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Moses 1 and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: Twin Sons of Different Mothers?
Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, David J. Larsen, and Stephen T. Whitlock

Please forgive the excessive use of italics in the document, which were used to help me read the text out loud.

MOSES 1 AND THE APOCALYPSE OF ABRAHAM: TWIN SONS OF DIFFERENT MOTHERS?

JEFFREY M. BRADSHAW, DAVID J. LARSEN, AND STEPHEN T. WHITLOCK

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Our presentation is entitled "Moses 1 and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*: Twin Sons of Different Mothers?" I am glad that Stephen T. Whitlock is with us today. We regret that David J. Larsen is unable to join us.

More detail can be found in a longer article that appeared earlier this year in *Interpreter: A Journal of Faith and Scholarship*.

Apokalypse Abrahams.

Das Testament der vierzig Märtyrer

herausgegeben

von

G. Nathanael Bonwetsch.

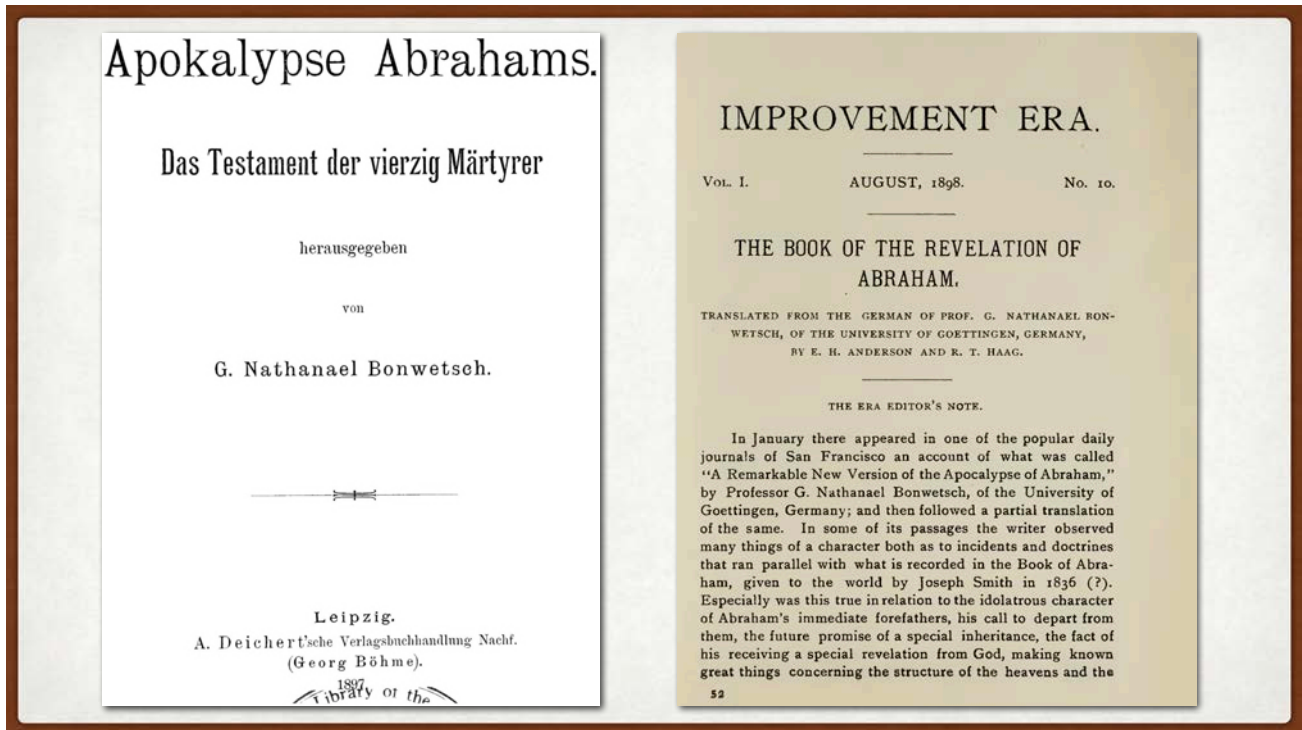


Leipzig.

A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf.
(Georg Böhme).

1897
Library of the

In 1897, a German translation by G. Nathanael Bonwetsch introduced the Western world to the *Apocalypse of Abraham* or, as I will call it throughout the rest of the presentation, *ApAb*.



The significance of *ApAb* was not lost on Latter-day Saints, who published the first *English* translation of the work in the *Improvement Era* in 1898, just one year after Bonwetsch's *German* edition appeared. Hugh Nibley, Jared Ludlow, and others have studied the work in conjunction with the Book of Abraham. Although I will mention some affinities with the Book of Abraham, our focus today will be on its relationship to Moses 1.

To begin, I would like to say some things about methodology.

WHAT IS COMPARATIVE RESEARCH?

- An examination of *historical and literary relationships* between a primary text and other texts to look for *evidence of influence or common origins*

Like some of the other presentations today, our methodology relies primarily on *comparative research*. Comparative research examines historical and literary relationships between a primary text and other texts to look for evidence of influence or common origins.

Though it is fair to say that comparative studies have not always been as carefully conducted as they should have been, it would be a mistake to reject the idea of comparative study outright. As Todd Compton explained: “Drawing parallels is a necessary technique for any scholar; one must simply judge each parallel separately to see what validity it offers,” recognizing that “this technique requires careful analysis of the passages to be compared.”

Details about standards for comparative analysis are discussed in detail in our published paper.

WHAT IS COMPARATIVE RESEARCH?

- An examination of *historical and literary relationships* between a primary text and other texts to look for *evidence of influence or common origins*
- *Illuminates the meaning* of both the primary text of interest and the texts to which it is being compared

Importantly, comparative research not only provides clues to origins and influences but also frequently illuminates the meaning of both the primary text of interest and the texts to which it is being compared.

It would be ideal if we had a manuscript much closer to the time and milieu of Moses than *ApAb* to use as the basis for our comparison. However, *late* and *imperfect* documents from antiquity may nevertheless provide keys for understanding, even when they may be riddled with the ridiculous. C.S. Lewis once addressed the potential of ancient sources, even those of poor quality, to inform modern scholars in surprising ways. He illustrated his point by saying, “I would give a great deal to hear any *ancient* Athenian, even a stupid one, talking about Greek tragedy. He would know in *his* bones so much that *we* seek in vain. At any moment some *chance phrase* might, unknown to *him*, show *us* where modern scholarship had been on the wrong track for years.” In a few instances, our experiences in comparing Moses 1 to *ApAb* have revealed the truth of Lewis’ claim.

For example, as part of our study of Moses 1, a seemingly gratuitous and initially inexplicable phrase stood out in verse 27: “*as the voice was still speaking.*” Surprisingly, we found that the *Apocalypse of Abraham* repeated similar phrases in analogous contexts. This discovery provided a welcome clue to a possible meaning of this obscure phrase in both texts — a finding we will describe further below.

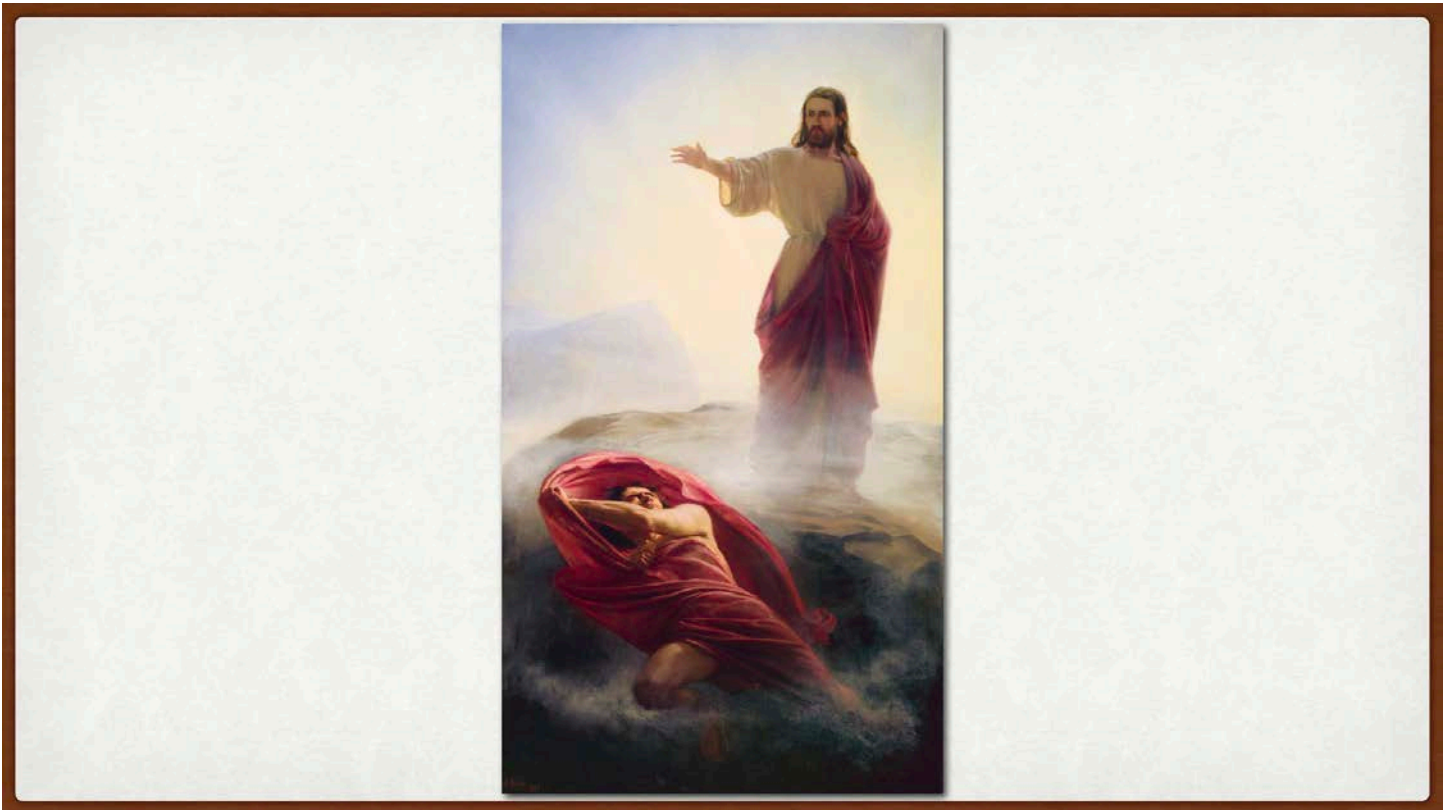
COMMON TYPES OF COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN STUDIES OF LATTER-DAY SAINT SCRIPTURE

