextual kinship between the language and doctrine of Moses 4:30 and that of Isaiah 55:8-9:

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<sup>71</sup> William H. Brownlee “The Ineffable Name of God,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 226 (1977): 39-46.

<sup>72</sup> Lindsay, “Arise from the Dust,” 222-224.

Moses 4:30-31	Isaiah 55:8-9
<p>For as I, the Lord God, liveth, <b>even so my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled.</b> So I drove out the man, and I placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.</p>	<p>“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: <b>so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.</b>” [cf. also Isaiah 40:8]</p>

The oath formula “For as I, the Lord God liveth” gives what follows clear legal force.

Stephen D. Ricks<sup>73</sup> has noted the legal implications of the oath formula. In this type of legal formula, found throughout the Hebrew Bible<sup>74</sup> and the Book of Mormon, the Lord binds his life to the fulfillment of his word. Draper, Brown, and Rhodes frame Moses 4:30 as “a declaration about the connection between what He says and what He does.”<sup>75</sup> In other words, it represents

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<sup>73</sup> Stephen D. Ricks, “Oaths and Oath-taking in the Old Testament,” in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 45.

<sup>74</sup> See, e.g., Numbers 14:21, 28; Ezekiel 5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; 16:48; 17:16, 19; 18:3; 20:3, 31, 33; 33:11, 27; 34:8; 35:6, 11; Isaiah 49:18 (1 Nephi 21:18); Jeremiah 22:24; 46:18; Zephaniah 2:9.”

<sup>75</sup> Draper, Brown, and Rhodes, *Pearl of Great Price*, 51.



another reiteration of the generative relationship between divine word and divine work as evident earlier in the creation narrative.

We should further note here Jeffrey D. Lindsay's<sup>76</sup> observation of the close correlation between the language and doctrine of Moses 4:30 and Alma 12:23 ("the word would have been void, making God a liar, for he said: If thou eat thou shalt surely die"), Alma 12:26 ("thus the plan of redemption would have been frustrated, and the word of God would have been void, taking none effect"); and Alma 42:5 ("yea, and also the word of God would have been void, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated"). Moses 4:30 restores the doctrine of the inviolability of the divine word, not explicit in the Genesis text of the Fall, at the precise moment required by Alma's two explications of the Fall.

#### **9. "The Words Went Forth Out of the Mouth of God in a Firm Decree (Moses 5:15)**

It is here necessary to point out that the story of the early years of Adam and Eve's family (Moses 5:1-15) is bracketed on the front end by the previously discussed statement of the efficacy of the divine word (in Moses 4:30) and the emergence of the decreed consequences (see Moses 4:31; 5:1). On the back end, this part of the story is bracketed or framed by a similar declaration of the efficacy of the divine word (Moses 5:15). We will also see that the Book of Moses's narrative transition from the story of Adam and Eve and the immediate aftermath of the Fall to the Cain and Abel narrative also represent a change in focus in the divine "word" narrative thread.

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<sup>76</sup> Lindsay, "Arise from the Dust," 222-224.

Beginning here, the divine “word” increasingly takes on the character of a *kerygma*, a preached “word.”

This narrative transition in the divine word thread begins with the appearance of an angel to Adam and Eve to explain the symbolism and function of the sacrifices that they had been commanded to make even before leaving the Garden of Eden: “And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me. And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth. Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore” (Moses 5:6-8). In perpetually offering sacrifice at the altar—comparable to the altar in the outer temple court—Adam and Eve observed the first two principles of what Nephi describes as the doctrine of Christ (2 Nephi 31–32) or the Gospel of Jesus Christ, namely faith and repentance.<sup>77</sup>

The principles that the divine messenger commanded Adam and Eve to perpetually observe at the altar, the Lord sent forth as a general message, proclaimed from God to the human family: “**And the Lord God called upon men by the Holy Ghost everywhere and commanded them that they should repent;** And as many as believed in the Son, and repented of their sins,

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<sup>77</sup> Jared T. Parker, “The Doctrine of Christ in 2 Nephi 31–32 as an Approach to the Vision of the Tree of Life,” in *The Things Which My Father Saw: Approaches to Lehi’s Dream and Nephi’s Vision (2011 Sperry Symposium)*, ed. Daniel L. Belnap, Gaye Strathearn, and Stanley A. Johnson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 161–78.

should be saved; and as many as believed not and repented not, should be damned; and **the words went forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree; wherefore they must be fulfilled**” (Moses 5:14-15). The narrator reiterates the doctrine that the Lord first articulated in Moses 4:30 “my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled.” The “words” going forth out of the Lord’s mouth that “must be fulfilled” are the faith in Christ and repentance of sins that eventuate in being “saved” or the lack of faith and repentance that eventuate in damnation, as preached by the Lord through the Holy Ghost “everywhere.” Draper, Brown, and Rhodes note that “the content of this decree ... stands as a legal declaration from the divine world ... and has to do with faith and repentance.”<sup>78</sup>

This mention of “the Lord call[ing] upon men by the Holy Ghost”—also begins a thematic transition to the “word” as *kerygma*—the preached message. The concept of “words [going] forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree; wherefore they must be fulfilled” in Moses 5:15 shifts from its earlier use in Moses 4:30 as the basis for the decreed consequences of Adam and Eve’s transgression, to the basis for salvation for the obedient and the damnation of the disobedient.

