

These notes contain links to a few books that have helped me understand the context and content of the Old Testament. As an Amazon Affiliate, I do earn a small commission from qualifying purchases (at no extra cost to you). [Click here to see all my favorite books on Amazon.](#)

Genesis 1-2; Moses 2-3; Abraham 4-5

1. A brief sketch of the Old Testament
 - a. The Old Testament covers about 6,000 years of time according to its internal history. **Bishop James Ussher** (1581-1656) dated the creation to October 23, 4004 BCE.¹
 - b. It (The Old Testament) covers the events of the creation to Malachi (circa 400 BCE), so it may be covering a time period much longer.
 - c. Often referred to as the “Tanakh,” or the Torah, the Ketuvim, and the Nevi’im = The First 5 Books of Moses, the writings, and the prophets.
 - d. The Old Testament is not one book written by a single author, rather it is an anthology of books written over centuries and by individuals. The ideas expressed in the Old Testament do not always agree.²
 - a. The time periods of the Hebrew Bible (Bryce gives 9 and Mike adds #10)
 - i. Adam & Eve, the creation and beginnings.
 - ii. Abraham & Sarah – The Abrahamic Covenant, the beginning of Israel.
 - iii. The tribes of Israel in Egypt, Joseph in Egypt.
 - iv. The Desert, Moses, Sinai, The Law.
 - v. The conquest & settlement of Canaan – Joshua & Judges.
 - vi. The United Kingdom under Saul, David & Solomon.
 - vii. The Divided Kingdom – 950-721 BCE.
 - viii. The captivity, Israel in Assyria, Judah in Babylon.
 - ix. The return of Judah from Babylonian captivity 539 BCE-400 BCE.
 - x. The dawn of apocalyptic prophets & apocalyptic literature 600 BCE-200 CE.
 - e. When was the Old Testament “canonized”? This is a complicated question, but a simple answer is that the Hebrew Bible was canonized between 200 BCE and 200 CE.³

¹ [Bishop Ussher dates the World](#). Accessed 12.21.21. See also: [The Irish Times, How an Archbishop calculated the Creation, Sep. 25, 2003](#). Accessed 12.21.21. His date of October 23, 4004 thus meant that time must have begun the day before, on October 22, 4004, since “the evening and the morning were the first day.”

² Books have been written about the many and varied theological discrepancies in the Old Testament. Suffice it to say that for now, we clearly see that multiple creation accounts exist, at least in LDS canon: The Genesis account (really two accounts stitched together), Abraham 4-5, Moses 2-3, and the Temple narrative of the creation. All accounts have variations and teach us something different. This should teach us about the nature of scripture and how Joseph Smith approached sacred texts. It should also give Latter-Day Saint readers pause when engaging in conversations about scripture. Our expectation of scripture is different than that of other traditional Christians. Since there is no ur-text, the variation in texts should be something to celebrate, not try to unify. The diversity in and of itself is a strength, and in fact is a gateway to revelation on how to read, interpret, and apply scripture. See: [The Messiness of Scripture](#).

³ Judaism recognizes the twenty-four books of the Masoretic Text, commonly called the Tanakh or Hebrew Bible. Evidence suggests that the process of canonization occurred between 200 BC and AD 200 over time and in stages, with the writings (13 very different books, including 3 poetic books) being decided upon last of all. A popular position is that the Torah was canonized circa 400 BC, the Prophets circa 200 BC, and the Writings circa AD 70 perhaps at a hypothetical Council of Jamnia—this position, however, is criticized by modern scholars. The earliest

- f. **What Old Testament did Jesus use?** Jesus spoke primarily in Aramaic, though he sometimes might have also used Greek and perhaps even Hebrew. Jesus probably was most familiar with the bible of his day, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Septuagint. He likely heard Scripture read in Hebrew and in Greek, and then paraphrased and interpreted in Aramaic.⁴ How much of this paraphrase was actually written down in Jesus' day is difficult to tell.⁵
- g. The Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Tanakh, or Hebrew Bible.⁶
2. In the Beginning “*be-rosh-iyt*” בְּרֵאשִׁית “*En arche*” Ἐν ἀρχῇ ... both complete the idea of “The First.”⁷

