

Hyrum L. Andrus
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DISCUSSION 1 - MESSAGE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON; CHRIST CENTERED

[Editors note: This was given as a series of discussions, not as lectures. There was significant interaction with the audience and as such, there were frequent comments and questions from them, most of which were peripheral to the subject being presented. Effort has been made to focus on the subject so most of the comments have simply been deleted. Same has been the case for many of the questions that resulted in tangential discussion that were not relevant to the subject so they have been deleted as well. In some case, the question and answer, though not directly related to what was being discussed at that point, have been placed at the end of the text for the session. In cases where the question was directly related to the subject both the question and the answer have been incorporated into the text without break. Even with all the distractions, Dr. Andrus was particularly good at always coming back to the flow of the theme he was presenting. Also, we have taken some liberty to help with awkward sentence structure and wording. In no case has the theological content been changed. All of this has been done to help with the flow of the ideas and make it easier for the reader to follow. lwp]

We're not here to study the Book of Mormon in regards to its history or to its geography or culture. We're here to study the Book of Mormon because, as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, you can get closer to God by reading that book than you can by reading any other book, and it is the keystone of our religion. We're here to approach the Lord through this modern tool which he has given us.

Some people raise their eyebrows a little on that statement. They say "How about the New Testament? After all, that is the record of Christ's ministry and his personal teachings. Can't you get closer to the Lord by studying that?" The answer is that the New Testament is a great and a glorious book, and Christ's atonement is the very center of life, not just of the gospel, but of life and of all things. The record of his teachings and of his ministry, certainly is primary, and the record of his atonement is not only fundamental, but primary.

But when you go to the scriptures as a whole, and ask yourself this question: Where can you find a revelatory commentary on the gospel plan, on Christ, and who he is and the nature of his ministry? Where can you go to find doctrines concerning Christ and his atonement and the great plan of

redemption for mankind? What book contains those doctrines and those teachings and insights into Christ to the greatest degree?

The answer is the Book of Mormon. It's a fifth gospel. It is designed for and tailor-made for this generation. There isn't anything in that book that is not tailor-made for this generation, including the wars, and including other things that we sometimes call mundane issues. It has been written for this generation by prophets; it is the distilling of a thousand years of gospel light by living prophets, many of whom had greater spiritual endowments than we as Latter-day Saints have yet attained. In fact, that book is so high-gearred spiritually that the Lord says in Section 84 that because the Saints haven't paid the attention to it that they should, the whole Church is under condemnation. We have a modern prophet who has said that is true today, and that condemnation has not been lifted.

I rejoice to see all of us here today. We are 6:00 am Mormons, but there isn't a person here today who is not under condemnation by the standard the Book of Mormon gives us. That's doubly sure for those who are not here today. There isn't one person here, including myself, who is not under condemnation by the standard of the Book of Mormon. That means we've got some reaching to do. That means that the message of this record in this book has got to distill in our lives a lot more than it has.

The Book of Mormon teaches not just a theology, it's a book of power. The prophets in it ministered with power. They ministered with revelation, and they give us the formula of power and of revelation. They make it clear that the primary mark of apostasy is that we do not have the gifts of the spirit. Ask yourself, for example, when was the last time that you had a personal revelation? When was the last time you enjoyed the gifts of the spirit – not the talents that you have. Talents and gifts are two different things. When was the last time that you enjoyed the gift of prophecy, the gift of revelation, the gift of knowledge, the gift of healing? That's the last time that you had the gospel in your life, because if you have the gospel, you'll have revelation, personal-to-you revelation.

You'll have the gifts of the spirit and you'll have the spiritual power. There will be a flow. Are you in the flow of the spirit and spiritual gifts? It's like putting your thumb into a 220 volt electrical line. If you hold it there, you begin to vibrate. If you have your thumb in the Book of Mormon and it's there like it ought to be, you begin to vibrate. It'll shake you to the very core. It will not be electrical power, but it will be the revelation and the power of the spirit. When that comes, the blessings of personal ministry, of communion with the Lord being opened, angelic ministrations will be a

reality, and we will enjoy the gifts and blessings.

In that sense, 4th Nephi is the goal of the Book of Mormon, where they were free and were partakers of the heavenly gifts.

On one occasion, President Romney was travelling with Stephen L. Richards to a stake conference. As they were talking, they were considering the way they could best encourage the people to more effectively live the gospel. President Richards was a man of great wisdom, and he expressed his conviction. He said "People would be more diligent in living the gospel if they could but get the true concept of its principles in their minds and appreciate their implications." This might not seem a profound statement, but let me tell you that it is profound. There is a lot of fuzziness in the Church today.