This provides necessary context for understanding Eve’s etiological naming of Cain in the next verse: “And Adam and Eve, his wife, ceased not to call upon God. And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain [*qayin*], and said: **I have gotten** [*qānîti*] a man from the

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<sup>78</sup> Draper, Brown, and Rhodes, *The Pearl of Great Price*, 63.

Lord [i.e., with the Lord's help] **wherefore he may not reject his words**. But behold, Cain hearkened not, saying: Who is the Lord that I should know him?" (Moses 15:16). The Book of Moses text retains the biblical wordplay on Cain (*qayin*) in terms of *qānîî*, "I have gotten a man from the Lord" or "I have created a man with the Lord's help,"<sup>79</sup> but adds an additional statement of purpose to the naming: "wherefore he may not reject his words"—words taught.

Adam and Eve faithfully discharged parental obligations and "made all things [words] known unto their sons and daughters" but they "believed it not" (Moses 5:12) and "loved Satan more than God" (Moses 5:13). This expanded etiology gives voice to Eve's maternal hope that she had "gotten" a son (or "created" a son with the Lord's help) who would not follow the path of her earlier progeny, but who would, as he came of age, "repent" as the Lord had "commanded." In effect, she hoped that Cain would "believe in the Son, and repented of [his] sins" and thus "should be saved" (Moses 5:15). Instead, Cain "rebelled" when God revealed himself to him (in contrast to Abel and Seth, Moses 6:3). He arrogantly repudiated his covenant sonship ("Who is the Lord that I should **know** him?") in favor of a covenant relationship with Satan ("And Cain loved Satan more than God"; "and they [Cain, his wife, et al.] loved Satan more than God"; "And Satan sware unto Cain that he would do according to his commands"; Moses 5:18, 28-30).

The Cain and Abel narrative offers a second etiology: the origin of oath-bound secret combinations. In this etiology Cain remotivates his name from its initial semantic connection to

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<sup>79</sup> Matthew L. Bowen, "Getting Cain and Gain" *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15 (2015): 115-141.

positive “acquisition” or “getting” to the notion of murder for the express purpose of “getting gain”: “And Cain said: Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret **that I may murder and get gain**. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness” (Moses 5:31; cf. 5:50).<sup>80</sup> Here we detect a third etiological function within the narrative. The proliferation of oath-bound secret combinations—organized evil—in subsequent generations becomes the basis for the systematic preaching of the gospel—organized good:

And thus **the works of darkness began to prevail among all the sons of men**. And God cursed the earth with a sore curse, and was angry with the wicked, with all the sons of men whom he had made; For **they would not hearken unto his voice**, nor believe on his Only Begotten Son, even him whom he declared should come in the meridian of time, who was prepared from before the foundation of the world. **And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost**. And thus all things were confirmed [unto Adam, by an holy ordinance (OT2)], and the Gospel preached, and **a decree sent forth**, that it should be in the world, until the end thereof; **and thus it was**. Amen. (Moses 5:55-59)

The narrator emphasizes that the systematic preaching of the gospel “from the beginning” as declared by divinely authorized messengers continued even as humanity spiral dived into Cainitic works of darkness and secret combinations. It began at least as early as when the Lord himself “gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flock for an offering unto the Lord” (Moses 5:5) and continued with the angel who appeared to Adam and Eve and instructed them or, as Alma states it, “he sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory” (Alma 12:26). As Alma

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<sup>80</sup> Bowen, “Getting Cain and Gain,” 118-119.

later states it, “Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption, that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death, which was an everlasting death as to things pertaining unto righteousness; for on such the plan of redemption could have no power, for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God” (Alma 12:32). The Lord also continued to call upon Adam and his descendants through the Holy Ghost with a message of repentance: “And the Lord God called upon men by the Holy Ghost everywhere and commanded them that they should repent” (Moses 5:14).

Thus the “decree sent forth” here should be understood in terms of “the firm decree” (“and the words went forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree; wherefore they must be fulfilled”) mentioned earlier in Moses 5:15 regarding the eternal trajectory of those who repent and respond affirmatively to the gospel message versus those who, like Cain and much of Adam and Eve’s early posterity reject it. It is no mean detail that the Book of Moses describes the origin of the preaching of the gospel in the world as the extension of the divine decree described in Moses 5:15. The closing words of Moses 5—“and thus it was [*wayhî kēn*]. Amen”—repeats a phrase directly from the creation account that illustrates the efficacy of the divine word and expresses the generative relationship between divine word and divine work. The use of the phrase “and thus it was” helps us see that Moses 5:55-59 as a further progression of this theme in the JST/Book of Moses text.