evidence we have of a third section of the Bible beginning to take form is in the non-canonical Book of Ben Sira, which was written in the early second century B.C.E. In his book Ben Sira makes reference to three sections of the Bible corresponding to our Torah, Prophets, and Writings. See: [Haaretz, Who Decided What Books the Hebrew Bible Would Contain?](#) Accessed 12.20.21. See also: [Jewish Encyclopedia, Bible Canon](#). Accessed 12.08.21. On arguments against a Council of Jamnia/Yavneh and the “canonization” of the Hebrew Bible, see: James K. Aitken’s article in [A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations](#), Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 223. He writes, “The Council was thought to have met inc.90 CE in this largely Jewish city on the coastal plain south of Jaffa. Seeing it as modelled on early Church synods, nineteenth-century scholars attributed to it the fixing of the Hebrew canon, the exclusion of Christianity from Judaism and the codification of Jewish law, and therefore considered it decisive in the split between Church and synagogue. The hypothesis of such a Council has, however, been widely rejected... Rabbinic Judaism developed over time, and the real need for codification would probably have been felt after BarKokhba (d. 135 CE) with the movement of rabbis to Galilee. The continuation of close contact between Jews and Christians for centuries and of rabbinic diversity and discussion on canonic and related issues, supports the case that there was no Council with authority.”

⁴ Since Matthew wrote primarily to convince the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed their promised Messiah, it would seem logical that his Gospel would be filled with references to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. Yet, when Jesus quotes the Old Testament in the book of Matthew, he uses the Hebrew text only 10% of the time, but the Greek LXX translation—90% of the time. Archer and Chirichigno list **340 places where the New Testament cites the Septuagint but only 33 places where it cites from the Masoretic Text rather than the Septuagint**. See: G. Archer and G.C. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey*, p. 25-32. **What does this prove? Does it necessarily follow that this is the version of the Old Testament that Jesus used?** Perhaps it is not so simple. One author stated, “while the New Testament authors quoted the LXX frequently, it does not necessarily follow that Christ did. We know for certain that Jesus quoted the Hebrew Old Testament at times, since he read from the scrolls in the synagogue. But Jesus could have only quoted from the Hebrew, and the New Testament authors later used the Greek translation to record the fact.” See: Jason Evert, [In which passages does Jesus quote the Septuagint, and where does the New Testament allude to the Septuagint?](#) Accessed 12.1.17. **So perhaps the data is inconclusive as to which version Jesus most used, but one thing is certain: the authors of the New Testament texts that we have today used the Septuagint.**

⁵ See: [What Bible Version did Jesus Read? Christianity Today, April 26, 1999](#). Accessed 12.21.21.

⁶ The Septuagint (from the Latin *septuaginta*, “seventy”), also known as the LXX, is a Koine Greek translation of a Hebraic textual tradition that included certain texts which were later included in the canonical Hebrew Bible and other related texts which were not. As the primary Greek translation of the Old Testament, it is also called the Greek Old Testament. This translation is quoted a number of times in the New Testament, particularly in Paul’s letters, and also by the Apostolic Fathers and later Greek Church Fathers. See: [How did we get the Bible?](#)

⁷ **John obviously understood the concept that the author of Genesis 1.1 was employing.** When John created his account of the Logos coming into the creation, he saw that in the first/chief/head the Logos existed and the Logos was “*pros ton Theon*,” with God, or near unto God, and that the Logos was also God. See the Greek of John 1.1: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

