



Zion and Joseph's Smith's muse, Enoch

dc 38.¹⁻⁶

¹Thus saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I Am, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made; ²the same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes; ³I am the same which spake, and the world was made, and all things came by me. ⁴I am the same which have taken the Zion of Enoch into mine own bosom; and verily, I say, even as many as have believed in my name, for I am Christ, and in mine own name, by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt, have I pleaded before the Father for them.

⁵But behold, the residue of the wicked have I kept in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day, which shall come at the end of the earth; ⁶and even so will I cause the wicked to be kept, that will not hear my voice but harden their hearts, and wo, wo, wo, is their doom.

In a meditation on DC 37, we suggested that the Enoch material found in what is today Moses 6 and 7 powerfully affected Joseph Smith, changed and expanded his vision and understanding of his call, and set him on a new course that would consume much of the rest of his short life.

Having read of Enoch's successful labors in transforming his society from this world's natural and typical dog-eat-dog zero-sum economic system to an cooperative economic system called "Zion," where there were no poor, but everyone was "alike" and "receive[d] alike,"¹ Joseph set out to imitate and duplicate Enoch's labors and successes. He felt called to establish a latter-day Zion based on the same principles as Enoch's.

Thinking concretely, Joseph first needed to identify a location. In being commanded to "go to the Ohio," the Lord identified the first of several locations that would serve as base for this experiment in societal and economic transformation. In DC 38, the Lord sets out the initial purposes of Zion and the principles upon which Zion is to be built. To a large extent, the Enoch materials of Moses 6 and 7 serve as inspiration for what is found there. In this series of

¹ See DC 51.⁹

meditations on DC 38, we will note similarities in perspectives on Zion between this section and the Enoch material found in Moses.

But before launching into this, we wish to note language and ideals that are found in DC 38 that align with language and ideals found in the Enoch material of Moses 6 and 7. We do this for more than simple literary reasons. We suggest that the similarity in language, while mundane, can be seen as a small indication of the degree to which Joseph was affected by Enoch, and prepare us to see the more profound affects that Enoch had on Joseph's life mission of establishing Zion.

We begin with the Lord, Jesus Christ's self-introduction. In this introduction, he refers to himself with a number of titles and descriptions.

“The Lord your God”

“Jesus Christ”

“The Great I Am”

“Alpha and Omega”

“Beginning and End”

The One “which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven”

The One “which knoweth all things”

The One before whom “all things are present”

The One who “spake and the world was made, and all things came by me.”

The One “which have taken the Zion of Enoch into mine own bosom”

The One who “by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt, have I pleaded before the Father for them”

You may list or summarize them differently, but most of the titles/descriptions are fairly standard fare. “Jesus Christ,” of course is perhaps most common among the titles on the list. We are not surprised to see the “Lord” or “God.” We remember “I Am” as his self-introduction to Moses at the burning bush. “Alpha and Omega” and “Beginning and End” are familiar from his self-introduction to John the Revelation. We have been introduced to him many times as omniscient

and omnipresent. His role as creator is well known and oft repeated. I would hazard a guess that if we played the game, “Which one does not belong with the others,” we might very well choose one of the last two. We would be hard pressed, for example, to find the penultimate description anywhere else in scripture... except in the Enoch material of Moses: “which have taken the Zion of Enoch into mine own bosom.”

The description, with its focus on Enoch, is unique enough and indicative of the fact that Enoch is on the prophet’s radar. However, in this self-description, we are presented with vocabulary and ideals that seem to echo those found in Moses 7.

“Enoch was high and lifted up, even in the bosom of the Father, and of the Son of Man”²

“Thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom”³

“Through faith I am in the bosom of the Father, and behold, Zion is with me”⁴

“Zion was not, for God received it up into his own bosom”⁵

Jesus is elsewhere, and is many times in the DC, referred to as one who abides in the bosom of God. This language attempts to portray the unique and unparalleled intimacy that exists between Jesus and his Father. It represents an expression of their oneness, their unity. In like manner, this reference to the God’s “bosom” in relation to Enoch/Zion is a powerful image of the intimacy and unity of purpose found between God and Enoch/Zion.

It does not seem like a stretch to understand the language from DC 38 about Zion being in God’s bosom as a reflection of Joseph’s recent encounter with that same language in Moses. Nor does it seem a stretch to suggest that the use of this language in DC 38 is indicative of the powerful impression the language had on Joseph. But even more, the use of this language in DC 38 is indicative of the powerful impression that the Zion concept had on the prophet’s mind and heart.

Next, we highlight another description Jesus uses to introduce himself. It possesses imagery that,

² Moses 7.²⁴

³ Moses 7.³¹

⁴ Moses 7.⁴⁷

⁵ Moses 7.⁶⁹

though unrelated to the concept of Zion, is shared by DC 38 and the Enoch material. In DC 38.⁴, we hear, “I am Christ, and in mine own name, by the virtue of the blood which I have spilt, have I pleaded before the Father for them.” Similarly, in Moses 7.³⁹, God informs Enoch, “that which I have chosen [Jesus Christ] hath pled before my face.” Again, the idea that Jesus is our advocate is common. We hear it most famously, perhaps, in the beloved intercessory prayer that Jesus offered on the night of his arrest. Human pleading to God is a common past time. But God/Jesus “pleading” to God for humans is rarer. Again, it does not seem a stretch of the imagination to see the Enoch material influencing Joseph Smith’s language in DC 38.