#### **10. “A Language Which Was Pure and undefiled”: Adam’s Book of Remembrance**

When we come to Moses 6, we witness not only the dramatic furtherance of divine “word” motif as a preached *kerygma*, but we encounter a vivid description of how divine speech and communication were preserved among Adam’s descendants. the means whereby “the gospel” as the divine, preached word would “be in the world until the end thereof” (see again Moses 5:59) with the composition and perpetuation of a “book of remembrance.” The first preacher of a systematic Gospel is none other than Adam himself: “And Adam hearkened unto the voice of God, and called upon his sons to repent” (Moses 6:1). At this point the text mentions the birth of Seth (Hebrew *šēt*), who became a divinely “appointed” (*šāt*) additional “seed” (“another seed”) to carry on a righteous line for Adam and Eve (Moses 6:2). The text then undertakes an etiology (or account of origin) for scripture—i.e., as a repository for divine speech and the divinely given written word: “And a book of remembrance was kept, in the which was recorded, in the language of Adam, **for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration;** And by them their children were taught to read and write, **having a language** which was pure and undefiled” (Moses 6:5-6).

The text records that Adam uttered a “prophecy” about the priesthood “as he was moved upon by the Holy Ghost” (Moses 6:8). That prophecy is briefly summarized as follows: “Now this same Priesthood, which was in the beginning, shall be in the end of the world also” (Moses 6:7). In other words, the Lord would enable the perpetuation of this Priesthood in the world throughout its ages in a manner similar too and ultimately not severed from the means whereby

the “gospel ... [would] be in the world until the end thereof” (Moses 5:59). This Priesthood and the concept of the “book of remembrance” remain inextricably intertwined.

The only place in the biblical corpus where the collocation “book of remembrance” occurs is in Malachi’s prophecy of “the day of [the Lord’s] coming”<sup>81</sup> (Malachi 3-4), a text pertaining to priesthood<sup>82</sup> and widely regarded as eschatological in character (i.e., pertaining to the end of times). There we read: “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a **book of remembrance** [*sēper zikārôn*] was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels [*sēgullâ* = personal or sealed possession]; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. (Malachi 3:16-17).

Moroni’s interpretive quotation of Malachi 4:5-6 helps us see the priesthood and genealogical dimension of “the book of remembrance” more clearly: “Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming” (D&C 2:1-3; cf. D&C 110:13-16).

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<sup>81</sup> Malachi 3:2.

<sup>82</sup> See especially Malachi 3:3; D&C 13:1; 124:39; 128:24; Joseph Smith–History 1:69 and the endnote.



If Adam's "book of remembrance" also functioned like the "books" and "records" described in Revelation 20:12 and D&C 127:6-9; 128:2-14 we can see how the divine "word" in all of its manifestations connects with gospel/temple ordinances and the development, progression, and eternal destiny of the human family. The biography of Enoch, the progression of his word, and the scenes of his people in relation to the winding-up scenes in this world in Moses 7 further help us to see these rich connections. Thus in its narrative context, the description of the "book of remembrance" as the conservator of divine speech, doctrine, and knowledge "in the world until the end there of" has the beginning and ending of human history as its horizon.

#### **11. "All Thy Words Will I Justify" (Moses 6:34): Enoch's Commission to "Speak Forth" the Divine Word**

We move now from the Book of Remembrance as the repository of divine speech and language to the prophet who was brought up and trained from that book. We will begin with an examination of how he became the greatest user divine speech in sacred history, apart from the Savior himself. Like the biblical text, the Book of Moses text presents Enoch as a seventh generation<sup>83</sup> descendant from Adam. The text further states, "Jared taught Enoch in all the ways of God" (Moses 6:21), a narratological datum perhaps drawn from Enoch's own speech ("And my father taught me in all the ways of God," Moses 6:41) and a statement bearing on the

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Jude 1:14, quoting from the book of 1 Enoch, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

meaning of Enoch's name in the narrative context (Hebrew *ḥănôk* = "initiated"). At this point, the narrator presents Adam's righteous descendants as "Preachers of righteousness"<sup>84</sup> who preach a version of the doctrine of Christ: "And they were preachers of righteousness, and spake and prophesied, and called upon all men, everywhere, to repent; and faith was taught unto the children of men" (Moses 6:23).<sup>85</sup>

Enoch's prophetic call and commission begins with "a voice from heaven" addressing him as "Enoch, my son" and commanding him to "prophesy unto this people" a message of repentance (Moses 6:27). The Lord then recounts the people's apostasy and embrace of secret combinations with all of their "abominations" (6:28). The Lord avers that in embracing secret combinations the people "have foresworn themselves"—i.e., had perjured themselves in a legal sense—suggesting a violation of divine covenants (6:30). Indeed, by their evil "oaths" they had "eat death unto themselves" and "hell" awaited the unrepentant (6:30). The Lord reinforces this idea with additional "legal"<sup>86</sup> language emphasizing the nature of the divine word: "And this is a decree, which I have sent forth in the beginning, from mine own mouth, from the foundation thereof, and by the mouths of my servants, the fathers, have I decreed it, even as it shall be sent forth in the world, unto the end thereof" (Moses 6:30). The use of "decree" here frames the divine

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. 2 Peter 2:5, which describes Noah as a "preacher of righteousness": "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

<sup>85</sup> See further Book of Mormon Central Team, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, and Matthew L. Bowen, "Enoch as Teacher (Moses 6:51-58)," *Book of Moses Insight*, no. 14.

