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“Moses, My Son”

*God knows us, loves us,
and desires our salvation
and exaltation.*

From my earliest days in Primary, I have always loved the stories of the Old Testament. Though these stories at times seemed supernatural to me with their portrayals of divine intervention in the affairs of God’s children, they are, first of all, accounts of the lives of otherwise ordinary men and women. Noah, Ruth, Jeremiah, Esther, and many others dealt with challenges that are the common lot of mankind: they married, had children, worked to survive, confronted enemies, battled discouragement, and in the process had their lives touched by God in often spectacular ways.

In reading about these Old Testament individuals, we discover that they were not so different from us. The fact that God was mindful of them and that they were of service to Him gives hope that the same is possible for us.

While working on his translation of the Bible in June 1830, the Prophet Joseph Smith had a vision



in which he was shown an extraordinary experience that had been given to Moses (see Moses 1–8).

This revelation serves as a further witness to what Moses taught in the Old Testament. This was the same man of whom it was said, “Now the man Moses was very meek, above

all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3). Here is a perfect example of an ordinary man having an extraordinary experience.

In this remarkable vision, Moses learned the truth about:

- Who God is.
- Who we are in relation to Him.
- Why He caused the earth to be created.
- The reality of Satan and how we can resist him.
- The role the Lord Jesus Christ played.

Let’s explore some of these in greater detail.



A Son of God

In this revelation God repeatedly refers to Moses as “my son” and teaches him that he was created in the similitude of the Savior (Moses 1:6). Commenting on the importance of this truth, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught:

In a revelation restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith, God repeatedly referred to Moses as “my son” and taught him that he was created in the similitude of the Savior.

“Consider the power of the idea taught in our beloved song ‘I Am a Child of God’ . . . Here is the answer to one of life’s great questions, ‘Who am I?’ I am a child of God with a spirit lineage to heavenly parents. That parentage defines our eternal potential. That powerful idea is a potent antidepressant. It can strengthen each of us to make righteous choices and to seek the best that is within us. Establish in the mind of a . . . person the powerful idea that he or she is a child of God and you have given self-respect and motivation to move against the problems of life.”¹

After being shown the creations of God and witnessing the power and glory of the Lord, Moses was moved to declare, “Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing” (Moses 1:10). Does this contradict Elder Oaks’s statement?

Not at all. Moses had simply come to understand that *by comparison*, God is infinitely wiser and more powerful than mortal men and women. It is our faith that as sons and daughters of God, we have the potential to become like Him.

Resisting Satan

After witnessing the power and glory of God, Moses was confronted by Satan, who “came tempting him, saying: Moses, *son of man*, worship me” (Moses 1:12; emphasis added). Note that Satan attempted to persuade Moses that he was not, as he had been assured, a son of God



MOSES OVERCOMES SATAN, BY JOSEPH BRICKEY

but rather a “son of man”—that is, a mere mortal. It is obvious why Satan wants us to doubt that we are spiritually begotten children of God. Dissuading us that we have divine potential erodes the nobility to which we ought to aspire and invites us to embrace the sins of this world. In doing so we surrender to the adversary and forfeit our rightful divine inheritance.

Moses provides us with a wonderful example of how to resist the blandishments of Satan. Moses said, “I will not cease to call upon God” (Moses 1:18), teaching

us the importance of prayer. Then Moses commanded Satan to depart from him, speaking “in the name of the Only Begotten” and thus declaring his loyalty to Jesus Christ and his dependence on the Savior’s Atonement (Moses 1:20–21). By displaying such determination, Moses was strengthened and succeeded in driving Satan from him.

God Reveals His Purposes

After Satan had departed, Moses again beheld the glory of God and was shown a marvelous vision. He was shown “the earth, yea, even all of it; and there was not a particle of it which he did not behold, discerning it by the spirit of God.

“And he beheld also the inhabitants thereof, and there was not a soul which he beheld not; and he discerned them by the Spirit of God; and their numbers were great, even numberless as the sand upon the sea shore” (Moses 1:27–28).

Awed by the extent and grandeur of what he had beheld, Moses asked what we might have asked had we been in his place: “Tell me, I pray thee,

why these things are so, and by what thou madest them” (Moses 1:30).

The answer the Lord gave is perhaps the most succinct and revealing description found anywhere of the purposes of God. He explained:

“This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39; emphasis added).

What a declaration! God’s works may be endless, but He knows and loves each of us. His intent—His “work”

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and His “glory”—is to bring salvation and exaltation to us, His spiritually begotten children.

President James E. Faust (1920–2007), Second Counselor in the First Presidency, provided this simple, yet profound explanation of what this means:

“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). We obtain this great gift, according to the Lord, ‘if you keep my commandments and endure to the end.’ If we so endure, the promise is, ‘you shall have eternal life’ (D&C 14:7).”²

As Latter-day Saints, we are grateful for the wonderful gospel truths provided by the Book of Moses. These additional insights strengthen what we are taught by Moses in the Old Testament. If these truths—our relationship to God, the reality of Satan, and the plan of salvation—were universally understood by the world, imagine what they would do to dispel fear, doubt, hopelessness, and unrighteousness. Without an understanding of these truths, mankind continues to “grope for the wall like the blind, . . . as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men” (Isaiah 59:10).

Many times in my own life I have felt an assurance that God is interested in me—in my personal salvation. And as Moses knew, I know that I am one of Heavenly Father’s sons. I also know that each of us is precious to and loved



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You too can enhance your gospel study by using the study guide with your scriptures. The study guide includes the following helps for each Sunday School lesson:

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The Old Testament consists of prophecies and teachings from at least 29 prophets and other inspired leaders. The study guide is written to help us focus on the chapters that highlight their prophecies and teachings as well as the enlightening events from their lives.

As we study the Old Testament and the books of Abraham and Moses in the Pearl of Great Price, we can prayerfully and diligently use the study guide as the tool it is meant to be. And as we study and read this ancient scripture, may we remember the words of President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988), First Counselor in the First Presidency: “The message of the Old Testament is the message of Christ and his coming and his atonement” (“The Message of the Old Testament,” *A Symposium on the Old Testament* [1979], 5).

by God. He cares, He whispers, and He watches over us in ways unique to each of our lives.

Like Nephi of old, I can say: “I do not know the meaning of all things” (1 Nephi 11:17). Nevertheless, I do know and witness that God our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, in their infinite greatness, know and love you and me personally as expressed to Moses through revelation. ■

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “Powerful Ideas,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 25.
2. James E. Faust, “The Supernal Gift of the Atonement,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 12.