

Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 82.2)

LESSON 5 (STUDY NOTES)

**“If Thou Doest Well, Thou Shalt Be Accepted”**

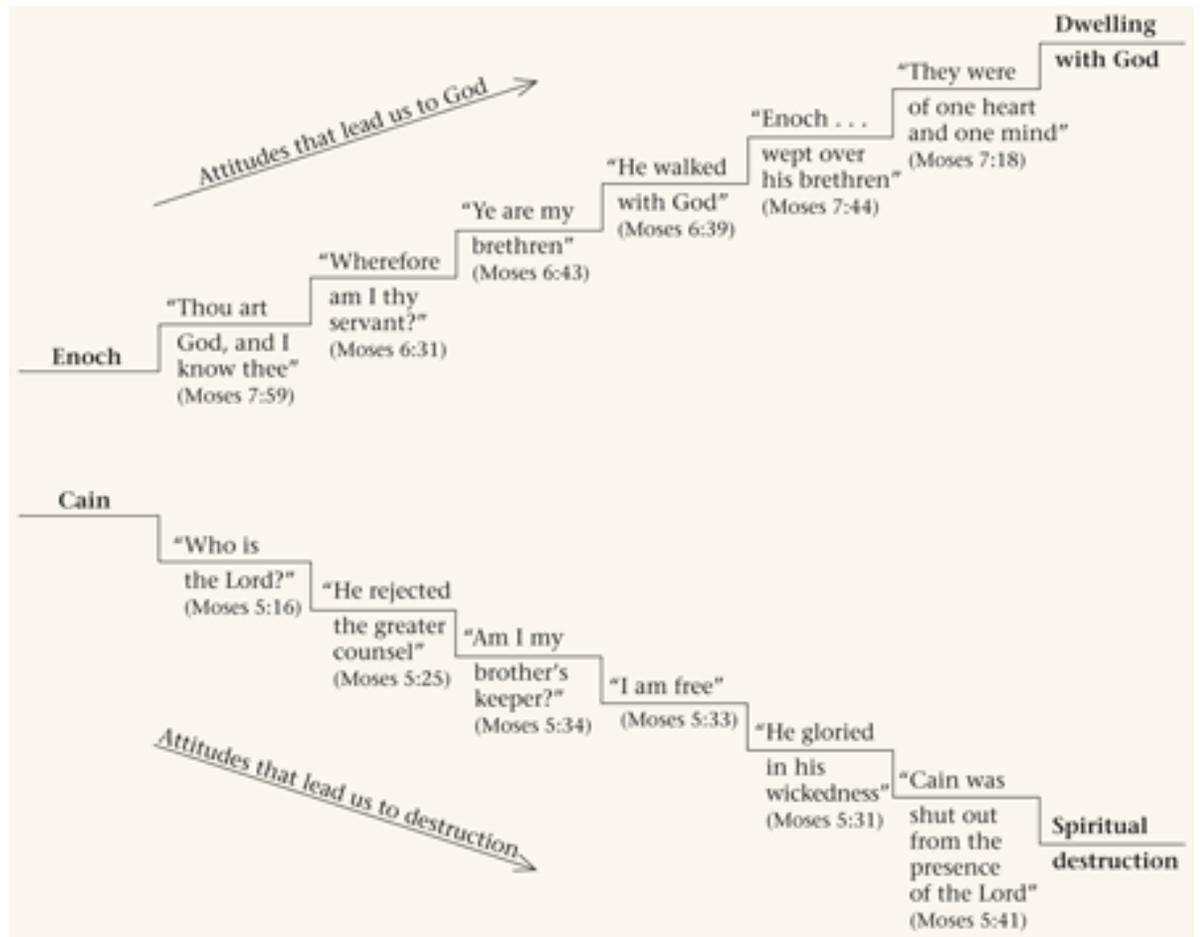
(A Tale of Two Cities)

Hook	This lesson includes what may be my favorite chapter in all scripture. The assigned reading presents a study in contrasts... the dismissive murder by Cain of Abel, and the eternity-shaking compassion of Enoch. In this reading we come to know the weeping, limited God distinctive in Mormonism.
Goal	Class members can learn from the examples of Cain and Enoch, specifically regarding what insight we gain about God and what we can apply from their feelings towards their fellow humans.
Overview	(see below)
Conclusion	

I. Sunday School

- a. Contrasts: Cain vs. Enoch (Enoch is a bright point in a story of increasing wickedness)
  - i. Cain: How does he treat God? How does he treat his fellow humans?  
What do we learn about Cain and God from this story?
  - ii. Enoch: How does he treat God? How does he treat his fellow humans?  
What do we learn about Enoch and God from this story? (Focus on Moses 7 in detail, bulk of discussion)
- b. In reading, look for theses of family and adoption, and listening. Whose “spiritual children” are we? How do we choose God as our parent?
- c. Discussion on the “God Who Weeps”
- d. (good Sunday School approach) ask what passages move the class members, solicit their thoughts and questions.
- e. Relationships with God, choices, and character (following the theme of the lesson)

I think this image from the manual would prove useful:



f.