How many of you remember Parley P. Pratt's book *Voice of Warning*? In the early days of the Church, about 1838 or 1839, Parley P. Pratt sat down and wrote a little book called the Voice of Warning. Probably it was, next to the scriptures and the Book of Mormon, the greatest missionary tool in the early Church. It was printed in edition after edition after edition. In the latter part of the book, he had a section in which he compared Bible Christians with the sectarians of the day. On one side was a list of characteristics of what a Bible Christian would actually understand and believe and do. On the other side was a comparison of how things were in contemporary Christianity. It was a very effective tool. It outlined what really ought to be, versus what we were doing. We need to do that today among members of the Church, because we have a tendency, and we have had over the last 50 years, in some measure, to create a theology out of the scriptures. We take ideas such as eternal marriage, three degrees of glory, word of wisdom, and other things and put them into an amalgamation of some kind. Then we say that's our religion. We need to throw that back into the hopper, like the potter does when he is making a vessel, and redo it. We need to put into it things that we've left out. One thing we need to put into it is the doctrines of the Book of Mormon.

When you do that, you ask yourself what do the scriptures teach and what do I believe?" You'll find just about as many contrasts today among popular Mormons as Parley P. Pratt found between the Bible and contemporary Christians. You may think that's a hard statement, but that's true. I bear you my testimony that's true. There is that much difference between what the Book of Mormon and the scriptures teach, and what we teach as a popular program. Sometimes that difference is merely a difference of superficiality; but, many times it's also a difference of fundamental doctrine.

We need to take President Richards' statement that the way to really get alive spiritually is to get the true concepts of its principles in our minds and appreciate their implications. When you do that, then you'll see it. That's what we want to do now. We want to begin doing that, and let me challenge you to rethink EVERYTHING that you think you know! Everything! Even whether there is a God or not – we should take it that far. I bear you my testimony on that. But go that far. Rethink everything that you know. In a sense, put it back in the hopper and it may come out with a different mold, a different vessel in the work of the Father. Let's do that. I promise that if you'll do that you will have a flow of the spirit of the Lord, you'll have a closeness with Christ, you'll have a spirit of revelation in your life that you have NEVER had before. You'll see as marked a difference between what we are now and what we can be, as Parley P. Pratt was trying to show the people of his day.

If we had the full program of the gospel, the spiritual powers would be so concentrated in our midst that over every dwelling place there would be a cloud and smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night. If we had what we really ought to have, we would have the spirit in our lives to that degree. There would essentially be no night in our little town because of the light and power of the gospel, if we were living like we ought to live. That's the way it will be in the millennium. That's in some measure the doctrine and standard of the Book of Mormon, or the standard that it directs you toward.

As Bishop James said, we want to make this discussion informal. Some people talk about techniques of teaching and what are the best techniques. My personal approach is a combination of presentation and discussion. I'd like in the procedure of our class to take a little time to lay out and explain some things, and then discuss questions. If you have questions along the way, take note of them and as we go along we'll get them answered. But I'd like to unload for a few minutes, and then if there are any questions I will address them before we on to the next area.

Let me make it clear, we're not here to create something different, but we are here to study concepts at a different depth. We'll judge the technicalities of that as we go along on these various points.

Let me turn first to the Title Page. The Prophet Joseph Smith gives us a statement on the Title Page in *Teachings*, in his opening statement. "I wish to mention here, that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been

translated, the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general.” So in Hebrew writing, you start from the back. The Title Page was the last back on the back, on the left.

He says it is a “genuine and literal translation of the title-page of the original Book of Mormon, as recorded on the plates.” So the Title Page has a purpose to give us an orientation on the specific volume to which it is attached. Here in the Title Page we have Moroni, and it’s Moroni’s writing, making this explanation: “Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites – Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile – written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation.” If you want to know how to get prophecy and revelation, read the Book of Mormon. It’s written in the spirit of prophecy and if you partake of the spirit of the Book of Mormon, you partake of the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, and that begins to get you focused. Because the gospel isn’t merely a theology, the gospel is a flow of the spirit in our lives. That spirit is the spirit of prophecy and of revelation. This book is written that way, and people who read it in harmony with the spirit that’s in the book, begin to be alive spiritually.

He says “Written and sealed up and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed – To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof – Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile – The interpretation thereof by the gift of God.”

Then he goes on “An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven – Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever – And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations – And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.”

Why, primarily, was the Book of Mormon written? It’s an Israel book; that’s where you start. It is written to show the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers – that’s point one – and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, and that they are not cast off forever.