1. Comparisons to the Bible and other translation resources *known* to Joseph Smith that as evidence of *nineteenth-century influences*
2. Comparisons to ancient sources *unknown* to Joseph Smith as evidence of a process that relied on *divine revelation*
3. Comparisons to other texts *focusing on literary features rather than explanations of influences and origins*

There are three common types of comparative analysis that are used to study the texts and translations of Latter-day Saint scripture:

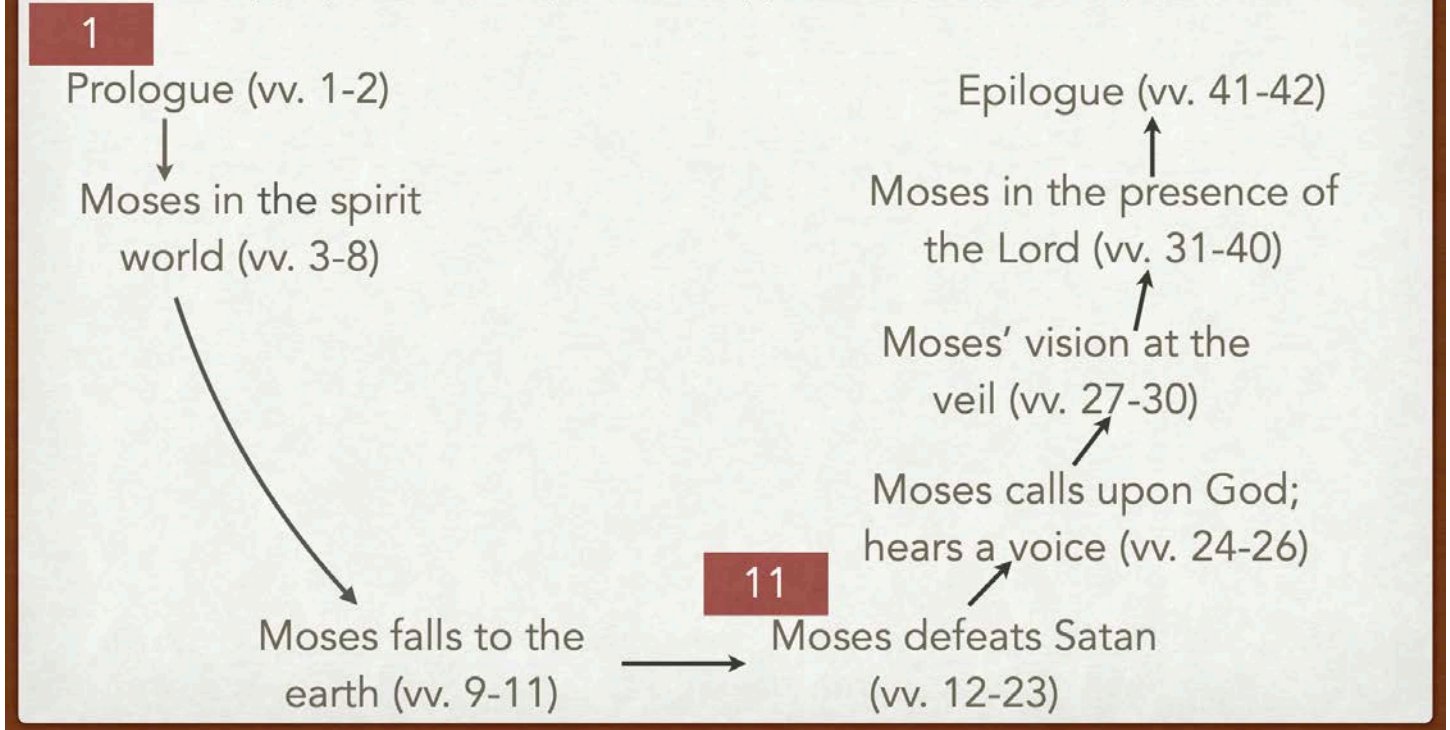
1. Comparisons to the Bible and other translation resources *known* to Joseph Smith as evidence of *nineteenth-century influences*;
2. Comparisons to ancient sources *unknown* to Joseph Smith as evidence of a process that relied on *divine revelation*; and
3. Comparisons to other texts *focusing on literary features rather than explanations of influences and origins*.

It is not a sound focus on one of these types to the exclusion of the others, since these three types are complementary. To avoid the blindness to unseen evidence that comes from over-specialization, results from all three types should be considered *together* when evaluating evidence for origins and influences.



The most common argument advanced in comparisons of Moses 1 to the Bible and other translation resources known to Joseph Smith as evidence of *nineteenth-century influences* is that it was inspired by Jesus' encounter with Satan in Matthew 4. However, a preliminary study by Colby Townsend has demonstrated that Matthew's account is a relatively *unfruitful* source of comparison.

NUMBER OF MATTHEW 4 RESEMBLANCES

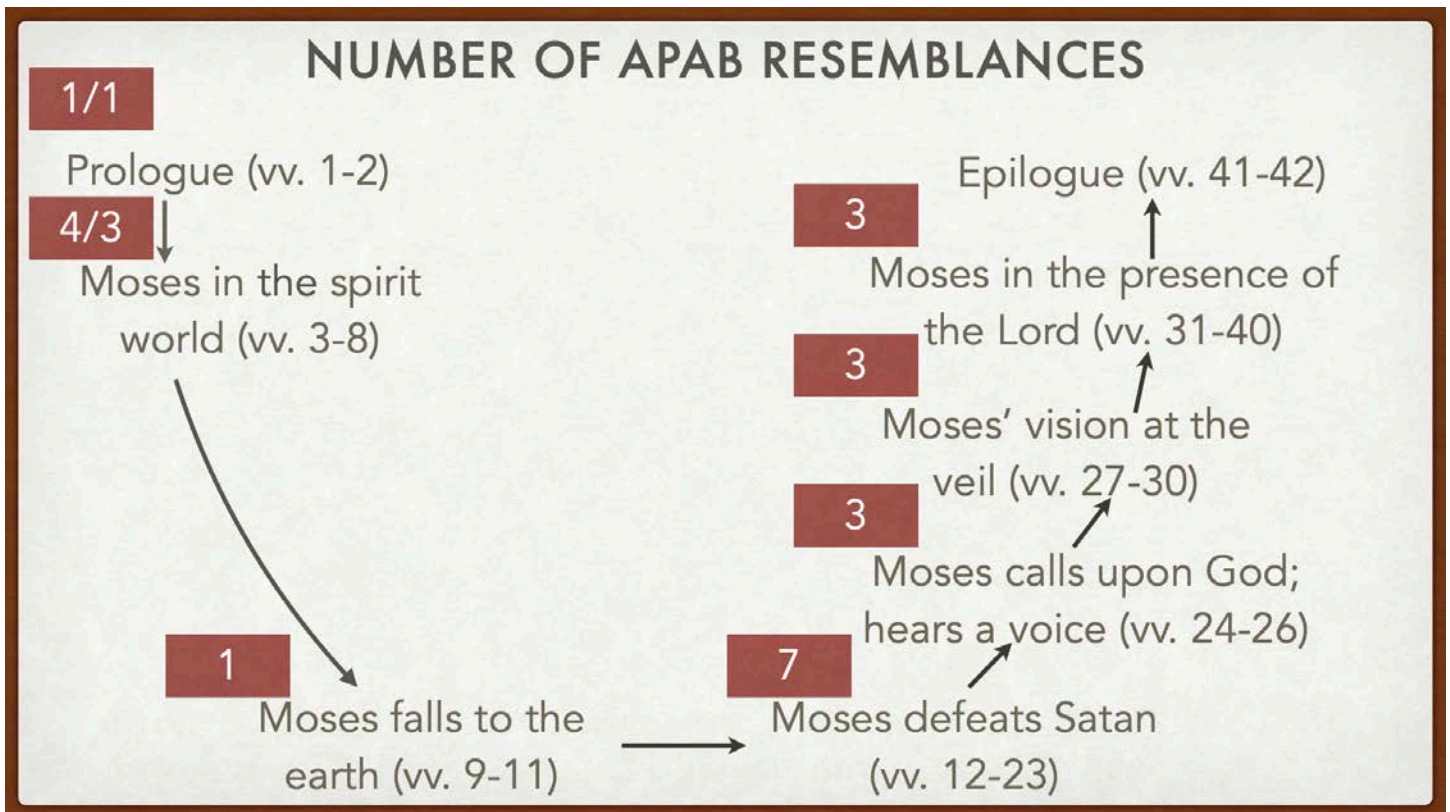


In this diagram, the number of resemblances in vocabulary of Matthew 4 to the narrative themes of Moses 1 have been classified according to the section of the Moses 1 account in which they appear.

