

December 27-January 2, 2022

Moses 1; Abraham 3

“THIS IS MY WORK AND MY GLORY”

Summary: *Moses 1. An extract from the translation of the Bible as revealed to Joseph Smith the Prophet, June 1830–February 1831. Chapter 1 (June 1830). God reveals Himself to Moses—Moses is transfigured—He is confronted by Satan—Moses sees many inhabited worlds—Worlds without number were created by the Son—God’s work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.*

Abraham 3. Abraham learns about the sun, moon, and stars by means of the Urim and Thummim—The Lord reveals to him the eternal nature of spirits—He learns of pre-earth life, foreordination, the Creation, the choosing of a Redeemer, and the second estate of man.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How prejudiced is the Bible’s history?

Daniel Ludlow (1924-2009), BYU professor and Chief Editor of the Encyclopedia of Mormonism, taught me that history is usually prejudiced by the writers and their perceptions as they saw events happening. Conversely, true prophesy does not have prejudice, because it has not happened yet. He also taught that scriptural history has the least amount of prejudice because it carries a message of future events. It is prophesy in the form of history. Therefore, the scripture history is accurate. The ancient prophets could not (and would not) write all that happened. They selected to write those things which would apply as lessons to the future. They knew the Messiah, before He was known as “Jesus.”

What guidelines can I learn from another scriptures that will help me better understand the Old Testament?

Serving as a Senior Missionaries in the Church History Department, Sister Rona and I have been assigned to create Church historical profiles on several countries including, so far, Singapore, North and South Korea, Indonesia, Austria, Switzerland, Ethiopia, and now Israel. Our reports are about 80 to 100-pages in length. Another team reduces those profiles to about 8-pages. Those smaller summaries are also reduced to a page or two – as a succinct synopsis. Prayerfully, we are guided by the Book of Mormon verses that remind us of the inspired writers who could only write a “*hundredth part*.” Following are guidelines we felt directing us in helping others in understanding and recording the past and current histories. (1) Testimonies that testify of the Messiah, especially in a local context. “And now there cannot be written in this book even a *hundredth part* of the things which **Jesus did truly teach** unto the people;” (3 **Nephi 26:6**) (2) Use the Lord’s spirit to help us choose what to report and understand past reports. You could consider, even creating several entries, as you write, then choose as directed. Consider, also what you are learning from the sometimes-duplicitous reports in the Old Testament. “Wherefore, **I chose these things**, to finish my record upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the plates of Nephi; and I cannot write the *hundredth part* of the things of my people.” (**Words of Mormon 1:5**) (3) We also learn from contrasting views. The Old Testament is purposely written with “opposites, contrasting views.” “And a *hundredth part* of the proceedings of this people,

which now began to be numerous, cannot be written upon these plates; but many of their proceedings are written upon the **larger plates**, and their **wars**, and their **contentions**, and the **reigns of their kings.**" (Jacob 3:13) (4) Reveal the fulfillment of promises in your writings and learn from promises fulfilled in the scriptures. "And the Lord spake unto Ether, and said unto him: Go forth. And he went forth, and beheld that the **words of the Lord had all been fulfilled**; and he finished his record; (and the *hundredth part* I have not written) and he hid them in a manner that the people of Limhi did find them." (Ether 15:33) (5) Learn from the written extra-ordinary reports, and in your own history, reveal what made the event extra-ordinary. I have found that the better histories report on the WHAT, HOW, WHEN, WHERE, and WHO, in such a way that the WHY is revealed. "And there had many things transpired which, **in the eyes of some, would be great and marvelous**; nevertheless, they cannot all be written in this book; yea, this book cannot contain even a *hundredth part* of what was done among so many people in the space of twenty and five years;" (3 Nephi 5:8)

What the basic code in ancient written scriptures?

The young prophet Nephi gave us a substantial key to understanding the scriptures. Note how subtly he teaches us through a 'chiasmus' (an order of words listed in one direction to a center thought and then listed in the other direction in reverse order).

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| <p>1.learning of my father</p> <p>2. highly favored of the Lord</p> <p>2. knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God</p> <p>1.learning of the Jews</p> | <p>I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.</p> <p>Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.</p> <p>(1 Nephi 1:1-2)</p> |
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The center point of his instruction is the gift he acknowledges, the knowledge of mysteries. A synonym for mysteries is the "subtle understanding" of God's word. This is available through the Gift of the Holy Ghost. "For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round." (1 Nephi 10:19) The center point is sandwiched by "learning of my father" and "learning of the Jews." This material suggests some 'learning of the Jews' to add insight to the study of the same religion and scriptures that Nephi brought from Israel. Other Jewish insights may simply help Latter-day Saints better understand Judah and thereby bring our two families closer together. It is necessary for the teacher and the student to relate and coordinate this information with the material provided

in their respective lesson manuals. My experience reveals that the writer uses the center point as a testimony of the Messiah, and how to recognize Him.

How is the Old Testament assembled?

