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# Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 4: Transcripts of Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at Brigham Young University, 1988-1990

Hugh Nibley

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## Semester 4

<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Scriptural Reference</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Page</b>
1 (86)	3 Nephi 6	The Horse in the Americas War and Prosperity	1
2 (87)	3 Nephi 6	Style of Writing in the Book of Mormon Pride, Gain, and Power	13
3 (88)	3 Nephi 6–7	Government Families and Tribes	23
4 (89)	3 Nephi 7–8	Conversion Signs and Destruction	35
5 (90)	3 Nephi 9	Destruction and Blessings	47
6 (91)	3 Nephi 9–10	The Early Christians The Five Gospels	59
7 (92)	3 Nephi	Resurrection The Forty-Day Ministry Reality	69
8 (93)	3 Nephi; Psalm 19	Physical and Spiritual Bodies Anthropism	81
9 (94)	3 Nephi 9–13	Christ’s Ministry and Teachings	91
10 (95)	3 Nephi 11–17	Church Membership Christ’s Ministry	103
11 (96)	3 Nephi 11–19	Resurrection The Forty-Day Ministry Blessing the Children	115
12 (97) John Welch	3 Nephi 11	The Sermon at the Temple Law and Covenant	127
13 (98) John Welch	3 Nephi 11	Christ at the Nephite Temple	137
14 (99) John Welch	3 Nephi 12–14	The Beatitudes Christ’s Teachings	145
15 (100) John Welch	3 Nephi 15–18	Sacrament Prayers Implications of the Sermon at the Temple	155

16 (101) John Welch	3 Nephi 19–4 Nephi 1	Understanding the Sermon at the Temple Zion Society	165
17 (102)	4 Nephi 1	Zion Society	175
18 (103)	4 Nephi 1	Prayer Peace Prosperity	187
19 (104)	4 Nephi 1:27–Mormon 2	Church Growth and Decline Mormon Leads the Nephites	199
20 (105)	Mormon 2–5	Conflicts between the Nephites and Lamanites	211
21 (106)	Mormon 1–5	Wickedness in War	223
22 (107)	Mormon 8–9	Extinction of Moroni’s People Roman Satire Spiritual Gifts	235
23 (108)	Mormon 9	The Book of Mormon and the Ruins	247
24 (109)	Ether 1–2	The Epic Literature of the Book of Ether	259
25 (110)	Ether 7–14	Struggle for Power	271
26 (111)	Ether 2–8	The Boats of the Jaredites	283
27 (112)	Moroni 1–10	Formula of Faith, Hope, and Charity Gifts	295

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 86  
3 Nephi 6  
The Horse in the Americas  
War and Prosperity

Last semester we rushed it toward the end to get to the Lord's coming to the Nephites, so we are going to have to backtrack a little bit and go back to 3 Nephi 6. We are going to ask a lot of questions this semester, too. Last semester we began with Alma 46. I said that had everything in it. If there was nothing else in the book but that, it would prove the Book of Mormon and give us enough nourishment to go on to the end of time. This is just as good. This chapter contains more historical wisdom in as small a scope as you can ever get it. (That's a bad sentence, isn't it?) It's the most concentrated form of historical wisdom; it tells us everything. The whole story is right in this chapter, and it especially applies to us. Is Brother Barrows here? Let's read this first verse, and then I'm going to ask you why this is a good place to begin. 3 Nephi 6:1: "And now it came to pass that the people of the Nephites did all return to their own lands in the twenty and sixth year [note the date], every man, with his family, his flocks and his herds, his horses and his cattle, and all things whatsoever did belong unto them."

Now why is that a good place to begin a story? It ends one phase; it ends the war. It's the end of an epic, and we begin a new phase. That's exactly the way *The Odyssey* begins. "Now all those who were to be spared destruction had got home, having safely escaped the perils of war and the sea." In the long epic [*The Iliad*] they go through all the war and trouble. Then it says, now we are going to begin a new story. It's a new beginning, and everybody is safely home. Everybody takes a deep breath. It's a good place to begin after the war, isn't it?

I'm caught on one thing. Before I can go any further, you've got to explain something to me. Brother Bentle? This is an underhanded way of taking the roll. Sister Bergeson? See, I don't call roll. Brother Bowen?—a good Welsh name. Brother Burdett? You're here—good for you. What about this business of horses in the Book of Mormon? Has that raised any problems?

"It has, according to some of the archaeological scholars."

We can't get any further until we've taken care of horses then, because this is the main crux. This is the strongest argument, supposedly, that has been raised against the Book of Mormon. Well, what about these horses it's talking about here? What's the objection? Why shouldn't they talk about horses? Incidentally, this also introduces us to another thing—how we interpret the words. If you are going to be literal, according to this, every male over the age of twenty owned more than one horse. It says, every man returned to his horses. What that means is every man, such as they were, returned to as many horses as he had, such as they were. They did all return—every man returned with his family and his horses. It's generic. Whatever men there were that had horses returned to whatever horses they had. This is generic, as it tells us, because it [uses] the indefinite *whatsoever*; whatsoever man had whatsoever horses returned to whatsoever horses he had.

We are in 3 Nephi 6, and, fittingly, we begin with the third verse, where the bard takes a deep breath (it's an epic) and begins another phase of the story entirely. This is a new beginning [following] a definite ending to the war. Everybody has settled down. Everybody is back home and happy. They have returned to their farms. Now we expect a glorious period. We've got to get

rid of this “horses” business, though, because this worries us, doesn’t it? Is there any evidence that Indians had horses? Well, yes, they rode horses all over the plains. Well, when and where did they get those horses? Nobody knows, as a matter of fact. But, first of all, what about horses in Egypt? We know they had them in the New Kingdom because we have pictures of them, but if you go look for horses’ bones you’ll never find any—no evidence of that sort.

The classic example, of course, is the camel. Professor Albright, who was the foremost American biblical scholar who ever was, absolutely insisted that people in Abraham’s day didn’t have camels—the camel wasn’t ridden until the eleventh century. There were no camels. Well, let’s ask somebody here. Where do you read about camels in the Bible? Do you remember who rides camels? Remember who was riding away on a camel, and she had the icon hidden under the camel’s saddle? It goes back to the patriarchal romances. That’s the story of [Jacob] and Rachel. Abraham is placed at 1800–2000 B.C., way back there. In other words, the patriarchal narratives talk about everybody riding around on camels, yet the best scholars say they didn’t have camels. There’s no evidence that they had camels. All we have is the written record, but the written record is quite adequate, isn’t it? Where did they get the idea of their having camels and riding around on them? All it takes is just one piece of evidence and that changes the whole picture. So you are not going to prove a negative by the absence of something.

But did every man have a horse here? Sister Burton? Brother Buss? What kind of fossil horses do you find in America in the early days? [answer inaudible]. It began in America, didn’t it? It was an eohippus, the little tiny thing, not much bigger than a jackrabbit. They wouldn’t have ridden those around, so we make jokes about that. But what about the intervening phases? What’s missing? There are all sorts of big gaps in it—what could have been there and what couldn’t. It’s very hard to determine these things. It was J. B. S. Haldane, the great British biologist, who said that the evolution of the horse is more certain than the proof of the Pythagorean theorem. It’s more certain than any mathematical demonstration. Since he said that, it has been shown that the evidence of the descent of the horse is as full of holes as anything. There’s no unbroken record whatever to be established. But this is the way it goes.

When the horses came, the plains Indians were the greatest riders. Do you learn to ride and do people change customs overnight, Brother Call? Is a custom like riding acquired readily and quickly by people? H. G. Wells wrote a story with his great historical imagination, telling exactly how man first domesticated the horse. Primitive man was hanging from a bough, and a horse ran under him. He let go and fell on [the horse’s] back and was riding him. So he became a rider. But we know from Mesopotamian records, which are very ample, that men drove horses as teams, even as four-horse teams, for a thousand years before anybody rode them. They never rode horses. They drove them and had them pull wagons. Why don’t people take advantage of those things? Well, look at us. Have you ever ridden a buffalo? The cape buffalo is supposed to be the most ferocious animal in the world. We don’t ride buffaloes at all, but in Southeast Asia little boys ride them. Naked little boys with sticks ride them all over, and the great beasts obey what they want them to do. We’d never dream of doing a thing like that. After all these thousands of years we’ve known that we could exploit our cattle by riding them, but we don’t. Other people will never ride a horse.

Another thing you might say is that there is definite proof that the Arabs never knew the wheel because they never ride wheeled vehicles. They don’t ride them at all. They’ve known the wheel for thousands of years, but you won’t find them using wheeled vehicles. In fact, they are suspicious. When the bicycles first started being used, they wouldn’t touch them. They were forbidden because they said, the *dūlāb* (wheel) was driven by the *iblis* (devil). The devil makes the front wheel go, but you make the back wheel go. You are collaborating with the devil when you ride a bicycle, so they wouldn’t ride bicycles. The thing is that through thousands of years the Arabs were never found using wheeled vehicles, though they knew all about them, that they were

practical, etc. Flinders Petrie, the Egyptologist and father of Egyptian archaeology, pointed that out. The Egyptians had certain inventions, and they knew their neighbors had [other inventions]. But they never adopted those conveniences, and the other way around. The neighbors never adopted their conveniences. They worked very well on both sides. It's a very strange prejudice we have about these things.

My friend at Berkeley, Woodrow Bora, studied for years the horse in America. Do you know where the great horse exchange center was in New Mexico? Is Brother Clawson here? Where did the Spanish and the Indians used to buy and exchange their horses in New Mexico? It's a well-known place beginning with *Santa* and not a long word after that. Santa Fe was the place where they traded the horses. But the interesting thing is that those horses didn't come from Mexico; they weren't Spanish horses. They were going into Mexico from Santa Fe, and they all came from the plains. But that was in the sixteenth century. The Spanish hadn't even been here before. The horses were coming down. And what's more, as I said, these customs are never adopted—riding, driving, etc. People are extremely conservative in those things. Yet we find the Indians are the best bare-back riders in the world. They just have to see a horse and off they go. We are told that when the horse appeared down in Peru in the Incan empire people were terrified. They'd never seen a horse, and they ran away. Why didn't the plains Indians and other Indians in Florida run away from the horse? They didn't. There is no sign of their being even impressed by horses. They were far better riders than the Spanish; they knew all about it. There are all sorts of blanks and holes we know nothing about here. You can't make an open-and-shut case of the horse at all. The moral is that the problem isn't solved yet, and you can't prove a negative. So this shouldn't slow us down; we should go right on here. But when they see [the word] *horses*, please immediately call you up on that. But again, you can see that the language is used very generally here. There is much more we could say about horses, but it is not necessary now.

Notice that nice things were going on here. They hadn't used up all their food yet; therefore, they had plenty to go on. They had a seven-year supply, but they didn't need a seven-year supply. "They did return to their own lands." This is a happy ending, you see. Every man had gone back to his own home—everyone who had escaped death, of course. Others didn't. Verse 2: "And they did return to their own lands and their possessions, both on the north and on the south, both on the land northward and on the land southward." So with everybody happy there's an ending again.

What makes that introduction particularly appropriate for the present moment in history, Brother Clay? (This is a good one.) This is a happy beginning of a new era. All of a sudden things are peaceful after fourteen years of war. They had a terrible time. All of a sudden the whole area is at peace, the north and the south. Everybody's back home and happy. How does that remind you of something that is happening today? And how broad a hint do I have to give? [answer inaudible] You refer to it exactly, of course. It looks all of a sudden as if everything is going to be lovely, doesn't it? This is very encouraging. It's another turn around, and it's a good thing. Everybody is much happier than they were—a new opportunity, a new chance, a new leaf. That's why I called your attention to the twenty-sixth year [verse 1], because if we turn in the same chapter to verse 17 we see it was the thirtieth year. Now we are going to have a little mathematics. Brother Clayton, the happy story began in the twenty-sixth year. Now we come to the thirtieth year. How many years between? We don't use slide rules anymore, but have you got a computer with you? [laughter]. In the twenty-sixth year everything was hunky-dory. This is exactly how a Gilbert and Sullivan comedy ends. It would go this way: "Oh joy, oh rapture unforeseen, The cloudless skies are now serene." Everybody's happy. This is a happy ending. In this year they begin with a happy ending, but how long does it last? Notice verse 17 here. From the twenty-sixth to the thirtieth year is how many years?

"Four."

And what happens? Look at the last sentence there: “They were in a state of awful wickedness.” It took just four years for the whole thing to collapse. Should that be a warning for anyone? This is a very rich chapter. This is going to tell us why it happened, exactly how, the process, everything else. It’s going to be all laid out for us here. It’s a marvelous thing. That was Brother Clayton who did the calculating for us. Now we come to the next one. Incidentally, we should ask you this. Is Sister Cox here? Have you read the Book of Mormon up to this point?

“Yes.”

Oh, great. What were Moroni’s policies toward the enemy and the opposition? Was he a get-even man?

“No.”

Never. He always called them his brethren. The minute they showed any signs of weakening, he would immediately want to parley and discuss things. But the funniest thing was that after the war was over, what did he do? Did he throw them all into concentration camps, make them pay enormous indemnities? No, he was a very wise man. He took their word for it and let them go home. That was that. This happened time and again. You notice that was a wise policy, and this policy is going to make for prosperity here. Notice, they go back and they are going to be very generous with the opposition. We talk about the robbers here. It was the war of the robbers, like the Roman robbers. Notice, verses 3–5 describe their liberal policies here. Remember after World War I, Brother Darrow? After World War I, do you recall the Treaty of Versailles, the League of Nations, etc.? Well, that’s too bad. Of course, I was there, as far as that goes. Just a couple of years after that I was there on my mission, and the tension was terrible. It was awful. It didn’t settle anything, because what happened? The French were determined to make the Germans pay for the whole war. They caused it; they were going to pay for it. Old Clemenceau wouldn’t move; he wouldn’t budge. Wilson’s League of Nations was adopted by everyone, but the U.S. Senate turned it down. So that collapsed. The English and the French, especially the French, were going to get the last pound of flesh from the Germans, and what did it lead to? I’ll give you ten guesses, Sister Davenport.

“World War II.”

Ah, you guessed it. After World War I came World War II. But it was that. The Germans were strapped; they were desperate. They got more and more desperate. That happens, so that’s not wise. Sister Davenport, after World War II, was it the same sort of settlement? Were we just as hard on the Germans and the Japanese, saying you’ll pay every penny of this? Who were the people who reorganized the general plan for the European theater? What did they call it?

“The Marshal Plan.”

The Marshal Plan by General Marshal. Who was in charge in Japan? MacArthur, and he took a very liberal stand, you see. They regarded him as the image. He could have been absolute dictator, but he wouldn’t do it. He wanted to restore Europe along democratic lines and gave them great freedom. There was as little oppression as possible. He gave them what they wanted, and the Marshal Plan helped Europe out, including the Germans as well. Of course, the Germans and the Japanese were the ones who staged the miraculous comebacks. It was a much wiser settlement, and that’s the kind of settlement they made after this war. You see how it pays off here in these three verses. Verse 3: “And they granted unto those robbers [who were bad people] who had entered into a covenant to keep the peace of the land [you have to trust them], who were desirous to remain Lamanites, lands, according to their numbers.” So they rehabilitated them, and there were no reprisals, and they gave them lands to settle in. “And they had formed their laws according to equity and justice.”

Well, you don't have anything to worry about. It should all be happiness. It should all be "peaches and cream." The cloudless skies are all serene, and it tells us that very soon. There is no reason in the world why everything shouldn't work perfectly. When you establish things in justice and equity, how rare that is. What that amounts to is grace and truth, actually. Grace is charity and equity, and truth is justice. Remember, the Lord is full of *grace* and *truth*. When you have those two you have everything. So naturally, what result would you expect from that? Do you detect that in the next verse, Brother Frost? If you will look sharply at verse 4, it tells us how this plan worked out. What was the immediate result of this sensible solution?

"A great comeback."

Prosperity, you bet. There was a terrific postwar boom—it really went wild. It created a boom too much though. Verse 4: "And the twenty and sixth and seventh years passed away, and there was great order in the land [that's fine]; and they had formed their laws according to equity and justice." Now this is the situation we are in today, we say. What will be the "fly in the ointment here?" People are sort of worried.

On Saturday night I was visited by one of the most eminent architects in Yugoslavia. He's a member of the Church and very active. He is designing buildings in Kiev, Lithuania, and all over the Russian area. He's Yugoslavian, and he's the head of a large architectural firm. He said, "This is good; it will last for five years." I corrected him and said, "No, three years—four years at most." But coming back to it, five years might be it, because five years seems to be a standard limit. When the Saints went to Kirtland, Joseph Smith prophesied that they would be good there for five years. We have the five-year rule. Here's what happens; it lasts five years. Should we start worrying already? What are we going to do about these things? Start taking the Book of Mormon seriously is what we should do.

Verse 5: "And now there was nothing in all the land to hinder the people [cloudless skies, all serene] from prospering continually [ah ha, what's the "fly in the ointment?" Is it economic? Is it political? It's because of what the people are—if the people weren't "damn fools"], except they should fall into transgression." Alas, we have human nature to face here, don't we? From here on you expect the happy ending. It may turn sour very soon, and we find that it does. In just the thirtieth year they had reached a stage of awful wickedness. We want to know how that was possible.

This verse 6 is an interesting one, too. Brother Hansen, in verse 6 the question is the judges. They appointed judges. We know that the system of judges superseded that of the kings under Mosiah. How would the appointing of judges insure the peace? What's the threat here? Is the thing going to last? Verse 6: "And now it was Gidgiddoni, and the judge, Lachoneus, and those who had been appointed leaders, who had established this great peace in the land." So it was the judges who established the peace. Why was it judges? Why wasn't it the king? Ten guesses. Of course, they didn't have a king. The judges were the government. But why judges instead of the legislature? They had a lot of organizing to do, but the judges were permanent here. This was a life position with these people. The judges are in and everything comes back to them. Well, where does everything rest in the end in this country? With the Supreme Court. They can invalidate an act of Congress if they declare it unconstitutional. That's all they have to do, so in the end it all rests with the nine old men and what their ideologies and philosophies are, etc. Is that the most stable system in the world? Well, if you don't have good, honest judges you might as well close up shop. Where are you if the judge isn't honest? What is a common theme of the prophets in the Old Testament? That the judges are crooked, that they accept bribes. Isaiah and Jeremiah talk about the easily bribed judges, etc.



Do we have any trouble with judges in the Book of Mormon? Did you ever hear of any corrupt judges there? Does anybody know of a corrupt judge in the Book of Mormon? There are various people when these Gadianton robbers take over. We'll see a lot more of that in the future, though. They certainly had them. Well, what about Abinadi? Who were the people who judged him? They were the judges, the high priests. What about the Lord? What about Israel? Where did the ultimate responsibility rest in Israel? Of course, it rested with the people, but who were those with whom the Lord dealt? The Scribes, the Pharisees, the doctors, and the lawyers. The Scribes were the officials at court, and the lawyers and judges were the high clergy. They were all the same, and they were the ones in charge of the trial of Jesus. Caiaphas, who tried him, was the high priest, but he was the chief judge, too. So it's a system of judges. If the judges are corrupt, what are you going to do? But these [in 3 Nephi 6:6] were good judges.

Now I run into something else. There were the horses. Now I run into a very suspicious word here in verse 6, which I hadn't noticed before. We might as well notice it now. Every time you go through, you get taken up on things. I noticed it later on, but not here. Brother Douglas Hart, what's wrong with this name *Lachoneus* in the Book of Mormon? We've been having a lot of strange, exotic names here. Well, the other Brother Hart, what's wrong with this name *Lachoneus*? Does it sound right? We have Nephi, Lehi, Sam, Abinadi, Laman, and Lemuel—the good old Semitic, Arabic, and Egyptian names. Now suddenly something like *Lachoneus* pops up. If we have any Greek or Latin majors here, they would say that sounds very suspicious—that sounds very classical to me. Do you know who the Laconians were? When you hear Laconia what does it mean? A few years ago if you asked that in a high school class, half the class would know what it was. We don't know anything anymore—that's true. Laconia is in the southeast Peloponnesus. Brother Hart, you know where the Peloponnesus is, don't you? The island of Pelops. It's the peninsula that hangs onto the south end of Greece. It sticks out into the Mediterranean. The southeast portion is very rich in harbors. That's Laconia; there's great ship building there. You've had this already in Book of Mormon classes, so Brother Harvey, or either of the brothers Hart can tell me, in the time of Lehi who was the king of Egypt? Who was the Pharaoh? It was the twenty-sixth dynasty, and it was Pharaoh Necho I. It was a new dynasty which had been established in the delta. He was a great power broker, a very powerful man, but he was being threatened by the Babylonians.

Who was the king of the Jews who pulled off his shoes? You should guess this one at least. Nebuchadnezzar. He was threatened by Nebuchadnezzar. A great land empire was in conflict with another great land empire, and Necho thought his great advantage would be to cultivate a fleet. Just at that time there happened to be invented a great novelty that revolutionized sea warfare. It was the invention by the Cilicians of the trireme. They invented the trireme, a very efficient, very sleek, very fast, very powerful warship that nothing could match. They were good, and that's where they made them, in Laconia and in Cilicia. Necho, who was the king of Egypt, bought up the whole fleet, including the crews and everything else. There was a good tradition for that, because he built his economic empire up and he was ruling in Palestine at this time by the power of his army. It was made up entirely of mercenaries, and the mercenaries were all Greeks. [Palestine] was swarming in Lehi's day with Greeks. For that matter, the Philistines were Greeks. They are very close. So here we have the name *Lachoneus* [verse 6]. The point is that there were Lachoneuses running all over Israel in the time of Lehi. They are just the people you would expect to be there. The ship builders, the sea people, and lots of sailors might be called that because they would come from Laconia and be running around. But these things we didn't know were going on, you see. If we knew about all these things that were going on underground, this wouldn't all look so strange. All of a sudden he pops up with a name that is about as Jewish, or about as Egyptian, as John Smith. It belongs here, believe me. He's one of the judges, a rather eminent name. This takes us to another subject. We'll deal with this separately later on about race in the Book of Mormon, which is much more complicated than we thought. Let's get on here with this exciting chapter.

So the people began to prosper and wax great. It was a happy time of law, equity, and justice, with nothing to hinder prospering except they should misbehave themselves. The good judge Lachoneus appointed leaders that were competent, and there was peace in the land. So what would you naturally expect them to engage in with peace after a long and ruinous war? I'll give you ten guesses, Brother Havens. What would you expect after a long, ruinous war? What do we have to do in Panama now for the next few years?

"They destroyed so many buildings and highways; they have to rebuild them."

Great projects, lots of chance for nice big fat contracts for construction, etc.—corruption all over the place. That's exactly what happens here. Isn't Joseph Smith shrewd to know all these things? He's got it all figured out. That 23-year-old kid on the farm sits down and writes it all out. Verse 7: "And it came to pass that there were many cities built anew [new cities—it's a boom time], and there were many old cities repaired." There had to be lots of repairs, lots of reconstruction in their inner cities. It was not just destruction, but they had been neglected. It had been a terrible war, and they had to use all their resources for other things. Naturally, if you have a lot of cities, what do you have to have connecting them? There are some nice fat contracts there, too, aren't there? Brother Hillam, what do you have to have connecting the cities?

"Highways."

Yes, you can have airports, but they didn't have them then. Highways, and we do know they had marvelous highways. We must remember, in 1829 when this was written, nothing was known about the great highway system that you find in Central America. It goes right up to Mexico City. You find highways all over, but especially in South America, as you know. They go right down the whole length of the Andes, these amazingly well-built highways. So they do have highways connecting them. That's from a later period, but they're built like the Roman roads. It was only very recently discovered that the great net of Roman roads in Gaul (France), for example, are simply overlaid over much earlier roads. There are pre-Roman roads that go back five or six thousand years. People have to get from place to place, and they take the closer route. There is a new photographic survey of England, showing the roads that go back to the fourth and fifth millenniums B.C. They had a wonderful road system. Watling Street, the main road that ran up the whole center of England almost as straight as an arrow, was there already then. It's an amazing thing. That's aside from the lay lines that the mystic people talk about today, connecting the sacred, prehistoric, megalithic centers. There are all sorts of things going on we don't know about, but this is natural. This is what you would expect.

Verse 8: "And there were many highways cast up, and many roads made, which led from city to city, and from land to land, and from place to place [a regular system. So it's the twenty-eighth year, just two years away] . . . and the people had continual peace." Two years is hardly something to boast about, is it? Even we could keep peace for two years. "But it came to pass in the twenty and ninth year there began to be some disputings among the people." And now we see where the trouble begins. What was the threat to this highly successful economy and would it last? Would you have any ideas about this? What would make you suspicious, Brother Hillam, that things weren't all going to be perfect once you heard about this great postwar prosperity, this boom? You would raise an eyebrow and say, can it last? Why? What's wrong with a boom? What's wrong with everybody getting rich overnight? We don't think so.

"It leads to corruption and things like you were talking about in the previous class."

Oh, but can't you avoid that? There's the famous saying of Lord Acton, "Power [like money], tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Will money always corrupt? Who uses money to corrupt people, to buy up armies and navies, popes and priests, kings and presidents, and rules with blood and horror? You know who. He uses money as his implement, so this makes

me very suspicious things are going to happen. We should read the verses as they come. “There began to be some disputings among the people; and some were lifted up unto pride and boastings because of their exceedingly great riches.” That has been the last main word of President Benson—pride is a thing to beware of. We get a false picture of pride, don’t we? It’s not necessarily pushing people off the sidewalk. Where does pride begin here, Brother Hilton? When I see pride, do I have to see somebody with long flowing robes and his nose in the air and wearing a crown, or something like that? Is that necessarily pride? That’s one form of pride. Is there anything in Central American art, from the jars, the vases, the murals, etc.? You’ve seen books of Central American art. What would suggest pride in those? There’s a very consistent feature; you recognize that type of art instantly, don’t you? You know it’s not classical Greek art, don’t you?

“There’s lots of gold.”

Yes, there’s gold in everything for one thing. And they don’t just wear gold, but what else do they wear? [Answer is inaudible]. Right, they load themselves like a walking Christmas tree, with feathers and all sorts of clinking, rattling, and glittering garbage. Then they parade themselves. It’s comical in Central America. They overdo it so, whether it’s on the Mayan, or the illustrations of the Popol Vuh. It shows the grandes parading around with much too much hardware on. That’s a sign of pride, and it talks a great deal in the Book of Mormon about their precious, costly apparel. It doesn’t say beautiful apparel ever. It just says *costly*; that’s the main thing. That’s the only thing that interests us—that it has the proper label on it. The cost is what makes them great. This is the way the people were. “And some were lifted up unto pride and boastings because of their exceedingly great riches.” There are various ways. Boasting doesn’t mean you would have to go and shout it from the housetops. There are various ways in which you can show it. Look at the ads that say you have to own a Cadillac because it gives you prestige; it’s a prestige car. And you let everybody know. There are some very [persuasive] things. There was a good essay yesterday in the paper on the yuppie philosophy. It was to have good things, not just expensive things but things of good quality that are immediately recognizable on sight—a BMW, a Porsche. These things are forms of boasting because they display wealth. You don’t have to spend that much for a car, after all. You don’t have to spend fifty or sixty thousand dollars, but people do. It can be immediately spotted as such an object. This is a form of boasting. It’s the same thing with our labels on jeans —our fashionable design labels and things like that. You can size a person’s wardrobe up when you see it, total up the bill, and decide exactly how much he spent on it. This happens, and we do that deliberately. We try to make it obvious that we are wearing a particular brand of this, that, or the other. They are boasting because of their riches and making their riches obvious. It becomes invidious comparison.

Here it gives us the kind of culture they had. What follows is very important. See, Joseph is not leaving anything out here. How can they keep up this sort of thing? What is the style of economy? We see what their lifestyle is, but what are they? Barbarians digging treasures out and adorning themselves with shells from the sea, etc. Not a bit of it. This is very sophisticated civilization; we are told that. Remember, the Lamanites had been taught how to write, and it boomed business by the Nephites. What kind of civilization would you call this one, Sister Hutchings?

“They were divided into ranks according to their riches.”

Start reading verse 11 first; this is the most important.

“There were merchants and lawyers.”

Ah, now what would you say? Business and law were the big things then, weren’t they? There were merchants; it was a business civilization. Where you have a business civilization, you are going to have legalism and courts. You can’t do business without lawyers. They get all the

money, but you have to have them or they won't let you stir. This is part of it. It was legalistic. You say, well, isn't that a development of our own times? Isn't that rather characteristic of our own sophisticated civilization, where you have the markets that we do, etc.? Is this the way they always did business? Yes, it is. This is a Byzantine civilization; it's a very ancient type. (What was I going to say? Professor McCormick at Berkeley always used to ask the candidates the first question. He said, "What do I have in mind?")

There were many merchants, many lawyers, and many officers. So the result is that you are going to have wealth distributed accordingly. Some people are going to be very rich. It's a business civilization. What I was going to ask is What is the code word by which we designate such a civilization—a rich, lush, materialistic civilization? The ancient one. Remember, we talk about Zion, and in contrast to Zion what is the world of the materialists called?

"Babylon."

Babylon the great. That's Babylon. Chapter 8 of Revelation describes what Babylon is and the prophets. They use that as the code word. It describes that because Babylon was just such a civilization. I said Byzantine because that's later, but this is the Babylonian. But the Byzantine was very official. Everything was divided into ranks. In your particular office you had a particular mark on your garment according to how distinguished you were. And there were ranks for every calling. It was a very highly organized, bureaucratic society. Those are very efficient and then turn out to be very inefficient. But they were divided according to ranks [verse 12]. That's supposed to make for efficiency, etc. The ranks were judged, alas, not according to capacity or anything else, but according to riches. Do we do that? People try to do it according to riches. What about a corporation? Brother Ivins, do riches count for anything in the distribution of rank in a big corporation? Say you're going to give rank from the chairman of the board right on down, does their wealth have anything to do with their position in the corporation? Does it make any difference? Could a salesman be twice as rich as the chairman of the board? [answer not audible] Fat chance. It is the riches. As you go up the ladder you make more and more. That's taken for granted; this is the whole thing. They are sorted out either according to their income or the wealth they already have. Who is the gentleman who has this obsession with riches, ranks everybody in riches, and gives us the 300, the 400, the 500 richest people, etc. Do you know who that is, Sister Ivins? It's Malcolm who?

"Forbes."

Malcolm Forbes, of course. He makes a cult of wealth; it means everything to him. It's rank, who you admit and who you don't admit. You don't speak to certain people unless they are in a certain bracket, you see. And, of course, the Romans formalized that too under first Galba and then Otho. The Emperor Otho was a great big fat slob and enormously wealthy. He bought the empire. It didn't last him long though; it cost him his life. He divided [people] according to riches. If you didn't get 22,000 sesterces a year, you couldn't sit in certain places in the theater. It was all according to the money you got. Yes?