<sup>86</sup> Draper, Brown, Rhodes, *Pearl of Great Price*, 93.

word as a legal pronouncement which the Lord would hold himself responsible to fulfill. This “decree” constitutes the same “decree” mentioned in Moses 5:59 in connection with gospel message and “the words that went out of the mouth of God in a firm decree” that “must be fulfilled” (Moses 5:15). This not only draws a stark contrast between humankind who have “foresworn” or perjured themselves and God who always fulfills his word. The nature of this divine decree gives us a clear picture of the type of divine “word” that the Lord would give Enoch.

Just as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were priests before their prophetic calls and commissions, Enoch had already been “taught” or “initiated” (cf. *hănôk* = “initiated”) into “all the ways of God” as a “preacher of righteousness” when he received his own prophetic call and commission. Like Moses,<sup>87</sup> Isaiah<sup>88</sup> and Jeremiah,<sup>89</sup> Enoch initially expressed diffidence at the Lord’s call: “And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying: Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am **but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?**” (Moses 6:31). Just as the seraph placed the live coal from the altar on Isaiah’s mouth “atoning” his sin and as the Lord himself touched Jeremiah’s mouth and symbolically put his words in in

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<sup>87</sup> Exodus 4:10; JST Exodus 6:29.

<sup>88</sup> See Isaiah 6:5: “Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

<sup>89</sup> See Jeremiah 1:6: “Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.”

the prophet's mouth,<sup>90</sup> the Lord gave Enoch a divine assurance regarding his "mouth" and his word: "And the Lord said unto Enoch: Go forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. **Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance**, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good" (Moses 6:32). In other words, the Lord avowed that he himself would be the source of his prophetic word.

But the Lord goes even further. He promises Enoch that he would "justify"—or vindicate—Enoch's prophetic word, and that eventually even nature would respond to the power of his word: "Behold my Spirit is upon you, wherefore **all thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course**; and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me" (Moses 6:34). In terms of theme, the Lord's promise "all thy words will I justify" harks back to earlier statements in Moses 4:30 ("even so my words cannot return void, for as they go forth out of my mouth they must be fulfilled") and Moses 5:15 ("the words went forth out of the mouth of God in a firm decree; wherefore they must be fulfilled") and the decree mentioned in Moses 6:30. The Lord promises to make Enoch's "words" as efficacious as his own. The Lord's words and Enoch's words will become indistinguishable.

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<sup>90</sup> Jeremiah 1:7-9: "But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. **Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.**"

Creation's or nature's response to Enoch's word will furnish the proof that he speaks forth the divine word. The Lord's promise that the created order would so respond, recalls all what the Book of Moses text has presented heretofore in terms of creation by divine speech. If the Only Begotten as the "word of [God's] power" is the creator, it is fair to suggest that the text here characterizes Enoch as the Lord's "vice-creator" or "re-creator," which invites immediate comparison to the figure of Enoch/Metatron in 3 Enoch as the "Lesser Yhwh."<sup>91</sup>

Enoch goes forth from this divine commissioning using his word as a bold witness against the sins of the people: "And it came to pass that Enoch went forth in the land, among the people, standing upon the hills and the high places, and **cried with a loud voice, testifying against their works**; and all men were offended because of him" (Moses 6:37). Even though "all men were offended" by his word, he had no lack of an audience (see Moses 6:38), although his delivery of his word caused his audience to fear: "no man laid hands on him; for fear came on all them that heard him; for he walked with God" (Moses 6:39).

Enoch's commitment to align both his will and his word with the Lord's emerges in his the brief vision report of his divine commission, "And it came to pass, as I journeyed from the land of Cainan, by the sea east, I beheld a vision;

A      and lo, **the heavens I saw, and the Lord spake with me,**

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<sup>91</sup> On the Enoch-Metatron tradition, see Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebek, 2005) *passim*; Moshe Idel, *Ben: Sonship and Jewish Mysticism* (London: Continuum; Bloomsbury Academic, 2007).

B        **and gave me commandment;**

B        wherefore, for this cause, **to keep the commandment,**

A        **I speak forth these words”** (Moses 6:42).

Here the text furnishes semantic evidence that Enoch was acting as a prophet (see also Moses 6:47, and below). The meaning of the word “prophet” in Hebrew—*nabî’*—denotes either “one called” or “one who calls forth”—i.e., “one who speaks forth” (cf. the Akkadian noun and verb *nabû[m]*).<sup>92</sup> The Greek translation of Hebrew *nabî’* is *prophētēs* (whence our English word *prophet* derives) which means: “one who speaks forth” or “a proclaimer or expounder of divine matters or concerns that could not ordinarily be known except by special revelation.”<sup>93</sup> Enoch, like other prophets, was more a *foreteller* than a *forthteller*.<sup>94</sup> If a prophet can be described as a

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<sup>92</sup> Scholarly debate on *nabî’* tends to revolve around whether the term conveys an active or passive meaning. Koehler and Baumgartner (*HALOT*, 661) suggest that *nabî’* “may have an active sense, ‘speaker, herald, preacher’ or (more probably) a passive sense ‘one who has been called.’” Whether the meaning of *nabî’* is ultimately active or passive, the word is certainly related to the Akkadian verb *nabû(m)*, originally Old Akkadian and Old Assyrian *nabā’um*, with the active meanings “to name; nominate; decree”; “name” (persons, things, places); “invoke” (deity) and the noun *nabû(m)*, a contraction of *nabium*, with the passive meanings “called, authorized person” (i.e., of a king). Jeremy Black, Andrew George, Nicholas Postgate, eds., *A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000), 228-229.