Townsend found twelve resemblances in all. At first glance, the number of similarities that relate to the verbal battle of Jesus and Satan seems impressive. However, closer examination reveals that *all eleven* resemblances come from only *three* verses in Matthew. And each one is based on an occurrence of one or the other of *two* key terms: “worship” and “depart.” Moreover, every resemblance identified, except the first, scores on the *weaker* end of the spectrum of the classification scale used —corresponding to a 1 or 2 out of a possible strength of 5.

In short, although Moses 1 and Matthew 4 share some general elements of one particular type scene in common, the specific resemblances are weak, repetitive, and limited to relatively small portions of the Moses 1 narrative.

NUMBER OF APAB RESEMBLANCES



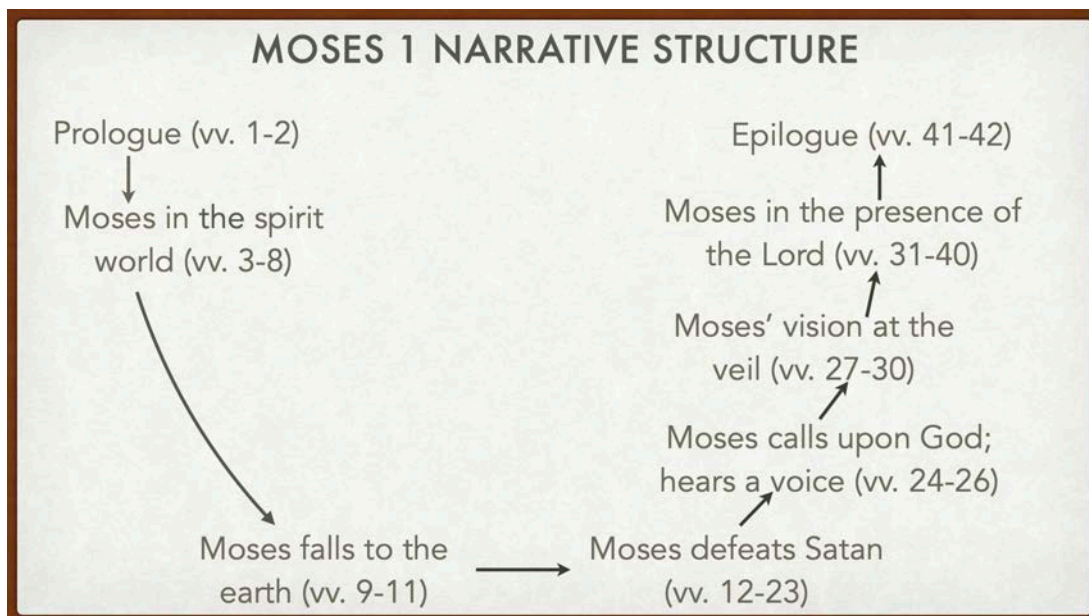
By way of contrast to studies of the first type that focus only on possible *nineteenth-century* influences, our focus today will be on comparisons to *ancient texts* as evidence of a process that relied on *divine revelation*.

We will primarily look at thematic resemblances of *ApAb* to Moses 1, a text Joseph Smith could *not* have known. By the term “thematic resemblances,” we mean instances where reasonably similar topics of discussion occur in both texts, even when perspectives on that topic may differ. The criterion of thematic similarity rather than identical vocabulary is appropriate because we are comparing two *English* translations.

The summary of resemblances shown here paints an interesting picture. It is evident that the resemblances are not confined to limited sections of Moses 1 but rather are spread throughout the chapter from start to finish. The resemblances themselves are highly varied and tend to be unique within a given section of the narrative.

Importantly, not only the *occurrence* but also the *sequence* of common elements of the two texts is similar, satisfying a stronger comparative criterion that resemblances should form part of “a highly intricate pattern rather than [the simple matching of] an isolated ‘motif,’” Significantly, with one exception, every one of the major resemblances between the two texts occur in the same sequence. We discuss the exception in more detail in the full paper.

Now let’s discuss Moses 1 itself.



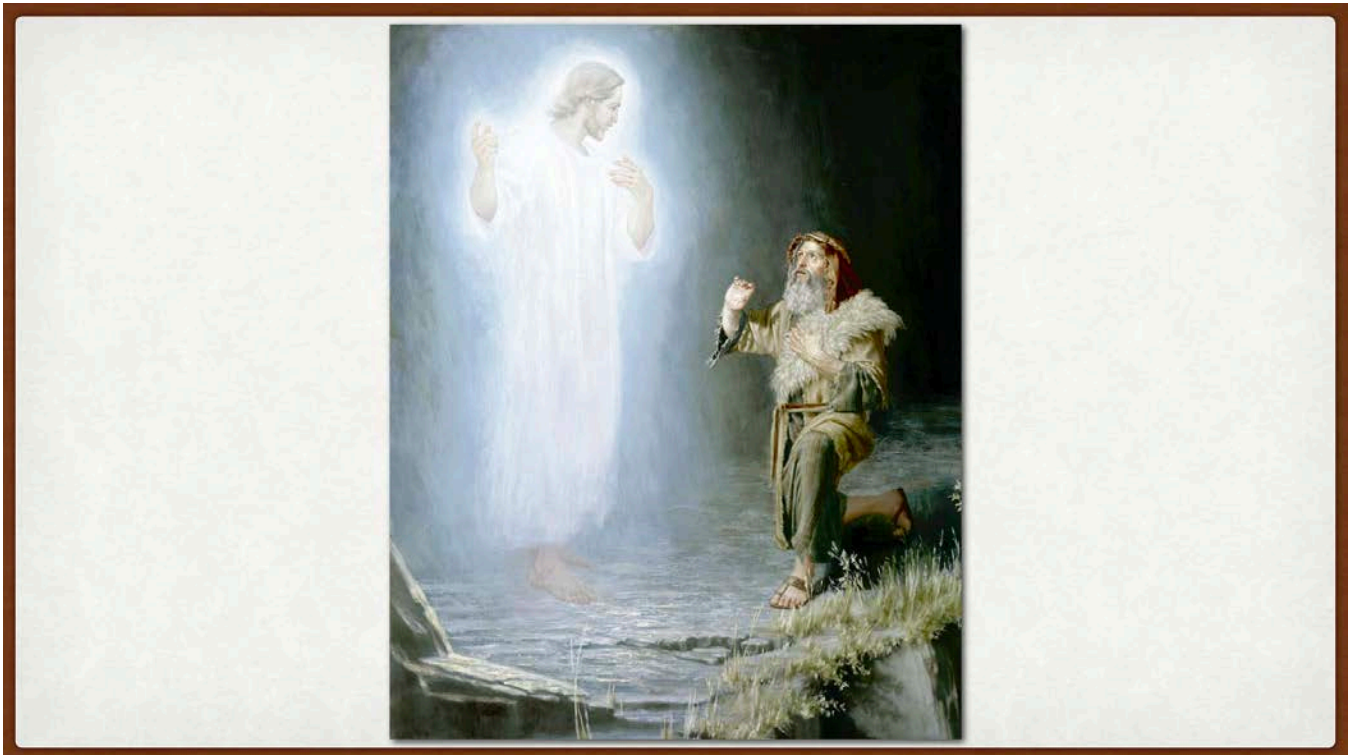
Several of the individual episodes in Moses 1 are well known to students of the Book of Moses—Moses’ confrontation with Satan, his comprehensive vision of the earth and all its inhabitants, and God’s declaration about His “work and glory.” Yet how all these pieces join beautifully into a coherent whole has been generally underappreciated.

At first glance, some elements of the vision might appear to be repetitive. For example, at the beginning of his vision, Moses saw the “world ... and all the children of men” (Moses 1:8). Then, near the end of the vision, he seems to have experienced the same thing again when he saw the “earth, and ... the inhabitants thereof” (Moses 1:27–29). Why is this so?

The answer to this question becomes apparent when one recognizes how these two *different* visions fit into the context of the chapter as a whole. The “u-shaped” two-part narrative pattern of Moses 1 consists of a *down-road* followed by an *up-road*. In brief, the prophet’s experience in Moses 1 not only constituted a divine prophetic *commission*, but also a *tutorial* on the plan of salvation from a personal perspective, analogous in many respects to the modern temple endowment.

More specifically, the sequence of events recounted in Moses 1 *began* with Moses’ departure from God’s presence in the beginning and *ended* with his glorious return to the divine presence through his faithfulness. Thus, the two seemingly *similar* visions at the beginning and end of Moses 1 are not *repetitive*. In verse 8, early on in the vision, it appears that Moses saw the *premortal* world and all the *premortal spirits* that God had created (compare Abraham 3:22–23). Later, in verses 27–29, he seems to have experienced a view from heaven of the *mortal* earth and all its *mortal* inhabitants.

Sandwiched between the two visions received at the high points of heaven, Moses’ experience at the low point of the narrative recapitulated the downward journey of Adam as he left the Garden of Eden, “landing” on earth “as a natural man,” as Hugh Nibley put it. Afterward, Moses was left to himself to be tested in a dramatic encounter with Satan. Only then was he prepared to rise heavenward again through the power of the priesthood and its ordinances.