"In the same verse it says it says they were divided into ranks 'according to their riches and their chances for learning.'"

We haven't got to learning yet, you see. I'm going to ask you about the learning. Why would learning have anything to do with it here? There's this strange equation, learning and riches. It used to be just the opposite; that's what it was when I was growing up. We'll say *L* stands for *learning*, which is inversely proportional to wealth. The more learned you are the poorer you have to be. It was a luxury and a delight. You were willing to forego all sorts of things so you could spend your time doing these things that the world didn't consider particularly practical and wouldn't pay you for. You didn't expect to get paid when you studied things. When Aristotle

explained the Pythagorean theorem to a class, one young fellow asked, “Well, what good is that going to do me?”

Aristotle said to the monitor, “Give that boy a quarter so he won’t think he is wasting his time.” You have to do these things. Learning was a luxury for which you were willing to pay a high price. You were willing to starve for it and go without all sorts of things because of that enormous delight in learning. It’s just the opposite now; you won’t turn a page unless they’ll put on the line how much you’ll get for that. That’s morbid and tragic. This should never be. When I was young, this would be regarded as a monstrous perversion of values. But is it our standard today? Would you say it is? I would say it is. Do we tend to equate learning and riches today? Yes, we say you go to school because you make more money. President Barrows of the University of California at Berkeley shocked the world when he made that announcement. He was General Barrows, the one who led the campaign up in northern Russia after World War I. The only reason one goes to college is to increase his earning power [he said], a terrible thing to say. [inaudible question]

Oh yes, IBM. I mean MBA—same thing. It was the MBA, obviously, chances for learning. I don’t think it was particularly learning in the scriptures, or anything like that. The idea is the chances. They could learn what they wanted to, but if you had the money then you had the chance. You can be darn sure what kind of learning it was. “Some were ignorant because of their poverty, and others did receive great learning because of their riches.” Well, you wouldn’t say that of Diogenes, would you? See, Diogenes was the wisest man in Greece, but also the poorest. Alexander had an interview with Diogenes in Athens. You know the story of that interview, don’t you, Brother Johanson? (This is a dirty trick to call the roll; I’ve never done it before.) You know who Diogenes was, don’t you, Brother Johnson? He was going around looking for what with his lamp? Brother Jorgenson, you should know who Diogenes was. Who was he looking for with his lamp? He was going around barefoot, a very poor man. He had nothing and he said he was going around looking for what?

“An honest man.”

An honest man. In the Old Testament they call that a *mystery*. That’s what Jeremiah does—when you break a pot or do something and this stands for something else. That lamp stood for the light in the world searching for an honest man. He went around searching for an honest man, and he lived in a [barrel]. They said he didn’t work hard enough, so he would roll his barrel up and down the street busily during the day. They said, “What are you doing?”

“Well, I’m rolling my barrel and being busy like everybody else.” He had to do something. That’s about as much sense as our business makes—ninety percent of the things we do. When Alexander had conquered Athens, he said, “Is there anything I can do for you?” He was a great admirer of Diogenes, and you know what Diogenes said. Everybody, raise your hand if you know what Diogenes said to Alexander the Great. Diogenes said, “Yes, get out of the sun.” He was sunning himself in his barrel, and he said, “Please stand aside and let me get the sunlight.” That was what he asked. But as they walked away, what Alexander said, according to Callisthenes, was “If I wasn’t Alexander, the one man I would choose to be is Diogenes.” He didn’t take his cues from anybody else—he’s himself. He was making fun of the other people doing the business—busy, busy, busy work. You see, he was rolling his barrel up and down the street to show that he was busy like everybody else, and he was accomplishing just as much as they were. He was seeking for wisdom.

Here [in the Book of Mormon] “some were ignorant because of their poverty.” And you see the equation. Always until our own day, scholarship has always been considered a life of austerity. That’s the Hermetic standard, you see. Though they could have great wealth, they didn’t choose that. That’s corrupting. They weren’t all that way, were they? Some were lifted up. Do we have

any gems here? I see the time is up now. We'll resume here. Everybody above  $K$  better be here the next time, too [laughter].



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 87

3 Nephi 6

Style of Writing in the Book of Mormon  
Pride, Gain, and Power

Somebody asked if we are going to have a syllabus. I think when the Book of Mormon is thoroughly studied, which it may be in years to come, it will be agreed that it's the most perfect book ever written—in structure, in form and everything—exactly what the message meant to convey. This chapter we are looking at today (3 Nephi 6) is miraculous in its structure, its simplicity, and its directness. So why would we need a syllabus? I think it's an impertinence to ask for a syllabus when we have the supreme syllabus in the Book of Mormon. It is a syllabus. Remember, this is the syllabus of hundreds of volumes of records. We are told that. So this is the syllabus, and this is the one we pay attention to. Since I don't have the roll today and can't ask questions (that's a horrible thing), let's talk about the style of the Book of Mormon. To start out I should ask somebody a question here. What do you notice in the first two verses? What do they have in common? What particular stylistic use do you find in the opening sentences of these two verses?

“And it came to pass.”

You immediately realize that the Book of Mormon is formulaic—that the ancients wrote in formulas, just as we do today. We don't write in separate, individual words; we think and speak in formulas. But the ancients did it much more than we do. If a thing has been perfectly and well said, you can do no better than to quote it. So if you look down in the margins of your Book of Mormon and at the bottom, or in other scriptures, or if you look at your concordance, you'll find that all scripture is a lot of quotes from other scriptures. Everybody is quoting everybody else all the time, and that's so with ancient literature, too. There was no copyright then; you were free to use anything, and you should be. This copyrighting and stealing of ideas is utterly absurd. As Upton Sinclair used to say, the purpose of a person's ideas is to have them stolen. You are not supposed to keep an idea to yourself. It's the same thing with an invention. You get your pay; that's all right. But there's this nonsense about royalties and stuff like that. We'll turn that all back to FARMS.

So there's this idea of “it came to pass.” This is one of the things the Book of Mormon has been criticized for. Mark Twain said, “If you leave out all the ‘it came to passes,’ the Book of Mormon would be a pamphlet.” Do you have to have these things? Well, you certainly do. It helps the Book of Mormon and everything else. It was Martin P. Nilsson, the great Swedish scholar, who called that “the epic technique.” When you are reciting, and when you are reading a long passage, you have to take a breath once in awhile. You have to lubricate the wheels. You can't face a person in every sentence with a brand new statement, a brand new idea, starting cold. You must put padding between the sentences. And in Semitic languages it's absolutely required to make it easier. A third of all the lines in the *Odyssey*, for example (we quoted that last time) are repeated lines. You repeat, you take a break, you take a breath, and you keep going. This keeps things going. It also keeps the reader's attention; it doesn't drag. For example, I picked up this morning a very old writing from the time of Seti II in the thirteenth century B.C. It's a famous story, which comes nearest to the writings of the patriarchs. It's like the patriarchal romances, very closely related to the Bible, very much like Genesis. It has the story of Joseph and other things like that and it's Egyptian, going back to the time of Seti II. And what do I find here? It starts out with this expression: “And now it came to pass after many days.” It sounds very much like the



Book of Mormon, doesn't it? "After many days" of all things. That's a usage we don't find in the Old Testament, but the Egyptians were fond of it. The Book of Mormon is supposed to be written in the language of the Egyptians and the learning of the Jews.

So we get down to the next sentence and it says: "Now it came to pass that after it dawned on the second day, there came to pass . . ." Something happens there. *Hr ír* actually means "next in our story" or "as to what comes next." The actual expression "it came to pass" is this one here. You'll see this is the one they go crazy about. Every sentence in this long story begins with either *íst rf* or *behold*, or *it came to pass*. It's required. This one starts out here: "And it came to pass when the time of plowing had come . . ." Then we get a real *it came to pass*, which is this expression *wn ín*. Now that really means *it came to pass*. The other is an expression that keeps things going, but here's this *hr ír* again. "Now it happened after the next day dawned there came . . ." Then here it is again. "It came to pass after many days." It goes on with these things. Then we get a *wn ín* again. "Then it came to pass that he said to his brother that it came to pass . . ." Now the next page is nothing but *it came to pass* in every sentence. Notice, they're written in here. You can fill them in with red. This is a copy. Where it's written in red, it's rubric.

In Egyptian you write in two dimensions, because you have to have depth. You have to have a stereo effect. Everything that is inspired and to be read as scriptures is written in black. But any comment the writer himself has to make, which is not divinely inspired (not the *ntr*, the divine words) is written in red. That's rubric, the red ink. So these are all in red ink. *It came to pass* is his own idea that he puts in there to grease things and to introduce another statement of the scripture. So here's the next line, *it came to pass*, the same thing. Seven times on one page it begins with *it came to pass*. We turn the page and it starts right out again *it came to pass*. Here's a long thing in rubric because he is making his own comments. "And behold, when came finally the time of sowing [the other was the time of plowing; this is the story of Joseph and his brethren] then it came to pass . . ." He puts them both in there. Here it is again. You have to put *it came to pass*. You can't just start a sentence out cold. Just as in Arabic it would be very bad taste to start out "I saw a dog." You have to say *'inna*, "Behold, I saw a dog." You have to say that. We mustn't worry about this. Actually, this is strong evidence for what we have here. This *it came to pass* business should be here. It's not out of place at all; you don't have to apologize for it.

We are going to ask somebody if style is important. What does the style of a writing do? Well, of course, it conditions our response. It establishes the mood of the writer. If a writer is trying to fool you, he can't do it. There's a massive work by a German writer called Friedrich Blass on the detecting of ancient forgeries, or what the writer was up to. The writer can't fool you with any long document; it's impossible. There's no such thing as a clever forgery; it doesn't exist. Only if people want to be fooled can they be fooled, but there's no clever forgery. The rule also is that a historical text is the hardest to forge, because it's not somebody's ideas. Anybody is free to have any ideas he wants, you see. But if he is writing a historical text, like Joseph Smith, [it's very difficult]. Having written this big book, he hands it to the world and says, this actually happened—this is true. These are not just my reflections, like science and health, like [the writings of] Mary Baker Eddy, or the writings of the Church Fathers, which are commentaries on the scriptures. They [presented] their ideas and argued with each other. Everybody can write commentaries, inspired works, spiritual-uptift poetry, and all sorts of inspirational literature. You can grind that out by the ream; there's nothing to it. But sit down and write a history, hand it to people, and say, this really happened at such and such a time and such and such a place. This happened and you are invited to expose it or explode it if you can. That's a very dangerous game to play. The more you add the more dangerous this becomes exponentially. You don't just add another detail, because adding two details together makes it four times as hard. Do those things really come together in the picture? You go on adding and have a huge book with every aspect of a civilization in it.

You think you can fool somebody with that? No wonder they won't touch the Book of Mormon—nobody. Even the great Eduard Meyer who laid so much emphasis on the study and criticism of Joseph Smith never read the Book of Mormon. That's a very interesting thing; they won't do it. Of course, you can read it through. We read it through, like going through the Louvre on roller skates or something like that. We want to say, I've read it through and that's that. With every problem and every study of grammar, or anything like that, you should read the whole thing through first fast. You don't learn it then, but you get an idea of what you're dealing with. It puts things in place and position. Do read it through by all means, as fast as you can—in one day if you can. That's the way you do it. Then you can settle down to things, but it's important to do it the first time that way. You must move fast when you learn things.

This style is very important because Joseph can't fool us. He may fool us with the history, which would be very hard, but the style is just as hard to fool us with. For one thing it is written in a number of styles. There are a number of books by a number of authors. They have been copied down and edited by Mormon and Moroni. This is another test. Brother Hilton at Berkeley got together a group, and they were going to study the Book of Mormon. They were not Mormons. They were Jews, Catholics, and everything. They were professors at Berkeley, and they were going to make a statistical study of the Book of Mormon, studying each of the books separately. You can get that report [on this study], and I've got to find out what the latest thing is on that. How can you study a person's style objectively and test it mathematically, if this book was written by Moroni and this book was written by Nephi? They were two very different men. One of the marvels of the Book of Mormon is the delineation of character in a very short space. In a few words it brings out with vivid clarity these beautiful little vignettes. You know exactly the kind of person Abinadi was—there's a lot about him—or King Noah was. It just has to say a few sentences and you have a vivid picture of the person.

So here we put things together and we find that these people [wrote in different styles]. Did Moroni write in the same style as Nephi did? For example, take the book of Ether. What do you mean by style in this case? How can you measure it objectively? Does it sound right? That's important; you get the feeling. The feeling is a very important thing. But there are certain [details]. A certain person uses certain expressions again and again. He is fond of using particles that another person doesn't use, he's fond of using a different conjunction, or he may use *behold* a lot oftener than somebody else uses it. Another may prefer *it came to pass*—so it goes. There are all sorts of ways in which you give yourself away [in writing] if it's long enough to form a pattern, and the books in the Book of Mormon, fortunately, are long enough—except for the short, dismal period after they settled in the New World and had a hard time, struggling along with all the short books. But you can measure them, and the styles of the Book of Mormon are very distinct. Each book was written by a different person. This makes it very clear, even though they were edited. But the style is important here. The style is not the form. It's all formulaic. It all follows the same form, as we write in the English form, but everybody has his own style. Bach wrote *partitas* in every form you can imagine—French, Italian, German dances, etc. But it was all Bach. It all had his inimitable style. It had the correct form of each of these musical idioms, but it was his style and it was immortal. Everything he touched turned to gold. There were no imitators or anything like that. Well, it happens with other composers, too.

What would we say is the main theme or feeling of the Book of Mormon? What do you feel most when you read it? Why does it move people so much? What is the thing that hits you most with the Book of Mormon? It's what Aristotle called *spoudaiōtēs*. I'm sorry we don't have the roll, so we can't ask about that; we'll have to pass it over. *Spoudaiōtēs* is usually translated as "high seriousness." He means to be understood; he wants to be believed. Whoever wrote the Book of Mormon in every book has this earnest zeal to get across. I guess if you were giving it a rhetorical form, [one of the] seven rhetorical tropes, you would call this a *swasoria*, or you could even call it

a *protreptic*. A *protreptic* is a missionary talk trying to get you to join our church, and a *swasoria*, as you can see by the word, is an attempt to persuade somebody. They are two types of address rhetorically. *Pro* means “to our side,” and *treptic* means “turn over.” [It means] “turn over” or “step over to our side.” Well, it’s not so *protreptic*, but it certainly is a *swasoria*. He’s trying to persuade us to believe in Jesus Christ. The title page of the Book of Mormon tells us that’s its purpose. It wants to persuade you Gentiles and everybody else to believe in Jesus Christ. It is frankly a sales pitch; it is really after us.

But there are sales pitches and [different] sales pitches, as you know. You can easily detect this; it’s a surprising thing. With all the rhetorical skills we have in public relations and our various skills in journalism, it’s almost impossible to fool a person who doesn’t want to be fooled. The appearance of great sincerity, whether in a politician or someone else, doesn’t fool you for long. It comes across for what it is. This is where the Book of Mormon is not going to fool you at all. It certainly couldn’t have been written by some old minister, Spaulding or anybody else, because it would be the most tremendous blasphemy that ever was. Here he’s telling you all about Jesus Christ. He’s putting words into the mouth of Jesus Christ. He’s calling you to believe this and bears his testimony, and yet he knows it’s just a novel, just a fake. That’s the explanation they still give. Fawn Brodie said Joseph Smith wrote it as a practical joke to fool his family and said, “I’ve got the damned fools fixed now.” That’s quoting. This kid goes to all the trouble of writing this enormous term paper, this vast piece of work just to fool his family. It’s not very convincing, yet they consider Mrs. Brodie the authority on the subject. And she hadn’t read it [the Book of Mormon]. We have her papers up at the University of Utah, and her Book of Mormon has a little mark here, a little mark there, and that’s it. She hadn’t studied it at all. It’s very obvious in what she wrote anyway; we won’t worry about her.

The style bears the weight of the message here. You notice that the Gettysburg Address was sincere; it doesn’t [try to] fool you. But other speeches we get about standing tall, the new wind, morning in America, and all this sort of stuff—how far does that fool anybody? This is a very different sort of thing. Matthew Arnold in his classic work on the translation of Homer said, Homer alone is great for four qualities that he possesses, and no other work possesses them. I’m going to ask you which of these the Book of Mormon stands out for. First of all, the most outstanding and the hardest to imitate of [qualities] of sublime writing like Homer (nobody else could ever pull it off) is that it’s preeminently rapid. You don’t expect a solemn epic to be rapid and move fast, but it does. He just rushes along. Milton moves at a majestic pace, but he is in no hurry, and other writers [are like that]. It’s almost impossible to write a serious work that really rushes along; you have to “milk it out.” But look at the Book of Mormon—look at the speed. Everything happens in 3 Nephi 6. You say, there’s nothing else left for the man to write; he’s told it all here. Where does he go from there? The poor guy is going to be awfully embarrassed. Not a bit of it. The next chapter is just as good, and he keeps going on and on and on. It rushes like a jet plane, and he never runs out of ideas. At the end he is going just as strong as at the beginning. Remember, it begins like a tempest with a rush and a roar—the fall of Jerusalem, the terrible tensions going on there, all the running around in the dark, etc. And it ends up at Cumorah with the most appalling and staggering description of people wiping themselves out, a horrendous thing. All in between there’s never a moment’s relaxation, including the long sermons and passages taken from the scriptures. So these things are very important, and the first is *rapidity*.

It is rare for it to have anything else, but the next is that he [Homer] is preeminently noble and lofty. There’s your *spoudaiōtēs*, you certainly get that in the Book of Mormon. We said preeminently rapid and preeminently noble. He also uses the word *lofty*.

Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top  
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed . . .

I thence  
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,  
That with no middle flight intends to soar  
Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues  
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

[This is Milton, you see, but it is the lofty stuff; it's not fast.]

Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first  
Wast present [the Holy Ghost, you see], and, with mighty wings outspread,  
Dovelike sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,  
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark  
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;  
That, to the height of this great argument,  
I may assert Eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to men.

John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I

This stately prose moves along. It's lofty all right, but it's not going to move very fast. They are stuck in the garden for about three thousand lines. Adam and Eve keep chatting for several thousand lines. This is the way it goes.

Some of you may know Arthur Henry King who was here, a well-known professor of English from Cambridge, who came over and joined the Church. Now I think he is teaching in Arizona. He noticed this same thing, that in the writings of the scriptures that we have through Joseph Smith there's an entirely different tone; there's a majesty that you don't find anywhere. Others try to imitate it. The [Reorganized LDS] have tried to produce scripture, and they don't do it. It doesn't sound that way. Notice the stately rhythm here: "And now it came to pass [he uses both of the expressions] that the people of the Nephites did all return to their own lands." Notice, that's a *spondee*; that's very heavy. Beautiful, isn't it? Homer had to end every line with a spondee summing it up—the two long strokes that have a solemnity about them. Then lighter: ". . . in the twenty and sixth year, every man, with his family, his flocks and his herds, his horses and his cattle, and all things whatsoever did belong unto them." It's beautifully balanced prose. The only person who could match that beautiful balance of prose would be Edward Gibbon, I suppose, who wrote *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a vast work in six volumes. There are some eminent Englishmen who actually memorize it by heart. It was once common for Englishmen to memorize Gibbons' entire history of Rome by heart. Can you imagine that? There are people who can do that, you know. We had a girl here who had a scholarship, and while she was there she memorized the Koran. Well, there are some schools in which you are not admitted to certain honors unless you know the Koran entirely by heart. We don't do that memorizing anymore; we don't carry the book around with us. It might help.

Anyway we have here the second quality, that it is noble. You have to admit the Book of Mormon is noble here, the way it moves. The third [quality] is that it is simple and direct in language—clear, simple, and direct. What is the expression the Book of Mormon uses? "In words of exceeding plainness." And it is in words of exceeding plainness, so you can't [misunderstand it]. The studies of Book of Mormon language all begin with a paradoxical fact. Shakespeare uses thirty-four thousand words; he contributed more to the language than any other person by far, including usages and everything else. This is what is phenomenal: The Book of Mormon uses only three thousand words. The most basic vocabulary, the least you can get by with, just stumbling and bumbling, is eight hundred words. But five thousand words is a minimum vocabulary. You are an ignoramus if you don't know more than five thousand, but the Book of Mormon uses only three thousand words, an amazingly limited vocabulary. They must, therefore,

speak with simple directness and plainness to get the ideas over. It doesn't use a particularly sophisticated word to describe a complex situation. It breaks it down and uses a few simple words that make it very clear what happens. We get that here: ". . . and all things whatsoever did belong unto them." Instead of a complex word, he breaks it down. They brought back all the things that belonged to them. After the war they got them all together again.

The fourth quality from Matthew Arnold is that it's simple and direct in ideas—in content, in the stories he tells, etc. We certainly get involved in it, but these are human events—people speaking to each other and doing things to each other. But he never gets us involved in sophisticated arguments, never gets us into deep and tricky matters at all. Even when Abinadi is arguing with the priests of Noah and they try to trick him, it's very simple and direct in ideas, language, and content. Anyone can understand it. We have children's [versions of] the Book of Mormon. There's no reason why you have to go to them—least of all these horrible animated cartoons, where Nephi, who is able to put on the armor of the mighty Laban, is a little kid about ten years old.

What else about the style? It does use what Martin P. Nilsson calls "the epic technique," taking a breather between lines, etc. Why the archaic language? There are more letters written and more questions about that than almost anything else. Why the King James language? Well, when missionaries go out and preach the gospel in Germany, what do they use? They use the Luther Bible, of course. Is it inspired? Well, as a matter of fact, the translators of the King James depended very heavily on the Luther Bible; we don't realize that. Luther beat them to the punch, and they borrowed a lot from Luther. It's a great translation. If we have any questions of what it means, we can always revert to the "original." We don't have the original text of either testament. The oldest text we have of the Old Testament is from the ninth century A.D., the Ben Asher Codex. We have eight thousand different ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, none of which are exactly alike. You can take your choice among them, so we make our constructions. But the Book of Mormon sticks to language that follows the King James Bible, as long as it serves, and so does the Doctrine and Covenants. If it has to be corrected or changed, he doesn't hesitate to give us the other. But we follow that. Why do we use the King James Bible? Because it is the accepted text of the Christian world. You are not going to preach the gospel without it.

What Bible did the apostles use in the New Testament, and what Bible does the Lord quote in the New Testament? He's quoting the Hebrews, but in our Greek New Testament, it's the *Septuagint*, because the *Septuagint* was the Bible accepted by the Jews (it was translated by the Jews, as a matter of fact) and accepted widely by the public. You have to use a text that people accept if you are going to prove anything by the scriptures. Naturally, we use the King James [translation] because the world will accept it, and it's good—it's great. It isn't always perfectly correct, but then we don't always follow it exactly. The Book of Mormon changes it when it is not [correct]; Joseph Smith didn't hesitate. There are two thousand differences in the Book of Mormon, so we have changes, corrections, etc. But it's strange that people make a big argument of that—oh, he's just copying from the King James Bible. Well, what language do you expect him to use when we are using common scriptures accepted by our whole society?

We've seen the style here, and we go on now. We come to this tremendous verse 15 in 3 Nephi 6. It tells us what's wrong. Remember what happened first. The pattern is very simple. It says here the people had prospered; there was pride and wealth, class distinctions, and poverty. It tells us much more than that, doesn't it? When they returned everything was lovely. They actually rehabilitated the robbers. As a result of the postwar boom there had to be a great deal of public works—lots of rebuilding of roads and cities. There was lots of work, lots of contracts, and a lot of people getting rich all of a sudden. So you have great postwar wealth which leads to the usual pride and boasting. It's really pride although it doesn't look like pride, such as the fashionable Yuppie culture, etc. The general contempt we have for those not in that particular culture, the

feeling of superiority we have, and the subtle efforts to maintain ourselves as superior [are pride]. We have that in our society. A person wants to succeed. “I want it all and I want it now.” We get this all over the place. You have to have the signs; you have to wear the right clothes, etc. What makes it real pride is the impression that you are above others.

We don’t realize that we are all in the same boat; we are all a bunch of slobs really, when you come down to it. Read the sermon of [Benjamin], “I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness. . . . If ye do this ye shall always rejoice” (Mosiah 4:11–12). You won’t be beset by ambitions and frustrations; you really can’t fail in that case. If you start out at the bottom of the ladder, you are going to stay there. You’re depending entirely on the Lord. You remember his greatness and goodness. You can have anything you want that’s expedient; that’s the best part of it. Then he [Benjamin] says, you are less than the dust; you’re nothing at all, and I’m no better than you are. That seems like running down the human race. But he is talking in comparative terms, and it is true, of course. We can’t do anything; we are absolutely helpless. We come to the end of the line and what do we have? A good example of that is people who are utterly terrified.

The weariest and most loathed worldly life  
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment  
Can lay on nature, is a paradise  
To what we fear of death.

Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, act III, scene 1

That’s what Claudio says in a long speech. When we are faced with that, we are all paralyzed. We are all as nothing, and we can be reduced very quickly.

You notice in our nightly TV dramas how quickly the mood and the pride can change to utter humility as soon as the gun changes hands. The one who holds the gun is utterly contemptuous; the other [person] is just scum and nothing else. If by accident he should lose the gun and the other one should get it, then he’s the scum and the other becomes all powerful. He has the command. He holds the “bow of Nimrod,” and he can do what he wants. It’s this idea of holding people in contempt if we have power over them. Immediately, the power shifts hands, and they do the same sort of thing. How unstable as water and unreliable we are; how quickly we can change from one extreme to another. We see that happen all the time.

They got rich and were “distinguished by ranks, according to their riches. . . . Some were lifted up in pride, and others were exceedingly humble. . . . And thus there became a great inequality in all the land, insomuch that the church began to be broken up.” That inequality is important. Let me read you something from Sunday’s paper. (This is too good to miss.) Actually, it was for the “attorney of the year.” They had interviews with half a dozen of the foremost United States historians, and the leader of them is Henry Steele Commager. The article, which is a fairly long one, ends with his statement. They are talking about what the eighties brought us. Scientists view the past decade as a period of folly and stagnation. This is the closing statement by Commager. Remember what we just read? There was a great inequality in the land. He said, “The 1980s created for the first time a class society in America.” Don’t think we don’t need the Book of Mormon. For the first time we have a class society. There are permanently poor that don’t expect to be anything else, and permanently rich that don’t expect to be anything else except richer.

So there was great inequality, and that broke up the church in the thirtieth year. Why should that break up the church? Well, again, read [Benjamin’s] address here. Remember, we began in the twenty-sixth [with great prosperity]. I wasn’t being patronizing when I said, “How many years is it from twenty-six to thirty?” because that’s a staggering figure. After four years the whole thing is going to fall apart now. This can happen. Already in the articles and editorials, you notice, in

the paper, they are starting to talk about the breakup of the present happy situation in the world. It can't last very long, because we are too aggressive for one thing. That's one thing the Book of Mormon emphasizes all the time: If the people of the promised land are destroyed, it will be themselves that do it. The Lord tells Nephi right at the beginning in the second chapter, I will always cause the Lamanites to breathe down your neck, to keep you in remembrance, to stir you up to remembrance. As long as you follow my commands you have nothing to fear from them. I'm keeping them there to scourge you when you slip. They'll be there for that purpose, and I'm going to keep them there. You'll never be able to get rid of them; they will always be on your necks to remind you of what you should do. If you are ever destroyed it will be because you bring [it on yourselves]. You have nothing to fear from them. Of course, all our emphasis is on protecting ourselves from those [bad people].

In only four years just a few Lamanites were true to the faith (3 Nephi 6:14). What do you think of that? "They were firm and steadfast and immovable, willing with all diligence to keep the commandments of the Lord." There was something the people were not doing, very obviously, and it was the law of consecration. Now he is going to explain it to us, after staggering us in verse 14 by saying, look, only four years and this happened. How can that be? It's a natural question, so here's the answer. Verse 15: "Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity [Now we come to the character in the Book of Mormon known as Satan. Is he real? This becomes a very real issue, too], and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power." Note that *pride* comes first of the four things. The last chapter of 1 Nephi ends up with these same four things, warning the people against them. It's 1 Nephi 22:23. ". . . all churches which are built up to get gain, and all those who are built up to get power over the flesh . . ." Power and gain go together. He is talking about churches or any societies. The greatest abomination is this composite of gain, power, and becoming popular. You must become popular if you are going to stay in power. Now we have the techniques of the TV, etc. Especially TV has locked these four together very closely. Politicians don't ask you to go out and work for them anymore; they just ask for money to buy TV time. That will win the election. Eighty-five percent of the elections were won last time by those that put the most money in there. Well, it's all the churches who get gain, power, and popularity. Then what's the final payoff? The lusts of the flesh, the glitz, the high living. Those are the four things.

These are the things that have to be dominant in our prime-time TV, to which I return time and again. There's the gain; you've got to get the money. The money is behind all this—the drugs, the sex, the perversion, the pornography, the corruption. And they are after power. They must become popular. It is not only nice to be popular, but your power depends on it. And the lusts of the flesh are the payoff. It says the same thing in 3 Nephi 6:15 that we are looking at now. "Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority [that's your popularity], and riches, and the vain things of the world [that's the fun stuff, the high living]. And thus Satan did lead away the hearts of the people to do all manner of iniquity; therefore they had enjoyed peace but a few years." Notice, the chronicler himself marvels that it should take so few years for all this to happen. What will the world be like four years from now? Could anybody even venture a guess? It would be wild if you dared to do such a thing. I don't worry at all whether I'm alive or not at that time. I'm going to have plenty of things to do elsewhere.

They were "carried about by the temptations of the devil whithersoever he desired to carry them." Notice here is the "me first, and I want it all." What is [the influence of] Satan? Some people don't think there is any Satan. What is the solution here? Can we think of any other explanation than evil? In the Book of Mormon we have this tug of war. Do we have to assume the existence of Satan? Don't we have enough evil in our natures to get along without having to be tempted by an outside character, some particularly fiendish person? Mosiah tells us about this tug of war.

Pride takes the lead of the seven deadly sins, but is Satan necessary [to explain the situation]? That's what I'm wondering about. There must be something like that when you consider what's happening in Mozambique today. There's a group of terrorists. Nobody knows where they are financed from, but they get weapons all right. They are absolutely out to destroy everything they come upon. They just destroy it and that's all. They have nothing to gain by it or anything else. It's an utter horror in Mozambique, a country the size of California. It would be a marvelous place, but they can't farm or do anything because of these terrorists. There was the same thing with certain Southwest Indians in the early days. There are the two groups, the one-horn and the two-horn societies. The one-horn is very dangerous. Don't let them ever catch you out. They are just out to kill. It's an amazing thing that we would find this sort of bloodshed. We're going to get lots of [people who take] delight in bloodshed in the Book of Mormon.