<sup>93</sup> Walter Bauer, Fredrick William Danker, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (rev. and ed. by Fredrick William Danker; 3rd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 890.

<sup>94</sup> See, e.g., *Bible Dictionary* (Latter-day Saint Edition of the Holy Scriptures, 2013 ed.), s.v., “Prophet,” 708-709: “It was ... the prophet’s duty to denounce sin and foretell its punishment and to redress, so far as he could, both public and private wrongs. He was to be, above all, a preacher of righteousness. When the people had fallen away from a true faith in Jehovah, the prophets had to try to restore that faith and remove false views about the character of God and the nature of the divine requirement. In certain cases prophets predicted future events, such as the very important prophecies announcing the coming of Messiah’s kingdom; but as a rule a prophet was a *forthteller* rather than a *foreteller*. In a general sense a prophet is anyone who has a testimony of Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost.”

“speaker, herald, or preacher,”<sup>95</sup> that description particularly fits the context of Enoch’s activities as a “preacher of righteous”<sup>96</sup> descended through a line of “preachers of righteousness.”<sup>97</sup> In “speaking forth” the Lord’s prophets must testify of Jesus Christ and call the people to repentance as part of the doctrine of Christ, both of which Enoch does.<sup>98</sup>

Enoch identifies the God who called him and gave him his prophetic commission him as “the God of heaven” and identifies his hearers as his “brethren” (Moses 6:43). He also briefly recounts the creation of heaven, earth, and humanity—“an host of men hath he brought in upon the face thereof” (Moses 6:44) statement that calls to mind the full-form divine title Lord of Hosts, *yhwh-šĕbā`ôt*, or Lord of Sabaoth.<sup>99</sup> Enoch notes that “death” had overtaken human—the original decreed consequence of disobedience to divine instruction and a running theme in the Book of Moses (see the Lord’s words in Moses 6:29 above).

## **12. “As Enoch Spake Forth the Words of God, the People Trembled” (Moses 6:47): Enoch’s Progression in the Prophetic Use of the Divine Word**

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<sup>95</sup> HALOT, 661-662.

<sup>96</sup> Compare Moses 6:41 to Moses 6:23.

<sup>97</sup> Moses 6:22-23.

<sup>98</sup> Moses 6:23, 27-30, 47-68; 7:10-12. On Enoch’s testimony of Jesus Christ, see Moses 6:52, 54, 57; 7:11; on repentance, see especially vv. 23, 27-29, 50-53, 57; 7:10-12.

<sup>99</sup> See Matthew L. Bowen, “‘Creator of the First Day’: The Glossing of Lord of Sabaoth in D&C 95:7” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 22 (2016): 51-77.

Let us now follow the exponential growth of Enoch’s ability to speak forth the divine word, as he undertakes to fulfill his prophetic commission. Enoch refers back to the “book of remembrance” from which he was taught and trained. This book constituted the source of much of Enoch’s preaching of the divine word—the “words of God”: “For a book of remembrance we have written among us, according to the pattern given by the finger of God; and it is given in our own language” (Moses 6:46). Enoch had obtained<sup>100</sup> God’s word from multiple sources, before he declared it.

At this point the narrator states that “as Enoch spake forth **the words of God**, the people trembled, and could not stand in his presence” (Moses 6:47). This declaration marks Enoch’s reception of the first installment of the Lord’s promise and helps the implied audience of this text track the progression of Enoch’s word. It also helps us appreciate the value of scripture study—obtaining and treasuring up God’s word as Enoch had done.<sup>101</sup>

As Enoch comes to embody the divine word, the text’s implied audience witnesses the Lord’s “word” regarding Enoch coming to fulfilment. Enoch’s growth manifests the development process implied by “made according to my word” in Moses 2:16 and the progression and growth implied in Moses 2:16; 3:7.

### **“The Words of Eternal Life”: The Gospel According to Enoch**

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. D&C 11:21.

<sup>101</sup> See, e.g., Matthew 13:52; D&C 6:20; 11:21-26; Joseph Smith–Matthew 1:37.



Enoch's teaching of the doctrine of Christ and the plan of salvation in Moses 6:48-68 gives a window on how a prophet of the Lord is a "forthteller" rather than a "foreteller" in speaking forth the words of the Lord. Also, this teaching offers us, very arguably, of the most concise and effective presentations of the doctrine of Christ and the plan of salvation anywhere in scripture.

Enoch teaches the Fall in v. 48-49; repentance in v. 50; the premortal existence in v. 51; faith, water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost in v. 52; Christ's atonement for original guilt and personal accountability for sin in vv. 53-55; the nature of God and the coming of the Son of God in the meridian of time, v. 57; the Fall and the necessity of divine rebirth, justification and sanctification, and their interrelationship with gospel ordinances, vv. 59-61; the plan of salvation through Christ's blood, v. 62; Adam's baptism and divine rebirth as a son of God through reception of the Holy Ghost and the priesthood (vv. 64-68). Enoch analogizes the process of spiritual rebirth with mortal birth, without which one cannot enjoy what Enoch describes as "the words of eternal life": "... by reason of transgression cometh the fall, which fall bringeth death, and inasmuch as ye were born into the world by water, and blood, and the spirit, which I have made, and so became of dust a living soul, even so ye must be born again into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, of water, and of the Spirit, and be cleansed by blood, even the blood of mine Only Begotten; that ye might be sanctified from all sin, and enjoy **the words of eternal life** in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory" (Moses 6:59 OT1).