As we describe in more detail elsewhere, Moses 1 fits squarely into the temple-related genre of scripture that scholars call *heavenly ascent*. Significantly, the account in the central chapters of *ApAb* is *also* a remarkable exemplar of *heavenly ascent*. In addition, as Jared Ludlow has observed, *ApAb* is also “the *only* Jewish text to discuss foreordination, Satan’s rebellion, and premortal existence.” While not exactly *identical* twins, important elements of both Moses 1 and *ApAb* seem to draw on a common well of ritual and experience in a manner that belies the apparent fact that they were independently produced in timeframes that are separated by millennia.

For starters, the primary components of narrative structure within *ApAb* of Abraham’s heavenly ascent can be matched to the sequence of major events in the heavenly ascent of Moses 1, as we have already seen. However, in addition, both Moses 1 and *ApAb* *culminate* in a vision of the Creation and the Fall.

Going further, in a 2014 *BYU Studies Quarterly* article, I have argued that Moses 2-8 can be seen as a temple text, following a similar pattern to the one Jack Welch described in his brilliant analysis on the New Testament Sermon on the Mount and the Book of Mormon Sermon at the Temple. The seven concluding chapters of the Book of Moses contain stories related to the covenants necessary for *ritual* ascent, the kind of *figurative* ascent that takes place in *earthly* temples. In other words, the *heavenly* ascent of Moses 1 seems to provide a prelude to the *ritual* ascent of chapters 2 through 8, as Douglas Clark and others have suggested.

In short, as Elder and Sister Hafen taught us last night, the Book of Moses is a “*blueprint*” for the temple ordinances that were eventually shared publicly with the Saints in Nauvoo, one of the many witnesses that the *heavenly* ascent of Moses 1 and the elements of *ritual* ascent in Moses 2–8 were the result of early *revelations*, not late *inventions*.

Now we will walk through thematic similarities of *ApAb* to Moses 1, occasionally supplemented with affinities to the Book of Abraham and other ancient sources when affinities with these texts were too striking to be omitted from discussion. In particular, the Book of Abraham will add much to our discussion of the *ApAb* account of Abraham’s vision of the premortal spirit world.

MOSES 1 NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Prologue (vv. 1-2)

↓
Moses in the spirit
world (vv. 3-8)

↘
Moses falls to the
earth (vv. 9-11)

→
Moses defeats Satan
(vv. 12-23)

↗
Moses calls upon God;
hears a voice (vv. 24-26)

↗
Moses' vision at the
veil (vv. 27-30)

↗
Moses in the presence of
the Lord (vv. 31-40)

↑
Epilogue (vv. 41-42)

Prologue. The prologue declares that Moses will be “caught up” to “an exceedingly high mountain” where he will receive the glory of God and enter into His presence.

PROLOGUE

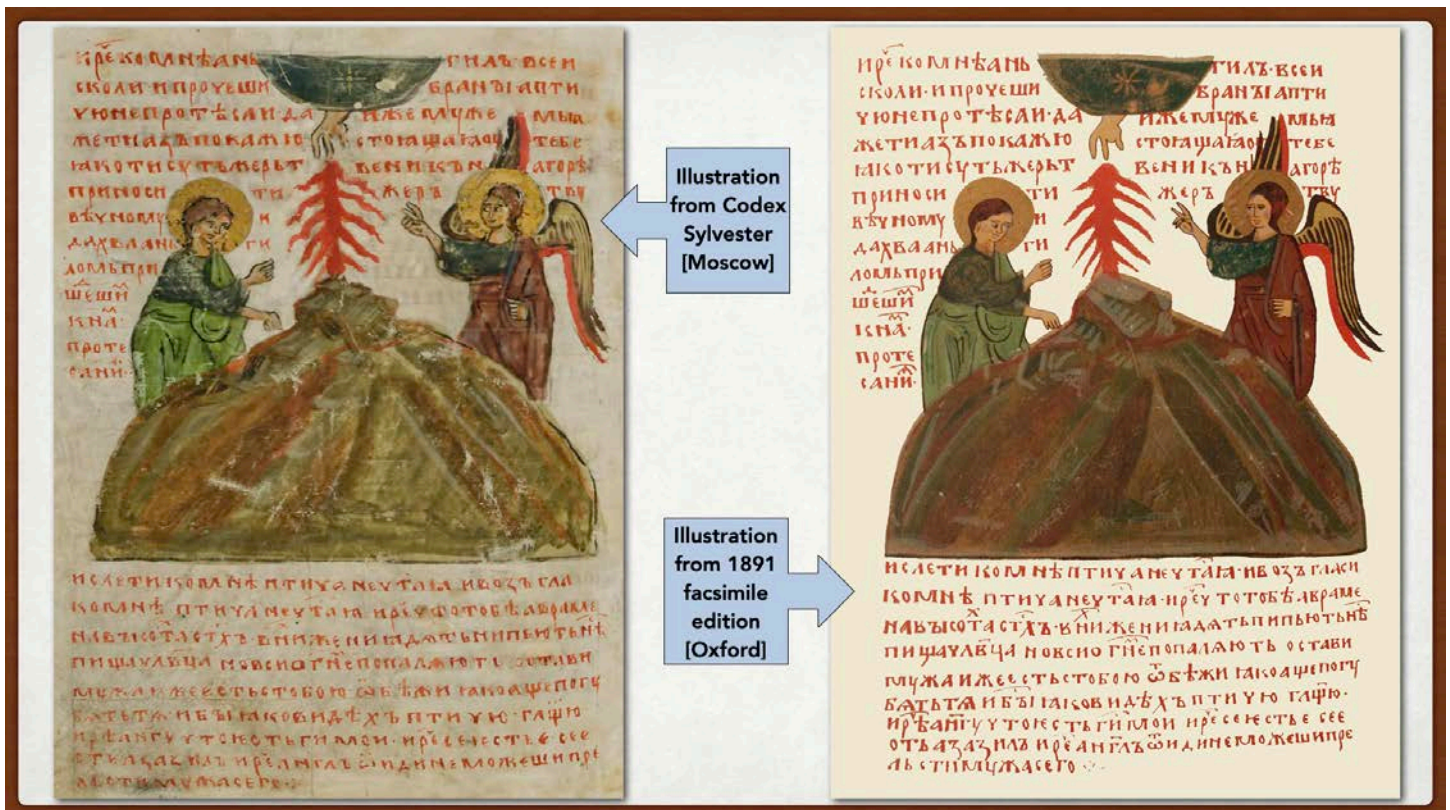
	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Setting	An exceedingly <i>high mountain</i> (1:1)	A <i>high mountain</i> (9:8)
Sacrifice	Revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered sacrifice upon an altar (Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 2)	Go ... and set out for me a pure sacrifice (9:5)

Setting. Both Moses 1 and *ApAb* mention a high mountain.

PROLOGUE

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Setting	An exceedingly high mountain (1:1)	A high mountain (9:8)
Sacrifice	Revealed from God to Abraham, as he offered <i>sacrifice</i> upon an altar (Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 2)	Go ... and set out for me a pure <i>sacrifice</i> (9:5)

Sacrifice. In *ApAb*, as in the Book of Abraham, the high mountain is to be a place of sacrifice and revelation. Though this detail is not explicitly mentioned in Moses 1, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose a similar setting.



The illustrations of Abraham's sacrifice shown here are from the *Codex Sylvester*, the oldest and most complete version of *ApAb*. At left is a previously unpublished copy of an illustration from the original manuscript of *ApAb* that Stephen Whitlock and I obtained from an archive in Moscow, while the illustration on the right is a retouched version from a rare facsimile edition we photographed in Oxford.

MOSES 1 NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Prologue (vv. 1-2)

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Moses in the presence of the Lord (vv. 31-40)

Epilogue (vv. 41-42)

Moses in the spirit world. Following the prologue, God's divine attributes are described and Moses' foreordained calling and status as a "son" of God "in the similitude of [the] Only Begotten" is confirmed. Moses was then shown a vision of the spirit world.

MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD 1/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Aretology	The Lord God <i>Almighty</i> , Endless (1:3)	The primordial and <i>mighty</i> God (9:3)
God to show a vision of eternity	I will show thee the workmanship of my hands (1:4)	I shall ... make you know secrets (9:5-6)
Reason for God's favor	Thy servant has sought thee earnestly (Abraham 2:12)	since you loved to search for me (9:6)
The prophet is commissioned	I have a work for thee, Moses, my son (1:6)	I called you my friend (9:6)

Aretology. Both the Book of Moses and *ApAb* begin with a description of God's majesty. The titles "Almighty" (Book of Moses) and "mighty" (*ApAb*) recall the demonstration of God's power over the waters as the first act of Creation and in the destruction of the Egyptian army in the Sea. Significantly, Moses will later "be made *stronger than many waters* ... as if thou wert God."

MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD 1/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
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God to show a vision of eternity	I will show thee the workmanship of my hands (1:4)	I shall ... make you know secrets (9:5-6)
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Both “Endless” (Book of Moses) and “primordial” (*ApAb*) are related to the characterization of God as being “without beginning of days or end of years.” “Endless” corresponds to a concept in the medieval *Kabbalah* that is depicted visually as a set of concentric circles with their “end embedded in their beginning, and their beginning in their end,” recalling the description in Latter-day Saint scripture of God’s course as “one eternal round.”

MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD 1/2

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God to show a vision of eternity. In both texts, a vision of eternity is promised. In Jewish tradition, the “*secrets*” mentioned in *ApAb* include two things: 1. a knowledge of “the system by which the whole cosmos is put together” (in other words, what the Lord describes to Moses as “the *workmanship* of my hands”); and 2. the revelation of what God is about to *do* (in other words, the things that will be shown later in vision to Moses and to Abraham).

MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD 1/2

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The prophet is commissioned	I have a work for thee, Moses, my son (1:6)	I called you my friend (9:6)

Reason for God's favor. In the Old Testament, the promise of seeing the face of God is realized through the whole-hearted *searching* of the petitioner, a prerequisite mentioned in both the Book of Abraham and *ApAb*.

MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD 1/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Aretology	The Lord God Almighty, Endless (1:3)	The primordial and mighty God (9:3)
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The prophet is commissioned	I have a work for thee, Moses, <i>my son</i> (1:6)	I called you <i>my friend</i> (9:6)

The prophet is commissioned. Each prophet receives a personal title—Moses as “*my son*” and Abraham as “*my friend*.” Both titles denote an individual who is personally acquainted with the Lord and, like members of the divine *council*, has firsthand knowledge of the divine *will*.

MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD 2/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Vision of the spirit world	Moses ... beheld the <i>world upon which he was created...</i> and all the children of men <i>which are, and which were created</i> (1:8)	And I saw there a great crowd of men, and women, and children... <i>before they were created</i> (21:7, 22:2)
Cosmic circle with opposing premortal forces	Circular <i>hypocephalus</i> representing the universe, its two vertical divisions representing light and life (right side) and darkness and death (left side) (Facsimile 2, Book of Abraham)	The fulness of the whole world and its circle ... half of them on the right side of the portrayal, and half of them on the left side of the portrayal (12:10 (Box), 21:7)
Some of the spirits are chosen	Among all these were many of the noble and great ones... These I will make my rulers (Abraham 3:22, 23)	Those on the right side... are the people set apart... to be born of you and to be called my people (22:5)

Vision of the spirit world. Both *Moses 1* and *ApAb* seem to include a vision of the premortal spirit world. Moses is shown the “world upon which he was created” and “all the children of men which are, and which were created.” Likewise, in *ApAb*, Abraham is shown “a great crowd of men, and women, and children” before they “came into being.”

MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD 2/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Vision of the spirit world	Moses... beheld the world upon which he was created... and all the children of men which are, and which were created (1:8)	And I saw there a great crowd of men, and women, and children... before they were created (21:7, 22:2)
Cosmic circle with opposing premortal forces	Circular <i>hypocephalus</i> representing the universe, its two vertical divisions representing light and life (right side) and darkness and death (left side) (Facsimile 2, Book of Abraham)	The fulness of the whole world and its circle ... half of them on the right side of the portrayal, and half of them on the left side of the portrayal (12:10 (Box), 21:7)
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Cosmic circle with opposing premortal forces. Later, after passing through the celestial curtain, Abraham will see what translator Ryszard Rubinkiewicz terms a “picture” on a “visionary screen,” that is “projected” on the backside of the heavenly veil, as it were. By means of this image, accompanied by God’s explanations, he will obtain “a knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come.” Rubinkiewicz is careful to clarify that the term used for “picture” likely refers to something more like a “model” or “likeness” of heaven and earth than a photographic reproduction.

Hinting at the geometrical shape of the model Abraham will be shown, Yaho’el tells him, “I will ... shew thee ... the fulness of the whole world *and its circle*.” In biblical cosmology such descriptions symbolize the layout of the universe. Circles are used to “indicate the horizon where the earth comes together with the sky” or, more generally, wherever celestial boundaries — veils, expanses, firmaments — separate one symbolic sphere from another. Hugh Nibley, noting the arguments of other scholars for Egyptian influences in *ApAb*, saw some resemblances in form, if not in content, to circular depictions of the universe in hypocephali such as the one found in Facsimile 2 of the Book of Abraham.

MOSES IN THE SPIRIT WORLD 2/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Vision of the spirit world	Moses... beheld the world upon which he was created... and all the children of men which are, and which were created (1:8)	And I saw there a great crowd of men, and women, and children... before they were created (21:7, 22:2)
Cosmic circle with opposing premortal forces	Circular hypocephalus representing the universe, its two vertical divisions representing light and life (right side) and darkness and death (left side) (Facsimile 2, Book of Abraham)	The fulness of the whole world and its circle ... half of them on the right side of the portrayal, and half of them on the left side of the portrayal (12:10 (Box), 21:7)
Some of the spirits are chosen	Among all these were many of <i>the noble and great ones... These I will make my rulers</i> (Abraham 3:22, 23)	Those on the right side... are <i>the people set apart... to be born of you and to be called my people</i> (22:5)

Some of the spirits are chosen. In the Book of Abraham, the Lord points out the many “noble and great ones” that were chosen before they were born. Likewise, in *ApAb*, a premortal group of spirits shown “on the right side ... of the portrayal” is “set apart ... to be born of [Abraham]” and to be called “[God’s] people.”

MOSES 1 NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Prologue (vv. 1-2)

Moses in the spirit world (vv. 3-8)

Moses falls to the earth (vv. 9-11)

Moses defeats Satan (vv. 12-23)

Moses calls upon God; hears a voice (vv. 24-26)

Moses' vision at the veil (vv. 27-30)

Moses in the presence of the Lord (vv. 31-40)

Epilogue (vv. 41-42)



Moses falls to the earth. Having left the presence of God and no longer being clothed with His glory, Moses fell to the earth—meaning *literally* that he collapsed in weakness and *symbolically* that he descended again to the relative darkness of the telestial world.

MOSES FALLS TO THE EARTH

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Fall and loss of strength	Moses... <i>fell unto the earth</i> ... And... it was for the space of many hours before Moses did receive his natural <i>strength</i> (1:9-11)	I... <i>fell down upon the earth</i> , for there was no longer <i>strength</i> in me (10:2)



Fall and loss of strength. Following their initial divine encounter, both prophets experience a “fall to the earth” that leaves them vulnerable to the will of the Adversary. Abraham is reported as saying, “I ... *fell down upon the earth*, for there was no longer *strength* in me,” closely resembling the description in Moses 1 where we are told that he “*fell unto the earth*” and lost his “*natural strength*.”

While modern readers might easily skim over the description of the fall and the raising of the two prophets, thinking it of little interest, it was clearly a significant event to the ancient illustrator, who found it important enough to include it among the six passages he highlighted with visual depictions. The drawing shows Abraham being raised up out of sleep — or perhaps *death* — by Yaho’el, who, using the right hand, lifts him firmly by the wrist. The rays emanating from the hand of God, emerging from the orb at the top of the illustration, impart the spirit of *life*, recalling the creation of Adam, when God “breathed ... the breath of life” into the first man, and he became “a living soul.”



Medieval Christian depictions such as this one of the resurrected Christ raising up the dead to life by the *same* ritual gesture further guide our intuitions about the importance of the raising of Moses and Abraham and how it may have been understood by the illustrator of *ApAb*.

MOSES 1 NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Prologue (vv. 1-2)

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Epilogue (vv. 41-42)

Moses defeats Satan. Satan tempted Moses—now in a physically weakened state—to worship him. After Satan is defeated, allusions to priesthood ordinances can be discerned.

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN 1/3

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan disrupts the worship of God	Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me (1:12)	And the impure bird flew down... and said, " ... Leave [Yahoel] and flee! (13:4-5)
Satan's identity is questioned	Moses... said: Who art thou? (1:13)	I said to the angel, "What is this, my lord?" And he said, "This... is [Satan]" (13:6)
Satan contrasted with the prophet	I am a son of God... and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee? ... I can look upon thee in the natural man (1:13, 14)	[Yaho'el]: "Reproach on you, [Satan]! Since Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth (13:7)

Satan disrupts the worship of God. The Adversary tempts the prophet — in his physically weakened state — to worship him (Moses 1) or, in the case of *ApAb*, to "Leave [Yaho'el] and flee!"

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN 1/3

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan disrupts the worship of God	Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me (1:12)	And the impure bird flew down... and said, " ... Leave [Yahoel] and flee! (13:4-5)
Satan's identity is questioned	Moses... said: Who art thou? (1:13)	I said to the angel, " What is this, my lord? " And he said, "This... is [Satan]" (13:6)
Satan contrasted with the prophet	I am a son of God... and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee? ... I can look upon thee in the natural man (1:13, 14)	[Yaho'el]: "Reproach on you, [Satan]! Since Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth (13:7)

Satan's identity is questioned. Both Moses and Abraham ask their adversary for credentials, which, not unexpectedly, he fails to provide. In the Book of Moses, the prophet questions Satan directly. By way of contrast, in *ApAb*, the angel Yaho'el *mediates* Abraham's question.

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN 1/3

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan disrupts the worship of God	Satan came tempting him, saying: Moses, son of man, worship me (1:12)	And the impure bird flew down... and said, " ... Leave [Yahoel] and flee! (13:4-5)
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Satan contrasted with the prophet	<i>I am a son of God... and where is thy glory, that I should worship thee? ... I can look upon thee in the natural man (1:13, 14)</i>	[Yaho'el]: "Reproach on you, [Satan]! Since Abraham's portion is in heaven, and yours is on earth (13:7)

Satan contrasted with the prophet. In both accounts, the prophets see through Satan's attempt to disguise his identity. Lacking divine glory and heavenly inheritance, the Devil is easily and humiliateingly exposed.

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN 2/3

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan told to depart and cease his deception	<i>Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not</i> (1:16)	<i>Depart from [Abraham]! You cannot deceive him</i> (13:12-13)
The prophet received the glory that Satan lost	God said unto me [Moses]: Thou art after the similitude of mine Only Begotten (1:16)	The garment in heaven which was formerly yours [Satan's] has been set aside for [Abraham] (13:14)
Satan told to depart a second time	Depart hence, Satan (1:18)	Vanish from before me! (14:7)

Satan told to depart and cease his deception. In similar terms, the Book of Moses and *ApAb* both relate the *first of multiple* commands for Satan to depart. Moses said, “Get thee hence, Satan; *deceive* me not,” while *ApAb* has Yaho’el saying, “Depart from [Abraham]! You cannot *deceive* him.”

