

MORMON SCRIPTURE

The Pearl of Great Price, Part IV

By Marvin W. Cowan

When God created man he placed him in the Garden of Eden according to Genesis 2:7-8 and 15. But where was the Garden of Eden located? Genesis 2:10-14 declares that the river which watered the Garden of Eden had four heads or sources. The names of the four rivers are: first the Pishon, which wound it way through Havilah; second, the Gihon which flowed through Cush; third the Hiddekel otherwise known as the Tigris and fourth the Euphrates. There is some disagreement among scholars about the identification of the first two rivers, but the last two are well known rivers in Mesopotamia. Therefore, Bible scholars believe Eden was located in or near Mesopotamia.

In the *Pearl of Great Price*, the book of Moses chapter 3:10-14 gives the same description of the Garden of Eden with the same four rivers, only the Pishon River is spelled without an "h" in it. With the exception of the words, "And I, the Lord God..." at the beginning of verses 10 and 11, the book of Moses account of Eden is almost exactly the same as Genesis 2:10-14 in the King James Version of the Bible. Since Joseph Smith claimed that the book of "Moses" was a revelation given to him by God, God must speak in the King James English of 1611 AD instead of the English spoken in Joseph Smith's time!

Even though both the *Bible* and the *Pearl of Great Price* indicate that the Garden of Eden was located in Mesopotamia because of the rivers that are mentioned, Mormonism teaches that the Garden of Eden was located in America! Joseph Fielding Smith, the 10th LDS Prophet declared, "In accord with the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, we teach that the Garden of Eden was on the American continent located where the City Zion, or the New Jerusalem, will be built" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 3, p.74). Smith's revelations are Mormon scripture in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Sec. 107:53-56; Sec. 116 and 117:8.

Section 116 has only one verse and the introduction to it says, "Revelation to Joseph Smith the Prophet, near Wright's Ferry, at the place called Spring Hill, Daviess County, Missouri, May 19, 1838." The verse itself says, "Spring Hill is named by the Lord Adam-ondi-Ahman...." LDS Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie wrote, "Adam-ondi-Ahman means the place or land of God where Adam dwelt.... The early brethren of this dispensation taught that the Garden of Eden was located in what is known to us as the land of Zion, an area for which Jackson County, Missouri is the center place" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 20). Thus, Smith's revelations and other early LDS writings teach that the Garden of Eden was located where Zion, or the New Jerusalem will be built which includes Daviess and Jackson County Missouri, which is a large part of northwestern Missouri.

A favorite old Mormon hymn by William W. Phelps, who was a Mormon leader in Joseph Smith's time, teaches this doctrine when it says: "Glorious things are sung of Zion, Enoch's city of old, Where the righteous, being perfect, Walked with God in streets of gold.... There

they shunned the power of Satan, and observed celestial laws; For in Adam-ondi-Ahman, Zion rose where Eden was.” When this hymn mentions “Zion, Enoch’s city of old” it is referring to the Mormon teaching that the Biblical Enoch “built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion.... And Enoch and all his people walked with God, and he dwelt in the midst of Zion; and it came to pass that Zion was not, for God received it up into heaven; and from thence went forth the saying, ZION IS FLED” (Moses 7:19 and 69 in the *Pearl of Great Price*; Also see *Doctrine and Covenants* Sec. 38:4). Notice that Adam-ondi-Ahman and the Garden of Eden were located in Missouri in the same place where Zion (Enoch’s City of Righteousness) was later located until it was translated or caught up into heaven. And in the future, Zion or the New Jerusalem will also be built there according to *Doctrine and Covenants* Sec. 84:1-5 and several other Sections.

LDS Apostle, Bruce R. McConkie wrote, “In addition to the rebuilding of the Jerusalem of old, the latter-days are to see the initial building of a New Jerusalem on the American continent, a city which like its ancient counterpart will be a holy city, a Zion, a city of God (*Book of Mormon*, III Nephi 20:22). This New Jerusalem is to be built by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Jackson County, Missouri, is the spot designated by revelation for its construction.... This New Jerusalem on the American continent will have a dual origin. It will be built by the saints on earth and it will also come down from heaven, and the cities so originating will be united into one holy city” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 532). Joseph Fielding Smith, the 10th LDS Prophet wrote, “The City of Enoch with its inhabitants is to return and join in the grand celebration at the coming of Christ to reign...” (*The Way to Perfection*, p. 310). That is the Zion or New Jerusalem that comes down from heaven and joins the New Jerusalem built by the LDS Church.

What a coincidence that Joseph Smith was in that area of Missouri trying to establish the headquarters of the LDS Church there when God revealed its wonderful past to him! Joseph Smith was also living in New York near the Hill Cumorah which, according to the *Book of Mormon*, was the site of the last great war of the Jaredites (Ether 15:11) and the final battle between the Nephites and Lamanites and where the gold plates of the *Book of Mormon* were buried (Mormon 6:1-11 and 8:1-3). He claimed an angel told him where the gold plates were buried. If you believe all of this is true, would you also believe Joseph Smith if he claimed Mount Ararat is located in northwest Missouri?

Our next article will discuss the 13 Articles of Faith of the LDS Church which is at the end of the *Pearl of Great Price*. More can be read on this month’s subject in my book *Mormon Claims Answered*.