We can easily—and appropriately—understand Enoch’s expression, on one level, to refer to the scripture, i.e., the written word. In this sense, the “book of remembrance” and its contents as described in Moses 6:5-9, 46 would constitute “the words of eternal life.” Nevertheless, John 6:68 attests the same collocation, “the words of eternal life,” as a translation of the Greek phrase *rhēmata zōēs aiōniou* (ῥήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου)—literally, “utterances of eternal life.” Peter here had no reference to a written body or collection of divine words, but first to Jesus’s authoritative interpretation of the scriptures (especially the “law of Moses”) as leading to eternal life and second, more broadly, to all the divine words which Jesus himself speaks—what Nephi describes as the doctrine of Christ—as the “way” to eternal life. Enoch’s own words as authoritative divine teaching would thus fit either description since “the doctrine of Christ” constitutes the sum and substance of his speech in Moses 6:48-68 and become a part of the book that Moses would “write”(see Moses 1:41).

Regarding Moses 6:59, Draper, Brown, and Rhodes note that “receiving the second birth somehow opens the door to joy over ‘the words of eternal life’ rather than to some other reaction ... such as indifference, rejection, or even anger.”<sup>102</sup> It is Nephi himself that tells us that “the gate by which ye should enter is repentance by water” (2 Nephi 31:17), namely, “following your Lord and your Savior down into water, according to his word” and then “receiv[ing] the Holy Ghost”

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<sup>102</sup> Draper, Brown, and Rhodes, *Pearl of Great Price*, 104.

results in “the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises to the Holy One of Israel.”<sup>103</sup>

To “speak with the tongue of angels” (2 Nephi 31:13-14; 2 Nephi 32:2) evidences the type of rebirth that Enoch describes in Moses 6:59. Indeed, Enoch himself represents that type of divine transformation—a transformation evident in Moses 6-7 and a theme almost ubiquitous in the non-biblical Enochic literature. To “enjoy the words of eternal life in this world,” then, must on some level correspond to “speak[ing] with the tongue of angels, and shout[ing] praises to the Holy One of Israel. Nephi’s later statement in 2 Nephi 32:4 further suggests that this is the case: “Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.” The words of Christ—the words which Enoch now speaks—are “the words of eternal life,” with the decreed consequences attached as enumerated in Moses 5:15.

### **13. “So Powerful Was the Word of Enoch, And So Great Was the Power of the Language Which God Had Given Him” (Moses 7:13)**

Further following the trajectory of his ability to speak the word of the Lord upward, we note Enoch’s additional “temple” experience when a “voice from heaven” directs him to ascend the Mount Simeon (Heb. “place of hearing”) where he sees “the heavens opened,” he is “clothed

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<sup>103</sup> Neal Rappleye, “With the Tongue of Angels”: Angelic Speech as a Form of Deification,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 21 (2016) 303-323.

upon with glory,” and the Lord talks with him “face to face” (Moses 7:2-3). The vision given to Enoch in Moses 7:3-12 with its second commission to preach repentance to the people gave Enoch an additional endowment of divine power.

We recall that Enoch received the first installment of the Lord’s promise regarding Enoch’s “words” or power of speech (see Moses 6:32, 34) with the result that “no man laid hands on him” and “as Enoch spake forth **the words of God**, the people trembled, and could not stand in his presence” (Moses 6:39 and 6:47). The trajectory of Enoch’s “word” from that first installment moves toward complete fulfillment of the promise:

And so great was the faith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; **and he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course;** and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, **so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him.** (Moses 7:13)

A major portion of the Lord’s word to Enoch in Moses 6:34—“all thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course” now stood fulfilled. The response of creation to Enoch’s “words,” here identified designated “the word of the Lord” is described in striking concrete imagery with the earth, the mountains, the rivers of water, and lions (representing the animal kingdom) all responding in their fashion to Enoch’s word and the power of the divine language given to him.

This type of response from the natural creation to the “word of faith”<sup>104</sup> is not unknown elsewhere in scripture. For example, Luke records that Jesus said, “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, **ye might say** unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you” (Luke 17:6). Similarly, Jacob the son of Lehi and brother of Nephi, averred, “Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that **we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea**” (Jacob 4:6). Moroni reports that “the brother of Jared **said** unto the mountain Zerin, Remove—and it was removed. And if he had not had faith it would not have moved; wherefore thou workest after men have faith” (Ether 12:30).

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and David Larsen have noted the connection<sup>105</sup> between nature’s response to Enoch’s word and the priesthood covenant that the Lord made with Enoch as later described in the JST text: “For God having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed with an oath by himself; that **every one being ordained after this order and calling should have power**, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course; to put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God; **to do all things according to his will, according to his command**, subdue

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. Romans 10:8.