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN 2/3

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan told to depart and cease his deception	Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not (1:16)	Depart from [Abraham]! You cannot deceive him (13:12-13)
The prophet received the glory that Satan lost	God said unto me [Moses]: <i>Thou art after the similitude of mine Only Begotten</i> (1:16)	<i>The garment in heaven which was formerly yours [Satan's] has been set aside for [Abraham]</i> (13:14)
Satan told to depart a second time	Depart hence, Satan (1:18)	Vanish from before me! (14:7)

The prophet received the glory that Satan lost. Satan is reminded that the glory he previously possessed now belongs to the prophet. Moses' words constitute a second "humiliating exposure of Satan" as an *enemy* rather than a son of God — reminding him of the divine declaration that Moses "actually *is* what his adversary falsely *claims* to be." In *ApAb*, Satan's false pretensions and the prophet's right to glory are both confirmed by the affirmation of Yaho'el that Satan's heavenly garment is now reserved for *Abraham* and that his erstwhile *glory* will be exchanged for bodily "*corruption*" of the sort that Adam experienced after the Fall.

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN 2/3

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan told to depart and cease his deception	Get thee hence, Satan; deceive me not (1:16)	Depart from [Abraham]! You cannot deceive him (13:12-13)
The prophet received the glory that Satan lost	God said unto me [Moses]: Thou art after the similitude of mine Only Begotten (1:16)	The garment in heaven which was formerly yours [Satan's] has been set aside for [Abraham] (13:14)
Satan told to depart a second time	<i>Depart hence, Satan</i> (1:18)	<i>Vanish from before me!</i> (14:7)

Satan told to depart a second time. In both texts, Satan is forcefully told a *second time* to leave, with no further discussion. Moses curtly commands, “Depart hence, Satan,” while in *ApAb* he is told, “Vanish from before me!”

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN 3/3

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan's final attempt to win the prophet's worship	<i>Satan cried with a loud voice, ...saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me (1:19)</i>	<i>[Satan] said, "Abraham!" And I said, "Here am I, your servant!" And the angel said to me, "Answer him not!" (14:9-10)</i>
Satan's definitive departure following the invocation of the name of the Son of God	Moses ... called upon God, saying: In the name of the Only Begotten, depart hence, Satan. ... And... he departed hence. (1:21)	When [Satan] saw the inscription ["In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit"] he was vanquished (<i>The Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth</i> , p. 17)

Satan's final attempt to win the prophet's worship. In *ApAb*, Abraham momentarily gives in to Satan's ploy to continue the dialogue, answering him deferentially, "Here am I, your servant!" To ward off further danger, the angel gives Abraham a stern warning: "Answer him not! ... lest [his] will affect you." In the Book of Moses, the goal of Satan's demand is expressed with shocking directness: "*Worship me*"!

Significantly, the cosmic battles depicted in *Moses 1* and *ApAb* are not head-on clashes between the titanic forces of opposing gods or demi-gods. Rather, they are the conflicts of mortals who are *caught* between those forces — being compelled to choose by devilish adversaries while at the same time being enabled to stand by heavenly powers. Marc Philonenko's analysis of this unusual aspect of *ApAb* applies *equally* well to *Moses 1*:

The interaction between the [good and malevolent powers] does not occur directly but rather through a medium of a human being — Abraham. ... Abraham thus becomes [the] place of ... battle between two spiritual forces. ... In [this] struggle ... the Prince of Lights and the Angel of Darkness are fighting in the heart of a man.

MOSES DEFEATS SATAN 3/3

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Satan's final attempt to win the prophet's worship	Satan cried with a loud voice, ...saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me (1:19)	[Satan] said, "Abraham!" And I said, "Here am I, your servant!" And the angel said to me, "Answer him not!" (14:9-10)
Satan's definitive departure following the invocation of the name of the Son of God	Moses ... called upon God, saying: <i>In the name of the Only Begotten</i> , depart hence, Satan. ... And... he departed hence. (1:21)	When [Satan] saw the inscription [<i>"In the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit"</i>] he was vanquished (<i>The Book of the Mysteries of the Heavens and the Earth</i> , p. 17)

Satan's definitive departure following the invocation of the name of the Son of God. In contrast to Satan's warrantless *demand*, Moses executes his authoritative *command*, thus forcing his adversary to depart through the power of the priesthood after the order of the Son of God. The dramatic turning point of this episode hinges on Satan's desperate, *false* claim to *be* the Only Begotten, countered by Moses' triumphant invocation of the *name* of the *true* Only Begotten.

No corresponding passage is found in *ApAb*. However, a medieval Ethiopian text provides an interesting echo of a similar motif that shows how Satan can be forced to depart through authoritative invocation of *divine names*.

MOSES 1 NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Prologue (vv. 1-2)

Moses in the spirit world (vv. 3-8)

Moses falls to the earth (vv. 9-11)

Moses defeats Satan (vv. 12-23)

Moses calls upon God; hears a voice (vv. 24-26)

Moses' vision at the veil (vv. 27-30)

Moses in the presence of the Lord (vv. 31-40)

Epilogue (vv. 41-42)

Moses calls upon God and is answered by a voice from behind the heavenly veil (vv. 24–26). Having continued to press forward, Moses “call[ed] upon the name of God” in sacred prayer. Afterward, Moses was answered by a voice from behind the heavenly veil enumerating specific blessings, including the promise that his commands would be obeyed “as if thou wert God.”

MOSES CALLS UPON GOD; HEARS A VOICE 1/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Ascent to heaven	Moses lifted up his eyes unto heaven (1:24). <i>Upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away</i> (2 Nephi 4:25)	The angel took me with his right hand and <i>set me on the right wing of the pigeon and he himself sat on the left wing of the turtledove ... and carried me up</i> (15:2-3)



Ascent to heaven. Here we see Abraham and Yaho’el ascending to heaven on the wings of the two birds provided by God but not divided at the time of the sacrifice. The imagery recalls Nephi’s poetic description that “upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains.” As in earlier illustrations, Yaho’el holds Abraham firmly by the wrist, using the right hand.

In the Book of Moses, imagery implying different priesthood ordinances begins to occur as soon as Satan leaves the scene. As one example, having banished Satan by calling upon the name of the Only Begotten (a motif that precedes baptism in some ancient Christian sources), Moses was immediately afterward “filled with the Holy Ghost.”

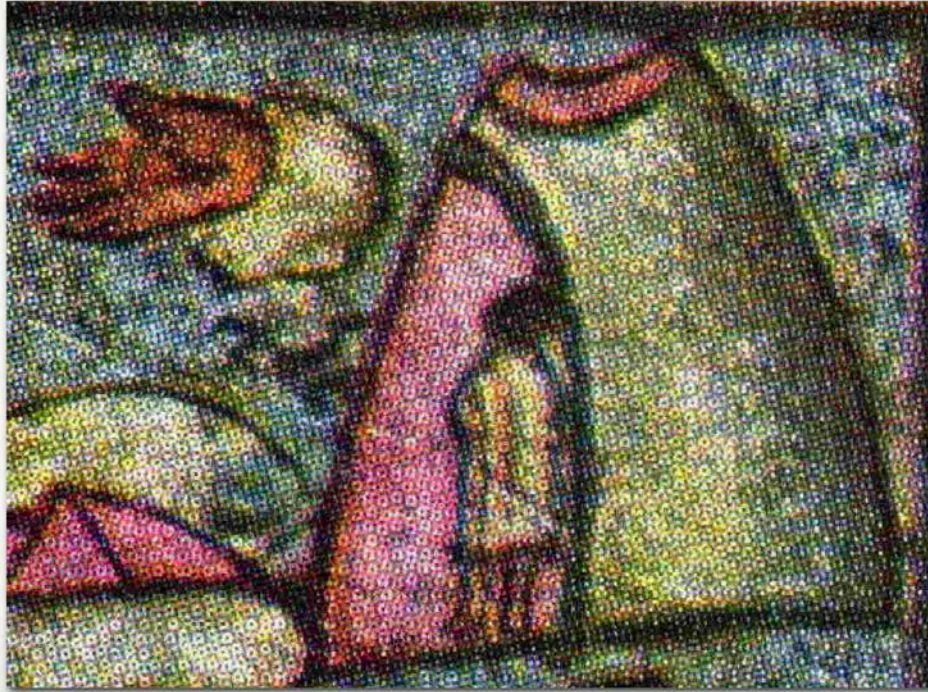
MOSES CALLS UPON GOD; HEARS A VOICE 2/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Seeing God	Calling upon the name of God, <i>he beheld his glory</i> (1:25; cf. v. 31)	The Eternal One ... you will not see (16:3)
Passing through the veil	He heard a voice (1:25). Cf. v. 27: and while the voice was still speaking	And while he [the angel] was still speaking (17:1)
Many waters	Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters... as if thou wert God (1:25)	Behold a fire was coming toward us... and a sound [voice] ... like a sound of many waters (17:1)

Seeing God. Moses 1:25 tells us that Moses “beheld [God’s] glory.” By way of contrast, *ApAb* has Yaho’el declare to Abraham “the Eternal One ... you will *not* see.”

Importantly, however, the divine whisper or echo (Hebrew *bat kōl*) through which, in Jewish tradition, divine revelation continued through the hearing of God’s *voice* even after the open *visions* of the prophets had ceased, was depicted for centuries as a divine hand. In portrayals of ritual or heavenly ascent, this hand was often shown as emerging from behind a cloud or veil, representing the obscuring boundary that separated earth from heaven.