But here [in 3 Nephi 6] there's this Satan business. For one thing, pride is inseparable from our existence, from our ego. You have to have some pride; you have to have something to hold you up. You have to assert your individuality and be distinct from anybody else. You have to do that or you will wither. But the question is how far should you go? How far should you assert your own ego? They made a carnival of that with Hitler. We think of Nietzsche who introduced the "superman." Superman became the fascination of everybody; then we got the super scientist. Superman is still with us. George Bernard Shaw wrote a series of plays like *Man and Superman*. He thought that man could become superman. Certain people thought they were absolutely superman, so we had super scientists, etc. The first German romance was *Judith*. Judith is a character in the play, and Holofernes is the hero. He is the superman who has to experience everything. This obsession with superman actually took people over at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. I grew up in that; we heard this superman business all the time. [In the play] Holofernes is murdering some poor character on the coals. He is the commander, etc. The man who is being cooked says, "Ha, Holofernes, you don't have this experience. This is one experience you haven't had." So immediately Holofernes has to go and lie down beside him. He can't have this person say he has anything Holofernes hasn't got. He cooks himself because he can't stand the idea that somebody should have an experience that he hasn't had and should taunt him with it. Well, this is the superman. We are obsessed with that. Remember what Mosiah said, Consider your own nothingness and the goodness of God.

Good and evil are not imaginary situations; they should be but they aren't. I have something that I cut out. This is an interesting thing that can go on in the world. How would you explain a phenomenon like this in Lebanon, which is being absolutely chewed up. There's almost nothing left of Lebanon. "While shells slammed into Beirut Saturday night, the monied elite of the Fakra Club, an hour's drive from the burning city, dined and danced the night away to the strains of 'Whatever Will Be Will Be.'

" 'They are like people from another planet,' said one West Beirut resident who suffered much from artillery." All the town is being destroyed, and a few miles away these people are living in luxury and splendor with plenty of everything. It's an amazing thing. "The club proves a point, that Lebanon must prevail, however bad is the situation on the streets of the capital. The Fakra Club is a chalet development, just like a fashionable Florida development here. It boasts three restaurants, two bars, a swimming pool, tennis courts, and a squash club." So we have Park City within a short drive of [Beirut] which is being destroyed. It's a very tiny country which is being wiped out, and yet these people go on living like that. Well, what a weird world; it's something like a drama by Offenbach, isn't it? It's like eighteenth-century Venice. It's weird and ghostly that these things could happen.

Back to 3 Nephi 6. It's going to do some explaining here. Verse 16: "Satan did lead away the hearts of the people to do all manner of iniquity; therefore they had enjoyed peace but a few years." In this thirtieth year they were "carried about by the temptations of the devil whithersoever he desired to carry them." You have to give him that power though; they weren't



like helpless automatons. This condition is achieved also through the art of rhetoric, salesmanship, and the ancients were susceptible to it. Four years later “they were in a state of awful wickedness [that’s what it amounts to]. Now they did not sin ignorantly.” They weren’t helpless pawns of Satan. He has no power, it’s going to tell us, but the power we give him. All this misrepresentation and false advertising is to lead us astray and make us willing to follow. Being the objectors, “they did willfully rebel against God. And now it was in the days of Lachoneus . . .” Here’s that Greek name again of the governor. It points out the extremely complex nature of ethnology in the Book of Mormon.

Then it comes to the reaction. The Lord had to do something. Is he going to do this in our day? “And there began to be men inspired from heaven and sent forth.” Well, if the Lord wants to inspire somebody from heaven, what can you do about it. I think there are such men coming now. My wife is quite active in what goes on in Yugoslavia in the mission. Last Saturday we had a visit by an eminent architect from Yugoslavia. In fact, my son-in-law’s father is an eminent architect in Yugoslavia, who has restored the baths of Diocletian in Split. But these people are aware that strange things are happening; strange people are suddenly appearing who are not to be dissuaded. They have suddenly decided to do the right thing, regardless of what it may cost. We’ve never seen a phenomenon like this; suddenly people have decided to be good whether it pays off or not. This is the answer. What can you do in a desperate situation like ours? “There began to be men inspired from heaven.” So let’s look out for them. When President Benson tells us to read the Book of Mormon and look out for pride as number one and number two issues, he is being inspired from heaven, I believe.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 88

3 Nephi 6–7

Government

Families and Tribes

I went through this particular section last semester, but it's a new story now. It's not the same thing at all. A strange thing has happened, you see, very disturbing. Everything was going so well. They'd come through a terrible time; then everything was going too well. It all "came up roses"; everything was happy. Then we're told in 3 Nephi 6:5 that things couldn't be better. There was nothing to keep them from being completely happy. There were no economic, social, or any other kinds of problems except in themselves—that was the only trouble. And almost immediately things started going bad. It tells us the cause of it was what? We've already seen that. But in that case, what do you do? Isn't that a remarkable parallel to things now? There's no reason in the world, with our technology and resources, why things shouldn't go very well from now on. But they're not going well; they're going to get worse and worse. Well, why should that be? Is that necessary? And what can stop it? See, we have these insoluble problems.

On Saturday someone came down to see me. He was a secretary to a U.S. Senator. "Do you have any ideas," he said. "The men in the Senate are completely at a loss. They realize the drug war is lost; they haven't got a chance. Is there anything we can possibly do? Does anybody have any ideas?" He came and asked me, of all people. That shows how desperate they are. He just wanted to ask some questions. But how do you solve these problems? Production versus pollution. We have to produce. We have to go on, but we can't do it without polluting. What are you going to do there? See, the essence of tragedy is the incompatibility of two good things, not of bad things. It's not the black hats and the white hats against each other at all. There's no such thing in the Book of Mormon. In the Land of Promise the promise is what? The promise is a blessing and a curse, never mentioned apart. The curse always comes with the blessing. The fact that [the blessing] is peculiar to this land doesn't mean we have it sewed up. We have our choice of being blessed or cursed. But the point is again, we have nationalism bursting out everywhere now as against one world. Natural boundaries are disappearing now in terms of pollution and things like that. There are no natural boundaries. Nationalism, as Brigham Young said, is the principal jewel of Satan's crown. Well, nationalism has burst out anew, and yet against this we have one world. Remember Wendell Wilkie's "one world"? They're both good, but how can you get along together, as when things deadlock? The First Amendment is sacred, but what about pornography? Is there no limit at all to what a person can do and say and display? What are you going to do with the incompatibility of two good things here?

So this is what happens. What's the solution? The essence of a Greek tragedy lies in the choice between two necessary things. The first Greek tragedy, *The Suppliant Women*, takes place in Argos, on the island just off Athens there. The king has to respect the claims of the fifty Egyptian maidens who are his relatives, who have been raised up in Egypt. They are claimed by Egyptian cousins, but they're not supposed to marry them. So what's he going to do? Can he yield to the Egyptian threat and recognize the rights of the Egyptians? Or can he yield to the old law of the family and recognize the rights of the girls not to marry outside the clan. And so it's a tragedy. The king has the people all assembled there in the plaza, and he says, "Children, we've got to think this thing through. We have to do it." And so it goes.

There's the classic example of Orestes whose mother accomplished the murder of his father because he had another lover. Well, what's he going to do? By the law of the vendetta of the family, he's required to avenge the death of his father. But he's also required not to murder his mother. So what can he do? Well, he solves it, as it should be solved, by going mad. He has no other solution, you see. So the court of the Areopagus votes on it—the twelve good men and true, the sacred prehistoric jury in the cave of the hill Areopagus. They vote on it and split six to six. They both have their rights, you see, so what do you do then? Well, the only thing that happens is revelation. The only thing that can break it in the end [is revelation]. Athena comes down personally and casts the deciding vote. And that's the way we go along with these things. So, that's what we have here, this tragic dilemma.

If any of you have a Bible here, just read the first chapter of Ecclesiastes. That's the whole thing—it says we can't win. The wisdom of Solomon tells us we're in a no-win situation. He knew everything and was the wisest of men. What is the solution? Well, it's in 3 Nephi 6:20. You've got to have angels come. That's the only thing that will help you. It's got to come from the outside. But it isn't angels here. "And there began to be men inspired from heaven and sent forth." And then the question is, were these angels? No, men can be inspired by heaven without even having direct revelation. They can be inspired by heaven and go forth, preaching boldly when they see how things are. Can we count on that solution? Well, the angel has already come for our particular crisis. Who was the angel? Well, we should be calling roll and asking questions. So I would say to solve our particular dilemma it took an angel, but the angel has already come. Brother Coon, who was the angel?

"Moroni?"

Exactly. He's already come; he's given us the record here. He's given it all to us; it's all set out in black and white for us here. Now we recognize that it's perfectly valid what's said here. I mean it fits us like a glove. It never did when I was younger. The missionaries pushed the Book of Mormon as a romance that told us the story of the Indians, etc. Red man, why do you always roam? It was a romantic novel. They almost took it that way, you see. That was the appeal. It's a very different story today.

So they were men inspired from heaven, it says. They were not angels and not direct [revelation], but they were inspired from heaven, inspired from above. And what was the reaction here? (We've had Moroni.) The next verse tells us: Many of the people were exceedingly angry and chiefly their chief judges who were high priests and lawyers. Sister Laver, why would they get angry? Not just angry, but absolutely red hot, exceedingly angry. Who were they and why would they be angry? Well, what was the reaction to Moroni? We said Moroni came. What were people mad at Joseph Smith for? And they were plenty mad at him, weren't they? They gave him an awful time, from the time he was a kid, right from the beginning. But what were they mad at? They weren't mad at him; they were mad at Moroni. If he hadn't claimed to see an angel, he wouldn't have been in any trouble at all. It was the idea of Moroni coming that really set them on their ear—telling them they were all wrong. What followed from that was devastating. They wouldn't take it. Well, this has happened all the time. Do you remember some other people who were given a bad time by the clergy, the scribes and the Pharisees, the lawyers and the elders? Yes, Sister Laver.

"Abinadi."

Very good. We'll give you a "good" for that one. No, we're not marking this. That reminds me of the little kid who was in class and the teacher said, "What's two and two, Johnny?"

Johnny said, "It's four."

She said, "That's very good, Johnny."

He said, "Good, nothing—it's perfect!" So we go on here. Brother Terry Lee, why would this particular class of people be angry? Why would they be upset? Notice, it tells us what they were. They were the high priests and the lawyers. On the same question, besides Abinadi what other great prophet and teacher was given a bad time by the scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders of the Jews? Ten guesses.

"Jesus Christ."

Of course, it was Jesus. They were the people who were always plotting. The mob was stirred up by them, remember? It says the high priests and the elders came down and stirred the people up, and said, "Barabbas, Barabbas, Barabbas. Let Barabbas go!" They wouldn't have done that. They wanted to let Jesus go, and so did Pilate. But the boys from the hill kept stirring things up, and they got what they wanted. This is the same sort of thing happening here, and we can sort of suspect it. What do you think is behind this? Why would they act like that?

"Because the prophets were being called again and preaching against them."

What were they preaching against?

"Iniquity."

Well, iniquity is a very general thing. We're all against iniquity. Calvin Coolidge's wife asked him, "Where have you been?"

"I've been to church."

"What did the minister talk about; what was the sermon on?"

"It was about sin." This is typical Calvin Coolidge, you see.

"Well," said Mrs. Coolidge, "what did he say about it?"

"He's against it." Just like that, you see. Well, everybody's against sin, so that can't be it. It's something more particular, something closer to home, isn't it? Yes?

"They were threatening the foundations of the things that they had established."

Yes, their interests were being threatened, and their authority was being threatened. People don't like that. That's getting close to home when this sort of thing is going on. Are we open to that sort of thing today? Whew! Are we! Well, we won't go into details there. What's wrong, for example, with working for clean air? Well, it threatens interests—it threatens practices.

What arguments would the courts and the clergy raise here? What is the main argument against these prophets that come out boldly preaching? Notice, they're preaching boldly, and that's what the objection is. They could have objected here and there, but they come forth, speak up, and preach boldly. They [the lawyers and judges] are against that. What argument do you have against people going out and preaching? What is the usual thing we call such people? Troublemakers and nuisances. Egon Friedall, our greatest writer on cultural history, says you have your choice of being one thing or the other. Everybody must be one or the other. You must either be a nuisance, or you must be superfluous. You're just there, just a potted plant, as they say. You're nothing else unless you want to be a nuisance. You have your choice. So, as I say, these

people are nuisances, and they think that's quite adequate reason for getting rid of them because they testify boldly, a thing you mustn't do.

We see in verse 22 they couldn't do anything about it. They had a limit to their authority. What couldn't they do here? What was the limit on their authority in verse 22, Brother Russell Lewis? (This is my way of calling roll, you see.) Well, Brother Madsen, what didn't they have any control over?

"They didn't have any control over killing them?"

The laws of capital punishment were under strict control. They had strict restrictions on capital punishment, the rule being that nobody could be executed without what? Without a warrant signed by the governor. Today, who can give pardons in our society?

"The governor."

The governor and the president are the only two—just the top men, so we accept that part of it. But others can pass judgment. Judges can condemn people to death now. Judges can, but they couldn't then, you see. It had to be the governor, which is a more sensible way, probably. We could talk about that. This isn't a political science class, but it's very significant here, that this is the same thing we have as far as pardons go, reversing it. They didn't like it, so what are they going to do about it? It sounds very, very familiar now. They're going to carry on and make it legal. How are they going to get around the troublemakers here? Notice verse 23. They're going to engage in covert operations. They have the power and the authority, but this does not give them the constitutional right. Well, sometimes it's "necessary" to stretch the constitution. These people are a nuisance, you see. We'll just get rid of them quietly, and then it will be announced when it's over. Nobody will be the worse off; they can't do anything about it. Well, this is the typical covert operation, a thing into which we've drifted quite a bit in this country. Again, you see, this is a [situation] where the Book of Mormon is very relevant here. This is how they get around it, getting rid of troublemakers. Sometimes, as the delectable Miss Fawn Hall said, it's necessary to stretch the law, to go beyond the law. Well, is it?

Well, at any rate there was a call for a grand jury here, an investigation. Things are beginning to look serious. This sounds so modern, it's almost laughable. There was nothing like this to match it in Joseph Smith's day, so far as we know. But here they go. A complaint came, you see. There were complaints against the judges, and they were going to be indicted. They were going to be brought up and tried, and probably convicted. Verse 26: "They were taken and brought up before the judge, to be judged [so the trial was set for them to be tried; there was going to be big front-page news] of the crime which they had done." Well, they weren't going to put up with that, because it didn't look good for them, it tells us here. They belonged to the establishment; this was standard procedure. But what about the judges that were going to judge them? They had connections with the judges who were going to judge them.

Does anybody know what the first rule of the law is? We seem to have forgotten it entirely in this country, but the first rule of Roman law or anything else is "nobody can be judge in his own case." Of course, we do that all the time now. The executive now is a judge. How often you see this with stock market people or anyone else. A committee is appointed. The committee does a complete bungling, and they investigate and decide that the committee has done a fine job. Well, who said so? The committee said so. They should know—after all, they're the experts. This is the way it goes all the time. We're always getting these answers that are not an answer. They can put you off every time. And this is the sort of thing that's happening [in 3 Nephi]. Notice how slick these people are. And there's a great deal said about this in the Book of Mormon. They treat this sort of sly crookedness, this off-color sort of thing, very skillfully in the Book of Mormon, and very clearly.

The joke is that the judges themselves belong to the establishment. How are they connected? Well, family connections. Verse 27: “Almost all the lawyers and the high priests did gather themselves together.” What would you expect them to do in this case, Brother McNary? The judges are in on it. As soon as they say something like *kindreds*, and you say *family*, then what do you expect? It’s not going to be just a government investigation, is it? Because they know each other. They’re a closed group. They exchange with each other, you see. This is aristocracy. And how did these kindreds get to be associated? Well, of course, by intermarrying. You get all this pride and wealth, etc., and then what do you do? You don’t just go and marry anybody. You don’t go marry somebody on the wrong side of the tracks. You build up a community like this sort of thing. This is what happened, just like the Roman *patris*, so we have these kindreds. They’re more than casual. And there’s much of kindreds in the Book of Mormon, as you know. In our society kindreds play a minor role. We don’t have family organizations that way so much, unless you get into big corporations and things like that where the family [is influential]. E. G. White wrote a book called *The Organization Man* on that subject some years ago that caused quite a stir. You have to be upwardly mobile in a corporation. In many corporations you have to belong to the right church, belong to the right clubs, live in the right part of town, vote with the right party, and marry the right people. So you get this closed [unit], and this is what you have here with these kindreds.

But in ancient or modern society in Western civilization, the family is important. In the sagas of course, every time you mention somebody, you have to say “the son of Thor, the son of Rochnar, the son of . . .”—and it goes down the list. You have to make a list of family a mile long every time you mention anybody. In Scandinavia we still have *-sens* and *-sons*. In Israel it’s always Ben someone—the *bðnê* so-and-so—the sons of . . . The Bible is patriarchal and genealogical. We’re set with genealogy, you know. Of course in the north you have Mac—Macduff, Macbeth and all the Macs we have. That means a member of the crowd, the head. He’s actually head of a clan. So this is a clan organization, and Indian tribes have that completely. The basic organization of the Hopis is not the tribe at all but the seven clans—the bear clan, the eagle clan, the snake clan, the antelope clan, etc.

It’s the same thing in the Book of Mormon. You have the seven clans. They remain throughout, but they don’t remain the government. They remain subdued. They’re there and they’re the real basis of personal relationships. This is where decisions are made, etc. If you look at Jacob 1:13, you see right in the beginning that’s the way they organized. He tells us here, “Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites”—seven different tribes representing seven different types of family. Zoram probably wasn’t of Israel at all or he wouldn’t have been the servant to Laban. And Ishmael with that name [probably wasn’t]. Remember, Ishmael was the great rival of Isaac. Ishmael was a favorite Arab name. They had the Nephites and the Lamanites and the Jacobites and Josephites. These are all sorts of people that were mixed in, because when they joined up they had their family backgrounds, and they kept them. It’s the form of seven tribes—the very same thing that has been shown by a German [scholar]. He wrote a very good study on ancient tribes, but seven is the number of tribes to make it official for various reasons. We have seventy to represent the seventy nations of the earth and the seven presidents of Seventy. They represent the normal distribution of the human race in sevens.

Anyway, they have these tribes, and it’s not the tribe but the clan or phratry that really rules. Among the Hopis, for example, they’re ruled by women. You’d think that they were anything but, but they’re actually a matriarchy. The woman decides it. It’s Mina Lansa’s daughter who now holds the Hopi Stone and is the head of the clan. Because she’s the head of a clan, that makes her the most influential. The bear clan, I think it is.

We still try to revive it in industrial and landed dynasties. That's what Wagner wrote about—all the troubles of families in *The Ring of the Nibelung*. You start out with Siegfried who doesn't meet anybody who isn't his aunt until he's middle-aged. It's all a family squabble, but it was represented very well. It has been reproduced in Germany recently as a nineteenth-century industrialist family. Well, there's Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, the great German novel of the family and the dynasty. We have dynasties and the rest of them. They were very popular on TV a while back. So this is the way it runs. But we have supplanted an aristocracy of birth by what? Ah hah, this is a good one. Brother McNary, you didn't have much of a chance to answer. We're very proud that we don't have an aristocracy of birth any more, but what do we have an aristocracy of? This is what we have here in the Book of Mormon. Who were the kindreds, etc.? What united them? What do we have an aristocracy of in this country?

“Wealth.”

Do re mi! Sure. It's the money. That's exactly the whole thing. Don't you read *Forbes* regularly? And that's the thing in the Book of Mormon. That's the way it started out here. Notice the pride and boasting because of their exceeding great riches. That was the basis of it. There was your merchant class and lawyers and officers. That's exactly the setup that you would expect—very advanced for Joseph Smith's day, but that's the way they were doing it.

And so what are they going to do? Let's see—I'm lost here.

The phratry rules. Incidentally, if I may continue to ask you, Brother McNary, which is the more pernicious? Which is the more insidious? An aristocracy of wealth—we say that frees us, that liberates us. You just get the money and then you're free to be as rich as you want. But which one has more obligations? You've heard of *noblesse oblige*, etc. Mr. Forbes says the prime responsibility in our society is to get rich. That's it, and anybody can do that, so we're equal as far as that goes. But once you get it, you have no responsibility. You play around. He has how many hundred motorcycles, his balloons, his yachts, his many estates and castles all over the world, etc. He just plays around. He has a perfect right to do anything he wants with it. And that's a Roman maxim, incidentally. But with aristocracy, you can't do that. You have *noblesse oblige*. There are certain rules you must obey. There are certain things you must do. They don't always do them. They can be perfectly awful people; nevertheless, there are restraints there—whereas there are no restraints on wealth, you see. You can have anything in this world for money.

So what did they do here in 3 Nephi 6:28? They entered into a covenant. This is very serious. A covenant means it's going further than just being relations. What would the nature of a covenant be, Brother Myers? What is a covenant?

“To destroy the government, to take down the chief judge, to destroy the rights of the people, and set up a king.”

What does the word covenant come from? It comes from the Latin *convenire*. It means “to meet at a certain place.” *Con* means “to come together,” and *venir* means “to come.” You come together at a certain time and a certain place, you see. That's an appointment, and there you make an agreement. So that's what a covenant is. So they came together at a certain time and a certain place and agreed to set up a government within a government. The covenant would make them that—to covenant “to combine against all righteousness.” Well, righteousness is an abstract term. Who would ever want to combine against all righteousness? This is the way the editor reads it. But what is their program? What does it mean by that?

Verse 29: “Therefore they did . . . enter into a covenant to destroy them, and to deliver those who were guilty of murder from the grasp of justice.” Well, the whole thing was to liberate these justices, so they were to stop the trial in other words. They were going to have this very serious

trial, and they were willing to wreck everything just to avoid standing trial. We're not going to be tried by you people, they said. So, [they did it] in order to elude the grasp of justice, which was about to be administered to them according to the constitution. See, they were going to have to suffer the full force of the law, and they were going to use various ways of getting out of it. Well, we've seen the Iran-Contra [operation]. There are various ways by which people can get out of things. They try this, that, and the other; they stall and everything else. This was more violent and direct because they had great advantage here because they controlled most of the offices in the government. And their program was to get rid of the people of the Lord, while escaping the arm of the law, which nearly had them.

Oh, I missed Sister McNeely. Sister McNeely, in the next verse what happens then? They made a covenant, and what was their final solution? [answer inaudible].

To wipe them out, to destroy the government. It's going to be a *putsch*. What else do we call it? We call it a *coup*. They're going to take over the government. Has that ever happened? It happens very often, you see. This is typical; this is happening here. That's what they're going to do, it tells us. "They did covenant one with another to destroy the governor, and to establish a king over the land." Well, [that's what] they'd always wanted. Now we know that's the final solution. There were precedents for this desperate measure, and it's especially common in Third-World countries. We've seen it just happen in Panama. [It happened in the] imperial courts of Rome, not just the small countries. Rome, Egypt, Russia, and Austria were seething with plots and counterplots to overthrow the government. Well, before the French Revolution there was the Diamond Necklace Affair and all sorts of things, and the Fronde way back in the time of Richelieu there—these dangerous party intrigues to overthrow the government.

There's the very famous story of Sinuhe that begins way back just before 2000 B.C. Actually, it's about 1985 B.C. It's the story [of a plot] to overthrow king Amenemhet, and his son heard about it when he was in an expedition in the desert. There was great intrigue that followed. Back there it was a palace intrigue by some priests and lawyers who wanted to overthrow the pharaoh and put their favorite on the throne. They wanted a king. So this is an old story, actually. What about the story of David and Solomon? Who did David have trouble with? Do you remember? David was a great king. Was anybody after his crown, his throne? He had lots of trouble. Who was his son?

"Absalom."

"Absalom, Absalom, my son." Yes, Absalom plotted against his father, and David had to put him to death. He didn't want him put to death by the powerful and brutal general, but that's what happened. Then the general went down and intrigued in Arabia and got in all sorts of trouble. As a result of that, Solomon had all sorts of intrigue. Well, you can imagine with 300 wives, he would have a lot of intrigue, and he did. Lots of it went on in Solomon's court. He was embittered and disillusioned, and he wrote what we call Ecclesiastes in our Bible—it's called "The Preacher" and other things—in which he's completely disillusioned with the world. The whole thing is a mess. Ecclesiastes 1:2: "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity," He begins that way, you know. There's nothing to it! I've done everything; I've seen everything. [He was] like the Roman emperor Septimius Severus who was the principal author of the decline of the Roman Empire, as Gibbon tells us. He'd been a sergeant in the army and ended up being an emperor, among the most powerful of all the emperors. He said, "I've been everything, and nothing's worth a damn." This is the way it goes. So we get these intrigues. Why do people act like that? Well, they do. They lack the gospel. Boy, do we lack the gospel. We could use it, couldn't we? There have been ambitious people in the Church. After all, they made Joseph Smith's life a hell from the very beginning. Ten of the Twelve turned against him and denounced him, etc. Well, that's another story, but it's related to all this. So these plots, intrigues, and takeovers have been with us since the beginning of time. And we think of recent events, violent events. [There are] all sorts of



things we do when going into [other countries]. Iran and Syria, things have happened everywhere. We won't go into it. You don't need to, because it's all over the place today.

Now we've got the seventh chapter here. Are things going to go happy there? What is the standard solution now preferred to the problem of taking over great power? How do they do it? Here it is, you see, "They did destroy upon the judgement-seat, yea, did murder the chief judge of the land." What is the bottom line here? They say the average child, before he begins school, has seen 4,000 murders. It's the solution here. Sister Meese, what is the final solution here? If you're troubled with a guy, what do you do? You rub him out, don't you. That's what happens here. Over KBYU there was a very good report about the famous Mafioso yesterday. That's the way they solve their problems. And that's what they decide to do here. They "did murder the chief judge of the land. And the people were divided one against another."

Notice what happens here, Sister Meese, after that. Incidentally, was the author of the Book of Mormon thinking of states' rights or feuding over central versus local authority? They're going to have this problem now; they've destroyed the central government. Well, was this a living issue in Joseph Smith's day? Remember, Charleston in 1832? But it was nothing like this. It hadn't come out. This is all written thirty years before the Civil War, is what I'm trying to say. Those weren't issues then. Now the Book of Mormon has this breaking up. What are they going to do, now they don't have the central government? Does it tell us here? How did they break up? Brother Morton, look at this second verse. What's going to happen to them? They destroyed the government, but did they just scatter in all directions, every man for himself? No. They had an organization already in place. They had an infrastructure already that had been there all along. What was that structure?

"The tribes."

It was the tribes. We saw that way back in Jacob; they really identified themselves by tribes. It doesn't talk about those having any authority or government. It says they bore the names of their tribes, and you can be sure they bore them proudly. They were rivals and this sort of thing. They've had them all along, so they have something to fall back on, and it's tribes.

Verse 2: "And thus they did destroy the government of the land." This is the main thing here; they actually got rid of their central government. Well, they're soon going to regret it bitterly, what they have done. What was their objection to it, incidentally? Well, we'll get to that in a minute. Now the result wasn't instant confusion, as we were just noting here, but immediately separating into tribes. That implies that they were already in place and going. The tribal system was the infrastructure, and that's so with almost all American Indian tribes. They have clans and phratries. They're the more important; they're your family, you see. We read in the third verse that the tribes were already organized and appointed and had their chiefs already. They became independent tribes.

What would happen if this country broke up like that now, Brother Morton? What do we have to fall back on?

"Our families."

We already have fifty governments, don't we?

"County governments?"

Would you fall back on county governments? Would that be our last resort? What do we have set up already?

“Well, the family.”

I read in the paper this morning that Brother Lee is arguing in behalf of the big stores that want to combine. He doesn't approve of monopoly or anything like that. It's not the principal; it's the legal technicality. He says the states have absolutely no right to forbid the big supermarkets from forming a monopoly. He says only the federal government can do it, but the states can't do it. That's his only argument, you see. He admits it will force up prices and be hard on the consumer. We have the state governments, but he doesn't want to recognize their authority in regulating prices at all. He says only the federal government can do that. Well, that's the big argument going on the Supreme Court now. So don't phone over to President Lee; he won't be there for a while.

But what about this business of the states? Would that be all right? Well, who had the idea that it would be a good thing for the states to be independent? We talk about the sovereign state of Utah, while we giggle. Yes?

“I think the states would probably be too big.”

Well, isn't the federal government a lot bigger than the states? Who championed the cause of states' governments that led to a great civil war? Ten guesses. They were just a confederacy of states. They weren't a union; they were a confederacy of states, weren't they? That's what the Civil War was fought about—who was to have priority, the states or the federal government. Of course, the real issue was slavery. That's what they fall back on here, but remember, this was written thirty years before the Civil War. He was not taking hints from newspapers or anything like that.

So every tribe appointed a leader here [in 3 Nephi 7]. It tells us there were no wars as yet. Well, why should there be wars among tribes? Would you think that a tribal organization would incline people to wars? Brother Oldham, what in a society divided into tribes would incline people to conflict?

“I think it's like we see in Russia right now, in the Caucasus, the civil war between them.”

Exactly. They have different customs. They're different families, in other words. Of course, the word *tribus* comes from the Roman word “for the three.” There were three main tribes that founded Rome to begin with. But each one keeps its language, its dress, its customs, etc. If they don't have them originally, they develop them more and more. We do here, you see. Look, we're only forty miles or so from the University of Utah, the same type of people doing the same sort of thing, but we've developed different tribal mores, colors, directions—a totally different atmosphere at either school. It's a very interesting thing. Well, you can imagine [how it is] with tribes that intermarry. Why would tribes be more inclined to intermarry than to crossmarry? What's the one thing that notes family solidarity? What is it that makes for family solidarity?

“I think it's the frame of reference; everything's familiar to you.”

It's yours; it's your pride—right or wrong, my country. See, that's the whole thing. Yes, it's the pride. Would it tend to flatten out and become diluted with time, and the tribes become less [influential]. Well, that's happened with states because of certain considerations. But, on the other hand, then there are times when it comes right back just as bad as ever. There was a time of states' rights in the fifties. Yes, the tribes are very [enduring] because of family pride. We must be a little better than you.

Two households, both alike in dignity,  
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,

From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,  
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.

*Romeo and Juliet*, act I, scene 1

That's the beginning of what play, Brother Paul?

"I believe it's *All's Well That Ends Well*."

No, the Capulets and the Montagues, you remember. So now you know what the play is.

"*Romeo and Juliet*."