The Book of Mormon talks about, over and over again, a great and a marvelous work. Let me say a few words about that to begin. Sometimes we consider that the great and marvelous work has happened, that it's history and that we are now in possession of it, because we have this record. That is a fallacy. The great and the marvelous work is not the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon, per se. Rather, the Book of Mormon is a preparatory thing to the great and marvelous work.

I have here a photocopy of the Messenger and Advocate. That was the Church newspaper in Kirtland in 1834. In this edition there is a lot of things concerning the origin of the Church. Oliver Cowdery wrote a series of letters from the information he received from the Prophet. He published them in a series in the Messenger and Advocate. They are some of the choice pieces of literature in the Church in our day, because it gives added detail on the origins of the Book of Mormon.

He gives a statement on Moroni's visit to the Prophet in September of 1823. Note how the Angel Moroni expresses the idea of the great and marvelous work "Therefore, says the Lord," Moroni is quoting the Lord, "I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder. The wisdom of their wise men shall perish and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid. For according to his covenant which he hath made with his ancient Saints, his people, the House of Israel, must come to a knowledge of the gospel and of their Messiah whom their fathers rejected, and with them the fullness of the Gentiles be gathered, to rejoice in one fold under one shepherd." Now note "This cannot be brought to pass until first certain preparatory things are accomplished." You can't do the great and marvelous work until certain preparatory things are accomplished.

He says "For so the Lord has purposed in his own mind. He has therefore chosen you," Joseph, "as an instrument in his hand to bring to light that which shall perform his act, his strange act, and bring to pass a marvelous work and a wonder." Now, ask yourself is the Book of Mormon itself that marvelous work? Or is it something that is designed as a tool to bring a marvelous work to pass?

I agree with Elder LeGrand Richards in "*A Marvelous Work and a Wonder.*" He talks about the Book of Mormon and about the last days. To me, the Book of Mormon is the greatest miracle of modern times, literally. Take the whole scientific revolution from the 17th century on down through, with all of our achievements. Those things do not compare in eternal value in any way with this book. This book is not only valuable above everything else

that modern man has, but it is the miracle of miracles. If you read it a few times, and if you really studied it, the spirit of the Lord will bear witness of the intricacies and the details and the preciseness and the significance and the importance of that message and of how it relates to our day and how it opens our day to the knowledge of the careful student. This is the greatest miracle of modern times, and it IS a marvelous work and a wonder. It is, in that sense, in its own right.

But the marvelous work and a wonder is the gathering of Israel, the return of the ten tribes, the establishment of the Zion order, a whole new order of society and of government, the renewal of the earth spiritually, the ushering in of a whole new order of things for men on earth, the establishment of universal peace, universal justice, universal law under God, under Christ, and the ushering in of a millennial order with Christ running the program. As this is established, the wisdom of the wise, of the previous culture, will perish and the understanding of the prudent will be hid. THAT is the great and marvelous work.

As you read the Book of Mormon and see references to the marvelous work, and there are many in it, don't read it and say "Marvelous work, i.e., the Book of Mormon," read it, "Marvelous work and a wonder, i.e., ZION, God's kingdom, an establishment of an order of things that will achieve social justice, that will elevate the poor, that will unite people in free and open union where the gifts and revelations of the spirit are made manifest, where the powers of his gospel are disseminated throughout the whole earth."

You take, for example, the spirit you feel sometimes in the Educational Week program, the spirit of learning, of inquisitiveness and the thrill of learning. Then you take the spirit that you feel on Temple Square at General Conference. Take those things and then you compound them about ten times and you spread them over the whole of America, then you begin to get the vision of Zion, where there is a spiritual cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night over every dwelling place and where there's free and open union, where people are alive spiritually, where the spirit of revelation is there with them in their lives, and where there is brotherhood and union and where there is light and truth, where the knowledge of God covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. That's the marvelous work, and that's the great goal. Joseph Smith pointed that out on several occasions.

It is all contingent upon the building of a program, and that program is mentioned in the Title Page of the Book of Mormon. It's that program that deals with God's ancient covenant people. In that program there are

certain responsibilities, some more than others. The tribe of Ephraim is a birthright tribe. It holds the keys of the kingdom and the right to build the house of the Lord and the right to the sealing powers, and the right to the dissemination of the gospel. It holds the keys of all of those things, and the keys to give these things to other people.