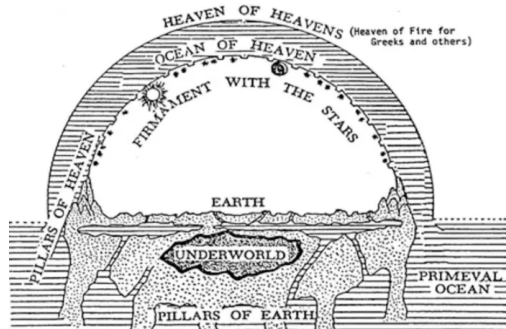
- a. What Joseph Smith is doing with **beroshiyt** and **en arche**: This is the Divine Council
 - i. This very first word of Gen. 1.1 and John 1.1 is identifying the players, and it is all compacted, abbreviated into this small word that is filled with meaning. The King Follett Discourse given by Joseph Smith helps explain some of these ideas.⁸
- b. The gods organized and formed the heaven and earth – Abr. 4.1.
 - i. This is the beginning of Biblical verses opening up the idea of a Divine Council of Gods performing creation. We do get some plural verses attached to Elohim in the Hebrew of Genesis 1, for example, “Let us make man in our image...” this verse is in the plural.
- c. **Elohim**, bara – Gen. 1.1
 - i. **Bara** בָּרָא is something God alone does – he does this kind of creating. Joseph Smith explained it as an organization.⁹
 - ii. Elohim אֱלֹהִים is “God” in the plural. Joseph will use this word to give us “gods” in the Abraham creation account.
- d. **Tohu wa Bohu** תהו ובהו = without form and void
 - i. This is an acknowledgement of the creation stories in the ANE, where the Gods conquer the deep-Tehom, or the Chaos Dragon, and through the destruction of the chaos, order is created and life may come to be. We see this in Babylon and Greece as well as Ugaritic materials. We also see this come up in Nephi’s narrative where Nephi slays the Dragon, or the Goliath figure, and then creates a temple/boat and crosses waters and builds another temple/order/people/kingdom. **Chaos plays a role in creation** and life in these materials as it does here.
 - ii. One thing the Creation story teaches us is that God can make something magnificent out of something unorganized. That’s helpful to remember when life seems chaotic. **Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are Creators, and Their creative work with us is not finished. They can make light shine in dark moments in our lives. They can form solid ground in the midst of life’s stormy seas.** They can command the elements, and if we obey Their word like the

⁸ Joseph Smith put it this way: “I shall comment on the very first Hebrew word in the Bible; I will make a comment on the very first sentence of the history of creation in the Bible—**Berosheit**. I want to analyze the word. *Baith*—in, by, through, and everything else. *Rosh*—the head, *Sheit*—grammatical termination... It read first, “The head one of the Gods brought forth the Gods.” That is the true meaning of the words. **Baurau signifies to bring forth**. If you do not believe it, you do not believe the learned man of God. Learned men can teach you no more than what I have told you. **Thus the head God brought forth the Gods in the grand council**. I will transpose and simplify it in the English language... **The head God called together the Gods and sat in grand council to bring forth the world**. The grand councilors sat at the head in yonder heavens and contemplated the creation of the worlds which were created at the time.” See: [The King Follett Discourse](#), emphasis added.

⁹ He stated: “You ask the learned doctors why they say the world was made out of nothing, and they will answer, “Doesn’t the Bible say he *created* the world?” And they infer, from the word create, that it must have been made out of nothing. Now, the word create came from the word **baurau, which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize**; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time He had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning and can have no end.” See: Joseph Smith, King Follett Discourse, April 7, 1844. See: [Documentary History of the Church, vol. 6, p. 302-317](#), emphasis added.

elements did, They can transform us into the beautiful creations we were meant to be. That's part of what it means to be created in God's image, after His likeness.

- e. **Raqia**/Firmament רָקִיעַ = the *raqia* splits the waters above from the waters beneath – Gen.1.2-8.
 - i. The **Raqia** רָקִיעַ introduces us into the world of early Hebrew Cosmology (see [graphic](#)). This all ties into D&C 1.24, in that God speaks to man after the manner of his language, according to his understanding.¹⁰



- 3. This entire story is a **temple text** used in a liturgical setting.¹¹

¹⁰ **The ancients viewed the cosmic sea as the watery abyss from which creation sprang**, as well as the waters that surrounded the earth above the firmament, or *raqia*. The watery chaos formed a barrier to sacred space, both above and beneath the firmament. In this way, God performed an act of creation in which Adam and Eve were in a space of holiness like his, and in this way Adam and Eve were invited to participate in creation. **The seas in antiquity represented a border** of sorts, and in stepping across this boundary, man was entering into liminal space, a place where the watery chaos could have potential to either bring man down into the depths of the *tehom*, the chaos, or he could pass over the waters and enter into a new dimension, a new relationship with God. Even the word for sea in Hebrew is associated with chaos, as [the word yam](#) יָם, is connected to an Ancient Near Eastern god of chaos. See: Peter Enns, [The Firmament of Genesis 1 is Solid but that's Not the Point](#), January 14, 2010, BioLogos. See also Edward Wright, [The Early History of Heaven](#), Oxford University Press, 2000. John Walton, [Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology](#), Eisenbrauns, 2011.