Right. You've got it right. Give that man a "cigar." But notice what happens. Notice, "fair Verona, where we lay our scene," is a very civil society. One of the most polished societies in the world was Verona. It was the queen of the Renaissance; I mean, it was a great place. Civil hands—the opposite of barbarism and tribalism is civility, a civil society. That means *city*, of course. So it's "from ancient grudge." This goes way back to the early days of their families—"from ancient grudge break to new mutiny [these things are always breaking out] where civil blood makes civil hands unclean." They had no business killing each other just because they were different families, but they did. The play opens with this terrible brawl in the streets, and there's a murder, etc. The boys fight all the time.

From forth the fatal loins of these two foes  
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life.

That's not the play today. At least today we can quote the closing lines of the play:

A glooming peace this morning with it brings;  
The sun, for sorrow, will now show his head:  
Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardon'd and some punished:  
For never was a story of more woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

This is the situation exactly—the families will have their pride. Do we have them? Oh boy, do we have some snobs in the Church. Whew! My land! I can tell you stories that would curl your hair. You wouldn't imagine how snobbish some people can be, but we won't go into that, needless to say.

So what's going to happen here? Now we come to [an important] word. The key word to the whole thing is right here in verse 6. Do you spot it, Brother Shumway? There's never a class without a Shumway. But Shumway hasn't shown today. Sister Kira Smith? See, S's don't like to come. Brother Mike Smith? See, what I told you. Ah now, Brother Smock, you see one word that really rings a bell there. What was the object of the whole thing?

"Destruction."

Destruction of what? What's the word there that just hits you in the eye?

"Of the government."

In verse six, what is the cloven hoof, what is the evil, what do we object to in big government? It sounds terribly mod here, just as modern as it can be. Maybe that's why we've overlooked it, I

suppose. We expect it to be archaic. What's the word? Regulations, of course! We've got to get rid of these government regulations. The Mafia hates government regulations. The big takeover artists hate government regulations. The monopolists hate them—the developers, the extractive industries, the polluters. They hate government regulations. They say, "Our purpose is to get rid of government." Joseph Smith is as up to date as today's newspaper—it says they finally got rid of them. "And the regulations of the government were destroyed [that was what they were after, you see], because of the secret combination." They carried on their underground. Notice, we would call this *privatization*. They took it for themselves, and out went the regulations. So happy, happy day. What were they supposed to regulate? Notice, it tells us what they were supposed to regulate right here—the secret combinations and their friends and kindreds. Those were the very secret combinations which were not answerable to the government. They were therefore outlaws, so the class and family system enabled these deregulators to operate more effectively because of the secrecy, the closeness of family ties. They could keep things to themselves. As we said, tribal societies are exclusive. They lead to rivalry, hostility, family pride, great inbreeding.

You may read the terrible [Scottish] border ballads. What are some famous feuds in this country? The Jewkes and the Kalakachs, the Hatfields and the McCoys. They just ignore all government and everything else, completely concentrating on hatred of the other family, the other tribe. It's consuming 'til they destroy each other. This happens, this mutual destruction. It's destroying [the people] in the Book of Mormon. Remember the Jaredites? Remember the Nephites and the Lamanites? We're going to have them destroying each other here. We have people getting rid of the regulations against insider trading or whatever it may be, and this makes it possible. We have the border ballads, and they're nothing but bleak. They're terrible, between the Douglas and the Percy [families] that Sir Walter Scott wrote about in *Marmion* and the like. Don't get me reciting border ballads here. There are some pretty bleak ones.

Verse 7: "And they did cause great contention in the land, insomuch that the more righteous part of the people had nearly all become wicked." Nonexistent, as far as that goes—wicked. They were no longer righteous. What happens to a righteous person who becomes wicked? He disappears. I suppose it's like an electron that collides with a proton. What you get out of it is they both disappear. You get a couple of photons or something like that. This great contention was inevitable. Was it between the righteous and the wicked? This is the point. No, there weren't any righteous people around. They had gone—they were hiding under the rock. There were hardly any; it was an extinct species, it tells us here. Notice, "the more righteous part of the people had nearly all become wicked; yea, there were but few righteous among them." They were not going to be heard; they didn't have a chance. Well, things were in a desperate situation now, you see. We're building up to something—you can see that. Incidentally, are the righteous a threatened species today? Well, how do we know? Who determines whether they are or not? It's going to be a very interesting problem. We think we're terribly righteous, as far as that goes. We heard Ernest Wilkinson saying, "We're holding the line in righteousness."

Then Mormon marvels at it: "And thus six years had not passed away [see, he's as surprised as we are] since the more part of the people had turned from their righteousness." Then he quotes the Old Testament pattern. They do that, because that's the nature of a dog and that's the nature of a sow, to wallow in the mire. Now, the secret combination—this is an interesting thing here. The secret combinations were not the same as the tribes, you notice. They were those who were opposed to the government before they broke into tribes, before the *putsch*. They were the old king-men who had turned up. We won't have to review that. A large part of the Book of Mormon has been taken up with these king-men with their pride and their nobility. Moroni said his purpose in life was to pull down the pride, nobility, and wealth of these king-men. They were the aristocratic, rich, extreme right, etc. (if it looks like an elephant, call it an elephant). These were the hard-core king people, but they turned out to be a minority. They weren't the ones who overthrew the government. They were a minority against the tribes with their own leaders. And after it was too late, the rest of the people regretted what had happened. This is a terrible thing.

Verse 11: “They were not so strong in number as the tribes of the people, who were united together.” What united the people together, Brother Sowa? What would bring these tribes together more than anything else?

“As tribes?”

No, not as tribes. That would keep them apart. It tells us in this verse what it is. What united them? Notice the bottom of the verse there. They were united in . . .

“Hatred.”

They had a common hatred. They hated the king-men more than they hated each other, so that was their unity. That was their sacred bond. So “they were united in the hatred of those who had entered into a covenant to destroy the government.” They regretted it now. They said those rascals are responsible for it. They [the king-men] wrecked the central government and they hated them. They started making things pretty hot for them so they would have to get out. They missed the central government, and they hated each other worse than that. We get an interesting setup here. As usual, the king-men were joined by a steady influx of dissenters when they went out. This was the system that always happened. You find these dissenters all the way through the Book of Mormon have an important aspect regarding race.

Well, I see the time is up now. Maybe I have time for one more question. What about verse 13, about where the king-men went? Brother Steele, what’s significant in [verse 13] on a very basic question of the Book of Mormon? “And so speedy was their march that it could not be impeded until they had gone forth out of the reach of the people.” They went a long way, it tells us here. They went out by themselves, out of reach, “And thus ended the thirtieth year.” Here you have a large group going out, going far and fast so they can’t be reached again. Now what’s happening there? It’s like a transplant of some sort, isn’t it? What would happen when they went out there? This casts a significant light on the race question in the Book of Mormon; it’s the sort of thing that was going on. They had this big country to go out in, and they would go out and settle there. That’s what they did, and then they would meet up with others, etc. This thing had been going on from the beginning. The result is you get a very complicated race picture, racial and ethnic mix, in the Book of Mormon. Why is that significant as far as evidence is concerned?

What argument does that answer that’s always been brought against the Book of Mormon? They say, “Look, everybody’s a Nephite or a Lamanite.” Do we believe that? Does the Book of Mormon preach that Lehi’s people were the only people that ever came here? No. It gives us a very complicated ethnic mix, and that’s what we’re getting here. And there’s a great deal about that in the Book of Mormon which we overlook. These things are going on, these connections. How long does it take to make another race? Well, chapters 7 and 8 are good. What we’re looking for now we’ve never looked for before. It’s the parallels to the day we’re living in now—not only the events, but the atmosphere of it. You feel that it’s coming home to you. This is dismally familiar. This is where I came in. I wish it wasn’t like this. It didn’t used to be like this, but it is now. So watch sharp.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 89

3 Nephi 7–8

Conversion

Signs and Destruction

All right, now, we're in 3 Nephi 7:14. Racing along here, we're in the next chapter already. We've done one chapter, and we've been going too fast at that. I'll call attention to verse 14. You'll notice this is a beautiful summary of the splinter group movement. There have always been splinter groups in the church in every age—among the Jews, the early Christians, etc. Verse 14 talks about the splinter groups that always take place. You're always going to find them, and they're characteristic. This is the way it happens. You notice how rich this verse is. First of all, "they were divided into tribes [you know the tribes], every man according to his family, kindred and friends." The family is the basis of all these splinter groups which Russell Rich (who just died recently) studied. He devoted his time to specializing on the splinter groups, of which there are over 100. There have been over 100 attempts to refound The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by individuals who thought they had special revelations, and they all wither by the way without exception. But these are the characteristics they all have. First, they are formed around families originally. Then the families extend to kindred, that is, wider associations. For example, my wife is associated in various lines with polygamous groups up in Canada—all sorts of things, distantly related. Those are the kindreds, and then the friends [enter in]. Friends join the group, too. And they are all very peaceful. They want to get away and found a new Zion by themselves.

Verse 14: "They would not go to war one with another; but they were not united as to their laws." They all had different ideas about things. Invariably they always form about a strong individual; they depend on the leader. When he's gone, the group usually collapses and disappears. It says they had peace in the land; they didn't trespass against one another. But, if you disagree with them in doctrine or if you drop out or something, look out. Then they play rough, you see. "They did stone the prophets and did cast them out from among them." The prophets were among these people, but if anybody had his own idea about the doctrines and started preaching, he was kicked out. They not only kicked them out, they denounced them, like the LeBarons, etc.

I personally was very closely associated with [M. L.] Glendenning and the Order of Aaron. The Laffertys came to see me often here, and Bruce David and the Peacocks, who had a group going down in Manti, etc. They would invite me down, try to convert me, and ask me about things. These people ended in murder—the Laffertys, Bruce David, etc. They started killing people. Then the LeBarons are another example, and the Singers are very local. But way back before Joseph Smith's day Jemima Wilkinson in New York State, not far from where Joseph Smith was, preached the restoration of the gospel. They [her group] expected angels and felt the people had fallen away. But they felt that Christ had come again in the person of Jemima Wilkinson. As soon as she died, the whole thing just disappeared. Glendenning became inactive and suddenly you hear no more of the Order of Aaron. All these have just withered on the vine. As I say, there have been well over a hundred of them, and this is the way it happens. So this is quite a test for the Church, isn't it? People are still breaking off and saying, they can't do without me; I'll blow the whole thing wide open; nothing can happen, etc. Why does it go on? Well, we're going to see. It's going to tell us why this happens now, and it's very relevant to what's happening today.

This is the difference, of course, in verse 15. Here we are entering a new dimension entirely. It's Nephi who makes the difference. Notice he's impressed by the appalling spread of the turnover

[from righteousness to wickedness] here. The voice of the Lord and angels had witnessed [to him], and he had power. Well, he had been visited by angels and received power. This solves it. Unless you get this, we're just going to go on squabbling forever. The upper world, the other world, has to intervene sometime and enter into the picture. Otherwise, we're just going to go around in a circle, hold meetings, have our committees and conclusions, and fight with each other. You get nowhere. Reformation is not restoration. *Restoration* is the new word that churches are adopting now. They've adopted it only since 1960. Before that it was a dirty word. They said, "Reformation, yes, but restoration, no. The gospel was never taken away." But now, even the Roman Catholic Church is talking about *restoration*. They're restoring things.

Verse 15: ". . . and having had power given unto him that he might know concerning the ministry of Christ, and also being eyewitness [that's what I was talking about] to their quick return from righteousness unto their wickedness and abominations"—these lightning switches. He witnessed it and was impressed by it. This is introducing something more, now. The gospel is something more than a successful and happy life or something like that. No, it's an eternal life, which is a different thing entirely. People don't talk about that; they don't think of it as real, but that's the one. This is what we're talking about, the eternities. We're introducing them into the picture now.

Then he [Nephi] has powerful motivation here. From his vantage point everything is black. Remember Plato's cave? In this world we're in a dark cave. The real world, the sun, is shining from behind our backs, but we're facing the wall here. We see our shadows on the wall, and we say "That's the real world. That's the real thing." And when we get on the outside, we're absolutely dazzled—we're blinded by it. We want to get back to our comfortable real world, which is actually in the dark. That's what you have here. Verse 16: "Therefore, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, . . . [he] went forth among them . . . to testify," to minister to them. From his vantage point they were in the cave. He was grieved to see them there, and he went forth to minister to them. *Minister* is used a lot in the Book of Mormon; you see it in verse 17 here. When Christ comes and ministers, when angels come and minister, what do they do? To *minister* is to help people, to give people something they need. But, above all, it's to teach them the words. You minister with words. "These are the words which he ministered." We have that expression used in 3 Nephi here when the Lord comes. And the angels come and minister to the children. The picture we get is that they walk among them and chat with them, comfort them, discuss things with them—talk with the children, with the people. That's a very clear picture that we have later [in 3 Nephi] that so impressed the greatest Lutheran divine today, Krister Stendahl. He gave a talk on that here in 3 Nephi, which he regarded as one of the great books of scripture, though he's the head of the Swedish Lutheran Church. He's the bishop of Lund, the top man. But anyway, 3 Nephi made an impression on him. We'll get to that [the coming of the Savior] soon enough.

But notice here that he ministered, and many of the things "cannot be written." They minister things that can be written. It's the words they minister, but they can't be written here. He says an interesting thing. You wonder why we've been taking things so slowly [because of these details]. He wouldn't write them down. If he could "a part of them would not suffice; therefore, they are not written in this book." I won't give you a part of them; you have to get the whole picture here [he said]. Won't you give us just a few of these angelic words [we might say]? No, "a part of them would not suffice," you see. You must get the whole picture here. We must see what these verses have to tell us. We haven't yet; we skipped through them. I've got a letter from the editor of a Catholic journal here. He just skipped through the Book of Mormon, for example, and there are lots of things he needs to be enlightened about. He's very nice in asking questions about it, though, very fair.

Well, he ministered these things, but these things can't be written. So that's how we study the scriptures. We don't study the scriptures in part—that would not suffice. We [shouldn't] go

through these things on roller skates; we take a little time here. “And Nephi did minister [to them] with power and with great authority.” So, we ask, does part of the Book of Mormon suffice? He’s given as much as we can take, all we need, and all that we should have, too. So that’s an important note on curriculum, isn’t it? And did Nephi’s charisma turn the tide? Absolutely not; they were angry with him. Oh, I should be asking questions here. Well, here we go. Why do you think they got angry with him? Why do you think he offended them? Why do you think he worried them? Notice what their reaction was. They didn’t say “Oh, the guy’s a nut,” and just forget about it. He wasn’t going around shooting people or anything like that. Why would they get angry with him? It says because “it were not possible that they could disbelieve his words.” He had proof. What was the nature of that proof? Oh, here we go; it’s about time. I’m neglecting my duty here. Brother Terial, what was the nature of the proof he gave them that they could not deny? You see it right here, don’t you?

“Verse 19 says and in the name of Jesus did he cast out devils and unclean spirits; and even his brother did he raise from the dead.”

And the next verse says, “The people saw it,” you see. They couldn’t deny it. They witnessed it. Of course they got angry. But what would shock them about that? What was the fatal crime of Jesus when they decided to put him to death? The high priests, the elders, and the Pharisees didn’t plot against Jesus to put him to death until what miracle?

“Raising Lazarus.”

When he raised Lazarus from the dead, that decided it. That was too much. This [news] went around, so they decided from then on that he would have to be put to death. So we have it here. They were angry because they couldn’t deny it. It was a culture shock, you see. You don’t like to be pulled out of a warm bed on a cold morning. This is a thing that made them furious. They were wild; it was just like they reacted to Joseph Smith. It would have been all right without that. They tell us now there were dozens of cults and revivals and nuts running all over the place in Joseph Smith’s day. Why couldn’t he be dismissed just like that? It was the Angel Moroni that spoiled everything, and then he turned up with the Book of Mormon. The people saw it and they were angry because they saw his power, and they couldn’t deny it.

In spite of all that, though, would you expect there would be general conversions, Brother Thomas? In the next verse, is this the expected result? Remember, the miracle stories of the Christian church from the fifth century on, the Gold Legend, etc.? They deal in the miracle stories. The apostles go everywhere in the world, and everywhere they go, all they have to do is perform a great miracle and everybody in the whole city joins the church. Peter makes a dead fish speak, and a whole city joins the church. John slides down on a sunbeam. They do it in a theatre. They wait till the people are all gathered in the great amphitheater, and then they perform these spectacular miracles, whereupon all the people are instantly converted. Well, that’s the story that [went around] in the early Middle Ages. Is that the way it works with the gospel? It didn’t work here, did it? It didn’t work at all. And why wouldn’t it work, with such miracles? “There were but few who were converted.” And what converted the only ones who were converted?

Now this editor of a very important Catholic journal writes me. He wants to know the secret of why the Mormons are able to convert so many people, as crazy as they are. He doesn’t call them “crazy.” He has great respect for this, that, and the other, but he thinks the Book of Mormon is utterly ridiculous. Why is it that people join the Church? Well, Saturday I was visited by a Russian Jew, a Soviet, who came to this country. He married a Yugoslavian girl. They’re here, and you’ve never met [people with] such strong testimonies. They’ve been in the Church for eight or ten years now and have absolutely unshakeable testimonies. He joined the Church in Soviet Russia as a Jew, you see. Well, what would convert him? What arguments would convert him? What demonstrations would convert him, or his wife, for that matter?



The firmest person I know has been a bishop and a [chaplain] in the Army. He's a stake president now. He was a fervent, practicing Moslem, but he knows the gospel is true. All the efforts that have been made to shake him are absolutely impossible. You can't do it. Imagine, people ganged up on him; he's been denounced, etc. He believes like the Brethren believe in that first edition of the *Journal of Discourses* that Muhammad was a true prophet. As his Uncle Waraka said, "To this people you are a prophet." That's what the Brethren taught in the early days in this Church. But anyway, the fact that he was a fervent Moslem did not stop him—nothing could stop him. And the fact that he got ill treatment and everything else did not stop him from becoming fervently converted to the gospel. And so it goes.

The strongest converts to the Church in my mission, the Catholic part of Germany, were the best, most fervid Catholics—priests and people like that. So, what converts these people? Well, this is it in this verse, and ten guesses to see what it is. Brother Thompson, what do you see in verse 21? What is it that converts them, after all?

"The spirit of God."

They were *visited* by the power and spirit of God. They were visited; something came down. It doesn't mean it dwells in you forever after, but you receive a visit. A visit means something coming from afar to you— something coming to you that wasn't with you before. It is the power and spirit of God that visits you, and when that comes, you forget about all your arguments. Now he was expecting me to give a long explanation—psychological, philosophical, historical, etc. on why the Church is growing the way it is. That's what this article is about that so puzzles him. And, there's only one answer, as Kresimir Cosic told me. I baptized him. He was a famous basketball player in his day. You probably wouldn't remember him. Kresimir Cosic had been here a couple of years and had seen the way some of the people misbehave here. He was world famous, a star in Europe. He participated in four Olympics, if you can imagine that, and received gold medals every time. Well, he said, "There are a hundred reasons why I shouldn't join this Church and only one reason why I should, because it's true." And so he joined. He said nothing could stop him. He's been extremely active ever since then, and that was fifteen years ago.

"What makes the other people so stupid?"

Well, what about us today? It's one of the great mysteries of the world why we're so dumb, isn't it? Here we are, everlasting spirits. Why aren't you a lot smarter than you are? I ask that question, and I know the answer perfectly well. It's my own fault. I don't have to envy anybody else or anything like that. If I'm not a lot smarter than I am it's my own foolish fault. We haven't used one-tenth of one percent of our capacity, you see. We shy away from it. We're lazy. Not only lazy, but these things are rather awesome, you see. It says angels appeared here, and what's the first reaction? We'll ask somebody else this nice trick question. Is William Thompson here? Bill, what was the first reaction when the angels came to the shepherds in the field, or to Mary in her house, or to Zacharias in the temple, or to the apostles on the mount?

"They were frightened."

They were scared stiff. They were "sore afraid," and the first thing the angel had to tell them was what?

"Don't panic."

Don't panic, I'm your friend, yes. I'm an angel come from God, and I bring good news. But why should we panic at an angel, the last thing in the world? Well, of course we do, living as we do. We're living in the depths here, and then talk about a culture shock when somebody comes like

that. It scares the daylight out of us. We're even scared by ghosts, and a ghost can't really hurt you, you know. But people turn white as a sheet when a ghost appears, because it's different. It's this culture shock. It's from another world. But when it's something lofty and infinitely above us, then we ask the rocks to cover us and the mountains to hide us rather than have to face this. Of course, the hardest test any of us will ever have to take is the judgment. Hell is a pleasure compared with having to stand in the presence of God and look in his face. Whew! You can have that, you see. This would be the worst thing that could happen [in mortality]. You'd just fold up. You'd turn to a cinder.

It's all your own doing; it's all been up to you. The Lord's going to talk a lot about that here [in 3 Nephi] when he comes. So, that was it. They were angry, and there were a few converted. Those who were converted were visited by the spirit of God. And he "did truly manifest unto the people." In these verses he baptized them, and they founded a church here. Verse 25: "There were ordained of Nephi, men unto this ministry." Let me see if we have any shrewd questions here. The baptisms, you'll notice in verse 26, started picking up on the eve of the great disaster.

Now chapter eight is psychologically a marvelous thing, isn't it? This is the great destruction. Notice how [the writer] approaches it. "And now it came to pass that according to our record, and we know our record to be true, for behold, it was a just man who did keep the record." Why does he knock himself out to convince us? And notice the second verse: ". . . if there was no mistake made by this man in the reckoning of our time . . ." He takes these first two verses to reassure us. And why do you think he does that? Brother Tolman, why do you think he puts himself out here to assure us—now what I'm telling you is the truth. We recorded this as well as we can; we're trying to be as accurate as we can here. Is he going to report an ordinary, everyday affair that everybody would take for granted? You get the impression that he is preparing us for what?

"He's preparing us for the coming of the Lord."

But the Lord doesn't come here. All hell breaks out here, you see. No, it's a terrible time. So what is he preparing us for? Why does he have to reassure us that somebody's telling the truth here? Why would you doubt this? Yes, brother?

"Because it's so unbelievable."

Yes, he's going to tell a whopper. You might not believe this, but this is what happened, you see. These things happen—that's exactly it. He has to reassure us and make sure this is exactly the way it was. Not making it up, but he says, "if there was no mistake made by this man." He makes allowance that humans make mistakes, but it was an honest man. He did the best he could keeping the record, and it was the thirty-third year, after the Lord had passed away. Then notice how psychologically he builds up here. We're getting into literature now, but what's the sense of this fourth verse? Brother Towery, what is the sense when he starts saying, "And there began to be great doubtings and disputations among the people, notwithstanding so many signs had been given." That's marvelous prose, incidentally. It's building up; there's a tension. There's an ominous hush here; you know something's going to happen. What's he preparing us for? What's going on here? Already here we get this mounting tension. And then it begins with just . . .

"He's preparing us for the greatest event that has ever happened."

Yes, but he's preparing them here for something pretty terrible, you see. The great event comes after this. It is after the same thing happens in the Old World. It is after Sinai—remember Sinai was a volcano and the earth shook and the people couldn't approach it. Any that approached were killed, and they had terrible [experiences] in the crossing of the Red Sea. After these terrible upheavals of nature, then the Lord came and spoke to Moses and established a covenant. After these terrible upheavals here, then the Lord came and established it again. And in these last days

after the great upheavals, it's the last time he will come. Then he will come again and bring Zion with him. So it follows that pattern all along here.

Well, this is the tension. First, people began to look with earnestness for the fulfilling of the sign that there should be darkness for three days. It's going to come. Verse 4: "And there began to be great doubtings and disputations among the people, notwithstanding so many signs had been given." There was a restless feeling of malaise that something was going to happen, like you have before an earthquake. Then they give the date here for a big event, the big bang, "In the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm." It just begins with an ordinary storm. These things always begin that way. Then the storm turns to a hurricane, you notice. Where does the word *hurricane* come from? Anybody know? In Central America the *Hurcan* is the god of winds, and the word *hurricane* probably comes from the Aztec or the Toltec language. *Hurcan* was the god of the hurricanes, the great storms that sweep in from the Caribbean there. So the storm turned to a hurricane. We've all seen that happen.

Well, I've listed some things, and this is an interesting thing we'll notice here—the order in which these things are given. Remember, the Latter-day Saints have oversimplified this picture. Brother Towery, I suppose in your day they didn't teach it, but they used to tell us that the Rocky Mountains and the Andes were the results of this earthquake. Would you believe anything like that? Utter nonsense, isn't it. These mountains out here weren't formed in that way, were they? What does this describe? It describes a good earthquake, maybe 8.5 on the Richter Scale, not higher than that. Many cities were spared [away] from the epicenter. It describes everything in its proper order exactly as such an earthquake would occur. Brother, talking about these terrible things that are happening, does he give us any figures, any numbers here? He doesn't give us any figures on the Richter Scale or the Wood-Noyman Scale. It's described in what terms? Is it described in scientific, objective terms? It's described as it appeared to people; it's an eyewitness account. When this happened and that happened, these are exactly the things people would report that saw it. It's the impression it made, and there's no gross exaggeration here at all. We've seen a pretty good earthquake in San Francisco, but this is nothing. Yes, Brother?

"Going back to verse 5 when it tells the date it happened, what do you think is the calendar that they used? Would it be a Hebrew calendar?"

On the fourth day of the month—it seems to be the solar calendar they were following. They had both the lunar and the solar calendars, though. It tells us, for example, when Moroni's general, Lehi, went and murdered the Lamanite leader, Amalickiah, in his tent it was the first day of the year, and the weather was very hot. Well, of course, they were in the tropics. It wouldn't make any difference if it was in the tropics. It could have been the equinox, the first day of the year. Or it could have been the sixth of January, which is Epiphany, the first day of the year in most Christian nations in Europe. Or it could have been the 25th of December, which is the Roman first day of the year. But it has to do with the calendar and the sun and the moon. They don't match each other very well, but it has to do with the new year. It could have been the agricultural year, but they know what it was anyway. We'll find that out. Somebody could figure this out, I think, from the Book of Mormon.

This is what happened as we list the things this way. We parallel these things just to check them briefly from books on earthquakes, which we did once. This is what happens. First of all there arose this great storm, and then the usual things. Then it became a hurricane, and then there was this phenomenal thunder, this thunder out of the ground, this unspeakable noise, etc. I'd say it was about 11 on the Wood-Noyman Scale. But there were some cities which remained (3 Nephi 8:15) here; whereas, in the great Assam earthquake of 1950 the damage was total over a vast area. There was nothing that remained after that. I have an account of that here, but I'm not going to read it. We're taking the Book of Mormon events in order here. I'm going down them rapidly. We'd better put them on the board, yes: First, a great storm and a terrible tempest, the hurricane.

Then, major earthquakes are often accompanied by heavy rains, thunder, hailstorms, and violent tempests. Some specialists insist there are some indications that certain weather conditions may trigger an earthquake, as in the Japanese earthquake of 1923. It was accompanied at first by a great storm, then a hurricane, then terrible rains and thunders—then came the earthquake. And Japanese seismologists maintain that the low barometric pressure was the trigger which set off the earthquake. Well, anyway, great earthquakes are preceded by great storms.

Then there was this lot of noise, this terrible thunder, insomuch that they thought the thunder shook the earth. And that's the impression you get. Now here we're quoting from Eby's book on earthquakes and from Heck's, and others: "In accounts of earthquakes, we always hear of the frightful noise which they produce. But in addition it seems that sometimes the earthquake can be heard before it is felt. This is difficult to explain. One should feel the shock before hearing it. The thunder seems to shake the earth, since the sound always appears to come from the ground beneath the observer." Now that's the peculiar type of noise we're getting here. It is not ordinary thunder, you see. It says, "A terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it were about to divide asunder." Well, how could thunder in the sky shake the earth, shaking it apart? Well, as it says here, the thunder that precedes the major earthquake comes from the ground. It's terribly loud, and it comes from under your feet. The sound always appears to come from beneath the ground. He's quoting from the official report of 1950: "In the Assam earthquake one thing is stressed in all reports—the awful rumble that heralded the outbreak of the earthquake, a deafening roar, louder than anything any of the witnesses had ever heard before." So you have this tremendous super-thundering sound coming before. Then it's time to run for cover, but where do you run? Not in the house. That's what wipes people out, isn't it?

Well, then what comes next? Verse 7: "And there were exceedingly sharp lightnings." That's what you're going to have, of course—updrafts and downdrafts with all that friction up there and all those ionized particles flying around like crazy. You're going to have these terrific exceedingly sharp lightnings. Well, the cumulonimbus is what you get here. Certainly in a cloud that high, you always get lightning and hail and all the rest of it. And we're told that the great Guatemala earthquake of September 11, 1541, which completely destroyed the old capital, was preceded by the fury of the wind. The incessant, appalling lightning and dreadful thunder were indescribable in their violence. One still unexplained phenomenon of earthquakes, we're told in a book on seismology, is that "all types of lights are reported seen. There are flashes, there are balls of fire, there are streamers."

The terrible winds at Guatemala City matched the Book of Mormon high winds and occasional whirlwinds. We're told in verses 12 and 16 that they carried some people away. They didn't carry everybody away, but there are these swift winds that carried people away. You know Parley P. Pratt's wife was carried away by a tornado in Davis County and never heard of again. They used to have those—well they still do have awful winds up there. We don't have them down here. We're blessed here anyway. We're extra good people [laughter].

In the Japanese earthquake of 1923 the earthquake reached terrific violence, and the first thing that happens when an earthquake comes is that fires break out everywhere. That's what happened here. "Fires in turn set up minor tornadoes. In the Assam earthquake strong winds raised the dust until visibility was reduced to a few feet. Verse 8: "And the city of Zarahemla did take fire." Now, the major cause of earthquake death is buildings falling in cities. Earthquakes are not really very dangerous if you're away from the town; they tell us that. It's the buildings that do the destruction. Recently in Mexico City we saw a classical example there. But what destroys the cities is the fires. The fires break out immediately, because you have fires on stoves, etc. All water mains are broken, and things start burning furiously. In this local earthquake down on the Embarcadero on the waterfront in San Francisco, the fire started out. There's no way you can control it, of course. There are fires in the house. They didn't have wires disconnected or anything, but they cook on fires and they light with fires.

So the first thing that happens in a major earthquake, everything starts catching fire, and this is what happened. Notice that the whole “city of Zarahemla did take fire” (3 Nephi 3:3). It would appear from the account of the Nephite disaster that the main cause of the destruction was fire in the cities (verses 8–11 here). “And the city of Zarahemla did take fire. And the city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea.” (The city of Moronihah is another thing.) This agrees with the major cities’ problem. Earthquakes are largely a city problem, mainly because the first heavy shock invariably sets fires all over the town. In the Japanese experience in 1923 (I remember the day that happened; we had a Japanese gardener, and he gave us all the details on it), wind-driven flames were shown to be more dangerous than the greatest earthquake.