Then there's Levi, and there's more to the Levite program than most of us think. It's not just the preparatory gospel. If you read Exodus 28, you find that Aaron had the ephod of God, which is a sacred robe, and he had the Urim and Thummim and he stood as a prophet in ancient Israel under Moses. It's an order of minor prophets. In the Old Testament minor prophets are those prophets for whom we have just a little bit that's written. The major prophets are the ones about whom we have lots written. Major and minor don't have any relationship to the powers of the spirit that they had. Elijah had the fullness of priesthood, and he was the last prophet in Israel to have that. Yet, we don't have a book by him in the scriptures, and he's not even counted as one of the major or minor prophets. But the true major prophet would be the Mosaic prophet who holds the keys of the kingdom. Aaron was a minor prophet, but he had the Urim and Thummim and access to its revelatory power.

He also had centered in him the law of sacrifice, which is symbolic of the great Messiah and his atoning redemption for us. He had centered in him the preparatory gospel, and that program needs to be restored. Then you have the royal power, that which was given to Judah, particularly the house of David – the right to be king. That king isn't a worldly potentate, that king is a king who has been to the house of the Lord and become a king and a priest and then had the right to do something with that. The anointing that David received from Samuel was a temple ordinance. As the Prophet Joseph Smith put it in *Teachings* p. 339 "Although David was a king, he never did obtain to the spirit and power of Elijah."

Note that he's not mixing politics with the temple, he's talking instead about an order of things where by reason of the temple, a person is king. It was on that basis that David was king. Although David was a king, he never did obtain the spirit and power of Elijah in the fullness of the priesthood. The priesthood that he received and the throne and kingdom of David are to be taken from him – this is the eternal order of things, of which he otherwise would have been a member and had a part – and given to another in the last days by the name of David, raised up out of his lineage.

When this great and marvelous work is carried on and brought forth, then we will see not only the restoration of Ephraim, and we've got a little of that

done, but we will see the return of the ten tribes, the reinstatement of the Israel order, including the raising up of a latter-day David, who will reign over Israel politically by reason of the covenants and the powers of the temple. That latter-day David will be a descendant of the ancient David. In eternity, in the restitution of all things, he will come up and enjoy the same blessings that David anciently had and would have inherited, but which the ancient David lost.

As I said, there are some branches of Israel that have certain rights and privileges. One branch is Ephraim. How far have we gotten along in the gathering of Israel? We've got a little bit of Ephraim gathered. The great gathering of Israel, and the great work of establishing the Israel order, the marvelous work and a wonder, is still future. We haven't really finally gotten to where the Lord has moved on that. He's brought forth the Book of Mormon, and he's gathered a few of the children of Ephraim, but the great gathering of the house of Israel as spoken of in the Book of Mormon has not fully happened.

For example, in 3rd Nephi 21 the Savior is talking about the gathering program and order of things for this land. He talks first about the alternatives that the Gentile culture have. They have the alternative, if they will receive the gospel and repent, and this would require national repentance, at least 51%, enough so that politically by the voice of the people you can change the order of things, because it is the majority. But if they will do that to the extent that would be required, then we would teach the gospel to this nation and we would instruct the people in regard to the kingdom of God in the latter days. We'd say, "Hey, you know, Wall Street shouldn't be the center of our economics; that order of things should be changed to the law of consecration and stewardship." Then we would say, "Washington, D.C. shouldn't be the center of our government in the latter day, because "The law shall go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem," and there will be two great folds of power." We need to change that. We need to go to Jackson County and build the New Jerusalem, and this needs to be a center, not just spiritually, but economically and politically for this land and for the whole of America, north and south, not just this thing that we call the United States.

If we really taught the people and they all embraced that, then the Prophet would have a day in conference and that's what the Prophet would say. We'd all vote to do that, and we would build up the order, not just move geographically from one place to the other, but we would institute that higher order of the gospel, and that higher order would be economic and

political, but above all it would be spiritual. And the powers of the spirit that would be there would be a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. And you'd begin to get a new order and a new program going.

So the Savior then explains that if the Gentiles will repent, we can do this freely. If they don't repent, then that's another situation. That involves judgments, judgments on this land such as we have never witnessed since the destruction of the Nephites. We're standing very, very, very close to that era of judgment. We'll get into it soon. We're getting close to it. That era of judgment will see a cleansing of this land so that, as the Lord says, in verse 19 "All lyings, deceivings, and envyings and strifes and priestcrafts and whoredoms, shall be done away." This land is going to be cleansed to that extent.

So the Gentiles can either build this order of things freely by repentance and embracing the gospel, or through judgment it will happen. But one way or the other, it will happen. Then he goes on and talks about the New Jerusalem in relation to his people, that there will be a gathering in of the Indian people. They will become part of this, along with the repentant Gentiles, also known as Ephraim, who hold the keys and will hold the keys on through. Then he says in verse 25 "And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst."

