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Volume Honors Professor's Legacy of Scholarship, Faith

Paul Y. Hoskisson

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Alan Ashton Delivers Annual Neal A. Maxwell Lecture

Testifying of the purifying power of Christ in an address entitled “Oh How Surely Christ Sanctifies His Own,” Alan C. Ashton, cofounder of WordPerfect Corporation and Thanksgiving Point, gave the seventh annual Neal A. Maxwell Lecture on April 12, 2012.

Among those in attendance at the Gordon B. Hinckley Alumni Center were Sister Colleen Maxwell (widow of Elder Maxwell); BYU president Cecil O. Samuelson and his wife, Sharon; and university officials, faculty, and students.

Ashton opened his remarks by explaining what it means to be “owned” by Christ. He cited the experience of King Benjamin’s people entering into a covenant with God to be continually obedient. That mark of discipleship enables them to become the “children of Christ” (Mosiah 5:7), members of “the Savior’s owned family,” Ashton said.

Personally acquainted with Elder Maxwell, Ashton shared stories highlighting the apostle’s exemplary discipleship. “When we surrender our



own will to our Savior, he owns us, we become his children, and he sanctifies us,” Ashton said.

In true chiasmic form, Ashton’s key message—“the atonement of Jesus Christ is at the center of the lives of all those who belong to him”—came precisely at the midpoint of his remarks. (Striking examples of chiasmus, an ancient literary device in which emphasis is achieved via inverted parallelism, appear in Alma 36 and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon.)

Ashton went on to discuss how the number seven is “especially sacred in the scriptures” and is clearly associated with “sanctification, purification, and cleansing,” as many passages attest.

Christ is so central in the sanctifying process, Ashton said, that many of the names and descriptive phrases associated with Christ in the scriptures reflect his sanctifying power. These include

Sanctification, Tower of Life, and Mediator of Life. Ashton’s addendum to the printed lecture lists more than a thousand names representative of Christ, his attributes, and his mission.

The lecture will be available for free in booklet form at the Maxwell Institute offices and will be posted online at maxwellinstitute.byu.edu. ♦

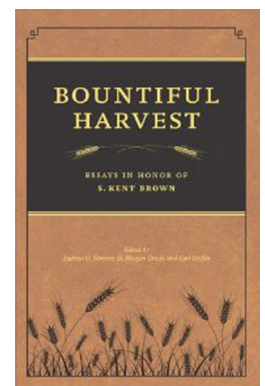
Volume Honors Professor’s Legacy of Scholarship, Faith

Bountiful Harvest: Essays in Honor of S. Kent Brown compiles recent studies by two dozen scholars who respect Professor Brown and his scholarship and whose own research in this Festschrift is worthy of its honoree. A recognized expert on early Christian literature and history and a past director of Ancient Studies at BYU, Brown has devoted his career not only to expanding the scholarly literature in his field but also to building the faith of believers through more popular works

such as his literary/historical study of the Book of Mormon entitled *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla* and the seven-part TV documentary *Messiah: Behold the Lamb of God*.

A sampling of articles from this volume shows the breadth of research that has gone into its production. The article “Joseph Smith’s Interpretation of the New Testament Parables of the

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
Neal A. Maxwell
Institute for
Religious Scholarship
Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah 84602
(801) 422-9229
(800) 327-6715
maxwellinstitute.byu.edu

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Kingdom,” by Monte S. Nyman, a BYU emeritus professor of ancient scripture (recently deceased), brings together Joseph Smith’s own words as well as his translation of the Bible to interpret eight parables of the Savior. One such parable is of the three measures of meal that rise from only a small amount of leaven. Of this parable, Joseph stated, “It may be understood that the Church of the Latter-day Saints has taken its rise from a little leaven that was put into three witnesses.” Such an interpretation—that this parable is in reference to the three witnesses—corresponds, according to Nyman, with both Old and New Testament teachings and Joseph’s prophetic role as an interpreter of scripture. Other interpretations by Joseph in this article are just as insightful.

The article “Two Crucified Men: Insights into the Death of Jesus of Nazareth,” by BYU professor of ancient scripture Andrew C. Skinner, provides a glimpse into the death and burial of the Savior. One of the main sources from which Skinner draws is the only known archaeological evidence of crucifixion—the remains of a Jew crucified in Jerusalem dating between AD 7 and 70. One striking remnant of this crucified Jew is a right heel bone “with a four-and-one-half-inch crucifixion spike still embedded in the bone.” Combining other fascinating discoveries from these remains with historical and prophetic sources, Skinner helps his readers have a fuller view of what the Savior suffered at Calvary and of his burial in Joseph’s tomb.

In “Rest Assured, Martin Harris Will Be Here in Time,” BYU professors of Church history and doctrine Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter (emeritus) give rare insights into the final decades

of the life of Martin Harris, including his return to the Saints in his eighty-eighth year. Jacob Neusner, an eminent Judaic scholar from Bard College, in “From History to Hermeneutics: The Talmud as a Historical Source,” addresses the questions “How are we to learn the historical lessons set forth by the revealed documents of sacred scripture?” and “What sort of history can we derive?” In “An Egyptian View of Abraham,” John Gee, a BYU Egyptologist, provides a unique Coptic account of an attempted martyrdom of Abraham and his subsequent rescue at the hands of an angel.

Because Brown has had such a far-reaching influence academically and personally, many other scholars have contributed to this volume, including Kevin L. Barney, M. Gerald Bradford, D. Morgan Davis, Ryan Conrad Davis, Paul Y. Hoskisson, William D. Glanzman, Carl Griffin, Kent P. Jackson, Leslie S. B. MacCoull, Robert L. Millet, Daniel C. Peterson, Dana M. Pike, Robert A. Rees, Stephen D. and Shirley S. Ricks, Marian Robertson-Wilson, Gaye Strathearn, and John W. Welch.

Bountiful Harvest serves a dual role by both continuing the serious scholarship of the Maxwell Institute and honoring the life and works of Professor S. Kent Brown. It is available for purchase at www.byubookstore.com. ♦



From Elder Neal A. Maxwell

If we can trust the answers God has already given, why not the answers yet to be given, including patiently awaiting the data from our first estate that will illuminate the imponderables of our second estate? (*Even As I Am*, 1982, 53)

INSIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

Paul Y. Hoskisson, D. Morgan Davis, *General Editors*

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By furthering religious scholarship through the study of scripture and other texts, Brigham Young University’s Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship seeks to deepen understanding and nurture discipleship among Latter-day Saints while promoting mutual respect and goodwill among people of all faiths.



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