Now we have the tsunami; that always follows. On the coast, cities have the tsunami. That’s the great tidal wave that invariably follows the earthquake, and it drowns the cities. “And the city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea.” We’re told that it was on the coast—of course it would be on the coast if it sank into the depths of the sea. This is the *tsunami*; you know that this is the Japanese word for earthquake. It’s a regular phenomenon. They always include this in the earthquake, this tidal wave sometimes 100 feet high. In the great earthquake of Lisbon that Voltaire wrote about in *Candide*, they had a brand new jetty built for the city, and 3,000 people went out to escape the fall of the buildings, etc. People went out on the new jetty. It cracked open and [the sea] swallowed the whole jetty with all 3,000 people. That was a tremendous earthquake which turned Europe into atheists. People said God should never have allowed that. The whole city of Lisbon was just wiped out. That’s [the basis of] Voltaire’s cynical story, *Candide*. Can you believe anything when God would do that? [they felt].

Verse 9: “And the city of Moroni did sink into the depths of the sea” because of this tsunami or sea wave. I am quoting from Haroun Tazieff’s book, a very good book on earthquakes called *When the Earth Trembles*. “In the winter of 372 B.C. the city of Helika in Greece disappeared beneath the sea. Not a single soul survived.” Very interesting. You see, this is what happens. And here, “The tsunami is the most spectacular and appalling of all earthquake phenomena. It almost invariably follows a major quake upon the coast.” Along with this, however, we have in the Book of Mormon recorded what seems to be a permanent submersion of coastal areas. The waters came up in the stead thereof and remained. Notice 3 Nephi 9:7. It tells us the waters came up in the stead thereof, in the place of what there had been.

The Chilean earthquake of 1960 was a “dilly.” One hundred miles of coast, thirty miles wide, sank in the sea and is still there. Not much was reported about that. Tazieff was the one who reported on it, and he was a specialist in that. He said, “We would have taken these flooded stretches, permanently flooded, for coastal lagoons if here and there we had not seen roads that ran straight toward them and into them, roads that vanished or sometimes showed under the stagnant waters, branching into what had been the streets of a town.” We’re hearing more reports about the New Madrid earthquake of 1811 recently. “Two vast tracts of land [30,000 square miles, they tell us] were covered with fresh water, both the damming of streams and the bursting out of numerous earthquake blows or fountains, flooding the newly submerged areas.”

And, of course, you’re going to have volcanic activity with this. Central America is a string of volcanoes, as you know. When earthquakes are active, volcanoes are, because they’re caused by the same thing—namely the subduction of the Pacific plate plunging under the continental front, under the continent. That’s what produced Mount St. Helens and all the mountains along there and running down the coast here, especially in that narrow land of Central America.

Verse 10: “And the earth was carried up upon the city of Moronihah, that in the place of that city there became a great mountain.” I’ve got a picture of something here, in case you should doubt it. “In September 1538 during a tremendous storm and tidal wave, a volcanic mountain suddenly appeared and covered a town near Pozzuoli on the Bay of Naples, and ever since the mountain

has been known as Monte Nuove, or New Mountain.” Well, there it is carried up and covering the town. And there’s been a very good documentary on [KBYU-TV] Channel 11 about that earthquake and the town of Pozzuoli. It has been still ever since. But just in the last two or three years the wharf in the harbor has risen 15 feet above its former level. So things are active, and the town’s being vacated now. More things may happen.

Well, since this book was printed we have some beautiful examples of that, like Surtsey in Iceland, that prosperous fishing town. You’ve seen the lava spurting up, etc. Now there’s this huge mountain over it. It’s covered with a volcanic mountain of ash and mostly lava clinkers. And [there have been] others, like Paracutin in Mexico. That was about ten or fifteen years ago. Anyway, it was after this [book] came out. Paracutin is now something to see—it’s a real mountain. There was no mountain before. It was just a cornfield, dead level. All of a sudden there came a volcano building up, and in a year tourists were going to see a new mountain in Paracutin. So these things happen. And there was a city near it like Monte Nuovo.

And then what other phenomena do we have? We have [discussed] the volcanic phenomenon. The quakings of the earth lasted for about three hours (verse 19). Of course, the aftershocks, tremblings, and groanings continued for three days. You always get aftershocks. There had been no studies of earthquakes. What would Joseph Smith in New York know about this sort of stuff, or anybody else? . . . during which time the afflicted people carried on in a hysterical fashion—with frightful howling and lamentation for the dead. We saw that in Mexico City. And then there was this thick darkness. This was really something. They “could feel the vapor of darkness. . . . Neither could there be fire kindled . . . so great were the mists of darkness.” When we talk about God sending down fire and destroying [people], that’s volcanic activity.

Well, we recall the greatest catastrophes of modern times, Mt. St. Pierre in Martinique in 1902 and Mt. Pele in 1906. And what did the people die of—about 60,000 people from Mt. Pele? This wasn’t Krakatoa, which was practically a desert island. They died of suffocation because the air was so thick. “They died of suffocation when earthquake dust, volcanic ash, steam and hot gases—mostly sulfurated hydrogen gas—took the place of air.” In some areas, the Book of Mormon reports the people were overpowered by the vapor of smoke and darkness. They were killed by suffocation, which is also a major cause of death in earthquakes (3 Nephi 10:13). Even without volcanic accompaniments, earthquakes do kick up a tremendous dust, as you know—accompanied “by phenomenal vapors and astonishingly thick air.” In the Assam earthquake such a contamination reduced visibility to a few feet and made breathing a nightmare. According to 3 Nephi 8:21–22, however, the vapor of darkness was not only tangible, but it defeated every attempt to light candles or torches for illumination. In Thira and Krakatoa the same thing happened. It said they couldn’t light any more lights.

Then this is another one, the rising and sinking of the land. Well that’s what happens, of course. We’re talking about plate tectonics here. It mentions the rising and sinking of the land, forming new hills and valleys. There’s no mention of mountain ranges here or anything like that. The New Madrid earthquake that I mentioned, in 1811–1812, over an area of 30,000 square miles, lowered the land fifteen feet in some places and raised it six feet in others. But in the Japan earthquake in 1923, over 500 square miles, some areas were lowered as much as 700 feet and others were pushed up more than 800 feet, so you had a 1,500-foot difference. I saw that happening one day going up to Santa Barbara. There was an earthquake along the coast. We were driving, and suddenly the whole mountain just slipped down like that. We’ve seen a mountain slip down here, but it wasn’t an earthquake. But that’s what the hydrographic surveys showed after the Japanese earthquake. So the earth is cast up after. Notice, these things are mentioned after, when they had a chance to inspect the land, and they saw that it was all broken up, etc. And some cities escaped total destructions; they didn’t lie at the center of it. And so it goes.

Well, we're told here, "Central America lies in the heavy earthquake belt, as well as being both a coastal and volcanic area." This is a perfect setup for this sort of thing. We see [in 3 Nephi 8] seams and cracks everywhere. "And the highways were broken up, and the level roads were spoiled, and many smooth places became rough." Well, you could go around and make a film of this, your own documentary. It was just a big earthquake. It was not the creation of the North American continent. We're not dealing with continental drift and things like that, but this is one of the periods of destruction. In other parts of the world at the same time [these things happened]. They date almost exactly the same time, about A.D. 30. They date the great earthquake at Qumran—which is near Jerusalem, just a few miles away—[to that time]. The steps that go down to the water, in what they call the baptistery now, are split 18 inches like that. One side of the stairway drops 18 inches under the other. That was a big drop. That was a real earthquake at that time. Of course, that's a very active earthquake zone. That's the jauf, the great depression that runs right down. That's a great rift which forms the Red Sea, goes right on up through Lebanon to Baalbek and goes right up to the headwaters of the Euphrates.

Well, anyway, this is a good description. But it's preparing for something now. As we said, these things happened in the time of Christ, and there were changes in topography. It was not a time of general extermination or mountain building. There have been such times of extermination. This is important for us to know today, since the 1980s. I'm going to refer you again, just to make your flesh creep, as the fat boys says in *Domby and Son*, "I wants to make their flesh creep." This June 1989 issue [*National Geographic*] is devoted to extermination, "The March toward Extinction." This is very relevant to our particular age, because it is man that does the extinguishing, and the Lord explains that when he comes. He says, you are wiping yourselves out. So this is the situation we're in now. Well, I'll just read you the introduction here; it's pretty sensational.

I notice I've included in here a quotation from Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology*, which was used for many years here at BYU. This is an 1892 edition that was in the library here. It was the great discovery of geologists that everything happens at a uniform pace—uniformitarianism, never any faster, never any slower. The same forces are at work everywhere with infinite slowness and gradualness. It's the secure Victorian idea of ameliorism, too. Things were getting better, irresistibly, was the expression they used. Well, this is the way it starts out here. "The philosopher at last has become convinced of the undeviating uniformity of secondary causes, and guided by this faith [you'll notice, by faith] in this principle often rejects the fabulous tales of former times, of violent upheavals and volcanoes and things on the grounds of their being irreconcilable with the experience of more enlightened ages." We just don't have those things happen. They just don't happen to nice people, you see. "They tell of terrible events, but we know better," he says. On the frontispiece of the cover it gives Pozzuoli as proof that things happen with infinite gradualness. If anything, it proves that things happen very fast.

But this is what this issue, less than six months old, of the *National Geographic* (p. 664) says. "During that same time [since the 1930s] as many as a hundred acres a minute of the world's tropical forests, among the most richly populated habitats of the earth, have been destroyed. Ecologists can only speculate about how many unnamed, unknown creatures have vanished with the trees. An estimated million species will be lost in the next 25 years [not a million animals but a million species; I didn't know there were that many]—a rate of one every 15 minutes." Every fifteen minutes a species, which has worked a long time to get going and has been around for an awful long time and has adapted itself to its environment, disappears. The whole earth is being readjusted. Something is happening; something is preparing. [We have] these great periods of extermination. "Many scientists contend that our planet is experiencing its greatest mass extinction in 66 million years. At that time the dinosaurs vanished, along with between 60 and 80 percent of other animal species [and they vanished suddenly and were replaced suddenly; that's what it talks about here]. Trilobites. Ammonites. Triceratops. Titanotheres. All were victims of at least 12 mass extinctions." There have been twelve mass extinction periods. They're outlined

and diagramed here—twelve times when almost all the life on the earth was extinguished and replaced again. Well, let's read what it says here: “. . . five of them immense.” This [the one in A.D. 33] was not one of the immense ones. This one at the time of Christ was worldwide; we know from other records. But it didn't wipe out the human race or form new continents or anything like that. This was one of the bad ones, but it was not one of the immense ones. “. . . five of them immense, that our planet has endured since the fossil record of animals began about 800 million years ago.

“Mass extinctions. The concept has hit science like a fireball during the 1980s.” You see, a few years ago we'd never dreamed of talking about a thing like this. This was going altogether too far. A few things go wrong, we lose a few trees or something like that—so what? That was the attitude certainly of my grandparents and parents who were in the lumber business and mining. They said, oh, yeah, there's always plenty left. Ha ha. Well, “the concept has hit science . . . during the 1980s.” Now we suddenly become environmentally conscious; this is a new thing. Well, it goes on here: “Paleontologists had long realized that occasionally large numbers of species disappeared simultaneously from the fossil record. . . . The causes behind those great dyings had remained obscured [but all that is changing]. Innovative geochemical techniques are coaxing subtle secrets from ancient rocks. Fossils are being reexamined. Computers are finding provocative patterns in the extinctions. In the process the rules of evolution are being rewritten.” We were so certain. When I came here at BYU, we just had it down cold. That's the only way it could have happened. It's all rewritten now, “And so is the four-billion-year history of life on the planet.”

It goes on to talk about the iridium-rich clay. Well, last week you may have seen on KBYU and KUED [a program] called “The Miracle Planet.” It was a geological thing on the forming of the planets and on the periodic destructions through meteorites, etc.: “Most scientists now concur that at least one great extraterrestrial object struck the planet” (p. 665): “ ‘In the first days after earth was hit, dust blanketed the entire world’ ” (p. 672). Like Yellowstone, the entire world caught fire: “ ‘To get the amount of soot we find, as much as 90 percent of the world's forests must have been burned [when this particular meteor struck]. . . . Winds of hundreds of kilometers an hour would have swept the planet for hours, drying trees like a giant hair dryer. Two-thousand-degree rock vapor would have spread rapidly’ ” (p. 673). This is a much bigger edition than this [in 3 Nephi]. Mass extinctions do occur. They force a new perspective on the history of life, and on the gospel, because we're talking about that, too. Remember, Brigham Young said that Adam wasn't the first man of that name who lived on the earth. He replenished the earth—who knows [what happened before], but we won't talk about that now.

“ ‘Mass extinctions change the rules of evolution,’ explains David Jablonski of the University of Chicago. ‘When one strikes, it's not necessarily the most fit that survive; often it's the most fortunate’ ” (p. 673). Then when it returned, animal life exploded across the planet, the start of the Cambrian. When it comes, it comes fast; when it goes, it goes fast. It's not this slow-paced, infinitely slow, long thing.

So, let's behave ourselves. Oh, there are some nice things, pictures and all that sort of thing. [There have been] at least six mass extinctions, but the greatest of all will probably be caused by the human race itself, and we're making it now. The upshot of this article is that the most complete extinction is this: We go around and do a thorough job, bit by bit. We don't just do a clumsy job. We don't go in with a sledge hammer. We go in, pick our way through, and wipe out species after species, ending up with ourselves. So the Book of Mormon plays rough, and it's not kidding.





# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 90  
3 Nephi 9  
Destruction and Blessings

Now we're really getting in over our heads here. This chapter nine is pretty deep stuff. See, the Lord in the aretalogy tells us that he's been doing all the destroying that's been going on here. But first of all, what is the theme of the Book of Mormon? The theme of the Book of Mormon is, of course, salvation in Jesus Christ. But what is its historical message? What is its particular message to us? Remember, Parley P. Pratt wrote *A Voice of Warning* about the Book of Mormon. What's it warning us against? Let's try out our shiny new roll. Brother Wolf, what's it warning us against? [answer inaudible]

What's the outcome we're going to try to avoid? What will happen if things go on? What's it warning us against?

"We'll fall back into personal wickedness, and we don't want to do that."

Well, that is the real calamity, you see. But what's the immediate calamity, the things we're being warned against?

"Destruction."

Exactly, you're absolutely right, but what you become is far more important than what becomes of you. What could be worse than to be a wicked person, I mean? That's the worse thing that could happen to you. Say he was a wicked person, but he broke his arm; he's a good man, but he broke his arm. He's a wicked person, but he has 20/20 eyesight, very good eyesight. What advantage do you have if you're bad, and what disadvantage if you're good? Socrates used to like to say that. Nothing really bad can befall a person if he's righteous.

But [back to] the theme of destruction. Sister Wilson, this is a guess, and you'd better guess right, too. Sister Wilson shrewdly decided to stay away and not be put to this one. Well, Brother Warren, would you make a guess as to how many times the words *destruction* or *destroy* appear in the Book of Mormon? These are useful questions with a point.

"At least one hundred."

Well, 534 times it uses *destruction*. It's just sanded with destruction. How does the Book of Mormon begin, Brother Warren? What's happening as the curtain goes up?

"The people are ripening for destruction at the beginning."

Where does it take place? Where is the scene laid, "in fair Verona where we lay our scene?"

"Are you speaking of 1 Nephi?"

Yes, right at the beginning of the Book of Mormon. Where does it begin?

"Jerusalem."

In Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is seething and just about ready to explode. Lehi gets out just in time, doesn't he? We'll ask Brother Warner this time. Brother Warner, what's happening when the curtain goes down?

"Everybody just got destroyed."

It's some scene. It's like the last act of *Hamlet*, isn't it? The stage is strewn with bodies—utter calamity and destruction. The Lamanites are no better off than the Nephites. The Nephites have been wiped out. The Lamanites are going into a long, long period of wiping each other out. It's pretty sad, isn't it? Well then, why so negative? We would always be cheerful, as Brother Waltvogel could tell us, with a name like that. Remember the first act of *Siegfried* is the "waltvogel." It sings, and it's cheerfulness itself. It's springtime, of course. So, that's a good name. We'd like to be always cheerful, wouldn't we? But do you conclude, in general, that life is not the happiest thing in the world? When you balance the books, how does it come out? Does everybody have a happy life? If so, why do we have this rich literature in books on how to have a happy life? Everybody has his formula, and it turns out that the guy who wrote the book is an alcoholic or something. It almost invariably happens. But remember, what does it say in [Shelley's] "To a Skylark"? Brother Waltvogel, that you should know, being a skylark.

We look before and after,  
And pine for what is not:  
Our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught;  
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

It's because we can't get out of it. And there are others, of course. You think you're enjoying yourself, as long as you're drunk, as A. E. Housman says. Remember his famous poem from *A Shropshire Lad*?

Men at times are sober;  
They think by fits and starts.  
And when they think they fasten  
Their hands upon their hearts."

Absolutely scared stiff, you see. "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" [Job 5:7]. Do you know any work that is absolutely cheerful, that tells us that life is great and happy and all this sort of thing? I even forgot that. Oh, it was Robert Browning who wrote that [poem], wasn't it? I'm thinking of what, Sister Waddell?

The year's at the spring,  
And day's at the morn;  
Morning's at seven;  
The hill-side's dew-pearl'd;  
The lark's on the wing;  
The snail's on the thorn;  
God's in his heaven—  
All's right with the world!

Nothing to discourage our little Pippa. Remember that poem, "Pippa Passes"? Yes, you remember the poem now. She is the original Pollyanna, isn't she? Whatever happens to Pollyanna is great, you see. But what was actually Pippa's situation? She worked in the factory at the age of eight or nine, and she had to grind away ten or twelve hours a day. She had one day off a year, and that's the day when she sang this song—everything's right with the world. It's "life is great," and she

really believed it. Of course, it's in your heart that you enjoy things. But do you envy the fate of our happy Pippa? Could you be happy under such [circumstances]. Maybe you could for one day. But then the day is over, and she'll have a happy time anticipating next year when she'll have her one day off a year. That's no exaggeration, that one day off a year. That's what they used to do in Scotland. You'd have one day off a year, and that went for Sundays, too.

So you see, it's a pretty sad show. You got Pippa right, so that's fine. Brother Van Werken, here's a good one, as we go on here. Is it the purpose of the gospel to guarantee us a happy life?

"Well, the happiness is knowing that whatever trials we go through, all will still be right in the end."

That's what happiness is. It really can do it, no matter how you suffer. You've read *The Gulag Archipelago* by Solzenitsyn who's being repatriated in Russia, they tell me now. But what could be worse than the Gulag Archipelago? Yet the point of that is, they were free there. Nobody can make you sin, make you do the wrong thing, make you be evil. It can't be done, however they try. So, of all things, the theme of *The Gulag Archipelago* was freedom. And so [that's what] we have here in the gospel. People write books, but what they're thinking of is how to have a happy life. The gospel will teach you how to lead a happy and successful life, and it lays down the principles of family and all this sort of thing. What kind of a life is the gospel preparing us for? What's the life we talk about that the gospel can give us? What life do we really want?

"Eternal life."

Yes, that's right. Well, you say, isn't a happy life here adequate? Here you have a catch-22 situation, don't you? Which person is more likely to regret the shortness of life, "our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought," etc. As the Koran says, "This world is all loss." Everything is loss—and literally, everything is passing away here all the time, isn't it? We're all oxidizing, as I say. Gravitation is pulling us down. Look, it's sagging me at every point now. There's nothing I can do about it. Why worry about it? That's not the life we're thinking about. But this life is a sad one, but here we are. We want an eternal life, which will assure us that we are happy here. We want our eternal life to be a happy one. But eternal life could be miserable, and that would be pretty bad, wouldn't it? We want to make sure that it's a happy one. Are we really going to have it? Is there really such a thing? That's what this part of the Book of Mormon comes to. This comes closer to the gospel from now on than everything else, because the Lord comes actually down personally and he talks to them and visits them. Now, they are on a chatty, first-person level with the Lord himself, and he tells us that those things are real. Well, we have cause for believing they are so, that it's not imagination.

But do we have the qualities to sustain eternal life? A couple of years ago the question I asked for that final essay was, if you were guaranteed all the comforts of life for a thousand years, funded for everything you need, what would you do? How would you spend your thousand years? And you should know they were all at a loss. Nobody had a good reason why we should live a thousand years. Well, you want to live for eternity, if it's not going to last forever.

We'll skip to Brother Underwood now. Brother Underwood, a theme you find in science fiction writing is the people that can't die, the old ones, etc. Have you ever read much of Robert Heinlein? He's very interesting and sort of a fascist, but he's a vivid science fiction writer. He always gets the Mormons in somewhere in his writing. That's what the science fiction writer calls "Mormonizing." Orson Scott Card is a Latter-day Saint who writes some very good science fiction. He wins all the prizes, etc. He's a distant relative and a very close friend. Science fiction writers talk about "Mormonizing." What would they mean by that? This is relevant to what we're talking about here. We have the idea of eternal life, and we talk about it as an abstraction, etc. Now here the Book of Mormon takes us right onto the scene. We step right into the picture of

the eternities and start talking and chatting and eating together with people from the other side. That's what you would call "Mormonizing." It's giving an element of plausibility to things that happen. What is possible? See, today we have a background of space travel and this sort of thing. We can think of such things because it's in those literal terms we have in the book of Enoch. In the process of time, Enoch was taken away and he'll come back, etc. Well, I suppose you'd call this Mormonizing science fiction.

Well, I just cited the Koran message *ad-dunya kasar*. The world really is life now. We say everything is oxidizing, passing away, being dragged down, etc. Brother Towery, what is promising to be the greatest problem we have? What is the one thing our civilization is producing in unique quantities that nothing else ever has? I've lived in civilizations where they were having a hard time—in very bad times in Greece and in the Black Forest of Germany. I never heard of them wasting anything. The concept of a garbage dump would have been blasphemous. But what is the main product we produce today in our world?

"Garbage."

The end product is garbage, and that's a serious thing. It is the unsolved problem. That would include nuclear garbage, too. But it's the unsolved problem. It's a horrible thing. We're going to wallow in it; we're going to be suffocated in it. The one thing we leave, our majestic ruins, would be a few hideous reinforced concrete foundations and things like that. Even the ruins we leave will be hideous. The ancients left some ruins that were pretty handsome, you know (Egypt and Greece). But for us it's nothing but garbage. Waste disposal is the greatest problem in the world today. Of the six highest paid executives in the world, two of them are in the business of waste disposal. That's what you get paid for today, if you can handle that stuff. How do they do it? They put it on barges. And what do they do with it when it goes on barges? Well, I'm going to ask you something, Brother Towery. Have you any good ideas for disposing of this junk?

"Yes, they probably dump it in the oceans."

Is that a good idea?

"It's not a good idea."

It is not a good idea, as Brother Cousteau tells us, doesn't he. Well, years ago the Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl made his trip in the Kon Tiki. Incidentally, I had a long talk with Thor Heyerdahl once. In the middle of the South Pacific a million miles from nowhere, the garbage floated by—disposable things, the sort of things that Brother Huntsman turns out today. Indestructible and nonrecyclable, they're mounting all the time. They're cheap and convenient, and so we just go on making them. And we're smothering in it; the ocean is full of it. They [Heyerdahl's group] were in a raft, you see. They were down right at the level. On a big ship you miss a lot of that, but when you're right down floating in the stuff, you realize it's gunk clear across the ocean. And then [there is] what these tankers are spilling; they seem to be unable to contain themselves. We'll have to put diapers on all tankers now, I suppose. They can't control themselves, like so many babies. That's it, you see. So our epitaph would be this. The one would be, "they couldn't leave anything alone." And the best thing they can say about our age is, "they made a lot of money." That's what we make. The money is on paper. It isn't even on paper anymore; it's in the computer now. A blip and you've lost your fortune. This happened to me—not in money, of course. I lost two weeks' work last semester when the gal hit a wrong key on the computer and wiped everything out. So we can do that. What a passing, temporary, flimsy, brittle society we have.

Now in 3 Nephi 9:2 the Lord describes the situation. Things have hit bottom here; this is what it is. But first about this voice. Remember this voice that's heard. President Grant used to tell a story

about a friend of his who mocked the Book of Mormon. He said that was the fatal weakness of the Book of Mormon, hearing a voice that wasn't a loud voice, yet people could hear it 50 or 60 miles away. That's absurd. To be heard, a voice has to be so loud, so many decibels, of course. Then radio came along, and Brother Grant had an answer to that.

3 Nephi 9:1: "There was a voice heard among all the inhabitants of the earth, upon all the face of this land," the whole land. Now, this isn't a soft, gentle voice that's going to follow. But you'll notice an interesting thing here in this chapter in verses 2 to 12 and 13 to 22—exactly 10 verses each. That's a striking thing and quite a coincidence, isn't it? Ten verses showing the Lord's severity and the next ten showing his real nature, how men brought this on themselves, etc. Notice it divides right in the middle here. He starts out with "Wo, wo, wo unto this people." He announces himself with what we would call an aretalogy from ancient literature—where a god announces his own activities and purposes and his own glory. See, when men praise God, what do they call it? Can anybody tell us that? Brother Aldridge, we're talking about an aretalogy here, and I was going to ask you something. Well, we'll get to it.

Verses 2 to 12, you'll notice, are one theme and verses 13 to 22 are the other half, just like the first chapter of the Doctrine and Covenants. Remember, it is divided exactly in the middle—18 verses of wo upon the earth, and then in the next 18 verses the glory that's going to come, the promises and how to gain them, and what you can do about it. We don't have to suffer; it's not necessary to go through all this. And that's what we have here. Now notice here, the Lord personally takes responsibility for the great destruction that's been wrought. This sounds like the savage, vengeful, old tribal God of the Old Testament they talk about in seminaries in both Protestant and Catholic schools. He wasn't savage and tribal at all. The law as it's summed up in Deuteronomy, the whole law that they had to learn by heart, is far more humane and gentle than our laws. It's marvelous law. We won't go into that now, but it is really something—taking care of everybody, no cruelty. It's a marvelous thing. We rule that out; we don't bother to read the thing.

Here he takes personal responsibility, but he tells us in the second part how he feels about it. See what kind of a God he is. What's wrong with the critics that call him a savage old tribal god then? Well, from their point of view, he is, because if you did that sort of thing, Brother Aldridge, [people] would say that you were a savage and tribal person. If somebody wronged you or disobeyed and you went in and slash banged and destroyed them—just wiped them out, women and children, one and all—you would be considered playing pretty rough. You would be a savage person. It's not enough to say that God's ways aren't man's ways. The lesson of the Book of Mormon is "man shall not judge; neither shall he smite." Remember, that's summed up in Mormon 8:20. But God does it; God judges. He is the judge, but don't you do it. Judge not, we're told again and again. See, God does things that men don't do. He lives on a different level entirely; he sees the whole thing. It's a different thing entirely with him. It's not the way it is with us, because of our limited view of things. We're going to see more of that a little later on, and it's very striking. For example, we might call this a surgical strike. Things had gotten so bad there was nothing else to do. They had to excise all the cancer, all the infection in the body here. And so men try surgical strikes, but that's not right for them, because they don't know the situation. It's a very dangerous thing to do. You don't try a surgical strike. You don't hit to anticipate a person might strike you, so you make the first move. That has become with us a military action justification. We shoot because they might shoot. We're told, and this is very clear—the Lord says you cannot punish a person for the evil he might do. The Lord was asked again and again by Abraham, and he was asked by the apostles at Capernaum—why don't you punish these wicked people? They're beyond salvation. The Lord said, no, I'm not going to punish them; let them go their way. That's what I don't do. They have their free agency here. He said when the judgment comes, then they will be judged. But meantime, Capernaum can go on doing what it does. The Lord tells us to keep hands off, but we don't. You cannot punish a person for a crime he hasn't

committed yet, no matter how probable it may be that he will commit it. You can't do it. And, of course, that's forbidden in the Constitution, but we do practice these things today.

Brother Aldridge, we talked about extermination last time. This was not a major extermination, was it? There were lots [of people] left. There was one major extermination in the scriptures, which really wiped things out, a worldwide catastrophe. What as that?

“The Flood.”

Yes, the Flood. Now there's exactly the same situation here. That has been the main reason why men have criticized God (I wrote an article on the justification of God), not just in modern times, not just people like H. L. Mencken and the professional atheists who do that. They bring the Flood against God as the strongest proof against him. A good God would not send the Flood [according to them]. See, it flooded women, children, and everybody, etc. But again we have the revelations which make that very clear, and that is exactly the way it's going to be made clear here. We find this right at the end of the book of Moses. This follows Genesis here, and then he goes on and gives us more, though. The last two verses of Moses end up this way, [similar to] Genesis 6:11–12.

Moses 8:29–30: “And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.” When corruption starts, it can go all the way. You can get such a thing as total corruption. The world has seen it before. You get total something, and then you've had it. So what happens then? “And God said unto Noah: The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence.” Notice, who's being violent? Who is destroying things here? We've got to stop them [the Lord said]. That's all that can happen. The earth had to be purged by the Flood. They had made it clear they had no intention to reform, “And behold I will destroy all flesh from off the earth.”

We have [something related to this] in Moses 7:27–37. Boy, I'm getting so rattled because I'm writing on one thing and talking about another. Here you have it—how the Lord feels about the Flood. “And Enoch beheld angels descending out of heaven, bearing testimony of the Father and Son; and the Holy Ghost fell on many, and they were caught up by the powers of heaven into Zion.” So they were caught up. There's a shuttle service here, and there are other accounts of this same thing. The angels descend and ascend. They come down and bring people away, as the angels brought people out of Sodom and Gomorrah. They came and rescued Lot and his family. Remember, they said, get out of this town—it's going to be destroyed. Lot wanted to stay. They said, you can't stay; you've got to come. His wife wanted to wait. You can't wait; you've got to go right now [the angels said], so the angel actually grabbed them and dragged them outside the city.

Moses 7:28: “And it came to pass that the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people . . .” They were the wicked that weren't gathered to Zion, and whether you got gathered to Zion or not was entirely your own decision, as it tells us earlier. There were missionaries. It was a crash program to preach to the people. So this is what happened with the residue of the people—God looked upon them and wept. This is how he felt about it, you see. “. . . and Enoch bore record of it, saying: How is it that the heavens weep and shed forth their tears as the rain upon the mountains?” Notice the preparations for the Flood here (it's already starting to rain) and the dramatic aspects. The whole book of Moses, you see, is archaic. This is a very old thing. This is your Enoch stuff, and it has this marvelous nature prose in it. They mix the two together. You'll see there's more to that than you think. “And Enoch said unto the Lord: How is it that thou canst weep, seeing thou art holy [God is weeping about it; he's not at all happy about this] seeing thou art holy, and from all eternity to all eternity.” We're supposed to live that we might have joy; if God himself has to cry, there's something seriously wrong here. “And were it possible that man

could number the particles of the earth, yea, millions of earths like this, it would not be a beginning to the number of thy creations.”