This is an appearance of Christ among his people prior to his coming in the great world appearance in glory in the clouds of heaven. When we talk about the second coming, most of us think what? Coming in glory, right? As latter-day Saints, we need to be a little more focused and refined in our thinking on that. Christ will come and dwell with his people for at least 20 or 30 years before he comes in glory in the clouds of heaven. We need to be looking to this more immediate, quiet coming.

The Lord says "The power of heaven shall come down among them." That's the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night; that's the marvelous work that the Book of Mormon is talking about. "And I also will be in the midst." Then he says "And then shall the work of the father commence in THAT day." Not "our" day, but "that" day. "... when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people. Verily I say unto you, at THAT day shall the work of the Father commence among ALL the dispersed of my people." Here's the great gathering of Israel as the Book of Mormon outlines.

He says "... even the tribes which have been lost," and here's the ten tribe program. People ask about the ten tribes and wonder where they are and

why we haven't found them. We're not supposed to find them, not yet at least. The time hasn't come. He says "Yea, the work shall commence among ALL the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name. Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father, among all nations, in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward."

Here is the great gathering of Israel and the establishment of his kingdom and the great and marvelous work and a wonder of which Moroni spoke and to which the Book of Mormon refers repeatedly. It's this orientation that we need to get. If this is a new orientation, then let me suggest that you think about this. Line up those two columns like Parley P. Pratt did, and ask "What is the popular concept?" Then ask "What is the scriptural concept?" You'll begin to see in some measure, as you see that contrast and the scriptural picture, you'll find your life is brought into harmony with the Lord. You'll find that he can pour out his spirit more fully on you. You'll find that the spirit of truth can come, because you are not going crossways down the road. In order for us not to be going down the road crossways, we've got to get our minds, our thinking, focused in on the Lord's work. We've got to begin seeing things like HE sees them!

When you do that, as you read the scriptures they begin to open up and you see the neon lamps turn up. They turn up and you say "Wow!" You'll have some of those "Wow" experiences, where you have a beautiful flow, a flood and enlightenment of mind, and you can almost literally taste the spirit of truth as it comes into your life. You say "Wow!" You go around all day and sometimes for weeks, just Wowing, because you've had a beautiful experience with the spirit of the Lord, by getting focused in. We need to get focused in on what the Lord is telling us.

Let me turn to a statement by Moroni to the Prophet. The day after the initial appearances, the Prophet went to the Hill Cumorah. He went there with dollar signs in his eyes. He was very much tempted because of the monetary value. You have to appreciate the Prophet on this. At that period of time in the Smith family, they didn't have anything – and I mean anything. The Prophet, a short time after that, invited Martin Harris to come and be a part of the program; the Lord instructed him to do so. Martin Harris was a wealthy farmer, living not too far away, within sight of Palmyra where the Smiths lived, in Manchester, so Martin came over.

The Prophet had the plates in his possession, but he couldn't show them to Martin. He had them in an old box, but he allowed Martin to lift the thing up and shake it. Martin could tell by fiddling with it and shaking it that there was metal in it. He could hear the rustle of the plates, of the leafs, because he'd shake it around. Martin was trying to find out everything he could about it without opening the darn thing. He went home that night, musing to himself, and this is the line of reasoning that he followed "I could tell by the weight of the contents of that box that the contents were either lead or gold. And I knew that the Smith family didn't have that much money to buy that much lead, so I had to conclude that maybe there was something about the stories about his having the gold plates." That's the way he reasoned it out rationally in his mind. Then he went back home and prayed about it. The Lord gave him a revelation and told him it was true.

Because of his poverty, Joseph went to the hill with dollar signs in his eyes, and when he arrived there he was tempted. But he was rebuffed and rebuked, and then the angel showed him first a vision of the realms of the damned, of what it was like to be in hell, and the devil and how they feel. It was very graphically portrayed. Mother Smith spoke about it and said it was so graphically portrayed to him and so instilled in his very soul that he never had any doubt, and he never had any lack of ability thereafter to discern the promptings of the spirit versus the prompting of the adversary in his life.

After that, Moroni opened up a vision of the future to him and of the future work. This is one of the choice statements about this. Brother Francis Kirkham was a really unique person. At about age 90 he'd go down to the Deseret Gym and swim several laps, play ball then come up to the Historian's Office at the time I was doing research in the Historians office. We'd sit around and talk about thing and he was a real picturesque personality. He compiled a lot of his work in a volume called, *A New Witness For Christ*. It's a 2-volume compilation of his findings.