<sup>105</sup> Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and David J. Larsen, *In God’s Image and Likeness 2: Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel* (Salt Lake City: Interpreter Foundation/Eborn Books, 2014), 63-64.

principalities and powers; and this by the will of the Son of God which was from before the foundation of the world” (JST Genesis 14:32-32). Enoch received the same oath and priesthood<sup>106</sup> to empower his word that Adam had conferred upon him by divine declaration as recorded in Moses 6:66-68.

Finally, it should be noted that Enoch also receives by divine decree a promise regarding his posterity not unlike the Abrahamic covenant, and even anticipatory of the latter: “And he sent forth **an unalterable decree, that a remnant of his [Enoch’s] seed** should always be found **among all nations**, while the **earth** should stand” (Moses 7:52). In addition to recalling the legal language of previous divine decrees (see Moses 5:15, 59), including to Enoch himself (Moses 6:30), this decree looks forward to the Lord’s promises to Abraham: “Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son” (Genesis 18:14; 21). This promise, fulfilled initially Genesis 21:1-6, also had a much wider horizon in view as expressed in Genesis 22:18 after the arresting of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac: “in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” “Seed,” understood in the narrowest sense as Paul understands it in Galatians 3:16, refers to Jesus Christ himself. The Lord’s subsequent words to Enoch could have been spoken to Abraham himself: “And the Lord said: **Blessed is he through whose seed Messiah shall come**; for he saith—I am Messiah, the King of Zion, the Rock of Heaven, which is broad as eternity; whoso cometh in at the gate

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<sup>106</sup> JST Genesis 14:27 describes Melchizedek himself as having been “ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch,” Cf. Moses 6:21, 23 where Enoch’s ordination prior to his prophetic call and commission is strongly implied.

and climbeth up by me shall never fall; wherefore, blessed are they of whom I have spoken, for they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy” (Moses 7:53).

#### 14. “The Words of Noah”

As we come to the end of the Book of Moses portion of the JST, the Enoch narrative in Moses 6–7 transitions to the story of Noah and the imminent flood with an increasing focus on the divine “word” as *kerygma*—the Gospel message that Enoch and Noah preached, including the all-important messages of repentance and Christ. Noah and his sons respond affirmatively to the preaching of their predecessors, “And Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed, and they were called the sons of God” (Moses 8:13)—i.e., through receiving the priesthood after the order of the son of God (see again Moses 6). The etiological naming of Noah, as presented in the Book of Moses text (“And he [Lamech] called his name **Noah** [*nōah* = rest], saying: This son **shall comfort us** [*yěnahāmēnû*] concerning **our work** and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed”) serves as more than an explanation of the “comfort” of wine for the “work” and “toil” of farming. It becomes a promise of “comfort” and consolation to “preachers of righteousness” for the “work” and “toil” of preaching the Gospel to cursed people in cursed world—i.e., to patriarchs like Enoch, who lamented the destruction of the wicked with the words, “I will refuse to be comforted” (Moses 7:44).<sup>107</sup> Noah’s naming also

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<sup>107</sup> Matthew L. Bowen, “This Son Shall Comfort Us’: An Onomastic Tale of Two Noahs,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 23 (2017): 263–298, see especially 264–267, 273–274.

promised “rest” to the earth or ground (the *’ădāmâ*), which bore—and still bears—the awful burden of that curse (see Moses 7:48 [2 x], 54, 58, 61, 64).<sup>108</sup>

Noah, in turn, followed the pattern set by his predecessors, including Enoch: “And it came to pass that Noah prophesied, and taught the **things** [words] of God, even as it was in the beginning” (Moses 8:16). The response to his prophecies was negative, such that “they sought Noah to take away his life; but the Lord was with Noah, and the power of the Lord was upon him” (Moses 8:18). The narrator then reiterates, “And the Lord ordained Noah after his own order, and commanded him that he should go forth and **declare his Gospel** unto the children of men, even as it was given unto Enoch” (Moses 8:19). In other words, Noah went forth with priesthood authority and a divine commission to preach the doctrine of Christ (“his Gospel”), just as Enoch had taught it in Moses 6:48-68. The text emphasizes the negative response to his “words”:

And it came to pass that Noah called upon the children of men that they should repent; **but they hearkened not unto his words**. And also, after that they had heard him, they came up before him, saying: Behold, we are the sons of God; have we not taken unto ourselves the daughters of men? And are we not eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage? And our wives bear unto us children, and the same are mighty men, which are like unto men of old, men of great renown. And **they hearkened not unto the words of Noah**. (Moses 8:19-21)

That the principles and ordinances of the doctrine of Christ constitute the essential message of the “words of Noah” is made clear in the text that follows: “And it came to pass that

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<sup>108</sup> Terrence L. Szink, “The Vision of Enoch: Structure of a Masterpiece,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Restoration Scripture* 17/1–2 (2008): 6–19. Bowen, “This Son Shall Comfort Us,” 268-273.



Noah continued his preaching unto the people, saying: Hearken, and give heed unto **my words**; **believe and repent of your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God**, even as our fathers, **and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost**, that ye may have all things made manifest; and if ye do not this, the floods will come in upon you; nevertheless they hearkened not. (Moses 8:23-24) The near-universal rejection of the doctrine of Christ supplies some appropriate context to the Lord's declaration of universal apostasy in Moses 8:29: "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, all flesh had corrupted its way [Heb. *darkô*] upon the earth" (Genesis 6:12). Notably, OT1 here reads even more clearly as a reference to the doctrine of Christ: "all flesh had corrupted **his** way upon the earth."