Now wait a minute. That’s pretty strong, isn’t it? Millions of earths like this—same material. Scientists tell us today whatever one thing is made of, they’re all made of. And that’s just the beginning of his creations. Well in this case, he should be the last person to be upset. “And thy curtains are stretched out still.” That means the creation is going on still. There’s a lot said about the curtains. They put curtains between the galaxies. They will not associate with the others. What is it they call that? Scientists have a word for that anyway. “And yet thou art there, and thy bosom is there.” Notice this idea of space—it’s marvelous. Of course, this is the book of Moses here. This is exactly what quantum physics is teaching us today, quantum mechanics. “And also thou art just; thou art merciful and kind forever. And thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations, from all eternity to all eternity [this fusing of everything]; and naught but peace, justice, and truth is the habitation of thy throne; and mercy shall go before thy face and have no end [what magnificent prose that is]; how is it thou canst weep? [this is the thing that has him absolutely stopped]. The Lord said unto Enoch [this is why he weeps]: Behold these thy brethren.” We’re going to learn here the intimate relationship that Christ has with the people. He’s going to come and move with them, stay with them, visit them, and talk with them—get to know every one of them personally, become a personal friend with each one of them. It’s quite a marvelous thing. We’re going to see more of that in a minute. Hang on.

Verse 32: “The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge [that’s what they’d need], in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency.” What more do you want? He made them free, he gave them their agency, and they had the necessary knowledge. But with knowledge and agency still how would you know which was the right way to go? He said, well, I gave them instructions. I gave them commandments, too. “And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father.” Now here is this whole universe in which everything is related to everything else. We’ve got to get along together. We’re all in the same family. We don’t start fighting or trying to take advantage of each other. That would louse everything up, wouldn’t it? Absolutely. We *must* love one another if things are going to continue at all. “. . . they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood.” People hate each other. “And the fire of mine indignation is kindled against them [here’s the anger; here’s what happening]; and in my hot displeasure will I send in the floods upon them, for my fierce anger is kindled against them.” Notice the two images of fire and water are both here: “And the fire of mine indignation is kindled against them [that’s the fire]; and in my hot displeasure [fired, kindled, hot] will I send in the floods upon them.” The other part of it, you see, because we’re in a very volcanic world. Well, now we have [knowledge of] the Atlantic rifts and all those things by which the earth was formed by volcanic fire, by the heat of the earth escaping through the oceans and cooling off. The floods stop it, you see. “And in my hot displeasure will I send in the floods upon them, for my fierce anger is kindled against them.” So it goes on. Well, you see how the Lord feels about this. It’s not his idea at all.

After the first part of chapter nine, notice this. As I said, this is an aretalogy, and he describes himself in every verse when he talks like this. Brother Barrows, they’ve had this terrible affliction and he says (3 Nephi 9:3): “Behold, that great city Zarahemla have I burned with fire [the first thing that happens in an earthquake]. And behold, that great city Moroni have I caused to be sunk in the depths of the sea; . . . that great city Moronihah have I covered with earth, and the inhabitants thereof, to hide their iniquities. . . . And behold, the city of Gilgal have I caused to be sunk, and the inhabitants thereof to be buried up in the depths of the earth.”



Verse 7: “And the waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come up any more unto me against them. . . . And the city of Gimgimno, all these [other cities] have I caused to be sunk, and made hills and valleys in the places thereof; and the inhabitants thereof have I buried up in the depths of the earth, to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up any more unto me against them. And behold, that great city of Jacobugath, which was inhabited by the people of king Jacob, have I caused to be burned with fire.” And so it goes. Notice, he gives an explanation here. What’s the explanation in this ninth verse? Do we find an explanation of why he did this, Brother Barrows? Notice in the verse 9, where he says: “which was above all the wickedness of the whole earth.” It had to be pretty bad to suffer that. And then he says *because*. And you’ll notice an interesting thing here that we haven’t been pointing out. We’ve been pointing out all the *I*s, but notice in every verse he says “I have caused.” Notice here in verse 9 where it says “because of their wickedness,” and in the same verse, “therefore I did cause them to be burned.” *Cause* and *because* keep going all the time here. I caused it because—they caused it in other words. “I did cause them to be burned.”

Verse 10: “I caused [them] to be burned . . . because of their wickedness in casting out the prophets, and stoning those whom I did send to declare unto them concerning their wickedness and their abominations.” They had been making war on Him. “And because they did cast them all out, that there were none righteous among them, I did send down fire and destroy them.” Well, he gives the cause, all right. Who brought the cause on them? The *because* was theirs. Notice there are three agents acting here. Verse 2: “The devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice.” It begins right at the second verse. We have three agents in the second verse. Who are they, Brother Barrows? There are three parties acting—three members of the cast here. Who are the three parties in this short second verse? Well, there is the *I* there, the Lord, and there is *this people*, and who is the third actor? Who’s laughing and his angels rejoice?

“The devil.”

See, we have three characters; we have a triangle here to consider. “The devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice” is just the way he wants it, but he didn’t cause it. Remember, they did yield themselves, it says in the preceding chapter. They did yield themselves to the temptations. They gave up to him; he had no power over them otherwise. But now they had given in, they played the game according to his rules, the way he wanted them to. So he laughed and his angels rejoiced. And that’s a very interesting thing. This verse is in the ancient Enoch. I mean we have ancient texts of Enoch that go way back, and this passage occurs in them, too. “For the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people; and it is because of their iniquity.” There’s your *because*, you see. He laughs because he sees the people being slaughtered and everything lost, and they’re being slaughtered because of their iniquity, that they are fallen. It was their iniquity that did it, so we see the agents and the agencies here. There’s God who is trying to do everything good, who gives them everything they want [and need]. He gives them the advice and the instruction. Then there’s the devil trying to trip them up. They don’t have to yield if they don’t want to, and it’s because of their iniquity that they are fallen.

Today there’s a serious trouble in the world. It’s a good example of this very same thing, isn’t it? What is it? This is a hard one. Sister Bergeson, we have such a problem today. It’s a paradoxical sort of thing. What is that particular plague that’s worrying people and may fill the earth in a short time? It is distinguished by the fact that people practically force it upon themselves. You don’t have to get it unless you want it, almost. People, knowing about it, are willing to take the risk, so who have you to blame for this terrible plague? Everybody is going around trying to find a cure for it and saying, “This is an awful thing—this should never happen.” Well, it never should have happened, of course. But Sister Bergeson, what am I talking about?

“AIDS.”

Of course, I’m talking about AIDS. This is the way it is. Who’s to blame for that? Well, men didn’t create it; they didn’t make it. Did the devil make it? He doesn’t make anything. He can’t create anything, not even AIDS. Remember, he can neither beget nor can he create, and that’s one of the sad things about him. All he can do is tear down; all his work is negative. Well, he has to react. He has to wait until God acts, and then he reacts. He has to wait until you act, then he reacts, you see. For a long time that was our policy. We had to wait till the Russians did something; then we’d do something. Who would you say is responsible for it? If it goes any further it goes bad. They’ll say, “Oh God, why have you allowed this to happen to us?” They do that. These people feel very sad; they feel put upon. They go right along with their practices, and they feel life just isn’t being fair to them. They’re pitiful characters, you know. They’re always rather sentimental, etc. But that’s a real tragedy. So this is the situation we’re up against here.

Brother Bowen, we’ve [discussed] these first ten verses when God said “I . . . I . . . I.” He takes responsibility for the whole thing. Then when he personally appears on the scene, if you were writing a play, what would you expect to come on? You know Grieg’s *Peer Gynt Suite*, don’t you? It’s a great play by Ibsen. Well, *Peer Gynt* wanders all over the earth, but his final score is with the *boyg*, this monster voice that comes out. It’s a sort of Nordic horror. But you hear this great booming voice, like the voice of God coming from heaven in the movie *The Ten Commandments*. When you hear that sort of thing or the way he’s talking here, this terrifying voice, what kind of a person would you expect to come walking on the stage, Brother Bowen? Here he comes! It’s coming! You expect some sort of monster, some horror like Godzilla, to come out after a description like this. Well, if you’re going to interpret it that way, I mean. Here’s your cruel, savage old god, so you expect him to come blustering on like the villain in a Japanese *nō* play or a Chinese tragedy—something quite terrifying. But he isn’t terrifying at all when he comes, is he? In what form does he come? How does he appear to the Nephites when he appears? It’s the next chapter. This is a good one.

The Lord came and mingled with the people on intimate terms. This is what happened. Let’s turn to 3 Nephi 11:8. Let’s talk about the voice first of all. They were gathered around the temple. Well, it’s only fair to read the second half of that chapter. I guess we’d better do that first. Let’s go back to chapter nine here, and this is his case. There’s a case against him, you might say. Here’s your savage god destroying all these people “because of their wickedness.” Then he starts out just as he talked to Enoch. Notice verse 13: “O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted [and now he starts the *I*’s again, notice] that I may heal you? Yea, verily I say unto you, if ye will come unto me ye shall have eternal life. Behold, mine arm of mercy is extended towards you [all the time, you see, you have this standing offer, and if you refuse it and continue to go on and know what you’re doing, what can you expect?], and whosoever will come, him will I receive.” See, here are the *I*’s again.

Then we go down to verse 15: “Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth [now again we’re going to another dimension; we have no business judging what’s happened at all], and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. I am in the Father, and the Father in me; and in me hath the Father glorified his name.” Now here we get the same [apparent mystery]. It’s not a mystery at all. It’s made very clear by John. In chapters 14–17 of John, he talks about this all the time and makes it very clear what he’s talking about. And 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon makes it even clearer, what we’re dealing with here, the nature of the Father and the Son. Here he is one with the Father, and now he wants to be one with us. He wants to be personal friends with us—not on his level but in the same universe of

discourse with him. He's going to be not only a friend and brother, he's going to come down as intimately as you please in a little while here, just as he did in his first mission.

Verses 15–16: “I am in the Father, and the Father in me; . . . I came unto my own, and my own received me not. And the scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled. And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God.” See, members of the family. What more could you possibly want than that? Here's a new order opening the door on eternity here. This is another thing entirely. Well, it's worth the price, isn't it? They brush that off. He gives them this offer, and they have to make a determined effort to refuse it, to turn it down. “. . . to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name [it's still wide open], for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled.” From this point, we are ready to go on, then. The law of Moses is fulfilled but it is not abrogated. We're going to add to it now. Just as the Word of Wisdom is fulfilled; if you observe it, you don't even have to think of it. If we go into the next world, we won't have to be reminded constantly hereafter not to be smoking cigars or drinking strong liquor or anything like that, because we won't even think of it. The law is fulfilled, so to speak. That is not the basic law for us anymore. It wasn't even in the Doctrine and Covenants.

So here we have it. Verse 18: “I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” Oh, I was going to bring along something [related to] the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. In the earliest Christian and Jewish writings we have, instead of *alpha* and *omega*, they used *alpha* and *tau*, the last letter of the old Greek alphabet, as well as of the old Hebrew and Aramaic alphabets. Well, in all of the old Semitic alphabets it's *T* or *tau*. It begins with the cross. And *alpha* is *aleph*, of course, the same thing in Hebrew as it is in Greek. It's aleph, the beginning, the getting together, summing all things in one already at the beginning—the beginning and the end. They're described in the earliest Syriac writings as *alpha* and *omega*, the *light* and the *life* of the world. The *alpha* stands for the light that dawns and the *omega* or the *tau* stands for the life of the world, which is the redemption, which is the cross that comes at the end. But this is used not only by Greeks. Of course, it is translated into English. We know what that means because it's traditional in our language. We use it, and that's what it's supposed to convey to us, that he's the beginning and the end. That sums it all up.

Now the alpha is the *qāf*; that's the famous *qāf*. We won't go into that now, but that's the *O* that sums everything up. Omega is the big *O*, the big circle. That, according to the Pythagoreans, shows that all truth may be encompassed in a single round. That's the *omega*. But the thing is, this usage, beginning and end, alpha and omega, *A* and *T*, was very common anciently, and it belonged to the mysteries. It's archaic and begins with the idea that the light breaks and the redemption is completed with the end. The *light* and the *life* is what he's talking about here.

Verse 19: “And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood [now he goes into the law of Moses immediately]. . . . And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit.” And then notice he says here, and if you do that, I will “baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost.” Verse 21: “Behold, I have come unto the world to bring redemption.” That's the idea. Redemption means “buying you back again.” You've made all these blunders and mistakes. To pay it off and buy you back again is what I've come for—because if you're let go, if you continue on the course which you are now on, you are lost. You can't bring yourself back again. You can't pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. It can't be done; you'll just get deeper and deeper all the time. There are interesting stories and poems about our follies. And it is so; we don't get better. So what you have to do is start at the beginning.

And throughout the Savior's mission here, he pays special attention to the children. We must be as little children. He insists on that, and he really means it. And he starts right out with it here. This is the thing that so impressed Krister Stendahl, the great Lutheran divine I mentioned the

last time. He gave a talk in an assembly here on this very subject, 3 Nephi and the little children. It's so very important. Being redeemed, you have to have a new start, because you have to enter into it. You have to do your part. All right, I'll shed all that old stuff, I'll begin, I'll listen to it [we might say]. I'll do it your way, in other words. I'll submit completely to your instruction and do what you tell me to do. That's what he wants us to do. You must come to me "as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. Behold, for such I have laid down my life."

The most emphasis on this is in what follows. To be as a little child is to be completely honest, without prejudice. You may be free of knowledge or anything else, but you're also full of wonder. That's the thing that Einstein and other people were always saying. Almost all the great physicists have made that remark. We must be as little children if we're going to learn anything at all. Remember Newton's famous remark? Brother Buss, Newton was the greatest scientist of his time, and he gave us the Newtonian system. He made one of the biggest forward steps ever made. We thought it was the biggest until others came along. But with all he gave us, Isaac Newton said he was like a little child on a seashore picking up shells, while the vast ocean of knowledge lies before him unexplored. Did he think of that just as a metaphor, the fact that there was so much more to learn than he knew? It was more than that. It was not just the knowledge he was lacking, but what does it imply as to his own state of mind, as to his own condition? When he recognizes that he's a little child, what does he mean by that? That there is a lot he has to learn? But what is the attitude of the child? Anybody? The most arrogant, conceited scientist or pseudoscientist in the world will admit that there is an awful lot he has to learn, that we're not perfect. Some people think they've made a great concession when they say "we're not perfect—nobody's perfect." You haven't made any concession at all.

It's not that, but the state of mind that Newton had. Do you know anything about Newton? A marvelous study was written by John Maynard Keynes. You economy students must read Keynes, so read Keynes' life of Newton. He wrote a biography of Newton. In his naivete and freshness, he was like a little child. He actually was, and the same thing with Einstein. He was absolutely naive in the questions he asked. He would start people laughing when he would ask such simple, childish questions, and [they were] the questions people never answered. They were too proud; they thought those things were settled, etc. Notice this business of being like a little child is no joke. The great ones are all like little children, all very naive. Remember Solon was the wisest of the Greeks. When he visited Egypt the priest of Heliopolis said to him, "Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always like children." The Egyptians had the age-old knowledge. Solon acquired the same; he studied in Egypt. That was where he started, but he carried it on to other things. Greek science is a projection. But nevertheless this childishness is no joke here, so we have to come as little children.

If people want something to do, maybe I could suggest some questions we should ask ourselves about the next [chapter]. What could we ask here? How would you solve this question here? The catastrophes hit just at the time these people were in their wickedness. They both hit bottom. Now, was that a coincidence, or was it not a coincidence? To what degree were these things controlled? Were they adjusted so it would hit them just right, or were the people led just so they would meet it? See, we have these two paths and they cross here. We get something like a sort of relativity study here. But how is it arranged? And is the same thing happening in our world? We are on a collision course; therefore it can be prophesied. But when it's prophesied, must it happen? This is a very basic problem in modern science, as you may know—whether these things can be prophesied, whether they must necessarily take place or not. We may talk about that more next time. That's the kind of question [we'll discuss]. Was it a coincidence? Then why did the Lord say "I did it." He keeps saying "I did it." Did he deliberately start cracking up the earth? Did he press a button and start those volcanoes erupting? Did he hold them back until that time? How did he do it? Of course, we don't know how he did it, but was it a coincidence? There's more than you think to the question.



## TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

**Semester 4, Lecture 91**  
**3 Nephi 9–10**  
**The Early Christians**  
**The Five Gospels**

Brother Clayton, the whole Book of Mormon is centered on one focal point, isn't it? It's like a burning glass centered with ferocious concentration on one single point. What is there in chapters 9 and 10 of 3 Nephi that points that out? One little word keeps hammering away, repeating and repeating. What is that, Brother Clayton? The whole Book of Mormon is just centered on one person, isn't it? And who is that?

"Christ."

Yes, and what brings that out very clearly, with great power in chapters 9 and 10 when the Lord is announcing himself?

"He is saying he is the one who has caused the destruction."

He keeps repeating that word over and over and over again. Remember, the ninth chapter is divided evenly into ten verses in which he says I did all these awful things, and then he turns around and says I give you all these blessings. This is what I'm going to give you. I'm going to give you eternal life. You belong to my family; you belong to me. I don't want to have to throw you out, you see. Now those people who perished, have they lost their salvation forever? No, not at all. We'll [discuss] the message which they wouldn't accept here. First Peter [mentions] those spirits who were disobedient at the time of Noah. The Lord went down and preached to them and he sent the apostles to preach to them. That's what you get out of this literature we're going to talk about today.

This repeated *I* tells us that one person has been commissioned to do everything. Is that selfish? All those *I*'s sound very selfish and egotistical. Sister Cox, that sounds awfully egotistical—I did all this, I destroyed these things, and I and I alone will save you and bring you back and you can live with me. I am one of the same type of person as you are. I belong to your universe of discourse and everything. I can give you all these blessings. Does that sound very egotistical to you?

"It does."

It certainly does. The only time I ever went to BYU [as a student], I went to a summer school many years ago up at Aspen Grove. They were very flattered to have this Rabbi Cohen there; he was talking. We were being very liberal in our ideas in those days. Rabbi Cohen said, "Wouldn't I be a conceited ass if I were to say 'Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest?'" Well, what's the answer to that, Sister Cox?

"Yes."

Yes, you would be a conceited ass if you said it. You don't have to say it, either, to be one. It came out all over the place, you see. Would I be a conceited ass if I said I invented the sewing machine? I'm a conceited ass if I go around boasting of that, because I didn't. It doesn't happen to be true. But if it's true, if I did invent the sewing machine, I'm not necessarily a conceited ass to say, "Yes, I invented it." So the Lord can say this, but others can't. God is permitted to do things that men can't do. What are some of the things? Well, all this destruction, etc. Now what

do we have here? What was I going to say, anyway? The Lord's speaking to them about the resurrection, and he tells them all these things that he has done. And they're true when he says them.

What about his actual coming though? This is a very important thing. Is the story true? The whole thing hangs around this—if this is true, if he is really the Redeemer. Or did he really say it, or really come at all? Do we have any evidence? Right off hand can you tell me the evidence for such a person coming among the Indian tribes of America? I don't think there's a single tribe that doesn't have that legend, and what is it? [answer inaudible]

And what is the legend called? The legend of the white god. These go by various names like Quetzalcoatl. You name it what you will. There have been a number of collections of writings about that. These legends are found everywhere, and of course they're all mixed up. They're all mixed and mangled and everything else, but you always get that main theme. How would all these people know about it? Remember, Cortez had an easy time because they thought he was the white god who had come back. He had the beard and all the rest of it. Were they ever wrong! He, Pizarro, and the others took advantage of that and exploited it. All the tribes have that legend. The variations show the usual signs of invention, contamination, and elaboration. But Christians don't want to accept the story of the Lord coming back after the crucifixion. This is an important thing, isn't it? They don't like it at all. I think the best thing would be to just briefly go through the account of it in the New Testament. Let's do that. This is what happened. Now, did the resurrection really take place?

Well, first I guess we should mention this. There are 17 [verses] in the Book of Mormon that repeat the teachings of Christ—the same that you find in the New Testament. Well, is that necessary, if you have it four times? Brother Frost, is it necessary after having four gospels to repeat the same thing word for word all over again? Is this repetition necessary?

“What he said here they didn't know about in the Old World, or they didn't have record of it.”

Oh, he added something to it. But remember, 17 of these verses are almost word for word out of the New Testament. Why is that necessary? Somebody might make fun of that. But, what is the first question that comes to mind? How many Gospels are there? How many accounts are there in the New Testament?

“There are four Gospels.”

Four Gospels. It's told four times in the New Testament. Well, was that necessary? Now, you're right, you see. Why four?

“They had different views.”

They did have different views, and especially on what subject? Where do they differ most widely? Where do they have different views and different reports? Some say they're very confusing. They're not confusing if you consider they came from different people and their impressions. Nevertheless, when you get to the story of the resurrection, they all go off in different directions. So, we need a fifth Gospel. There's nothing wrong with a fifth Gospel, because we know that he preached the fifth Gospel, as we're going to talk about. That's the one he talked about during the forty days, for example, when he came back and taught them. So this repetition is necessary here. This has fortified people's doubts, that the Gospels disagree. This is one of the main arguments against [the Bible]. They say, “Well, it's a fiction.” The standard accepted doctrine today of the return of Christ is that the Christians were so dedicated and so full of the spirit and remembered him so vividly with wishful thinking that they incorporated him into a cult. They built a cult around his memory and his thought. In that spiritual sense he would appear, and that's the sense

in which the Christian world accepts his coming back again, and that only. You may think that's an exaggeration. I think I'll have to read something else then. See, I brought the whole library along.

The earliest and greatest of the Christian theologians was Origen of Alexandria. He grew up at the University of Alexandria, so he had a lot of fancy ideas. He came very early, and he influenced the others like nobody else. You say, well, isn't St. Augustine greater? St. Augustine is simply a paraphrase of Origen. And so this is what we have when these men speak. This was Origen's reaction. Well, first of all [we'll discuss] the Apostolic Fathers. The first writers after the apostles, after the New Testament, were the Apostolic Fathers. There were seven of them, beginning with Clement, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp. They [gave us the] first writings after the New Testament, and the earliest of those are Clement and Ignatius. Now, they were writing in the first century, between A.D. 85 and 115. And this is what they were talking about. Ignatius was going to Rome to be martyred at that time. There were two charges constantly brought against the church members by the Apostolic Fathers; all of them charged the church members with this. They said, they're ashamed of the crucifixion and they deny the resurrection. Well, would you think Christians in the first century would start denying the resurrection as soon as they got it?

"I know that Christ had a body after the resurrection," said Ignatius writing to the Smyrnaeans, "and I believe that he still has."<sup>1</sup> There's no thought of a mystic body here, you'll notice. Ignatius pleads with the Trallians (he wrote seven letters, including one to the Trallians, too) to believe that Christ really and truly was born, that he ate and drank, that he was really and actually sentenced under Pontius Pilate and was actually crucified and died, and that he really and truly was raised from the dead. "But if as certain atheists, that is nonbelievers, say, he only appeared to have suffered, . . . why am I going to fight beasts?" In the longer version Ignatius rebukes those who don't believe in the resurrection; "others that say God cannot be known [now, this is what the church was preaching already in the time of the apostles. See, Ignatius was boasting that he was the last to see John, and Polycarp was contemporary. They had seen an apostle]; others that think Christ was unbegotten, others who claim that the Holy Ghost is not a reality, and others who say that the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost are the same." They (the Apostolic Fathers) were very much alarmed about it.

Then came the great Origen, who was going to explain it all, you see. He joined the church, and he was the great philosopher. He was going to explain the gospel to his friends. He wrote a refutation of Celsus who had written a document against the church way back in 180. [Origen] said, "We are stunned with the greatest amazement that this, the most eminent of all natures [that's Christ], putting off its state of majesty, should become a man. . . . It is utterly beyond human comprehension that the Word of the Father . . . should be thought of as confined within that man who appeared in Judea [in the Book of Mormon he appears as just a man and mingles among them]. But that the Wisdom of God should have entered the womb of a woman, and been born a baby, and cried and wailed just like other crying babies [and had to have diapers changed, etc.], and then suffered death and said that his soul was sorrowful unto death, and been led off to the most undignified of all deaths. . . . Seeing such things the human intellect is stopped in its tracks, so stunned with amazement that it knows not where to turn. . . . It is far beyond our powers to explain. I suppose it even goes beyond the capacity of the holy Apostles; nay, it is quite possible that the explanation of this sacrament is beyond the powers of all the celestial beings." The angels and God can't explain it, because it shouldn't happen, you see. God is bodiless. He must be without any material contamination—that's a thing you had to accept. That's why he doesn't know what to *think* about the Lord, so he gives his suspicions.

We'll cite St. Augustine here. I like St. Augustine. According to St. Augustine, the resurrection of the flesh is the one thing the pagans cannot take, the one thing with which the philosophers have no patience, and above all, the one thing that distinguishes a Christian from a non-Christian. Since that's the one doctrine that makes Christians Christian, it is alarming to learn from



Augustine what *his* idea of the resurrection is. Quoting Augustine here: “In nothing is there so much conflict and controversy among Christians themselves as on the subject of resurrection of the flesh.” See, the Christians themselves were fighting about it—the one thing they could not agree on was that. “On no other matter,” he says, “do they disagree so vehemently, so obstinately, so resolutely, or so contentiously as on the subject of the resurrection of the flesh. For as far as the immortality of the soul is concerned,” he says, “many a pagan philosopher too has argued about that and bequeathed us vast heaps of writings to the effect that the soul is immortal. But when it comes to resurrection of the flesh, they won’t argue, but dismiss it out of hand as impossible, and that on the grounds that it is impossible for this earthly flesh to aspire to heaven.”

And so we go on with the various [ideas]. I like the explanation that St. Jerome gives to this. Maybe we can find Jerome here. He says the resurrection is at the heart of Christian teaching. Commenting on this, St. Jerome (talking about Origen) wrote a century and a half later, “If all things, as this order of reasoning compels us to believe, shall live without a body [hereafter], the whole universe of corporeal things shall be consumed and return again to that nothing out of which it was created.” Now, that’s St. Jerome who gave us the Latin Bible, the official Catholic Bible, the Vulgate. He believes everything is going to return [to nothing]. Oh, he says we’ll have to be resurrected in the flesh because the scriptures say we will have to be, but the moment we are resurrected, then we’ll start dissolving. And very presently we’ll be dissolved into the “nothing from which we came.” Like the Buddhists, we’re just a drop of water in the great ocean of being and return to nothing.

But this [in 3 Nephi] is a very different story. This is so literal. Let’s look at some of these. I’m so bowled over by these. Look what happens in Matthew 28:1–2. It was very early on the Sabbath, when it was still dark. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb (notice the Book of Mormon at the time of the crucifixion), and there was a tremendous earthquake as they went. Earthquakes are very common in that part of the country; that’s right on a very active earthquake belt. It’s the *jauf*, the great depression sunk in there. That’s the great rift that runs through Africa and right up through Palestine there. There was a terrific earthquake [Matthew 28:2], and an angel of the Lord came down and rolled the stone away from in front of the tomb. And then what happened? They saw him. People rationalize and say, “Well, obviously it was the earthquake that rolled the stone away.” But no, they said they saw him, [verse 3] “And his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.” They always talk about the garments white as snow. That’s uniform. That is the basic white that’s worn in the celestial kingdom.

Those who were there to perform the ordinances were scared to death, and they shook like the earth and fell down as if they were dead. [This refers to] those who were sent to watch the tomb, to carry out the necessary protection of the tomb—probably the Roman soldiers. It doesn’t say they were the Roman soldiers, but they passed out and fell as if dead at the sight of the angel. They couldn’t take it.

Verse 5: “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye.” See, the angel always says, “Don’t be afraid.” There’s the cultural shock. He says, don’t be afraid of me at all for I know that it is Jesus who was crucified whom you’re looking for. You won’t find him here. He’s risen and gone just as he said he would.<sup>2</sup> Come on and look if you don’t believe me. They’re always being asked to look and test and see with their eyes, etc. Come here and look. This is the place where they laid him. See, he isn’t there, immediately having risen up. After they have seen it, then he says, now you hurry off as fast as you can and tell what you’ve seen to the disciples, that he has risen from the dead. And then that he would meet them in Galilee.

Now, you see, this was just an angel, but they were absolutely overwhelmed at what had happened, naturally. And he was to meet them there. And they left the tomb with fear and rejoicing. They were frightened. They were overawed and very happy at the same time, with great

fear and rejoicing. They ran away as fast as they could and announced it to the apostles that Jesus had actually risen. And “behold, Jesus met them.” He was standing right smack in front of them and met them face to face saying, good morning, how are you this morning? The word was *chaire*. It means cheer. Our word *cheer* comes from that. And when they saw him they grabbed him by the feet so he couldn’t go any farther, and Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid”—again, you see. You go and tell what you’ve seen to my brethren, and tell them that they should go to Galilee and meet with me. They’ll have a chance to see me there.

Notice, there are appointments and goings and comings here. It seems like regular, everyday affairs. And they [the philosophers] say Christ’s spirit came into their hearts and he was everywhere, etc. Nothing could be more down to earth, and all the Gospels keep rubbing it in, all the time. This is not the way you think it was, but you have this other idea. And then they themselves went, and behold (it uses the Roman word *custodian* here) came into the city and announced to the high priest. Then [it tells] how they plotted it, etc. Well, we have to be getting along here because there are some better passages than that. Notice verse 16: The eleven disciples did go to Galilee and met him. As soon as he met them there, he told them to go forth and teach and baptize. Go teach all people and baptize them. That’s what he does right off, in all the Gospels. Almost as soon as he sees the apostles, he says, this is my Father’s gospel; go and baptize—exactly as he does in the Book of Mormon. He doesn’t wait to tell them that part.

Now Mark 16:5 has a nice touch here, when they went and looked in the tomb. See, this one says they saw the angel outside, and he told them to look in the tomb. The angel was brilliant, etc. In this one they look in the tomb and they just see a *neanaiskon* there, which is “a nice young man.” It’s a term of endearment, a caritative, a diminutive. In Mark 16:5 when they looked in the tomb, what did they see? You’ll notice it’s always defined in all the Gospels, not just Luke, with clinical accuracy. They want to make sure that you know exactly what happened.