¹¹ The process of creation provides a model for temple building and ritual. See: Hugh Nibley, Return to the Temple, in *Temple and Cosmos*, pp. 71–73. See also J. H. Walton, [Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006, pp. 123–127; Hugh Nibley, Meanings and Functions, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, pp. 1460–1461; S. D. Ricks, Liturgy and cosmogony: The ritual use of creation accounts in the ancient Near East." In *Temples of the Ancient World*, edited by Donald W. Parry, 118-25. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1994. For more on the structure and function of the story of Creation found in Genesis 1 and arguably used in Israelite temple liturgy, see J. H. Walton, [The Lost World of Genesis One](#); Mark S. Smith, [Priestly Vision of Genesis 1](#), Fortress Press, 2010. J. H. Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 2011, pp. 17–22 for a useful table that highlights similarities and differences among creation accounts in the ancient Near East see: [William P. Brown, The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder](#). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 21–32.

- a. Quote the biblical scholars that are presenting this information: Jon Levenson, John Walton¹², John Lundquist¹³, Hugh Nibley, etc. Read some of these quotes.¹⁴
- b. Why is this a temple liturgy?
 - i. This story is our foundation stone, our beginning, hence it is tied to the temple, for the temple and creation cannot be separated.¹⁵
 - ii. **Adam and Eve are us**, male and female.
 - iii. They will be made “Lords of the whole earth.”
 - iv. This is an invitation for us to create an Edenic state on the earth.
 - v. Adam is to garden as God is a gardener. Jesus’ resurrected kingly body is first portrayed after his resurrection in a garden where Mary thought he “was the gardener.”
 - vi. Adam and Eve are to “dress and to keep” the garden – *eved* and *shamar*. These are the words used to describe what the temple priests do in the temple.¹⁶

¹² John Walton sees the creation account as directly connected to the temple. He writes, “**It would not have been difficult for a reader from anywhere in the ancient Near East to take one quick look at the seven-day account and draw the conclusion that it was a temple story.** That is because they knew something about the temples in the ancient world that is foreign to us.” See: John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate*, 2016, IVP Academic, p. 42/234 electronic version.

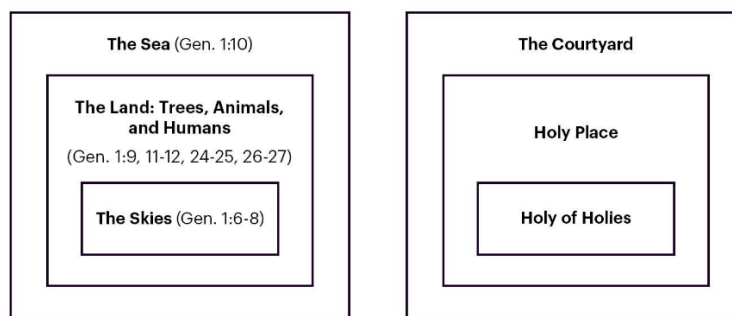
¹³ See John M. Lundquist, The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East, in [The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives](#), Bookcraft, 1984. Lundquist provides evidence that the temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain, that the cosmic mountain represents the primordial hillock, the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process. The temple is also the place associated with the tree of life.

¹⁴ Jon Levenson states, “The following midrash shows that the notion of increasing orders of centrality can be found even on the mountain itself: ‘Just as the navel is positioned in the center of a man, thus is the Land of Israel positioned in the center of the world, as the Bible says, “dwelling at the very navel of the earth” (Ezek. 38:12), and from it the foundation of the world proceeds.... And the Temple is in the center of Jerusalem, and the Great Hall is in the center of the Temple, and the Ark is in the center of the Great Hall, and the Foundation Stone is in front of the Ark, and beginning with it the world was put on its foundation. **In short, the Temple is a visible, tangible token of the act of creation, the point of origin of the world, the “focus” of the universe.**” See: Jon Levenson, The Temple and the World, *The Journal of Religion*, July 1983, Vol. 64, No. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 283. Levenson also states that “the “creation of the world,” the “construction of the sanctuary,” and “the establishment of the sanctuary in the land and the distribution of the land among the tribes” are all described in similar, and at times, identical language” (p 286-287), and Levenson is quoting Joseph Blenkinsopp in this instance. Levenson also notes that “it is not coincidence that the Hebrew Bible begins with an account of the creation of heaven and earth by the command of God (Gen. 1:1) and ends with the command of the God of heaven “to build him a Temple in Jerusalem” (2 Chron. 35:23). It goes from creation (Temple) to Temple (creation) in twenty- four books,” p. 295..