Noah's warning, "if ye do not this, the floods will come in upon you" makes the "uncreation" of the earth/land in the Flood contingent upon the people's response to Noah's preached "words" along the very same lines as Lord's "firm decree" in Moses 5:15. The canonical Book of Moses ends with the ominous declaration: "The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence, and **behold I will destroy all flesh** from off the earth" (Moses 8:30), signaling the near-wholesale rejection of the Lord's and Noah's "words" and the forthcoming of the previously decreed consequences. Fittingly, the Lord's declaration punctuates the canonical Book of Moses with the same force as the declaration in Isaiah 40:8: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

## 15. Conclusion

One of the clearly emergent results of the JST text that comprises the Book of Moses is a detailed presentation of the multifaceted nature of the divine word and the generative relationship between the divine *word* and divine *work* (see Moses 1:4; 2:6-7, 9, 11, 14-15, 24, 26, 30). Its vision of God's words and works as endless (Moses 1:4, 38) helps provide a striking context for viewing scripture and the nature of post-biblical "canon": divine words should not be diminished, since God's words are as endless as his works. The Lord can, does, and will restore them even as he continues to add thereto (see Moses 1:41).

We glimpse the nature of the divine word as christological—Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten, acting as "the word of [divine] power" (Moses 1:32, 35; 2:5). This descriptive title constitutes an appropriate theological and doctrinal backspace for Hebrews 1:1-4, 11:1, the *logos* of John 1:1-18, and similar Jewish texts attesting personified "word" (*mêmrā*). The JST/Book of Moses gives us a view of the function of the word in creation that illustrates the tight generative relationship between word and work. Spiritual creation or development "according to his word" (Moses 3:7), like the growth of a seed (Alma 32), can be understood as a process rather than an event.

The JST/Book of Moses presents a view of the nature of the divine "word" as a (legal) "decree"—the "unalterable decree" that "cannot return void" but "must be fulfilled (Moses 4:30; 5:15, 5:59; 6:30). This has implications for the prophetic word and its fulfillment. Enoch himself becomes the embodiment of such prophecy, progressing in his ability to speak the divine "word" from the weakest of speakers to one at whose "word" the people "trembled" (Moses 6:47) and to

whose “word” nature responds (Moses 7:13). JST/Moses also offers an etiology for scripture as a preservation of the divine “word” and the perpetuation of divine language, literacy, and priesthood among the human family in the “book of remembrance” kept by Adam and his posterity.<sup>109</sup> Enoch further offers a view of the nature of the preached “word” as the Gospel or doctrine of Christ—the “words of eternal life”—the essence of which has been preached from the very beginning (see Moses 5:6-15; 55-59; 6:48-68). It was the rejection of Noah and his “words” that triggered the Flood as an “uncreation.”

Finally, one could make the argument that the theme of the divine “word” in the JST/Book of Moses offers us a view of one of the most crucial aspects of God’s character and divinity: As the Lord stated in a revelation contemporary<sup>110</sup> with the translation of those portions of Genesis that became the Book of Moses: “But remember that all my judgments are not given unto men; and **as the words have gone forth out of my mouth even so shall they be fulfilled,** that the first shall be last, and that the last shall be first in all things **whatsoever I have created by the word of my power, which is the power of my Spirit**“ (D&C 29:30). The Father’s actions

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<sup>109</sup> Samuel Zinner (personal communication, notes in the possession of the author) offers the following insight regarding the “book of remembrance” kept by Adam and his posterity: “This brings to mind the Jewish tradition of Adam possessing a book of mysteries that is transmitted through the chain of his descendants. In Ethiopic literature this becomes a pearl of great price transmitted from Adam to Jesus.”

<sup>110</sup> The heading to Doctrine and Covenants in 2013 edition states that the revelation was received beginning on September 26, 1830. Joseph Smith translated Moses 2-5 sometime between June and October 1830.

always match his words, so too the Son's. The Son is the "word of [the Father's] power" precisely because his actions always match the Father's words.

The contrast between Satan, "a liar from the beginning,"<sup>111</sup> and Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten, could not have more stark. Satan "came before [the Father] saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore **give me thine honor**" (Moses 4:2), "**which is my power**" (D&C 29:36). "But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and Chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever" (Moses 4:3). Contrary to Satan's assertion ("surely I will do it"), he could not and would not. Jesus "suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11:11). We become more like the Father and the Son when our righteous actions match our words. We must learn to say with Joseph Smith and the Kirtland Saints, ""But thy word must be fulfilled. Help thy servants to say, with thy grace assisting them: Thy will be done, O Lord, and not ours" (D&C 109:44). In the big picture then, the Book of Moses highlights personal honesty as a supreme divine virtue. Jesus Christ is "the word of [his] power" and "the word of [his] power" is "the power of his spirit"—his power and divinity.

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<sup>111</sup> D&C 93:25; cf. Alma 5:5; see also John 8:44.