



Gospel Doctrine Sunday School Lesson

Volume 2, Issue 1

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Slippery Rock Branch

Today's Word: Translation

January 1, 2006

Lesson 1: "This is My Work and My Glory"

Questions to Ponder

Are You:

- Reading Scriptures Every Day?
- Having Family Home Evening?
- Saying Prayers Daily?
- Bearing Your Testimony to Others?

- What difference can it make in our lives to know that we are children of God, created in the similitude of his Son?
- How can prayer strengthen us to resist temptation?
- How can you come to feel that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ know you individually and love you?
- Why is it important for us to know what God's work and glory is?

There may be times when we are "left unto [ourselves]" as Moses was—times when we do not feel the Spirit strongly or have many trials. What can we learn from Moses 1 to help us deal with these times?

Next Week

Lesson 2:

"Thou Wast Chosen Before Thou Wast Born"

Abraham 3; Moses 4: 1-4



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OVERVIEW of KEY SCRIPTURES

Moses 1: 1-11

- God teaches that Moses is a son of God.

Moses 1: 12-23

- Satan confronts Moses; Moses casts him out.

Moses 1: 24-39

- God appears again and teaches of his work and glory.

Background on the Book of Moses

Originally called the Vision of Moses, the Book of Moses began when Joseph Smith began "translating" the Bible between 1830 and 1831. I put the word "translating" in quotes because this is not the typical kind of translating that we think of: making the content and style clear from one document in one language reflect as close as possible the same content and style in the other language. "Translating," in Joseph Smith's understanding of the practice, means making unknown things known, to be a seer and revelator, to add to in order to illuminate previous understandings of biblical works.

Joseph Smith had learned from Moroni's visit in 1824 that some biblical passages could be rendered more clearly. Indeed, at that time in America and elsewhere, the Bible received many new translations and revisions, and religions were most often distinguished from each other by the way they interpreted passages in the Bible. Many attempted translation and/or revision through scholarly means, while Joseph Smith did so through revelation.

The first time the Book of Moses was published was when W.W. Phelps printed the Church periodical, *Evening and Morning Star* in Independence, Missouri, August 1832. Later,

these and other portions of the Joseph Smith Translations were published in 1843 in the Nauvoo *Times and Seasons*. In 1851, the Church published them as a pamphlet for the British Mission. In 1878, Elder Orson Pratt, then Church Historian, edited and rearranged the Joseph Smith Translations, to make them smoother and more flowing, and eventually, the collected excerpts became known, after a sustaining vote of the Church in 1880, as *The Pearl of Great Price*, and accepted as one of the standard works of the Church. In 1902, Elder James E. Talmage cross-referenced it, footnoted, and arranged the material into its present form.

Sources

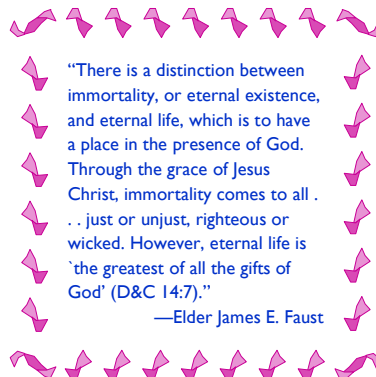
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"There is a distinction between immortality, or eternal existence, and eternal life, which is to have a place in the presence of God. Through the grace of Jesus Christ, immortality comes to all . . . just or unjust, righteous or wicked. However, eternal life is 'the greatest of all the gifts of God' (D&C 14:7)."

—Elder James E. Faust

The Old Testament: A New Year and a Fresh Start

I'm excited, as I hope you are, this year to start studying the Old Testament. Its richness and solid foundation are integral to our understanding of all the scriptures. As we go along in our lessons, take note of patterns that are repeated, events that foreshadow others later, and lineage that is traced throughout generations. The Old Testament is full of archetypal stories that teach us much about actions and consequences, sin and repentance, trusting and forgiveness, and mortality and eternal life.

Take time each day to study a part of the lesson ahead for Sunday, to come with questions raised and insights gained during that scripture study, and to participate actively in our meetings.

When you do come prepared, it challenges me and all of us to reach for further insights and to address the hard questions of life together, enlightened by each other's perspectives. Even if you miss studying the lesson one day or one week, if you are actively engaged in our



discussions when you are here, you can often become more motivated to buckle down and resolve to study it for the next week. As the scriptures teach us, we can repent and start anew when we stumble.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "I hope that for you [studying the scriptures] will become something far more enjoyable than a duty; that rather, it will become a love affair with the word of God. I promise you that as you read, your minds will be enlightened and your spirits will be lifted" ("*The Light Within You*," *Ensign*, May 1995, 99).

Ultimately, my hope is that studying the Old Testament will strengthen your testimony of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and strengthen your commitment to live the gospel.

—W. W. Austin