ISAAC PASSES THROUGH THE VEIL



A relevant example is shown here, from the Dura Europos synagogue. Significantly, it is the “earliest known depiction of the hand of God in either Jewish or Christian art.” Isaac, shown behind the scene of his near sacrifice and clad in white clothing bearing a prominent mark, enters through the veil of a tent sanctuary at the top of Mount Moriah.

This reading is supported by Jewish and early Christian texts suggesting that, in the *Akedah*, Isaac literally died, ascended to heaven, and was resurrected. Note, however, that the scene could be *equally* well-interpreted as a ritual *simulating* death, resurrection, and ascent to heaven, such as what seems to have been experienced by worshippers at Dura Europos. I have described in detail what seem to be features of ritual ascent at the Dura Europos synagogue in a 2010 *BYU Studies Quarterly* article.

The disembodied hand, shown emerging from a cloud or veil, is a visualization of God’s body in “*pars pro toto*” and of His heavenly utterance from behind the veil (in other words, the *bat kōl*).

Importantly, Moses 1:25–31 describes the revelation of God as a *progressive* phenomenon, beginning with “a voice” and ending with a “face to face” encounter. Note that the same sequence of divine disclosure is followed in the story of the brother of Jared’s intimate encounter with the Lord “at the veil.” In that account, his prayer is answered first with a divine *voice*, then with seeing the finger of the Lord’s *hand*, and finally with a view of the “*body* of [His] spirit.”

MOSES CALLS UPON GOD; HEARS A VOICE 2/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Seeing God	[Moses] beheld his glory (1:25; cf. v. 31)	The Eternal One ... you will not see (16:3)
Passing through the veil	He heard a voice (1:25). Cf. v. 27: and while the voice was still speaking	And while [the angel] was still speaking (17:1; cf. 18:1; 19:4; 30:1)
Many waters	Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters... as if thou wert God (1:25)	Behold a fire was coming toward us... and a sound [voice] ... like a sound of many waters (17:1)

Passing through the veil: The voice of God. In *ApAb* 17:3, Yaho'el mediates God's self-revelation to Abraham, as he previously mediated Abraham's dialogue with Satan. Yaho'el, standing with the prophet in front of the veil, gives encouragement to a fearful Abraham, provides instructions to him about what to say at the veil, and promises to remain with him, "strengthening" him, as he comes into the presence of the Lord.

By way of contrast, Moses experiences the voice of God *directly*. At first, Moses hears God's voice but does not yet see Him "face to face." His experience parallels that of Adam and Eve, when they also "called upon the name of the Lord" in sacred prayer. We read that "they *heard* the *voice* of the Lord from the way toward the Garden of Eden, speaking unto them, and they saw him not, for they were shut out from his presence." As I have argued in detail elsewhere, in the corresponding symbolism of the Garden of Eden and the temple, the Tree of Knowledge hides the Tree of Life, just as the veil hides the presence of God in His heavenly sanctuary. To proceed further, the veil must be opened to the petitioner.

"AS THE VOICE WAS STILL SPEAKING"

BOOK OF MOSES

- 1:25: "Calling upon the name of God ... [God's glory] was upon him; and **he heard a voice**"
- 1:27: "**as the voice was still speaking**"
- 1:30-31: "Moses called upon God ... and ... the glory of the Lord was upon Moses ... and [he] **talked with him face to face**"

APOCALYPSE OF ABRAHAM

- 17:1: "**While [the angel] was still speaking**, behold, a fire was coming toward us"
- 18:1: "**While I was still reciting the song**, the edge of the fire ... rose up on high"
- 19:4: "**While [God] was still speaking**, the levels opened"
- 30:1: "**While [God] was still speaking**, I found myself on the earth"

In Moses 1 and *ApAb*, the moments when a veil is opened are signified explicitly if somewhat cryptically. We observe that in Moses 1:25, a significant *inclusio opens* with a description of how, after "calling upon God," the Lord's glory "was upon" Moses "and he heard a *voice*." In verses 30–31, the *inclusio closes* in similar fashion but states, significantly, that Moses *sees* God rather than just *hearing* Him: "Moses called upon God ... the glory of the Lord was upon Moses ... and [he] *talked with him face to face*." Sandwiched between the opening and closing of the *inclusio* is a phrase that is intriguing because at first blush it seems both *gratuitous* and *inexplicable*: "*as the voice was still speaking*."

To our surprise, we discovered that *ApAb* repeats variants of a similar phrase *four* times. Further examination of these occurrences revealed a commonality in each of the junctures where it is used. In short, in each of the four instances in *ApAb* — as in its single mention in Moses 1:27 — the appearance of the phrase seems to be associated with an *opening* of a heavenly veil.

More detail on the various openings of the veils described is given in our published paper.

MOSES RECITES A "HYMN" NEAR THE END OF HIS ASCENT



Passing through the veil: The voice of the petitioner. It has been argued that this image from Dura Europos shows Moses reciting a “hymn” as he completed his ascent to heaven.

Likewise, in *ApAb*, Abraham is enjoined by the angel Yaho’el to recite such a “hymn.” One *ApAb* scholar notes an interesting feature of the “hymn,” namely that Abraham must repeat it as a *requirement* for passing through the veil and into God’s presence. As this scholar expresses it, unlike any *other* pseudepigraphal account of heavenly ascent, *ApAb* “treats the [hymn] sung by the visionary *as part of the means of achieving ascent.*” Near the end of Abraham’s recitation, he implores God to accept the words of his prayer and the sacrifice that he has offered, to teach him and to “make *known* to your servant as you have *promised* me.” Then, “*while [he] was still reciting the [hymn],*” the veil opens and the throne of glory appears to his view.

MOSES CALLS UPON GOD; HEARS A VOICE 2/2

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
Seeing God	Calling upon the name of God, he beheld his glory (1:25; cf. v. 31)	The Eternal One ... you will not see (16:3)
Passing through the veil	He heard a voice (1:25). Cf. v. 27: and while the voice was still speaking	And while he [the angel] was still speaking (17:1)
Many waters	Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and thou shalt be made stronger than many waters... as if thou wert God (1:25)	Behold a fire was coming toward us... and a [voice] ... like a sound of many waters (17:1)

“**Many waters.**” After Abraham’s traversal upward through the veil “*while [the angel] was still speaking,*” he sees “a fire” and hears a “[voice] ... like a sound of many waters.”

The theme of “many waters” is a rich one that we have discussed at length elsewhere. Jeff Lindsay and Noel Reynolds (and perhaps others) will also touch on this theme today.

MOSES 1 NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Prologue (vv. 1-2)

Moses in the spirit world (vv. 3-8)

Moses falls to the earth (vv. 9-11)

Moses defeats Satan (vv. 12-23)

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Moses' vision at the veil (vv. 27-30)

Moses in the presence of the Lord (vv. 31-40)

Epilogue (vv. 41-42)

At the heavenly veil, Moses sees the earth and all its inhabitants (vv. 27-30). While “the [divine] voice was still speaking,” Moses was permitted to pass through the heavenly veil and, from within, looks downward and outward toward God’s handiwork.

MOSES' VISION AT THE VEIL

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
The prophet beholds the earth	<i>Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth (1:27)</i>	<i>"Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation" (21:1)</i>
The inhabitants of the earth	He beheld also the inhabitants thereof (1:28)	And those who inhabit it (21:1)
The prophet questions God	Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so, and by what thou madest them? (1:30)	Why ... have you set yourself with [Satan]? (20:7). Eternal, Mighty One! Why did you ordain it to be so? (26:1).

The prophet beholds the earth. The change in perspective as Moses passes upward through the heavenly veil is related in subtle beauty in the Book of Moses. Previously, as Moses stood on the earth, he "lifted up his eyes unto heaven." Now, after ascending to heaven, he "cast his eyes" down to see the earth. Similarly, Abraham is told, "Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation and those who inhabit it."

ApAb scholar Alexander Kulik notes that "Abraham's exploration of the heavenly world in a downward direction as the heavens open below" is "unique" in the relevant heavenly ascent literature. Remarkably, this feature, otherwise unique to *ApAb*, also appears in Moses 1.

MOSES' VISION AT THE VEIL

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
The prophet beholds the earth	Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth (1:27)	"Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation" (21:1)
The inhabitants of the earth	He beheld also <i>the inhabitants</i> thereof (1:28)	And <i>those who inhabit it</i> (21:1)
The prophet questions God	Tell me, I pray thee, why these things are so, and by what thou madest them? (1:30)	Why ... have you set yourself with [Satan]? (20:7). Eternal, Mighty One! Why did you ordain it to be so? (26:1).