## II. Other Reading

- a. Cain and Abel narrative in literary and historical context (Why did God reject Cain's sacrifice, what themes are present in the narrative, what is Cain's mark, why does God protect Cain, etc)
- b. Life spans (genealogies have also been key in calculating the time of Eden/Creation)
- c. Enoch traditions (Bible: Genesis 5:18-24 is it, other than Jude 1:14, which ascribes an end of the world prophecy to Enoch)
  - i. 1 Enoch (300s BC- turn of era), Enoch portrayed as seer, sage, scribe priest/mediator, eschatological judge.
  - ii. 2 Enoch (only Slavonic, unsure date, life of Enoch, journey through heavens, midrash of biblical passages)
  - iii. 3 Enoch (Enoch is known as the archangel Metatron) Composed 500s-1000?

## III. Study Notes

- a. Theological reflections: What do we do with this story? Abel dies then Cain is protected? What theological investments do we have for this story to be literal?
- b. Reviewing the reading with more analytical comments
- c. Secret Covenants and “Master Mahan”

Michael Quinn suggested Mahan is derived from Mahoun in Early Mormonism and the Magic Worldview, 147-148 and 208-210. (variant of Muhammad?)

IV. Bradshaw says this when discussing Mahan at Moses 5:31:

V. "Truly I am Mahan. Draper, et al. comment: “Cain takes a new name as an indicator of his new status, also a later characteristic of righteous persons (Abram becomes Abraham;539 and so on).”540 Nibley discusses a possible etymology of the name: “The word ‘secret’ is sirra in Arabic; the eighth form of the verb, mustirra, means ‘to hold a secret, to keep a secret.’ It’s the same as the Greek word sathra for secret. The Egyptian word is seshet; mesehet is ‘to hold a secret.’ Sether is the Hebrew word for keeping a secret (the master of the secret). So this word ‘master’ may not be our word ‘master’ at all, but ‘master’ means ‘keeper of secret,’ and ‘Mahan’ means ‘great.’ In any language, maha means ‘great.’ Words like magnus, mighty, might, many, maharaja; anything that’s big is ma. So this could mean Master Mahan, the ‘great secret keeper.’ (It could be; this is just a suggestion here.)”541 Note that in OT1, “Mahan” is consistently spelled “Mahon,” which suggests how the Prophet might have pronounced the name while dictating the manuscript.542 The spelling was changed to “Mahan” in OT2."

Anti Masonic? Master Mahan/Mahon = Master Mason?

- a. Cain in LDS tradition
  - i. Bigfoot!
  - ii. Blackness and the Priesthood ban
- b. Reflections on human evil and goodness
- c. Concluding thoughts about what we learn about the stories of Cain and Abel and Enoch

Resources

God Who Weeps/Limited God

Cain and Abel

Cain in LDS tradition

<http://mormonmatters.org/2013/10/01/194-197-genesis-part-1-creation-garden-expulsion-cursing/> (episode 197)

Mauss, Dispelling the Curse of Cain

<http://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/134-56-61.pdf>

Folklore on race <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/126-34-35.pdf>

Weeping God of Mormonism (read from pp. 105-106)

Blacks and the Priesthood statement: <http://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng>

The justifications for this restriction echoed the widespread ideas about racial inferiority that had been used to argue for the legalization of black “servitude” in the Territory of Utah.<sup>9</sup> According to one view, which had been promulgated in the United States from at least the 1730s, blacks descended from the same lineage as the biblical Cain, who slew his brother Abel.<sup>10</sup> Those who accepted this view believed that God’s “curse” on Cain was the mark of a dark skin. (David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 178–182, 360n20; )

Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else. Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form.<sup>23</sup>

Cain Miracle of Forgiveness quote:

“On the sad character Cain, an interesting story comes to us from Lycurgus A. Wilson’s book on the life of David W. Patten. From the book I quote an extract from a letter by Abraham O. Smoot giving his recollection of David Patten’s account of meeting “a very remarkable person who had represented himself as being Cain.’

‘As I was riding along the road on my mule I suddenly noticed a very strange personage walking beside me... His head was about even with my shoulders as I sat in my saddle. He wore no clothing, but was covered with hair. His skin was very dark. I asked him where he dwelt and he replied that he had no home, that he was a wanderer in the earth and traveled to and fro. He said he was a very miserable creature, that he had earnestly sought death during his sojourn upon the earth, but that he could not die, and his mission was to destroy the souls of men. About the time he expressed himself thus, I rebuked him in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by virtue of the holy priesthood, and commanded him to go hence, and he immediately departed out of my sight...”

(Miracle of Forgiveness, Spencer W. Kimball, pg 127, 1969)