The basis of Jewish learning is based on the "Torah," that is the first five books of the "Old Testament." "The Bible is holy to Jews because it represents the Word of God. This is particularly true of the Torah which is, so to speak, God's direct statement. The *Halakhah*, or Jewish law, which is the authoritative guide for a Jew's life, is mainly based on the Torah, so obviously study of the *Torah* as well as the rest of the Bible is one of the prime religious duties." "The custom of reading the *Torah* publicly is very, very ancient --- originating with Ezra in the fifth-fourth centuries B.C.E. At some later date a reading from the *Nevi'im* was added; this corresponding passage from the Prophets is known as the *Haftorah*."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) The Latter-day Saints' use of the "Pearl of Great Price" can be likened as the *Haftorah* of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Literally it is the reading of the *Nevi'im*, the "Prophets," with their explanations and heavenly insights.

What clarifying doctrine does the Pearl of Great Price, Moses 1, give me to better understand the God Father and His first-born Son?

The anthropomorphic nature of God was known to the Jews at the time of Jesus. The Old Testament, as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls contain several references to God in 'human terms.' As the true nature of God is seen to diminish in history, true religion fades away. By the time the Crusaders were approaching the Holy Land, a prominent Jewish philosopher, Moses Maimonides, began collecting the writings and interpretations of other Jewish sages to codify and centralize them. In his work "The Guide to the Perplexed," Maimonides included 'Thirteen Articles of Faith'. The first three articles attempt to explain that God cannot be explained. That is probably the first published Jewish work that (in most Judaic studies) eliminated reference to the anthropomorphic nature of God. "The great Jewish philosopher Maimonides argued for the existence of God from the idea of motion. Everything in the universe is moving, and since we know that movement is finite, it must have started somewhere; hence the idea of the Prime Mover, i.e., God." "In the final analysis, however, there is no direct positive evidence of the existence of God. It can be argued that if there were such evidence then there would be no virtue in believing in Him. Ultimately it is a question of faith." "Perhaps the most famous of the various formulations of dogmas is the Thirteen Principles of Faith of Maimonides. Originally written in Arabic, this creed is the basis of the *Yigdal* hymn which is part of the daily service and is usually recited at the conclusion of the Friday evening synagogue service. The 13 fundamentals are: (1) The existence of God, which is perfect; (2) God is "one" in every sense of the word; (3) God has no body or physical attributes; (4) God is eternal; (5) God alone must be worshiped; (6) the prophecy of the Bible is true; (7) Moses was greater than any other prophet; (8) the entire Torah was given to Moses; (9) the Torah will never be superseded or abrogated; (10) God knows the actions of men; (11) God rewards and punishes; (12) the Messiah will ultimately come; and (13) the dead will be resurrected. These principles have also been put in the form of a creed in which each begins with the words "I believe with perfect faith that . . ." "The creed is printed in most prayerbooks." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What revelatory tools do prophets use?

A tool or gift of spirit used by ancient and modern prophets is the *Urim* and *Thummim*. "The exact meaning of the words '*Urim*' and '*Thummim*' have puzzled scholars over the generations. Both in the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible they were rendered as

'revelation and truth' or 'teaching and truth' and this understanding gave rise to the incorporation of the Hebrew words *Urim ve-Thummim* on the official seal of Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) There are symbols in modern Judaism that purportedly date back to David and Solomon's times. The account of (**Mosiah 28:13**) speaks of two rims of a bow with two stones, the *Urim* and *Thummin*, used to know the mind of the Lord. The Emeritus General Authority, Patriarch, Eldredge G. Smith once spoke of Joseph Smith describing the *Urim* and *Thummin* as two triangular stones connected by silver bows. Detractors of Joseph Smith spoke of them being "magic glasses." The use of these special revelatory stones has been repeated throughout time. It is a characteristic of the House of Israel. Repeating some insights in a previous lesson, the *Magen David* is always shown as two triangles, interwoven. One possible explanation is that the two triangles represent a characterization of the *Urim* and *Thummim*. They were two triangular stones – one pointed up and the other pointed down. Superimposed they make a fascinating *Magen David*! According to a paper given at Hebrew University by John Tvedtnes (1941-2018), then, Senior Researcher at FARMS (BYU), the words *Urim* and *Thummim* may come from Egyptian words similar to "RMMM" and "TMMM," one meaning yes or act upon it (positive), the other a more negative meaning (leave it alone). Jewish thought also states: "From the use of the verbs *hippil* and *nilkad* in connection with the *Urim* (and *Thummim*) (**1 Samuel 14: 41–42**), it appears that they were a kind of lot (marked) stones or sticks?), since these verbs occur in connection with the casting of lots (**Isaiah 34:17; 1 Samuel 10:20**). They were suitable for indicating which of two alternatives was right; hence inquiries to be decided by them were designed to elicit "yes" or "no" answers (**1 Samuel 23:10–12; 30:8**)." (<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-urim-and-thummim>) Since the *Urim* and *Thummin* were revelatory tools, it is possible that they represent a procedure, or that they can operate on a simple principle of revelation with answers of yes or no. "But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right." (**Doctrine & Covenants 9:8**) Revelation requires study and faith in the Lord. As a reminder, even though the *Magen David* is so prevalent in Jewish art and culture, the official symbol of the State of Israel is the seven-branched *Menorah*.