¹⁵ “In short,” Jon Levenson states, “the temple is a visible, tangible token of the act of creation, the point of origin of the world, the “focus” of the universe,” Jon Levenson, The Temple and the World, *The Journal of Religion*, July 1983, Vol. 64, No. 3, University of Chicago Press, p. 283.

¹⁶ Walton explains: The verb *šmr* is used in the contexts of the Levitical responsibility of guarding sacred space, as well as in the sense of observing religious commands and responsibilities. This verb is only used in agricultural contexts when crops are being guarded from those people or animals who would destroy or steal. When the verb applies to Levitical activity, it could involve control of access to the sacred precinct, although it is often applied more generally to performing duties on the grounds. To conclude, then, I would propose the following line of logic: Since: 1. there are a couple of contexts in which *šmr* is used for Levitical service along with *’bd* (e.g., Num 3:8-9), and 2. the contextual use of *šmr* here favors sacred service, and 3. *’bd* is as likely to refer to sacred service as to agricultural tasks, and 4. there are other indications that the garden is being portrayed as sacred space, then it is likely that **the tasks given to Adam are of a priestly nature**: caring for sacred space. **In ancient thinking, caring for**

1. The temple is where the priests experienced God’s presence. The Hebrew verbal form (hithpael) used for God’s walking back and forth” in the garden (Gen. 3.8) describes God’s presence in the tabernacle (Lev. 26.12; Deut. 23.14; 2 Sam. 7.6-7; Ezk. 28.14).
 2. The Hebrew words *aved* and *shamar* can mean “to work/serve” or “to worship,” and *shamar* can mean “to keep, guard, or protect.” These words are used to describe the responsibility of the priests and how they were to guard, protect, and serve in the temple (see: Lev. 18.5; Num. 1.53, 3.7-8, **8.25-26, 18.5-6**; 1 Chron. 23.32; Ezk. 44.14).
- vii. This is also a literal recreation of the temple. This creation parallels the temple.¹⁷ The design plan of Eden is a prototype of the tabernacle and the temple. This narrative is meant to preview the priesthood and the holy of holies in the Israelite temple. The map of Genesis 2.4-18 imitates this very holy space.
1. The skies: Gen. 1.6-8.
 2. The Land: Trees, animals, humans: Gen. 1.9, 11-12, 24-25, 26-27.
 3. The Sea: Gen. 1.10.
 4. This parallels the Holy of Holies, Holy Place, and The courtyard. The courtyard, in some time periods was called “The sea” and represented chaos outside of the created order.¹⁸ (Image source: Bibleproject.com)



sacred space was a way of upholding creation. By preserving order, non-order was held at bay. See: John Walton, [The Lost World of Adam and Eve](#), p. 90/234 electronic version.

¹⁷ Donald Parry gives **eleven examples of how the Garden of Eden is a prototypical sanctuary**: 1) The Tree of Life was located in the garden and the temple, 2) Both the temple and garden had sacred waters, 3) Eastward orientation played a role in both centers, 4) The Cosmic Mountain was affiliated symbolically with both, 5) The account of the earth’s creation is closely connected to the account of the creation of the temple, 6) Cherubim serve as guardians in both places, 7) Revelation was an important aspect of both the garden and the temple, 8) Sacrifice existed in both the garden and in the temple, 9) Similar religious language existed in both spaces, 10) Sacred vestments were associated with Adam and Eve as well as the priests in the temple, 11) Abundance was associated with both spaces. See: [Donald Parry, Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary, in Temples of the Ancient World, p. 126-127.](#)

¹⁸ Margaret Barker explains, “In later interpretation, **the whole of this courtyard** (of the temple complex in Jerusalem) **represented the sea**; the entire temple complex ‘was’ the creation, with the temple as the created and ordered firmament in the midst of a hostile sea.” See: Margaret Barker, [The Gate of Heaven](#), Sheffield Press, 2008, p. 30. Later Barker adds, “A tradition attributed to Rabbi Pinhas ben Ya’ir, who lived in the second century AD describes the temple thus: “The house of the holy of holies was made to correspond to the highest heaven. The outer Holy House was made to correspond to earth, and the courtyard was made to correspond to the sea...” The interpreters of the Pentateuch said, “The court surrounds the temple just as the sea surrounds the world.” The Babylonian Talmud remembers that the white and blue marble of the temple walls looked like the waves of the sea. All these are later texts, written after the temple had been destroyed, but Josephus, who knew the temple,