The next example of what looks like conscious or unconscious imitation of language on the part of Joseph Smith is rather innocuous. It is reflected in a single word that is found five times in the Enoch material. The reader will have no difficulty identifying the word.

“...Enos and the residue of the people of God...”⁶

“...but the residue of the people...”⁷

“...the residue of the people...”⁸

“...the residue of the people”⁹

“...the residue of the wicked...”¹⁰

The word, “residue,” never used in the Doctrine and Covenants until 38.⁵, is found often afterward. In verse 5, it is used exactly as it was used in Moses 7.⁴³: “*the residue of the wicked* have I kept in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day...” Yes, the Hebrew prophets commonly use this word, “residue,” as the King James translates it. But it seems noteworthy that it pops up in the DC weeks after Joseph finds it repeated in the Enoch material.

More significant than the use of a rather insignificant word, is the common eschatology that

⁶ Moses 6.¹⁷

⁷ Moses 7.²⁰

⁸ Moses 7.²²

⁹ Moses 7.²⁸

¹⁰ Moses 7.⁴³

exists between 38.⁵ and the Enoch material. DC 38.⁵ teaches that “the residue of the wicked have I kept *in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day...*” Of this same “residue,” Enoch learns that “the remainder were reserved *in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day.*” It almost seems that in expressing himself in DC 38, Joseph Smith opened his copy of the revelation of the Enoch material and pasted Moses 7.⁵⁷ into DC 38.

Here is another phrase that DC 38 and Moses 7 share: “veil of darkness.” The phrase is used in both places for world conditions leading up to the Lord’s coming in the latter days. In DC 38, a “veil of darkness” keeps the saints from seeing God and knowing that He is (vs. 8). In Moses 7.⁶⁰⁻⁶¹, a “veil of darkness” covers the earth. This state is remedied with the Lord’s second coming. Both passages, then use the term “veil of darkness” for ignorance about God. When the “veil of darkness” is removed, God is seen and known. Before moving on, we should note that it was “a great chain” that Satan held in his hand that “veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness.”¹¹

This brings us to another parallel in language and sentiment between DC 38 and the Enoch material. Seeing the destructiveness of his “great chain,” Satan “looked up and laughed, and his angels rejoiced.”¹² But what was the Lord’s reaction to the corruption that flooded the earth? Enoch movingly and repeatedly reported both the Lord’s startlingly pained reaction, along with that of heaven and its various hosts.

“The God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people and he wept.”¹³ Witnessing this divine sorrow, Enoch could not wrap his brain around a perfect Being, surrounded by “naught but peace, justice, and truth... and mercy” feeling the negative emotion of sorrow such as to make Him weep.¹⁴ But God, on the other hand, wondered at Enoch’s rather dimwitted confusion.

“The whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer.... Wherefore, for this shall

¹¹ Moses 7.²⁶

¹² Moses 7.²⁶

¹³ Moses 7.²⁸

¹⁴ See, Moses 7.²⁸⁻³¹

the heavens weep, yea, and all the workmanship of mine hands.”¹⁵

Enoch finally got it and joined in the lamentation.

“Wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook.”¹⁶

Indeed, Enoch “had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens: ‘I will refuse to be comforted.’”¹⁷ Enoch did eventually find comfort in his vision of the Lord’s crucifixion. Still, as the earth continued to suffer under human corruption, Enoch wept again and ask, “When shall the earth rest?”¹⁸

All this talk of God, heaven, angels, and Enoch painfully weeping at the corruption of the earth, is reflected in DC 38.

“All flesh is corrupted before me; and the powers of darkness prevail upon the earth, among the children of men, in the presence of all the hosts of heaven—which causeth silence to reign, and all eternity is pained...”¹⁹

There are many points of contact between the vocabulary and ideas found in DC 38 and Moses 7. As we continue to examine DC 38 in the following meditations, we will find more vocabulary and additional ideals that they share. We will note especially many points of contact between the Zion that Enoch established and the Zion that the Lord describes to Joseph. It seems clear that the Lord used the revelation of the Enoch materials to make Joseph aware of a higher calling. Joseph was to do as Enoch did. Joseph was to be a sort of latter-day Enoch. Those who accepted Joseph’s prophetic call were to be latter-day “Zionists” in imitation of those who followed

¹⁵ See, Moses 7.³⁷⁻⁴⁰

¹⁶ Moses 7.⁴¹

¹⁷ Moses 7.⁴⁴

¹⁸ Moses 7.⁵⁸

¹⁹ DC 38.¹¹⁻¹²

Enoch.

The importance of DC 38, then, can hardly be overstated. It is the opening salvo in the Lord's attempt to restructure society and especially a decadent economic system that the world in its delusion has always found to be normal and inevitable. Joseph's followers were not up to the task. They failed repeatedly to live Zion's economic law. This great social experiment has been on hold for several generations. There seems no appetite to renew the attempt, even as the traditional worldly economic systems exhibit their predatory nature. Here's to hoping it won't require a complete collapse of the current predatory economic system to convince even the saints to try the Lord's more enlightened economic system called, "Zion." But one suspects there will be no leaving of the old for the new until the death of the old.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

(edition: October 25, 2024)