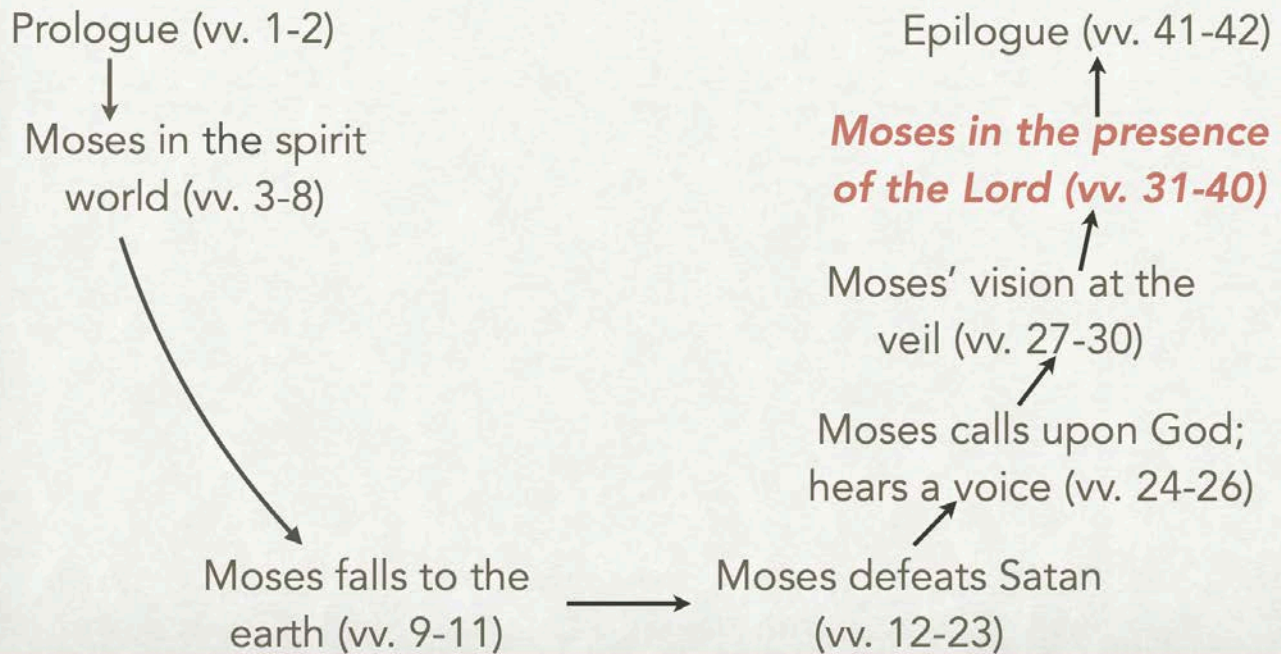
The inhabitants of the earth. In their visions, both Moses and Abraham not only saw the inhabitants of the earth but also, like other prophets, witnessed the earth's entire history from beginning to end.

MOSES' VISION AT THE VEIL

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
The prophet beholds the earth	Moses cast his eyes and beheld the earth (1:27)	"Look now beneath your feet at the expanse and contemplate the creation" (21:1)
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The prophet questions God. Once they have completed their ascent, both Abraham and Moses pose questions to God. Moses asks about the Creation: "Tell me, I pray thee, *why* these things are so?" By way of contrast, Abraham asks different questions —about the origin of evil in the world and in humankind.

MOSES 1 NARRATIVE STRUCTURE



Moses stands in the presence of the Lord (vv. 31-40). After God describes His purposes for this earth and its inhabitants, He showed Moses the Creation and the Fall. Moses was commanded to record an account of these events something like, but almost certainly not identical to, what we have today in the Book of Moses.

MOSES IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
God's purpose and will are His own	For <i>mine own purpose</i> have I made these things. Here is <i>wisdom and it remaineth in me</i> (1:31)	As <i>the will of your father is in him</i> , ... so also <i>the will desired by me</i> is inevitable (26:5)
Seeing the Lord face to face	Moses stood in the presence of God, and talked with him face to face (1:31)	Abraham and Yahoel speak with the Lord face to face (<i>ApAb</i> illustration from <i>Codex Sylvester</i>)
Vision of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Fall	Moses sees the creation of the earth (ch. 2), the Garden of Eden (ch. 3) and the Fall of Adam and Eve (ch. 4)	Abraham sees the creation of the earth (21:1-5), the Garden of Eden (21:6), and Satan inciting the Fall of Adam and Eve (23:1-14).

God's purpose and will are His own. While the Book of Moses refers to “mine own *purpose*” and the “wisdom [that] *remaineth in me*,” in *ApAb* God speaks of how his “*will*” is similar to “the will of your father [that] *is in him*.”



Seeing the Lord face to face. In explicit contradiction to the previously cited verse of *ApAb* where Yaho'el declared to Abraham that “the Eternal One ... himself you will *not* see,” the fourteenth-century Christian illustrator of *ApAb* seems to have had no qualms about representing God visually.

Note the contrast between the beautifully rendered faces in the original illustration at left with the more simple and crude faces in the facsimile version at right.

The individual pictured on the throne seems to be the Christ. His identity is indicated by the cruciform markings on His nimbus. Behind the enthroned Christ is a second figure, perhaps Michael or Metatron.

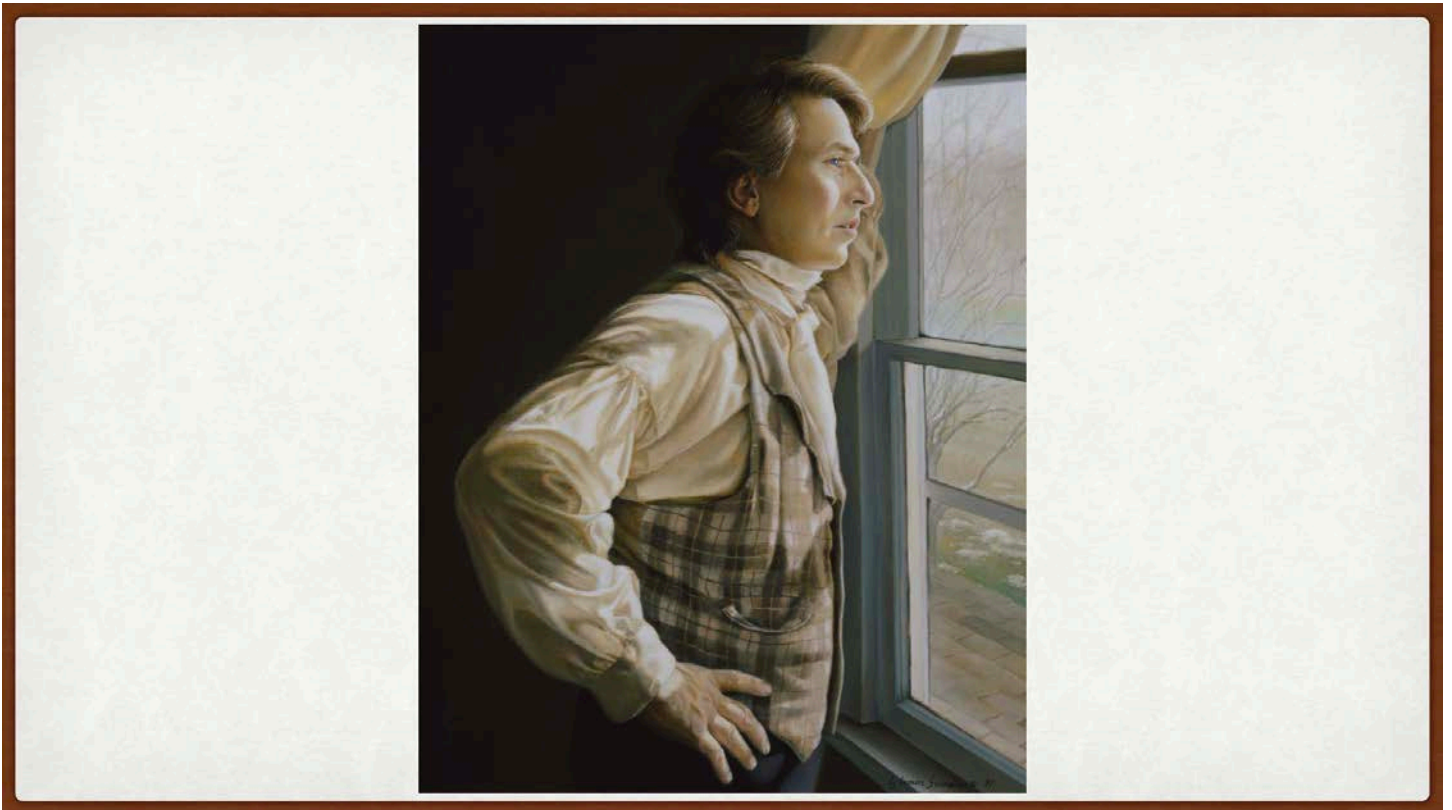
Beneath the throne are fiery seraphim and many-eyed “wheels” praising God. The throne is surrounded by a series of heavenly veils separating the Lord from the material world.

MOSES IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD

	Book of Moses	Apocalypse of Abraham
God's purpose and will are His own	For mine own purpose have I made these things. Here is wisdom and it remaineth in me (1:31)	As the will of your father is in him, ... so also the will desired by me is inevitable (26:5)
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Vision of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the Fall. At this point, just as Moses is shown the Creation and the Fall, *ApAb* describes how Abraham looked down to see the affairs of what is called in modern revelation the “kingdoms of a lower order.”

The Lord's voice commanded Abraham to “look,” and, “*as the voice was still speaking,*” a series of heavenly veils were opened beneath his feet. Abraham is shown the heavenly *plan* for creation, the *realization* of the foreordained plan in the creation of the earth (21:3–5), the Garden of Eden, and the Fall of Adam and Eve incited by Satan (21:6; 23:1–14).



Could it be that Moses 1 was revealed rather than simply imagined? With a generous openness to Joseph Smith's claim of the exercise of seeric gifts, Samuel Zinner, a non-Latter-day Saint who is a lifelong scholar of ancient scripture and pseudepigrapha suggests that:

it might prove fruitful to apply to Joseph Smith's modern-era [scripture] Michael Stone's model whereby he posits that at least *some* ancient post-canonical literature ... may have been created under the impact of *visionary experiences* rather than having been authored exclusively by *imitating previous literary works*.

Joseph Smith encouraged each of us to follow his example. "Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them," said the Prophet, "can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that was ever written on the subject."

May we be worthy someday of the blessings given to the prophets we have spoken of today.

Thank you.