On page 100 of vol. 1, he quotes this episode of Joseph on the hill with Moroni. He says and this is Moroni explaining "When they are interpreted (the Book of Mormon plates), the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim his gospel." Now, note that this foreshadows the restoration of the priesthood; this is 1823. "...the Lord will give the holy priesthood to some, and they shall begin to proclaim his gospel and baptize by water, and after they shall have power to give the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands, then will persecution rage more and more, for the iniquities of men shall be revealed, and those who are not

built upon the rock will seek to overthrow this work.” He says continues “But it will increase, the more opposed and spread farther and farther, increasing in knowledge till they shall be sanctified” and note “and receive an inheritance, for the glory of God shall rest upon them.” That’s the cloud by day and pillar of fire by night.

“...Where the Saints receive an inheritance under the law of consecration and the glory of the Lord rests upon them, when this takes place and all things are prepared, the ten tribes of Israel will be revealed in the north country.” There’s no need of worrying about them yet. But they are in a body, regardless of what some people have said. They haven’t done their homework if they say they’re not. He says “The ten tribes will be revealed in the north country whither they have been for a long season. And when this is fulfilled,” so you have the redemption of Zion, the endowment of glory, the coming of the ten tribes “And when this is fulfilled” getting now to this further situation “will be brought to pass the saying of the prophet, and the Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.” This is Isaiah 59:20.

So Christ will come to Zion. He will dwell among his people after the redemption, after the coming of the ten tribes, then Christ will come. That’s what he says in the Book of Mormon. Then shall the power rest among them, and I also will be in the midst. And this will be some time prior to his great world coming in glory. This will be some time prior to that. The scriptures indicate very clearly that it will be at least a 20 or 30 year period of time, at least that much time.

So one purpose of the Book of Mormon is to show ancient Israel what the Lord has done. We know from the Old Testament some of the things that he has done, but we know from the Book of Mormon something else that he has done. We know that there’s this branch of Israel, this choice branch of the descendants of Joseph who was sold into Egypt, the Patriarch, and that this choice branch was brought to this land in fulfillment of the statement in Genesis 49. “Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well and his branches shall run over the wall.” The place they will inherit is this land of everlasting hills. There’s only one place on earth where that fits, where hills run or mountains run from the north to the south pole, from everlasting to everlasting on this earth, and that’s the western hemisphere. This land of the everlasting hills is given to Joseph. In III Nephi 15, the Savior makes that very clear. “This is yours, you are given this.”

So we are gathered here, the Gentiles are here as a part, but we’re here

because Ephraim, to use the words of the Prophet Joseph, “has been identified with the Gentiles.” While we’re Gentile in culture, we are Ephraim in blood. The old Anglo-Saxons were a break-off from that group of people we call the ten tribes. That group headed on north from there, but the Anglo-Saxons broke off, particularly the Saxons were Ephraim; they are Ephraimites, and they settled back about 450 A.D. on this little island that we call Britain. They also came from the German woods, and the Angles and the Saxons and the Jutes, these were groups of people strongly impregnated with Israel, particularly the Saxons.

We come down through that, and we are literally part of that group of Israelites that were taken into Assyrian captivity by Shalmanezar, back in 721 B.C. Then at the fall of Ninevah a century or so later, they escaped from Assyria, and as a body they went up through the passageway between the Caspian and the Black Sea, through the Caucasus Mountains, and headed on up and dumped off into southeast Europe. Some of the Saxons settled in that area. There was another group that said “You know it would be nice if we could finally get somewhere where no one else has been, where we can finally live the gospel and covenants of Israel like we’re supposed to.” They apparently then headed off somewhere, and that’s another discussion. But we are descendants from that group, so we are literally of the tribe of Ephraim.

The Book of Mormon reveals all of that and reveals those covenants, and it reveals the great work in the latter day of gathering and of establishing the Zion order and the Jerusalem order, under the Lord’s full program which centers in the temple. Some people have a hard time going to the temple. They think the Church is here and the temple is a little sideshow, like going to a circus. There is the big tent and then there’s that sideshow over there. We want to be in the big tent, but we don’t want to spend much time in that sideshow. Well, that’s a misconception. You need to put that sideshow right up front! Zion is a temple-centered society; it’s based on the covenants of the temple, including the economic covenants of consecration. It’s based on the sealing power. When you go back to Jackson County, you won’t go back there and build a program on the Church per se, fundamentally and primarily. You will go back and build a program on the temple – consecration, the order of kings and priests and the endowments of the spirit and the glory which is manifest and revealed and given to the people through the temple. That’s where you get the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. That’s the Israel Order! The Book of Mormon tells us about that.