4. The **How** versus the **Why** of Creation.
 - a. Genesis 1-2 is a text that is working to describe creation as a process of God's glory, power, and order. This is a temple text, not a scientific text.
 - b. The 7 lessons from Genesis 1-2; Moses 2-3; Abraham 4-5
 - i. Moses 3 tells us how to succeed in life: rest is part of the program.¹⁹
 - ii. Spiritual before physical. Moses 3.5 tells us that the Lord created things spiritually first. If we put the spiritual in its proper place, we are creating a balanced life.
 - iii. We must grant space between the trees.
 1. What was Satan's objective? See: Alma 12.4-6 and Alma 42.4-5. Allowing for "space between the trees" in our probationary state gives balance to our lives. It gives room for missing the mark while getting up and trying again.²⁰
 - iv. Moses 3.11-14 shows us that the river out of Eden parts into 4 heads. This is the beginning of division. This world brings division and inequality, which must be overcome.
 - v. Notice the first temptation – Moses 3.15-17 and Moses 4.7. Note how the serpent worked in this situation.
 - vi. The message of the rib (see #10 & 11 below).
 - vii. The message of the coats of skins (see #8 below).
 - c. Whatever the details of the creation process, we know that it was not accidental but that it was directed by God the Father and implemented by Jesus Christ.
 - d. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints does not take a position on evolution.

also said that the outer courtyard represented the sea. He said that the tabernacle on which it was modelled, was divided into three parts..." see p. 65. She continues, "Psalm 93 describes **the Lord enthroned in majesty, as mightier than the floods and the waves of the sea**. Psalm 29.10 is similar:

The Lord sits enthroned over the flood.

The Lord sits enthroned forever.

Since the throne was in the temple, this is a picture of **the creator who has triumphed** and is literally **enthroned in his sanctuary over the floods he has subdued**. Psalm 24 says that the Lord has established the world upon the seas, and immediately asks: "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?" (Psalm 24.3), implying that the established place is the holy hill, the place of security for his people. The ancient poem now incorporated into Exodus (The Song of the Sea, Exodus 15) tells of the Lord bringing his people through a terrifying sea (hence into inclusion in this story) but it does not end with the rest of the Exodus story. In its original setting it did not describe the events of the Exodus. The poem in fact tells the ancient story of the creation:

Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them on thy own mountain, the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thy abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established (Exodus 15.17).

This, incidentally, is a good example of myth at work; the events of history are set in an existing framework, and the creation of the chosen people as a result of the Exodus is told in terms of the creation of the world from the primeval seas, e.g. Pss 33.7; 74.13; 89.9; Jeremiah 5.22, and the stories about **King David subduing the subterranean waters before the building of the temple are a variation on the same theme...**" See: [The Gate of Heaven](#), emphasis added, p. 66.

¹⁹ A drugstore psychologist once said that people need three things to be emotionally healthy: **someone to love, significant things to do, and something pleasant to look forward to**. Brethren, make sure your wife has something pleasant, something genuinely fun, to look forward to regularly (Jeffrey R. Holland, "Our Consuming Mission," *An Evening with Jeffrey R. Holland*, 5 Feb. 1999).

²⁰ Indeed, "missing the mark" is the concept of sin – *hamartia* - ἁμαρτία as it is expressed in the Greek language of the New Testament authors. See: [Strong's G266](#).