There was a terrible fear among them, and it was the first day of the Sabbath they went just before sunrise. They said to each other, “Who has moved the stone?” And then going up to the tomb, they saw a *neanaiskon*, a young man, a youth, a pleasant one. Notice, *iskos* is a term of endearment; a nice young fellow was sitting there. That’s all it was, you see. He wasn’t flaming or blazing like the other angel was. Then notice how accurate they want us to get it. He was sitting on the right hand, and he was clothed in a white robe, a *stolēn*, after the manner of a Roman robe, an ordinary white robe. He wasn’t a terrifying sight at all; he was just a young fellow sitting there. He was sitting on the right side of the place where [Jesus] had been buried. They were absolutely amazed—*exethambēthēsan*. That’s as strong as you can make it. But he said to them the usual thing: Don’t be surprised that I should be here (they always have to be reassured). Jesus, whom you are looking for, Jesus the Nazarene (Nazarene doesn’t mean of the town of Nazareth; it means of the church, Nazarene), the crucified one—he is risen, and he is not here. This is the place where they laid him, but he’s not here anymore. But you go and tell the apostles. Tell Peter, who is in charge of them, that they shall all go and meet him in Galilee, and then they’ll have a chance to see him there. So that’s the same part of the story. They all had a hard time believing all of these things, until they saw them. Even then they were amazed and had to be pacified, because it was both ordinary and very extraordinary—to have it happening just so casually and matter of fact. The angels came around and mingled with men in this manner.

Luke’s report is the fullest, of course. In his Gospel he starts out [by saying], I want you to get this straight. Everybody gets it all mixed up, and there are all sorts of reports going around now. And, you see, there were. They should not discredit it, but he says, I’m going to tell you how it really happened. So in this account when they go to the tomb, what do they see? Luke 24:4. It’s not a *neanaiskon* this time. Verse 4 says they didn’t find the body of the Lord Jesus. When they started talking about this, then behold there were two men standing there who appeared to them, and they were clothed in garments like lightning. Now it was two men at the tomb, and they were

standing, not sitting. But it gives us some more clinical detail. [Translating again:] And they were terrified of the object, and they hid their faces right down to the ground. They put their heads on the ground. And the two said to them, “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” This is a tomb. He’s not here. You don’t look for the living here. “He isn’t here, but he’s risen.” You remember how he spoke to you concerning the times in Galilee. They have to go there and meet him. And then they remembered his words, and they turned away and they left the tomb and told all these things to the eleven apostles. They were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna and Mary [the mother of James], and there were some others with them. They weren’t alone when they went there; the others were with them.

They went and told the apostles of it. What did the apostles say? You wonder why Christians don’t believe it today. They wouldn’t believe it then. His apostles told them “you’re crazy” when they told them the story—notice verse 11. It appeared to the eleven that the women were simply speaking a lot of nonsense, out of their heads. They refused to believe them. So Jesus’ own disciples, whom he told he would rise from the dead, wouldn’t believe it when they [the women] said it was so. See how hard this is to take? They couldn’t take it. The Christian fathers couldn’t take it. Churches don’t take it today.

Then there’s the story of the two of them going along the road to Emmaus, talking to each other all about the things that had happened. Verse 15: While they were talking there came and appeared to them somebody walking beside them along the road quite close. Somebody keeping pace with them came closer to them and walked along with them. And then they suddenly recognized who it was. It says their eyes were overcome so that they didn’t recognize who it was. How would their eyes be overcome so they couldn’t recognize him? And he said to them, you were having an argument as you walked along. What were you talking about? And then they stood stark still, very much upset, almost angry. *Skuthrōpoi* means “angry, upset, taken aback.” They stopped as they were walking down the road—a dramatic scene—when one of them answered, who was named Cleopas. He said to him, you alone are the only person who has been to Jerusalem and hasn’t heard about it. So they talk about the crucifixion, etc.

Verse 22: But certain women from us came very early to the tomb to find his body, and they said they saw an angel with their own eyes; an angel became visible to them. But the women reported they saw the angels there, but they didn’t see him. And he appeared unto them and said, Oh, you stupid [*anoētoi* is still the modern Greek word for *stupid, dumb*] and slow-witted people, not to believe all things that were spoken by the holy prophets. And then beginning with Moses and the prophets, he explained to them all that had happened. It was only then that they began to understand what was happening. The Lord was with them, as in the Book of Mormon. He opened the scriptures, beginning with Moses, and explained to them all the things that were to happen. He had to do that before their eyes were open. Verse 31: “And then their eyes were open.” They recognized him, and in a moment, instantly, he vanished from them. So this would keep you off balance all the time. They said, “We should have known all along. Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he met us on the road there and started explaining the scriptures to us?” And then, after, he was seen of others.

This is what happened after that. He found the eleven when they were met together, and those that were with the eleven. They said that really the Lord has arisen from the dead and had appeared to Simon. Notice all these different reports going around. And those that met him on their own recognized him when he ate bread with them. When he broke bread with them, then they knew who it was. And while they were speaking and talking about these things among themselves, then he appeared among them again, in the midst of them while they were talking about these things. And they were all struck dumb. The conversation stopped instantly, and they were afraid. They thought they had seen a ghost, a spirit. Now this is what the Christian world says

it was: Well, of course, it was the Christ's spirit who returned to them in their fond memories. They built the cult around it, etc.

And he said to them, "Why are you so upset, and why do you argue about these things? Why do these things enter into your heart? Behold, these are my hands and these are my feet, and they will prove to you that I am I. [Remember, he does that to the Nephites, too; he introduces himself that way.] Behold, these are my hands and these are my feet, showing that it is really me. Come and feel me and see, and you will see that a spirit does not have flesh and bone as you see for yourself that I have." He's doing everything he can to prove that he is not a spirit. The Gospels all emphasize that, so what does the Christian world say? He was a spirit, of course. It was the Christ's spirit that came to them. But I am not a spirit, he said. But, he saw that they still wouldn't believe him. Why? That explains why, you see. It was too good to be true, because of their joy and amazement. These things just don't happen, you see. Because of their joy and amazement they wouldn't accept it. So he said, all right, you need some more proof. You still won't believe it, he said. Do you have any food in the house? They brought out to him a piece of broiled fish. He took that in their presence and he ate part of it. Then he said, these things I spoke to you while I was still with you, that the words of Moses would have to be fulfilled. But he called for the fish and the honeycomb and ate before them. In John he really goes into it, calls for the honeycomb, etc.

Do we have anything else here? Well, we see from Luke here that there's something different about him. It says here in [Luke 24:35] that it was the eating that convinced them. Was he a ghost? They doubt, but he has a body. This is what he tells the Nephites in verse 44—this is the thing which I taught the Jews at Jerusalem. This is what my gospel has been all along. He explains the scriptures in verse 45. Then he says their minds were opened and they began to understand the scriptures. So he taught them and preached to them, but we don't have the sermon that he gave to them. This is important here.

But let's get on to John. We find in John 20 that Mary [Magdalene] is on the spot. How is her experience described here? Again, in meticulous detail. It was early dawn of the Sabbath, the beginning of the Sabbath, when Mary Magdalene went in the first light (when it was still more dark than light) to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb, and she ran and told Simon Peter about it (that's another account). And she told it to the other disciple, the one that Jesus loved. (Modest John isn't mentioning his own name here.) And she said to them, the Lord has risen from the tomb. He's left the tomb, and we don't know where they've put him. She's very much worried about this, because she wants to perform the rites for the dead—not the Roman ones. Peter and the other disciples went out to see if that was really true, and they went to the tomb. The two of them walked along together, and the other disciple, the second one, ran faster than Peter did. He got to the tomb first, and he bent over and looked in, and he saw (now notice how clinically exact he is) the sash, the *othonion*, a sort of sash or towel. He saw the garments there, but he didn't go in. So Simon Peter caught up with him. He went right into the tomb, and he saw the white garments (it's linen, actually) lying there, He saw the *sudarion*. That's the Roman word for *towel*, the cloth around the head. He saw the *sudarion* lying there which had been on his head. There they were, neatly folded, lying there.

It's all too physical for words—no wonder the fathers couldn't take it. Notice he wants to make particular note of it. *Sudarion* is the Roman word; that's a sweatband. The *sudarion* wasn't with the other clothes, but it was in a separate place. Then when the other one went in (both of the disciples are now in the tomb) he saw, and he believed what he had seen. Up to that time, they hadn't understood the scriptures, that he really would be resurrected. Now John is beginning to understand [that he would] arise from the dead. So they went back and told the other disciples.

But Mary stayed there near the tomb, and she was crying. She thought it was all over. While she was crying, she leaned over, too, and looked into the tomb. She saw there two white angels (this is a different account; well, the others saw two men, too; they were angels—an angel is just a

messenger) in white garments sitting there. The others were standing there. Well, I guess they got tired of standing, I don't know. But when Mary went there, they were sitting, one at the head and one at the foot of where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said to her, "Woman, why are you crying?" And she said to them, "Because they took the Lord away, and I don't know where they put him." And when she said these things, she turned and looked behind her. She saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't recognize who he was. See, he doesn't come in glory now; it's as an ordinary human being. He's got to let us know that until he has finished his mission here, he is just one of us.

And Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?" And she thought it was the gardener. So you can see that early in the morning when it was still dark, he obviously wasn't an overpowering presence or anything. She thought it was the gardener, who came up to hoe around the garden. It's the Garden Tomb, I suppose. She thought it was the gardener, and she said to him, "Sir, if you have taken him, could you please tell me where you took him, and I'll come and get him."

And Jesus said to her, "Mary, don't you recognize me?" And she whirled around and she said, in Hebrew, "Rabboni," meaning *Lord*. So she recognized him, and he said, "Don't touch me. I'm going to my Father later and then we can get together." So we have these different stories.

Then this very same day, which was the Sabbath, the doors being still closed, the disciples were met together. They were scared to death, right after the crucifixion. They had locked the doors because of fear of the Jews, and Jesus came and stood right in the middle of them. And he said to them, "*Shalom 'aleikhem*," which is literally "peace be with you." And when he said this, notice, he showed them the tokens, because they are the apostles. He showed them the signs in his hands and in his side [John] said. And they were utterly rejoicing when they saw that, when they saw it was the Lord. He said to them, again, "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). Then he immediately told them to go out and baptize and started talking about baptism. Remember, the first thing he says in the Book of Mormon: This is my gospel, that the Father calls upon all men everywhere to repent. [He tells them] to go out and preach repentance and receive the Holy Ghost. He breathed on them and said to them that they should receive the Holy Ghost. Thomas doubted, as you know, because he wasn't there when Jesus was there. He had to see, but the others saw, too. Don't blame Thomas for doubting; they would have doubted, too. When the women told them about it, they doubted. So don't blame Thomas, because after what he saw in two seconds, he said, "My Lord, my God," just like that. But he didn't get to see [the Lord] until a week later.

And then [John] said in verse 30 there were many other signs he did in the presence of the apostles. But they are not written down in this book. But what is written down is written so that you may know that Jesus is the Christ. This is the purpose of the Book of Mormon. This is why they write the gospel. John said, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life thorough his name" (John 20:31). So it's very important to write these things down. If it happened to the Nephites, they have to write it, too, in this fifth gospel. They are not going to leave things out there, even where he tells the same things. But some things are different here.

We have this in John, but this is only part of the story—[the Savior] did much else. But Luke was the one who wanted to go into particulars. Luke was the physician; he was not a Jew, you notice. As he introduces his gospel, he wants to take particular care that people get this right. He's going to describe everything exactly as it is. Then in the first verse of his Gospel he says people are all getting mixed up about this. He wrote Acts, too, and that's why he wrote the Acts. We already mentioned Luke. We could talk about the forty days. Well, the reason I mention Luke again is that he starts the Acts of the Apostles by saying that things had happened through the Holy Spirit,

but everybody was getting mixed up. Then we get to verse 3: “To whom he showed himself living after he had suffered death, by many signs and wonders.” Through forty days they were in his presence and saw him—not just three times. Well, back in Matthew he comes back, and they see him for three days, and in the Book of Mormon. But this is for forty days he comes back. He visits them, and the word [Luke] uses is *sumalizomenos*, [which means] “he came and camped with us.” He paid visits to us like a person camping with somebody. He came and camped with us off and on for a period of forty days. Well, that would give them plenty of time to become familiar with him. It wouldn’t have been a miracle or a terrifying thing anymore. That’s the way you find it in the Book of Mormon.

The Gospels labor to make us see Christ not as a myth or a mystery. His public appearances continue after his death. Remember, John then writes a letter. In verse 1 of 1 John, he says, this is all something we saw with our eyes, heard, and felt with our hands. They [the philosophers] say, oh, John is so spiritual—there’s nothing but spirit here. And he says, how can I make it clearer? We saw with our eyes and we felt with our hands. But no, they won’t take that at all. He says they [the disciples] were frightened, taken aback, puzzled by the unexpected, but plainly, it’s not on our level that he [the Savior] condescends to show that he is of our nature and that he belongs to the family. He uses all the familiar words and the family words in the Bible—father and son. Those are only used in connection with familiar relationships, yet the Lord tells him in the Lord’s Prayer they are to address God, his Father, as “our Father.” Well, that sounds like a father, if you ask me. Can’t they use a better word if he’s not a father? They said that’s the last thing in the world he really was. The [Apostolic Fathers] of the church complained of that.

So we have this one focal point, then. In 3 Nephi we get the same thing just briefly here. Jesus came to them. How did he come to them? As a man in a white robe (3 Nephi 11:8). He didn’t come in overpowering glory. They didn’t know who it was; they thought it was an angel, we’re told in [verse 8]. And he introduced himself simply and directly. He said, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ,” just like that. After all this build-up, you expect Lucas and the special-effects people to go all out for confrontations of the second sort, or something like that. Then he established his identity by signs and tokens in verse 15. That’s the purpose of signs and tokens; a mutual recognition is the purpose. And there was an exchange of greetings. He not only circulated freely—it said he ministered (it uses the word *ministered*), circulated among them freely, and had a personal interview with every individual (3 Nephi 17:21, 25). One by one he introduced himself to them, called them by name, and showed them the signs and the tokens. He took them one by one, including the little children, 17:11 and 17:21. He took the children aside and blessed them and taught them one by one. So it’s a personal relationship here. Remember, it tells us in 2 Nephi 9:41, “And the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there.” When you finally go to the veil and meet the Lord, there will not be a substitute. He will know you, and you will know him. Notice, if it took all day [he greeted them], and then he came again and again.

If you met a General Authority at Conference and you met him the second day after, you’d know him pretty well. The third day you’d say, “Hello, Brother So-and-So,” and you’d be old friends by then. And then it says, as [during] the forty days, he came often to them after that and ate with them, as he did in the New Testament. Whenever you come together and make a party, what do you do? In the Near East or anywhere else, you eat, of course. You never have somebody visit you without having something to eat, so he ate with them. So the New Testament confirms this account.

Now we go to the Book of Mormon account. We don’t want to hang up on it, but we must know these things are real. This is the thing that people can’t get into their heads. If they are [real] that changes the picture for us. We have nothing to worry about.

1. See Hugh Nibley, *The World and the Prophets*, vol. 3 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), 157.
2. Dr. Nibley is translating from the old Nestle edition of the Bible. He said, “It has thirty different texts with all the variant readings. You can see if somebody disagrees with somebody else because no two are alike.”

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 92  
3 Nephi  
Resurrection  
The Forty-Day Ministry  
Reality

Those passages we read from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts show what remarkable fact about the resurrection toward which everybody had looked forward, which was to be the great climax of human history? When it actually happened, what was the reaction of most people to it, including members of the Church and apostles? Did they say, “Hooray, hooray, it has happened at last?” When somebody told them about it, what did they say? You’d expect them to be dancing in the streets.

In 1968 they discovered the original version of the First Vision, a text far older than any other. It goes back to 1831–32. I told the person who found it that there would be dancing in the streets when that thing got out, but there was no dancing in the streets. They shoved it under the rug; they didn’t want to have anything to do with it. It was written in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams at the dictation of the Prophet Joseph when he was twenty-six years old. It is by far the fullest and best account we have of the First Vision. We never even acknowledged that it existed—that’s a strange thing. Well, the same thing happens here in the New Testament. How did the people first accept the news that the Lord had risen? With open arms? With joy?

“They didn’t believe it.”

They wouldn’t believe it; even the apostles wouldn’t believe it. When the Marys told the apostles, they said, “You’re crazy.” Nobody would believe it. Did Mary instantly recognize the Lord when she saw him? No, she thought he was the gardener and told him to get to work [laughter]. It was just that commonplace, that ordinary, not the sort of thing people would suggest.

Then we went on about the early Christians. The second century was the century of *gnosticism*, which spiritualized everything. Everything was spiritual in gnosticism. So they were absolutely against physical resurrection. Physical resurrection and physical creation were abominations in their book; they wanted nothing to do with them. And the gnostics were most of the church. But what about these other Christians? We talked about the Apostolic Fathers. Remember, they were the seven that [followed the apostles]. Now, we have a much richer literature of very early writings that talk about the resurrection, etc. But what is the main problem that these Apostolic Fathers had? There were seven of them—Clement, Polycarp, Ignatius, and 2 Clement [and others]. They all had the same [problem]. Not only was the church falling away, but the one thing the people would not believe was what? It’s easy to guess by now, isn’t it? Brother Hansen, how did the people take the resurrection? Remember, we just quoted from Clement and Ignatius of Antioch. He said, if there is no resurrection from the dead, why am I going to Rome to be put to death? None of you say there is a resurrection from the dead; you don’t really believe it. You believe he came in spirit. Of course, this greatly strengthened the position of later church historians, excusing themselves for believing such a thing.

Then we get to the Doctors of the church. Brother Hart, who were called the Doctors of the church? That’s a technical term; I’m going to have to tell you, I’m afraid. There were four Greek Doctors and four Latin Doctors, and they set the course of all Christian theology forever after.



They all got it from Origen, but Origen wasn't accepted as a Doctor of the church because he preached too much of the old teachings. He came earlier in Alexandria. "This is what is taught today," he was fond of saying, "but in the early days the brethren taught something different." So he didn't get rated as a Doctor of the church. The four Doctors of the church would include Augustine and Jerome, whom I mentioned last time. Both of them said the idea of the resurrection was out of the question—that we would dissolve into the nothing from which we came, etc. Augustine said it is utterly inconceivable that there should be a physical resurrection; that would be an "abomination." Along with them were the other great ones, Gregory and Ambrose. They were the four great Roman Doctors. The Greek Doctors were Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa and his cousin, Gregory Thaumaturgus, and Basil. Those eight men set the tone. What did they teach about [resurrection]? Did we talk about them and what they taught about the doctrines of the church? Yes, we quoted just enough from Augustine, his close personal friend, Gregory (they were born just fifteen years apart), and Jerome. No resurrection, Jerome said, remember—we'll have to be resurrected because the gospel says so, and then we will melt and very promptly become the nothing from which we came.

Then who would come after them? We'll have to ask about the modern clergy; they come from them. The modern clergy don't like it at all either, but again they feel bound to say something about it. This is where the Book of Mormon becomes very important. Let's hear some things. I've quoted every one of the number one New Testament scholars of the time when this was written. It was printed in 1966 in Holland in the *Vigiliae Christianae*. The theme of the Forty Days is that he actually came and preached. That's a long time to be coming all the time. First he came the three days in the Book of Mormon. Then he preached off and on for forty days; he came and camped with them and had visits with them. That's plenty of time to teach. But did he really come [to the Jews]? [Many scholars] say, "No, he didn't."

John Gordon Davies is the foremost English scholar of the Old Testament. He edited this huge book on the subject, and everybody contributed to it. He has been here at Provo a couple of times. He has written me some letters about Mormonism, and we corresponded. But he is the grand old man. The title of this work is *He Ascended to Heaven*. He wrote, "We are bound to conclude that such an occurrence is not only improbable but impossible." That's his view of the resurrection, so he writes a book on the resurrection. "It should not even be discussed, for other such things are tolerable only as myths."

M. J. Suggs, who was a "big wheel," quotes the great Reinhold Niebuhr when he says, "It's to be taken seriously but not literally"—take it seriously as a spiritual thing, I suppose, but not literally. The great D. F. Strauss [wrote] *Das Leben Jesu* that caused an absolute sensation at the turn of the century. He said, "We just can't conceive of it. It's utterly inconceivable for us, but the evangelists could think of such a thing." The evangelists were able to believe such things, but we enlightened people today are not. That's a thing Jerome said a lot. A Christian writing of the fourth century called "The Octavius" has a lot to say about that, and Jerome especially. For those early primitive Christians that was fine. They were naive and believed such things, but today we are more educated and we don't accept that stuff [they said]. This became Christian doctrine.

Joachim Jeremias, who had lived in Palestine most of his life and was a great scholar, said, "We can only know Jesus clad in the garb of myth." The stories we read about Jesus are nothing but myths, wishful thinking after he had gone. This is the way the Christian world takes these things, so you see why the Book of Mormon is a very necessary curative to these things, to set back the balance.

Question: Are these men and the eight men you were talking about earlier the ones the Book of Mormon talks about who took the plain and precious things out of the Bible?

Answer: No, that comes way back earlier.

The Dead Sea Scrolls started coming out, and then they found the Nag Hammadi library. They are getting very much into the old, old documents—older than they’ve ever had before. And whenever you find one, it’s almost bound to bear the title “The Secret Teachings Which the Lord Gave to the Apostles after the Resurrection.” The point is we’re told that he gave them the teaching, but we’re not told a word of what it was in the New Testament. The Book of Mormon tells us what it is. It gives us the teaching, which is more than just what he gave them while he was still with them, as he says.

Well, some are frank to admit that they simply do not like the story. Paul Scherer says, “Half of it I like; half of it I don’t.” If you like the story, it’s true. If you don’t, you don’t have to accept it [according to him]. Another one, M. E. Dahl, was foremost among the Danish scholars on this. His work is called *The Resurrection of the Body*. That’s the name of the book, and he says about it, “The point is do we or do we not like the answers?” If we like the idea, he was resurrected. If we don’t like it, then he wasn’t resurrected. It’s as if it were all up to us. This is the way they talk.

It’s astonishing how many writers on the resurrection pass the forty-day interval in studied silence. It gives some good examples. Severus of Antioch in his exhaustive treatise on the resurrection never mentions the forty-day mission, and W. Bousset, who was the most eminent scholar to write on the apostasy in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, [doesn’t either], like M. E. Dahl; F. J. Foakes-Jackson, who wrote a commentary on the Acts; and Kirsopp Lake, who was foremost at the University of Chicago. In all their long surveys, they all write on the subject and never mention once the forty-day mission of Christ, the fact that he came back and preached. Indeed, churchmen since Clement and Origen have employed all the arts of rhetoric and logic to evade this crass literalism. Schmidt has talked about that; he can’t stand it. They do everything to excuse themselves. They claim that the story is insufficiently attested (that’s what J. G. Davies, S. M. Gilmour, and others do), or that the language or the thought forms of the ancients elude us. M. E. Dahl says here: “It is unlikely that the Apostle Paul’s logic bore any resemblance to ours, whether deductive or inductive. When he talks it’s a language we don’t understand.” His logic is completely out; we don’t have his logic at all. When he calls it *black*, he could mean *white* as far as we’re concerned [they claim]. So what good are the scriptures in that case, if they bear no resemblance to our type of thinking?

Or [they claim] that the writers themselves were confused in maintaining that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom while asserting the very opposite in the doctrine of the resurrection. Of course, the blood is the life, the mortality, the corruptible part. Of course flesh and blood can’t, but the Lord didn’t say, spirit doth not have flesh and blood, as you see me have. He said, “A spirit hath not flesh and bone, as you see me have,” which is something very different. But that is none other than Kirsopp Lake saying that. He says, “Both John and Paul were hopelessly confused about the post-resurrectional reality.” Well, the apostles were on the spot, but they were hopelessly confused. Then where are we going to be?

“Even those who accept the forty-day ministry are at a loss to explain what happened. Plainly the key is missing when serious commentators can describe the event as a mere example of condescension and friendship [he just came back to be friendly] by one who had more urgent business elsewhere.”

Another said it was “a magnificent recompense for the forty hours of anguish occasioned by the Lord’s absence. He made them suffer for forty hours when he was away, so to make up for it he stayed forty days with them. Well, that’s pure, sentimental speculation. R. F. Hancock in the *Hibbert Journal* says, “It was forty odd days of frustration and inaction.” The apostles didn’t know what to do and the Lord didn’t know. They just sat around and said, what do we do now? Or [it was] strategic and psychological holding back of forces for a more effective charge at the enemy—let’s build up a while and then really overrun them. “It is often claimed that a full forty

days were necessary to demonstrate the reality of the resurrection of flesh.” They were so reluctant to believe that flesh could be resurrected that he had to come back for forty days and show them that he was in the flesh—and then ceased to be. After all, forty seconds was enough to convince Thomas.

We are told that the apostles had to overlearn their lessons in order to persuade an overskeptical world. They are described as a weaning process to draw the disciples gradually away from undue attachment to each other, or to the person of the Lord, lest they be too upset with his departure (they were upset). Or strangest of all, [the forty days were] “to wean their minds away from corporeal, physical concepts, to purer realms of disembodied intellect.” This is why he came [and spent] forty days eating with them, talking with them, and saying, “A spirit hath not flesh and bone, as you see me have.” He called for a fish and honeycomb and ate it before them so they would know, because feeling and seeing hadn’t been enough. But the real reason was to prove to them that he was a spirit [according to the philosophers]; it took forty days to prove he was a spirit, after he said he wasn’t, you see.

In short, if anything like the great forty days occurred, the enormous portent of it, which Luke puts at the very root of the Christian faith, quite escapes commentators who viewed it as an odd and rather interesting interlude, but admit that in the end we do not know what Christ did or said during the forty days—we can only suggest. That’s interesting because then their eyes were opened and they were able to go forth on their missions, but we don’t have a word of what he told them. Here Jacquier says, “Just what does a spiritual body do? We don’t know. We can only reverently conjecture. It is nowhere set forth in the scriptures.”

À Lapide, who was the foremost Catholic commentator on the whole shebang, said, “Nowhere in the scripture do we find out what the nature of Christ’s body really was. It’s impertinent to inquire and over-bold to specify what it is.” And so it goes—everybody’s “at sea.”

We have only the opening words of the Lord’s discourse. What does he say? “O fools and slow of heart [not] to believe all that the prophets have spoken,”—you can’t understand—you’re stupid. Then it says, “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:25 and 27). Then their eyes were opened. Well, we’re not given a word of the great sermon he gave to them, then or after. You see why we need the Book of Mormon, why we need a fifth Gospel. Nothing of this is preserved in the canon, we are told in verse 45. These writings take the position of conscious resistance to the rising tide of skepticism regarding the reality of the resurrection. So it goes on. The teaching was never designed to be popular. It never “went” and was junked by the church in a great hurry.

So the next question is where do we stand today? This is the point: where are the Christian churches today on the resurrection? Well, we have just been quoting from modern Doctors on that. We don’t have to go very far there. But we can’t decide unless we take contemporary science into account. When they rejected it, who did they take for their guide? Well, they took Aristotle for their guide; he became the scientific cornerstone of the church. You had to adapt the scriptures to Aristotle, not Aristotle to the scriptures. Aristotle was final in scholastic philosophy. There are those, like the Thomists, who try to deny it now. They realize that they’ve gone too far, but for a thousand years Aristotle was the master of those who know. He was the keynote in theology. We don’t need to go into that now. We’re going to talk about ours. They wanted to make it scientific. It was Alfred North Whitehead who said the whole course of the Christian church has been one long, humiliating retreat—they make one adaptation after another. They do the adapting; they don’t adapt the scriptures to themselves. It is one long, humiliating retreat as they adapt and go along.

So how do we adapt here? This has become serious recently. What is the scientific mood today regarding these things? I’m sure we have some scientists here. Brother Havens, what is the

scientific mood today? Is it positivist? You know what *positivism* is, don't you? There was a cult of positivism founded in France in the middle of the nineteenth century, and it spread very rapidly. Positivism was just what you could know—what you could see, feel, and be absolutely sure of. That was pure science, and everything else was nonsense. You see lots of science fiction books; people write about that still. Like all the others, it sort of faded on the vine. It was like scientism. It's an interesting thing that most of the old chapels of the positivists were bought by the [Mormon] Church. The Church got them very easily because it collapsed with the death of their leader. The Mormon Church was able to take over a lot of nice chapels from them. Positivism is just what you know and what is obviously true. Is that the thing today? Can you trust your senses at all? Well, that's the whole thing when we come into quantum physics and things like that. No, quantum physics seems to adapt itself to modern revelation. By the rules of science it is free to do so; they are much freer now. There are a lot of good books on this, but I think the most helpful one to get you into the picture easier came out in 1980. It's called *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics* by Gary Zukav, a very good physical scientist. But the big seller today, as you may know, is Stephen Hawking's book *A Brief History of Time*. They go right together. This brings us a little more up-to-date. This is very condensed; you might find it more difficult to understand, although both books are quite lucid. I'm going to suggest Zukav's book because it is in paperback and it's still at the [BYU] Bookstore. *Wu Li* is the Chinese word for science—the *science masters*.

These are some of the basic theses that have come out in the new quantum science. The modest confession used to be, "We don't know everything." The modest confession today is, "We don't know anything." This is a very important position to take. It's more now than just a rhetorical statement. We're talking about the great Heisenberg here, who gave us the uncertainty principle—"the dilemma of having to talk in classical terms [our usual positivistic language] about phenomena which cannot be described in classical concepts is the basic paradox of quantum mechanics. It pervades every part of it. It is like trying to explain an LSD experience. We try to use familiar concepts as points of departure [you say, 'a hat is a hat, and that's that—that's science'; no, that doesn't go anymore], but beyond that, the familiar concepts do not fit the phenomena. The alternative is to say nothing at all. 'Physicists who deal with quantum theory,' wrote Heisenberg, 'are also compelled to use a language taken from ordinary life. We act as if there really were such a thing as an electric current, [or a particle] because if we forbade all physicists to speak of electric current [or particles] they could no longer express their thoughts' " (p. 202). They know there are not such things, but they have to call them something.

That [reminds me] of a thing St. Augustine said. He gave a picture of Jesus as having a body, etc. Then he said, "That's incorrect, but it's at least a picture." I'll give you a picture of this thing so you'll understand it. I show you a picture of a rake and say, "That's not a kangaroo, but you have to understand it that way." That's what they say when they talk about things in theology, "It's not what I'm talking about, but at least it's an image to think about." When they paint a picture of the Father with a dove over his head, Mary on one side and Christ on the other, and radiant lights coming out around them, etc., people are prone to think of those as being physical beings. They say, "Oh, no, no, they're not physical; they are just pictures to give you an idea." But if you want a person to get an idea of what a thing is not, you don't draw a picture of something else and say that's it. That's the best possible way to confuse if he is not that.