Joseph Smith sat down one day with John the Revelator and had an hour and a half conversation with him. That would be a glorious thing in and of itself. John the Revelator told the Prophet that he was closely associated with the ten tribes and that he was their king and their priest, and that they were then beginning the work in preparation for the coming of their people to Zion. Some people have the idea that when they come to Zion, we're going to teach them the gospel and give them the temple ordinances. That's another one of these things that need to be straightened out.

When they come to Zion, if you read Section 133, they'll come and they'll be "crowned with glory" (v. 32) by Ephraim. Go back to the statement of Moroni that I read. Before they come, the Saints will receive an inheritance where the glory of the Lord rests upon them. That glory isn't just a one-day happening like the sun coming up in the morning. Glory is given, and Saints are endowed with it through sacred temple ordinances, including the sealing powers. You can give people the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. If they'll live like they ought to, they'll get it, right? You can take them to the temple, and you can give them an endowment, and that's a greater power in their lives. Then if you really give them the full program of the temple, at which we're told if we're faithful we'll be called back and receive, then that full program includes an endowment where when people live the law and do as they ought to, they'll have the powers of the spirit in such concentrated form that it'll be a cloud of smoke by day and a pillar of fire by night. That's done through priesthood channels.

When the ten tribes come, they are going to be crowned with glory by the children of Ephraim. They'll not get that from non-Mormons up to that level to start with. They already have the gospel; they already have the prophets; they already have temple marriage; they already have a lot of that stuff. When they come to Zion, they are going to come and get that endowment of glory. That's what Moroni essentially told the Prophet, and that's what Section 133 spells out rather clearly.

So they are not just a law unto themselves. They know who they are and they are working to prepare. That's the picture of things as the scriptures indicate.

The Savior made an appearance among them, did he not? He tells us that in 3rd Nephi, that they would write and keep a record of that. So when they come we will have another account of the Savior appearing to another branch of Israel and whatever else he may have added there in the way of clarifications of the gospel. We'll have the benefit of that. But we'll have another testament of Christ, something like 3rd Nephi, and that will come

and be a part of the records of the ten tribes.

Let me turn to one other thing and then we'll quit. Another purpose for the Book of Mormon, and this is in many ways the primary purpose. It's expressed here when he says "And also to the convincing of Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God". We as Latter-day Saints need to take that one more fully to heart. As you study the scriptures, there are several relationships in which they portray Christ – as Savior, as Redeemer, as Jehovah, as Son, also as Father. We need to understand the various relationships in which Christ is revealed scripturally.

We have what I call an "Elder Brother syndrome" among the Latter-day Saints in general – not that it's false. It's that it is an improper emphasis. Christ was the firstborn in the pre-earth life. It is true. In that sense there is an Elder Brother relationship. But bless your souls, he has graduated. In the Book of Mormon, it is not to prove to us that he is our Elder Brother. That's not the purpose of the Book of Mormon. It is to prove to both Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.

For example, let me run through a few scriptures with you. 2 Nephi 11, verses 6-7 "And my soul delighteth in proving unto my people that save Christ should come all men must perish. For if there be no Christ there be no God; and if there be no God we are not, for there could have been no creation. But there is a God, and he is Christ, and he cometh in the fullness of his own time." Who is Christ? He is God, right?

When the Savior appeared to the Nephites in 3 Nephi 11, this is how he announced himself in verse 14 "Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world." Who is he? "Elder Brother"? He is our Lord and our God.

Let me turn to John 16 to give us proper orientation. While we're turning there, let me comment that in Section 130, the Prophet makes a clarification concerning what we call the Godhead. He says "Now, the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's, and the Son also. The Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit." That's necessary for the times when the Holy Ghost bodily has to dwell within a person, just like a devil can dwell within a person. There are times when the Holy Ghost as a spirit has to bodily dwell within a person. So it's necessary for him to have merely a spirit body, because a spirit body can do that. So he clarifies what we call the Godhead in certain important keys and functions in relation to

that. In that sense there's the three persons, and we know that. What the Book of Mormon teaches is not a modification of that, but rather it's a refinement in that context. Let me say that again, IN THAT CONTEXT.

There are three personages. Sometimes we get the idea of a great first Presidency in the sky. I don't mean to be sacrilegious, but maybe you can remember it that way. That the Father is up here and he sits like the President, and he's running the show. He's the President of the Church or the Stake President, and Counselor #1 is Christ and he's over here, and he has certain duties that are allocated to him. Counselor #2 is the Holy Ghost and he sits over here, and he's under the Father and gets his power from the Father and functions in some things that he does. People see it as a great First Presidency. But that's a false concept. That's not the way it is scripturally.