5. It is also good (perhaps not vital) to identify this as two accounts of creation that were stitched together.
 - a. Genesis 1-2 is called J & P in much of Biblical scholarship.²¹
 - b. The “P” account, or Priestly account goes from Genesis 1.1 -2.4a and identifies the creator as Elohim, or “God” in the KJV. Elohim is the plural of El, the name of God.
 - c. Genesis 2.4b-Gen. 3.24 is the “J” account, or Yahwist account, where the creator is said to be the Lord God: Yahweh Elohim, the Lord God, or Yahweh of the Elohim (another appropriate translation as this can be read as a construct chain.)
 - d. Both creation accounts mention different deities doing the creating.
 - e. Both accounts have God creating a bit differently. Elohim speaks creation into existence and Yahweh gets busy doing things: he formed, he planted, he made – See Gen. 2.7-9. We also have Yahweh “walking” in the Garden – Gen. 3.8.
 - f. The Moses account gives space for the P version (Gen. 1-2.4a) to be a spiritual creation and the J account to be a physical creation. (Gen 2.4b-3.24.)
6. Times versus days.
 - a. Abraham is calling these periods “times,” and Genesis is calling them “days” – see Abr. 4.8, 4.13, 4.19, 4.23, 4.31.
 - b. Abraham opens up the idea that matter took time to obey the “gods” – “The Gods saw that they were obeyed...” – Abr. 4.10, 4.12. “The Gods watched those things which they had ordered until they obeyed.” – Abr. 4.18... these verses open up the possibility for natural processes of creation and the development of forms of life over time “until they obeyed”...
7. Good versus “very good.”
 - a. The things made in Genesis are “good,” but when man is made (ha-Adam), it is “very good.”
 - b. How God considers man and creation. See D&C 18 on how God views mankind.
 - c. In one creation account God says, “I have made you Lords over the whole earth.” We see something similar in Gen.
8. Coats of skins.
 - a. Light and skins – we have a pun here.²²
 - b. What is the point of garments? What purpose do garments serve in the Old Testament?
9. The names of Adam and Eve. Their unification/marriage.
 - a. Adam means man or mankind, while Eve’s name denotes the idea of bearing or giving life. Both names are significant names that teach the importance of life and the purpose of life.
 - b. Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God. The command to multiply and replenish the earth while Adam and Eve are in God’s presence seems to denote that

²¹ See: Richard Friedman, [The Bible with Sources Revealed](#), HarperOne, 2005, p. 1-31. See also: Bokovoy, [Documentary Sources in the Pentateuch](#), in, *Authoring the Old Testament*, Kofford Books, 2014.

²² Here is the text: וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כְּתָנוּת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם

My translation: And Yahweh Elohim (יהוה אלהים) made to Adam and to his wife coats/*kutonet* (plural) of skins עור (pronounced OR) and he clothed them (וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם)

Light is OR and skins is OR.

In Genesis 3.21 we have עור

In Genesis 1.3 we have God speaking forth light אור

And so while skins has the *ain* before the O sound vowel with the *vau*, and light has the *aleph* prior to the exact same construction, **the words are pronounced the same. It is a pun.** See also: [Clothing of Light](#), accessed 11.29.21.

they are married by the Lord and that this is an eternal marriage, as they are both in God's presence and have not yet partaken of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

- c. Knowing that "marriage between man and woman is essential to [God's] eternal plan," Latter-day Saints persist in the time-honored religious principle that marriage is foremost an institution for the procreation and raising of children. We also adhere to the proven experience that marriage is the best institution for the economic, political, and moral well-being of the human family. As President Spencer W. Kimball said many years ago: "We know that when things go wrong in the family, things go wrong in every other institution in society."²³

10. Genesis 2.18 – A "help meet" *ezer kenegdo* - עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ

- a. Understanding how these words are used gives glory to womankind.²⁴

11. Genesis 2.22 – The "rib" עֶלְצָה – side, or "rib."

- a. The rib signifies neither dominion nor subservience, but a lateral relationship as partners, to work and to live, side by side.²⁵
- b. This message of the rib teaches through the use of symbols, many things relating to how men should treat women, and how husbands should treat their wives. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland has spoken about this.²⁶

²³ [Dallin H. Oaks, "As he thinketh in his heart," S&C devotional February 2013.](#)

²⁴ The phrase translated as "help meet" comes from two Hebrew words, *ezer* and *kenegdo*. *Ezer* means "help," but in a distinct way. In English, a "helper" is sometimes thought of as someone in a low position, but *ezer* describes strength. It suggests that the individual has power to rescue others. *Ezer* is used 21 times in the Old Testament, always describing a person with the capacity allowing one to help, protect, or aid. In most of these cases, *ezer* describes the way God offers help to rescue humankind. For example: "For the God of my father, said he, was mine help [*ezer*], and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh" ([Exodus 18:4](#)). "Happy art thou, O Israel ... saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help [*ezer*]" ([Deuteronomy 33:29](#)). "My help [*ezer*] cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth" ([Psalm 121:2](#)). "In me [the Lord] is thine help [*ezer*]" ([Hosea 13:9](#)). Though its meaning is less definitive, scholars agree that *kenegdo* means "corresponding to" and "opposite to." It describes two things that are next to each other and complementary to each other, but different from each other—like facing opposites. Putting these two terms together, we see that *ezer kenegdo* suggests that God created Eve in counterpart to Adam, with the power to rescue and serve. "Help meet" is not a label of inferiority but an acknowledgment of strength! See: "[Help Meet](#)": Women's Power to Serve By Angela Ashurst-McGee, [September 2020 Ensign](#). Accessed 12.21.21.