The great First Presidency in the sky, just put an "X" through the whole idea and put it out of your mind and go back to the scriptures. Let's turn to John 16 in light of that. Here's the Lord speaking about himself and the Holy Ghost. He says "Howbeit when he," that is, the Holy Ghost, or, "the Spirit of truth is come, (verse 13) he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will shew you things to come." If you have this Holy Ghost in you, you'll have the spirit of prophecy and of revelation; you'll know the future.

Now note. The Savior is speaking of the Holy Ghost, or more accurately, the Holy Ghost's relationship to him. "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Where does the holy Ghost get his power? He gets it from Christ. "He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you."

Then he says "All things that the Father hath are mine." What does that mean? Everything that pertains to life, to salvation, to glory, to power, to redemption, is given to Christ. We refer to him as Alpha and Omega – those are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. They mean from the beginning to the end. Therefore, everything centers in Christ. He is the author, to use Moroni's expression, and the finisher of our faith.

"All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he," the Holy Ghost, "shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Instead of the great First Presidency up here, what have we got? We've got the Father up as senior, have we not? But the Father has committed everything to Christ – absolutely everything. So much so that President Joseph Fielding Smith said, and it's accurate, that the Father as a Person has never spoken to

man since the fall of Adam, except to bear witness of Christ. About the sum-total of what the Man of Holiness as a Person has said is “This is my Beloved Son, hear him.” Even in the sacred grove in the first vision. When he was there personally, who delivered the message to Joseph, the Father or Christ? Christ delivered the message. Why? Because all things that the Father hath are given to Christ, and the Father honors that.

When the Father centers all things in Christ, that includes the power of the Holy Ghost. So the Holy Ghost gets his power from Jesus Christ, and he is the revelator of Christ. If you turn to Section 36, you have a revelation given to Edward Partridge, who hadn’t yet been baptized and given the Holy Ghost. The Lord speaks to him and says in verse 2 “And I will lay my hand upon you by the hand of my servant Sidney Rigdon,” and this is confirmation, conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost, “and you shall receive MY Spirit, the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter.” Whose spirit? Christ’s spirit. Christ’s spirit is the Holy Ghost. In that sense Christ by the appointment of the Father has all things centered in him, and he is our Lord and our God. He is not merely our Elder Brother; he has graduated. No person comes unto the Father except by and through Christ. You get acquainted with Christ first, and then he will introduce you to the Father.

We have in this song “I Am A Child of God” a beautiful little song, and I like it. But we take our theology from that. “I am a child of God, and he has sent me here, etc., etc.,” and that’s great and that’s beautiful. It’s very significant. But we, because of that orientation, leave Christ out. Our relationship is only to the Father and Christ becomes an Elder Brother and a good Friend, and he happened to make the atonement, thank goodness, as a good Friend, and he’s kind of walking along here. We have that mental picture.

But what’s the mental picture in the Book of Mormon? Jesus is the Christ, “the Eternal God”, manifesting himself to all nations, not the Eternal Son of God, but the Eternal God. This is the Israel picture. Isaiah puts it this way “Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. And his name shall be called wonderful,” talking of Christ, “Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father.” Christ is not only God, but he is Father. As you read in Ether 3:14, the Savior appears to the Brother of Jared and introduces himself. As he does so, he does it in this full context.

He says “Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I AM THE FATHER AND THE SON.” Do you understand that doctrine? You know Christ as your Father and also as the Son. Do you? Again, you need to

learn those doctrines.

If you will learn Christ, learn who he is, understand your relationship to him, then the thing will move. As it moves, you will enjoy the spirit of revelation and the gifts of the spirit and the flow of knowledge and truth, because you are in line to receive it. God can't push you down the road crosswise! He can't reveal his spirit in its real flow to you unless you are heading down the road or up the road in the right way. Then you can get the thrill of union with Christ.

Again, the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. That means it gives us the keys of insight. That means it puts everything else together. That keystone is the one up at the top that puts everything together and holds them together in proper perspective. You can get closer to God by reading it than any other book. I want to bear my testimony to you that that's true, and that the Book of Mormon itself is a great and a marvelous work. It's the greatest miracle of modern times. But it is a preparatory thing for what the Lord wants yet to do. That marvelous work and a wonder I venture to prophesy will take place in the lifetime of many of us here, and also of our children. But to do that we've got to get close to the Lord through that Book; we've got to do that. We've got to awaken spiritually. WE, all of us, are under condemnation; we are living below our privileges. We are not alive spiritually like we ought to be. We don't have the strength and power of the spirit as we ought to have it. We can have more, that's what President Benson is saying to us.

I bear you that testimony, that that is true and that you can have that flow of the spirit, and you can feel it as you come to know Christ and as you come to know his program through this sacred record. And I bear this humbly in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.