²⁵ Elder Russell M. Nelson, [Lessons from Eve, Sept. 1987](#).

²⁶ From Elder Holland, "Love is a fragile thing, and some elements in life can try to break it. Much damage can be done if we are not in tender hands, caring hands. To give ourselves totally to another person, as we do in marriage, is the most trusting step we take in any human relationship. It is a real act of faith—faith all of us must be willing to exercise. If we do it right, we end up sharing everything—all our hopes, all our fears, all our dreams, all our weaknesses, and all our joys—with another person. No serious courtship or engagement or marriage is worth the name if we do not fully invest *all* that we have in it and in so doing trust ourselves totally to the one we love. You cannot succeed in love if you keep one foot out on the bank for safety's sake. The very nature of the endeavor requires that you hold on to each other as tightly as you can and jump in the pool together. In that spirit, and in the spirit of Mormon's plea for pure love, I want to impress upon you the vulnerability and delicacy of your partner's future as it is placed in your hands for safekeeping—male and female, it works both ways. Sister Holland and I have been married for nearly 37 years, just a half-dozen or so years short of *twice* as long as we have lived without each other. I may not know everything about her, but I know 37 years' worth, and she knows that much of me. I know her likes and dislikes, and she knows mine. I know her tastes and interests, hopes and dreams, and she knows mine. As our love has grown and our relationship has matured, we have been increasingly free with each other about all of that. The result is that I know much more clearly now how to help her, and, if I let myself, I know exactly what will hurt her. In the honesty of our love—love that can't truly be Christlike without such total devotion—surely God will hold me accountable for any pain I cause her by intentionally exploiting or hurting her

- c. Spencer W. Kimball has taught that we should give our whole hearts to our spouses.²⁷
 - d. *Azer* is a word used for the Lord's kind of help (H5828) used 21 times in KJV.
 - e. *Neged* (H5048) corresponding to what is in front, parallel to, or corresponding to.
12. Serpent – *nachash*
- a. The Serpent is going to be seen as Satan by Nephi.
 - b. The Serpent will also be seen as Satan in Early Christianity.
 - c. *Nachash* – briefly read “bronze, shining” from other sources.
 - d. We will not cover this in detail in this podcast, but it is important to note that Nephi and Lehi connect the serpent to an angel who fell from heaven and became the Devil (2 Nephi 9).
 - e. The serpent comes up again in the Moses narrative and later in the temple.

when she has been so trusting of me, having long since thrown away any self-protection in order that we could be, as the scripture says, "one flesh." To impair or impede her in *any way* for my gain or vanity or emotional mastery over her should disqualify me on the spot to be her husband. Indeed, it should consign my miserable soul to eternal incarceration in that large and spacious building Lehi says is the prison of those who live by "vain imaginations" and the "pride of the world." No wonder that building is at the opposite end of the field from the tree of life representing the love of God! In all that Christ was, He was not *ever* envious or inflated, never consumed with His own needs. He did not once, *not ever*, seek His own advantage at the expense of someone else. He delighted in the happiness of others, the happiness He could bring them." (Jeffrey R. Holland, "How Do I Love Thee?," 15 February 2000, 3-4).

²⁷ When the Lord says all thy heart, it allows for no sharing nor dividing nor depriving. And, to the woman it is paraphrased: "Thou shalt love thy husband with all thy heart and shalt cleave unto him and none else." The words none else eliminate everyone and everything. The spouse then becomes preeminent in the life of the husband or wife, and neither social life nor occupational life nor political life nor any other interest nor person nor thing shall ever take precedence over the companion spouse. The Lord says: "Thou shalt cleave unto him and none else." Marriage presupposes total allegiance and total fidelity. Each spouse takes the partner with the understanding that he or she gives totally to the spouse all the heart, strength, loyalty, honor, and affection, with all dignity. Any divergence is sin; any sharing of the heart is transgression (Spencer W. Kimball, [Faith Precedes the Miracle](#), 142-143).