All over southern Germany they have these magnificent crucifixes that go back to the Middle Ages. On the bottom it says, "This is not an idol that we are praying to." It's just to remind you. It looks like one. If it looks like an elephant, call it an elephant. But we have to call it that because there is nothing else to call it. You can see that's going to lead to trouble, but that's the game that the theologians have always been playing. They are always talking about Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Christology—terms that are mysteries beyond understanding. We just have to use those terms [they say]. What could be plainer than the word *Father* or the word *Son*. They are the most elementary, primitive family words you could get. If you want to say that God is not our Father

and Christ is not a literal Son, then why on earth can't you find better words to use than the very words that would lead people straight to the wrong conclusion?

He [Zukav] says, "Therefore, physicists talk about subatomic particles as if they were real little objects that leave tracks in bubble chambers and have an independent ('objective') existence [that's not true at all]. This convention has been extremely productive. Over the last forty years almost one hundred particles have been discovered. They constitute what Kenneth Ford calls the particle zoo." But none of those particles exist in reality; this is a strange thing. But then that is so in our normal relationships. A German philosopher in the late nineteenth century by the name of Hans Vaihinger wrote a famous work called *The Philosophy of "As If,"* showing that we couldn't get along if we weren't just play acting. Well, Havelock Ellis wrote [a similar] book in English called *The Dance of Life*. We're all play acting and making believe, sort of skating around this way. We are certainly doing it today more than ever before. For example, Vaihinger tells us a person writes a letter [saying], "You rat, if you don't pay me the money you owe me, I'll have the law on you—signed, your obedient and humble servant." Well, that's the *as if*. In order to get along we make all these assumptions as if. Well, the stock market goes on the presumption as if certain things were so—as if the computer were giving us reality. We have *as if* to get along smoothly; it smooths the rails. You may act as if a person is your friend; you get along better that way.

But we really don't know what's there, is the point here. They always keep coming back to this. This is the fundamental thing, and, it says, not just in a philosophical, abstract, scientific way. We really don't know what the universe is like. "In the middle 1800s, Newtonian mechanics was at its zenith. There seemed to be no phenomenon which could not be explained in terms of mechanical models. All mechanical models were subject to long-established principles. The chairman of the physics department at Harvard discouraged graduate study because so few important matters remained unsolved. [Lord Kelvin in 1900 thought there were two little clouds in there, and those clouds grew.] By 1927, the foundations of the physics, quantum mechanics and relativity, were in place. [Finally] in contrast to Kelvin's time, the allegiance of physicists today is to a symbol of extreme openness" (p. 311). That's the model; you can believe almost anything. For a basis of experiment or speculation, nothing is too wild—it's extreme openness.

There's the famous saying of Heisenberg when somebody introduced a theory at a conference and they said, "That was pretty wild, wasn't it?"

He said, "No, the only trouble is, is it crazy enough?" This is the thing.

"'Reality' is what we take to be true [quoting from Zukav]. What we take to be true is what we believe. What we believe is based upon our perceptions. What we perceive depends on what we look for. What we look for depends on what we think. What we think depends on what we perceive. What we perceive determines what we believe. What we believe determines what we take to be true. What we take to be true is our reality," and we are stuck with that. Of course, we are just going around and around here. But that's not the reality; that's the world we live in here.

The critics of Mormonism have always proclaimed that they are cool, detached, impartial observers. A very basic theme today is there is no such thing as a detached observer observing detached things. This is the idea now. What we look at is something else—we don't analyze it. [According to] the famous Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics, reality is not like it appears. "It says that what we perceive to be physical reality is actually our cognitive construction of it [you make it]. This cognitive construction may appear to be substantive and real, but the Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics leads directly to the conclusion that the physical world itself is not" (p. 82). A lot of top scientists met in Copenhagen and came to that conclusion. Einstein opposed it for a while. Here's another statement on this. These statements are rather important, I think. They've actually had an influence on me. "Von

Neumann's discovery that our thought processes (the realm of symbols) project illusory restrictions onto the real world is essentially the same discovery that led Einstein to the general theory of relativity. Einstein disproved the universality of Euclidean geometry" (p. 280). That was the most obvious thing, the final proof.

I remember when I was a kid of thirteen or so, I was reading a book on geometry, and Vern Knudsen, who was the head of the Physics Department at UCLA at that time, came to the house for dinner. He was a member of the Church, and in the wards we got together. He saw the grammar, which was a very old-fashioned geometry. He said, "There you have reality. That is the final reality. When you have something proved there, you know it is true. You can't go farther than that." That's what it was in those days. It was an illusory restriction to the real world. It's essentially the same discovery that Einstein made. He disproved the universality of that Euclidean geometry I was doing there.

"Until the general theory of relativity, Euclidean geometry had been accepted without question as the underlying structure of the universe. Birkoff and von Neumann disproved the universality of classical logic." That's part of it, not only the logic on which it is based, but the classical logic itself, based on the excluded middle and basic terms. [According to] Aristotle a thing can't be *A* and *B* at the same time, but that's out now. You forget about your excluded middle. It can be *A* and *B* and a lot of other things. "Until now classical logic has been accepted without question as natural reflection of the nature of reality [and it's nothing of the sort]. A powerful awareness lies dormant in these discoveries: an awareness of the hitherto-unsuspected powers of the mind to mold 'reality' [we make it up], rather than the other way round. In this sense, the philosophy of physics is becoming indistinguishable from the philosophies of Buddhism, which is the philosophy of enlightenment" (p. 280). The only difference between Buddhism and Mormonism there is that Buddhism is complete annihilation—don't ask for anything and you won't be disappointed. They are so realistic to say "there really is nothing." *Nyeti nyeti* is where it all ends up, just exactly like Jerome—"into the nothing from which we came." But we, in the Egyptian, say, "No, you have to be yourself, and you will always be yourself."

Whatever sense we make of the scene, it would seem, is quite wrong today. Here's another one. I like these quotations. What this really comes down to is the idea: Did the Lord really come? Is that possible? Are we in a position to judge? "Bell's theorem shows that common sense ideas are inadequate even to describe the macroscopic events of the everyday world!" (p. 290). We're not just talking about particles here, little dinky things, but the things that happen all around us. [Henry Stapp wrote:] It "shows that our ordinary ideas about the world are somehow profoundly deficient even on the macroscopic level." Even on the level of books, papers, and things like that they are profoundly deficient; they won't work at all. "No matter how it is formulated, it projects 'irrational' aspects of subatomic phenomena squarely into macroscopic domain [it's not just the subatomic; it's the world we live in]. It says that not only do events in the realm of the very small behave in ways that are utterly different from our common sense view of the world, but also that events of the world at large, the world of freeways and sports cars, behave in ways which are utterly different from our common sense view of them [we've got a completely cockeyed view of the world]. This incredible statement cannot be dismissed as fantasy because it is based upon the awesome and proven accuracy of quantum theory itself" (pp. 290–91).

If we see something, what is it we see? We see the part that appeals to us. Then what do we do? We have to construct our own universe. This is a thing that has become very prominent on the biological side. "Quantum physicists ponder questions like . . . 'Did any particles exist at all before we thought about them and measured them?' 'Did we create the particles that we are experimenting with?' Incredible as it sounds, this is a possibility that many physicists recognize. John Wheeler, a well-known physicist at Princeton, wrote, 'May the universe in some strange sense be "brought into being" by the participation of those who participate?' " (pp. 28–29).

Did you bring it into being? It's not just your sensation, but there must be something out there that's giving it to you, and you influence that. "The vital act is the act of participation." You don't observe something out there anymore. You participate; you are part of it. Remember what the scriptures say about the Lord? He is in all things, and through all things, and about all things. Well, every participator is that, he says here. " 'Participator' is the incontrovertible new concept given by quantum mechanics. It strikes down the term *observer* of classical theory, the man who stands safely behind the thick glass wall and watches what goes on without taking part in it [no, that won't go]. It can't be done, quantum mechanics says."

When you observe you enter into it, and you are in it and through it and about it in the same way, too. We can't see at all, so we insist on filling out the picture, because we have to have a complete picture. We can't just leave it there. That's what I used to call "the gas law of learning." The gas law is that any amount of gas, no matter how small, will fill any vacuum, no matter how large. It will, even though there are only two atoms. Well, any amount of ignorance, no matter how great, can be satisfied and filled by any amount of knowledge, no matter how small. If I'm a complete ignoramus and I learn two facts, I'm happy now—I know. I'm a knower. You find that all the time, of course. No matter how great the ignorance just a few facts will fill it up all right.

This is an interesting statement here: "All that the mind can ponder is its *ideas* of reality. . . . Therefore, whether or not something is true is not a matter of how closely it corresponds to the absolute truth, but of how consistent it is with our experience [well, those people really saw the Savior]. The extraordinary importance of the Copenhagen Interpretation lies in the fact that for the first time scientists attempting to formulate a consistent physics were forced by their own findings to acknowledge that a complete understanding of reality lies beyond the capabilities of rational thought [we'll never have a complete understanding of reality; in other words, there will always be mysteries]. It was this that Einstein could not accept. 'The most incomprehensible thing about the world,' he wrote, 'is that it is comprehensible.' [Is it comprehensible? That thought is incomprehensible, he says.] But the deed was done. The new physics was based not upon 'absolute truth,' but upon *us*" (p. 38). It acknowledged that a complete understanding of reality lies beyond the capabilities of rational thought.

So we should be able to accept all sorts of things here. "Not one physicist, not even Planck himself, wanted to accept the implications of Planck's discovery, for to do so threatened a scientific structure (Newtonian physics) over three hundred years old. Heisenberg wrote about the quantum revolution [this is how we react to it]:

"When new groups of phenomena compel changes in the pattern of thought, . . . even the most eminent of physicists find immense difficulties [this happens especially in theology; a person says he's had a vision, and what's the reaction to it?]. For the demand for change in the thought pattern may engender the feelings that the ground is to be pulled from under one's feet. . . . I believe that the difficulties at this point can hardly be overestimated. Once one has experienced the desperation with which clever and conciliatory men of science react to the demand for a change in the thought pattern, one can only be amazed that such revolutions in science have actually been possible at all." (p. 192)

Whenever they take place nobody wants to tear out all the plumbing and redo it all again. That's what it amounts to—or be pulled out of a nice warm bed into a cold shower, or something like that. Nobody wants that; it's terrible. They fight, hang onto the furniture, and scream [so to speak], but it finally goes through. Well, you can imagine what their reaction would be to Joseph Smith trying to introduce them into another world, in a case like that. They acted accordingly; they were absolutely frantic [about] where that led. We insist on filling out the picture here and making one that we can see. Can this be achieved here?

We have these ideas that don't get along together. You end up with a Many Worlds concept—many worlds that are just alike. That's an important thing. "If the second assumption (definiteness) fails, then we are led to the Many Worlds theory in which the world continuously is splitting into separate and mutually inaccessible branches, each of which contains different editions of the same actors performing different acts at the same time." Like this world, there are other worlds of actors, not doing the same things we are, but they are contemporary with our particular world. This is the Many Worlds theory which has come out because it's necessary to fulfill certain things all at once. "Despite the tidal wave of 'knowledge' which has swept over us for forty years, the Fundamental Physics Group found it necessary, like the physicists at Copenhagen a half century before them, to acknowledge that it might not be possible to construct a model of reality [we'll never be able to know the real world]. This acknowledgment is more than a recognition of the limitations of this theory or that theory. It is a recognition emerging throughout the West that *knowledge itself* is limited" (p. 303).

We can only have so much knowledge in this world; there's a lot going on that we'll never [understand]. It's easy to say, "Well, I don't know everything—all sorts of things are possible." But when it talks about the things of the eternities and the possibilities [we become concerned]. What brings this on is this interruption—the Lord breaking in and appearing, or the Angel Moroni coming. If they are going to do things like that, then [people] say, well, men must be crazy. No, "it might not be possible for us to construct a model of reality. This acknowledgment is more than a recognition of the limitations of this theory or that theory. It is a recognition emerging throughout the West that *knowledge itself* is limited. Said in another way, it is a recognition of the difference between knowledge and wisdom." So we have the word of wisdom here.

So much for the common sense, cold-light-of-day theory. There's an important one here, too, on the "either or," the "excluded middle," and the like. "The wave particle duality marked the end of the 'Either-Or' way of looking at the world. Physicists no longer would accept the proposition that light is *either* a participle *or* a wave, because they had 'proved' to themselves that it was *both*, depending on how they looked at it." This opens the door to all sorts of things. This is what Heisenberg wrote: "It meant a tendency for something. It was a quantitative version of the old concept of 'potentia' in Aristotelian philosophy"—potentialities (pp. 65–66).

We have all these potentialities every day of our lives. Every second of your life you have to make a choice. That's why this is the time of judgment. That's why this is the time when we are being tested. Which will you choose? It's the doctrine of the Two Ways. It isn't the doctrine of the Two Ways that you once had a choice ten years ago. Every hour of your life you have a choice of which way to go, as the Book of Mormon says. So you are being judged. Which do you choose? You decide for yourself. So there you are. It's like a child who is loose in a candy store or a toy shop. Or we'll say you're let loose in a cavern of jewels. You can have any jewel you want in here; that's your potentialities. They are all available to you, but you can choose only one. When you have chosen one, then your other choices are all out. A lot is being said about that today by these physics people—you have these potentialities. This is the way Heisenberg puts it: "It introduced something standing in the middle between the idea of an event and the actual event, a strange kind of physical reality [I think of the Savior standing there] just in the middle between possibility and reality." You must make your choice and decide. When the apostles decided they would believe, there he was. But they had to decide, and you have to decide. You make a thing cease to exist just because you don't believe in it; that's not what it says at all.

Here's another good one. "In a related context Nels Bohr wrote that quantum mechanics, by its essence, entails . . . 'the necessity of a final renunciation of the classical idea of causality and a radical revision of our attitude toward the problem of physical reality' " (p. 113). That's our fatalism. I had a brother who was a passionate fatalist. Of course, Aristotle was that. One thing causes another which causes another; therefore, you're not to blame for anything. What caused



you to do this was something else. Something else caused him to do that, and something else caused that to happen. You are the helpless victim of a chain of causality. But he [Bohr] says we don't have that anymore: ". . . a final renunciation of the classical idea of causality [they gave that up] and a radical revision of our attitude toward the problem of physical reality." Well, what do you have in the place of that?

"The entire structure of classical mechanics was based on the fact that somewhere, somehow, there must be a frame of reference in which the laws of classical mechanics are valid. The inability of physicists to find it made classical mechanics appear exactly like a huge castle built on sand" (p. 126). That's the basic mechanics we have been working with ever since [Newton]. So our view is hopelessly limited. What we see we say is reality. Remember in *Hamlet*, he sees his father's ghost come to him. He is with his mother, Gertrude. He says, "Oh, don't you see it? What do you see?"

She says, "Nothing at all; yet all that is I see." Well, the nothing at all was true—she didn't see anything. But when she added, "yet all that is I see," there was the catch. Do you see all there is? So we have here (in Zukav's book, p. 160): "The general theory of relativity shows that our minds follow different rules than the real world does. A rational mind, based on the impressions it receives from its limited perspective [like Gertrude], forms structures which thereafter determine what it further will and will not accept freely [what you accept after that must fit into the structure you have built up]. From that point on, regardless of how the real world actually operates, this rational mind, following its self-imposed rules [very reasonable], tries to superimpose on the real world its own version of what must be." I've decided what I will see, and I will see that—that's it. He can't have seen that because such things don't exist [we say].

"The limited perspective is the perspective of our three-dimensional rationality and its view of one small part of the universe (the part into which we were born). The things that 'must be' are our ideas of geometry (the rules governing straight lines, circles, triangles, etc.). The beginner's mind was Albert Einstein's [who started very differently]. The long-held belief was that these rules govern, without exception, the entirety of the universe. What Einstein's beginner's mind realized was that this is so only in our minds. . . . However, as our experience expands, we encounter more and more difficulty in trying to superimpose these rules upon the entire expanse of the universe. Einstein was the first person to see that the geometrical rules which apply to one small part of the universe as seen from limited perspective (like ours) are not universal. This freed him to behold the universe in a way no person had seen it before" (pp. 160–61). So that's called that wide-open thing, that anything goes today.

So these things are related how? Well, there are no local causes. We talk about the other world, how the Lord can get around, and all this sort of thing. This is one thing that Galileo already pointed out. He could have made Einstein's discovery because he had it already. Newton was the one who pointed out what Galileo had pointed out, namely this: Say you have two worlds and they are fifty light years apart. Light is  $C$ —it's the *constant*. Absolutely nothing can go faster than light. But you have Newton's Law. It completely baffled Newton; he said there was no explanation to it at all. But say these worlds move farther apart or closer together. Then the gravitational force between them changes. According to the rule, the gravity is inversely proportional to the square of the distance [the inverse square law of gravity]. Even if they move a little bit, the force between them changes. But they are fifty light years apart. Does it take fifty years for that rule to apply? No, it instantly applies. Well, how can it? They're fifty light years apart. Nothing can travel faster than light, yet it doesn't take five minutes. If they just move five feet apart, according to Newton's rule, they will change instantaneously. So throughout the [universe] we have this instantaneous communication everywhere—it goes everywhere. This is why gravity doesn't fit into the complete rule that is supposed to answer all. There are the three forces, but they can't get the fourth force, which is gravity. The other three forces (the strong, the weak, and the electromagnetic) all follow the basic rule of the Constant  $C$ , but gravity will have

nothing to do with constant  $C$ . It works no matter what, no matter how far apart, instantaneous, etc. There are instantaneous connections in the universe that do things like that.

These infinite worlds and local causes they talk a lot about now. (I'm glad they explain these so clearly; it's all over my head.) "The principle of local causes must be false!" Something happens in this world and something happens in this [other] world, and they have nothing to do with each other. No, the [belief] today is that whatever happens in one is going to influence all the others. Sir James Jeans was right when he said (and this is absurd): "Every time a baby throws his bottle out of the perambulator, he disturbs the orbit of the remotest star." Well, not drastically, you understand, but the idea of that connection is there. But the principle of local causes, that a thing can happen anywhere without influencing something else, is out, [Zukav] says. "The principle of local causes must be false! However, if the principle of local causes fails and, hence, the world is not the way it appears to be, then what is the true nature of our world?" (p. 296).

He says there are no separate parts in the universe. We think of Christ coming and being there. He's going to see them tomorrow. How long will it take? "In this picture, what happens here is intimately and immediately connected to what happens elsewhere in the universe, which, in turn, is intimately and immediately connected to what happens elsewhere in the universe, and so on, simply because the separate parts of the universe are not separate parts" (pp. 296–97). This is very strong stuff. You hear in the temple or elsewhere that all truth can be circumscribed in one great whole—it's all one family. We say there are worlds without number; we read that from the Pearl of Great Price. How can they all act together, and how can the Lord get around to all of them at once? Well, this immediately raises problems which to us are quite baffling at present. But they sort of fall out when you start thinking in terms like this. [Quoting David Bohm]: "Thus, one is led to a new notion of *unbroken wholeness* which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existent parts" (p. 297).

We don't have separate existing parts; we are just one. It's one big whole thing, and we are all connected. So we're not going to get out of it. As the scriptures say, "until you have paid the last farthing," you are not going to be able to get out of the house because there is no way of getting out. We are all shut into it. We've all got to live together forever, ever so close and so intimate, according to all this.

I wanted to get into Stephen Hawking's book. He is really exciting, but there are two [problems]: It's more condensed, and it's over my head.



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 93  
3 Nephi; Psalm 19  
Physical and Spiritual Bodies  
Anthropism

I got two phone calls from the East before eight o'clock this morning. One of them was from Washington, D.C. They have to do with discussions in Sunday School classes and priesthood quorums that took place yesterday. They all have to do with Adam and his having a body. This fellow said, "Was Adam's sin really a sin, or was it a transgression?" President Joseph F. Smith said that Adam's [act] was a transgression rather than a sin. There is a difference. He [the caller] said there's no difference between them. Oh, yes, there is a great difference between them. That's in our second Article of Faith: "We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression."

There's a difference between being naughty and being vicious and rancorous, you see. How far can you go? Will you say with Macbeth, "I am in blood stepped in so far, that should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er"? I've sinned already so I might as well go on sinning. That's what John Chrysostom preached: Sin all you can; give God a chance to display his mercy and forgiving power. If you sin less than you can, you've robbed him of that privilege. See how you can rationalize these things.

But it goes back to this marvelous idea we have in 3 Nephi. I've been writing like fury all morning now as a result of this. To the Christian world Adam's fall was *the sin*. It was vile and unspeakable. "It brought death into the world and all our woes," as Milton tells us, with the loss of Eden until a Greater One redeems us. There was everything nasty and vile that followed it. The early Fathers of the church tell us that it was matter and matter alone (substance) that was the defilement. That's what the Neoplatonists taught. It was what the Gnostics taught; it was what the Hermetics taught. As Plotinus said, any contact with matter would completely corrupt God himself. That's how bad matter was. Where did they get this idea, this Neoplatonic obsession that the Christian world adopted, that matter was all bad? (We were talking about Christ coming to the Nephites here.) It was in their world. They couldn't even think of existing without misbehaving. The world had become so nasty, corrupt, and decayed, as ours is becoming, that they would just equate the two: Having a body means being vile. You don't have to, you know.

In the most beautiful of all Christian hymns, "The Pearl," a very early writing, the hero leaves his happy family in heaven. They all believed in the pre-existence in those days. He says, "When I was with my Heavenly Father above . . ." He goes forth, comes down and goes to Egypt to be tested. He has to get the pearl and bring it back undefiled. But the warning is, if you go to Egypt you will be subject to defilement, and you will be tempted—and he was. If you go to Egypt you are lost. Well, the question arose: If you go to Egypt, how far do you have to sink? That depends entirely on yourself.

Does having a body make it necessary for you to be utterly vile? That has become the idiom of our time. What does the spirit lack? I should start asking questions here. Brother Havens, what is spirit lacking? What do you have that you didn't have as a spirit?

"Matter."

Exactly, substance—that’s what you have, you see. The spirit apparently doesn’t have enough. Does the spirit have enough substance? Well, enough for what? Brigham Young has a lot to say about that; he is very good on that. (Question that is not audible, about substance) Well, it is all physical. We get into quantum physics, you see. It’s all forms of energy anyway; there’s no real substance there at all, except we know it does exist. We are aware of it at various levels. Joseph Smith absolutely shocked everybody when he said “spirit is a more refined form of matter.” We had spirit bodies. You don’t just go around as a gas when you are a spirit, you see. The Christian world doesn’t know how to handle that. It has to be something like [you find] in *Dr. Who*; you have to be made out of cellophane or something like that. You shake a lot and that makes you a spirit. They didn’t know how to define spirit. Origen, the first and greatest of all the Christian theologians goes into this quite deeply. He said, “There is only one thing you can say about a spirit; it is *asomaton*.” It has no matter, no body, no photons, no electrons, no neutrons—nothing in it at all. It is just pure idea and nothing else.

The most eminent Catholic theologian in this country and this century, Étienne Gilson, wrote a book on God. His final definition of God is: “God is the self-thinking thinker who thinks only of thought.” So now you know what God is. The idea is to get away from all matter. Don’t have Christ coming down here eating with people and things like that. That’s all wrong; you can’t have that.

Well, let’s pursue that scene for a minute here. Brigham Young tells us that there are peculiar kinds of joy that you can experience here. We’re told about appetites, desires, and passions. Are they bad? Brother Hiram, are appetites, desires, and passions to be wiped out, ignored, denied, and suppressed entirely? What’s the formula? [answer inaudible] They are to be kept within the bounds that the Lord has set. They are to be there, but to be within the bounds the Lord has set. As Brigham Young tells us, these are for our edification and enjoyment, but don’t overdo them. A good example of that is in Psalm 19. I looked at this verse and then suddenly looked at the first verse and realize that this is anthropism of a high order. This takes us right into the whole problem. Psalm 19 is perhaps the one people know best, next to (Psalm 23), “The Lord Is My Shepherd.” This is what I’m talking about here (Psalm 19:5): “Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” You rejoice to run a race—that is a physical experience. A strong man rejoices to run a race, and a bridegroom comes glowing (the word it uses is *yāšîš*) out of the bridal chamber—perfectly legitimate pleasures that they couldn’t have as spirits. This is a very interesting point.

Notice how Psalm 19 starts out.<sup>1</sup> This is right on this theme. It is cosmism; it deals with the cosmos. “The heavens”—always in the plural.

*Sēpher* is a book; *lāsappēr* is “to make known.” *Sippûr* is “an account, story or lesson.” See, they tell the story. They will tell you about the true nature of the *kəḥôd-ʾēl*, of “the greatness of God.” *Kəḥôd* means “the weight, the heaviness, the greatness, the glory, the might of God.” This is the physical heavens; you mustn’t deny them. They announce to you that God is a very powerful and glorious being.

*Maʿāseh* means the “deeds or performances of YHWH (Jehovah).” The workings of his hands are clear before you if you study them carefully. *Hā-rāqîaʿ* is “the other galaxies, the world beyond this world.” He uses lots of astronomical terms in this one. We all know, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth [forth] his handiwork.” But it goes further than *sheweth forth*; it means *explains*. Every single day, day by day. That word *yabbîaʿ* means “to gush forth in a great overpowering stream.” It announces his *ʿōmer*, his words, his commands, his plan for the thing. *ʿŌmer* is what he has uttered, the *logos*, the word of his mouth. From day to day and

then from night to night *yəḥawweh*. That's another one; it means "to blow hard, a powerful blowing wind, an irresistible course." Day after day his utterances gush forth, in continued creation, and night by night *yəḥawweh dā'at*, "he blasts forth knowledge." That's pretty strong.

There is no *ōmer* (they use that word again and again), meaning "teaching, doctrine, or knowledge." There are no words and no statements whose voices are not heard—without the hearing of their voices. We are being blasted with information whether we know it or not. The stars do send forth hints; all we get from them is hints. We have been unable to react to them. As Hawking says here, we could have known all this as early as the time of Newton; all the data we needed was there. But he says we had another plan of the universe we were sticking to, so we completely ignored it. That's what we do now. God is trying to teach us. *Bəkhōl hā-āretz* is everywhere. This is an amazing verse. There are two different sentences actually. Everywhere *yātzā*; it goes forth. It says, "His string is extended everywhere." Now what on earth does that possibly mean? The word here is *qāw*; that means "the string of a musical instrument."

Hey, I've written this all out this morning. Let me go through here. What am I bothering about this for? "Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth . . ." We've come to verse 5. Now, what rejoicing? This smacks of the anthropic principle. Man is not an observer but a participator in the universe, we are told now, in which everything is immediately influenced by everything else, including himself. So we'll read the Psalm. "The heavens declare [forth] the glory of God [and I see and react to it—declare it to me as a personal message]; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." *Yabbīa'* means "to gush forth in torrents," and *yəḥawweh* means "to breathe out, to blast out knowledge." You can't control it. Verse 2 is on communication by speech, language, voice, and hearing. All those are mentioned in this verse here. (They are numbered differently in different editions.)

Arthur Clarke tells us that light and sound waves don't travel very far. They travel, but they have to be sorted out very soon. Unless we send a camera clear out to Neptune to take a photograph of the thing, we are never going to see it in a telescope. A telescope can only dissolve up to a certain point because after sound or light waves have traveled a short distance they dampen each other. You are not going to get a clear image no matter how powerful an instrument you have. The conclusion is that there is only one way known so far by which information can be conveyed over vast reaches of time and place, and that is the written word. All you need for the written word is a surface to scratch on and something to scratch with. You have something that can travel for millions of miles and deliver your message, which will not only be time and place (where you are) but what you think. Carl Sagan is [interested in] this; he is trying to write things to send out into galaxies. The written word will convey not only who you are—time, place, and your name—but your inmost thoughts and feelings, your most subtle emotions and nuances of experience and reaction, etc. All this can be conveyed in writing over thousands of years. I'm reading a text now that is positively terrifying—an Egyptian text that goes back five thousand years. Boy, what a description it is of a world gone bad way back then!

*ōmer* is "to utter, to make a statement, to make a claim, to make a command." There is no formula, or uniting, or putting together of words except they are all heard by someone; they must be heard by someone. Then he says *bəkhōl hā-āretz*. Then the next verse says a funny thing: Their line is extended to all the earth. What's he talking about, "their line"? That's the way they translate it; that's not the thing at all. The word is *qāw*, which is the string of a musical instrument. Here's what we say with great wisdom. This refers to the music of the spheres (you've all heard of that). It was the string of an instrument that taught Pythagoras the principles of mathematics, which have been developed ever since as the key to understanding the structure of

the universe. The way he discovered it was by plucking a string and finding that if he took half the string, it was the same note, only twice as high, etc. Then he suddenly found that the whole thing was laid out in a mathematical order. There are seven notes on the scale; the eighth is the repetition of the other one. And there are the seven spheres that go around the sun—the seven heavens. Each has its tone, and as they go around they make harmony together—each making its note. With that combination there is an infinite number of harmonies and combinations that you can make. You can figure out the factorials, how many combinations of notes you can make with eight notes. They go on to billions and billions; the song never ends. This is talking about that. It makes absolutely no sense in the King James Version—“his line is stretched in the earth.” What it says here is “through all the universe his string is stretched.”

The planet earth is *tēbēl*; whereas *’eretz* is a sweeping term that means many things. It could just mean “the land of Israel.” It could mean “the earth.” It is our word *earth*. But *tēbēl* is the earth we walk on down here; that’s *planet earth*. *Millim* is another word for *words*. To the ends of the earth the human speech reaches and the *mālēhem*, “the words discussing them.” *Mallōn* is a dictionary; that’s words put together.

Then there’s another sentence: Out of these words (this is sounding very cabbalistic here) and out of these notes, he has constructed an *’ōhel*. That simply means a *tent*, but it doesn’t mean a tent here. For words and for hearing—by these communications he has provided a frame of reference (that’s what an *’ōhel* is—a *tent* that is set up) for the suns. See, the sun is not everything; it is in a closed system here, too.

Verse 6 is a typical hymn to the sun. It sounds like relativity. The sun rises and sets as it goes through the sky. Relatively that’s correct. If you are amateur astronomers, you have to use the Nautical Almanac all the time. It tells you the time the stars rise and set and the sun rises and sets so you can find your way at sea. But anyway it always talks about sunrise and sunset. Well, how unscientific—the sun doesn’t rise and set. Oh, yes, it does if you use the Nautical Almanac and if you refer from the place you stand. Seven times in one chapter in the book of Abraham, the Lord says, “This is as it is from the place where thou standest.” It’s with reference to your standing place only. With reference to where I stand, the sun rises at a certain hour. I can walk ten steps to the east and it will rise earlier. I can walk ten steps to the west and it will rise later. That’s all I have to do. The instruments are sensitive enough for that. It’s the same thing if I go north or south. It depends entirely on where I stand, but the sun does rise and set. That’s for us, and it’s a form of this *anthropism*. *Anthropos* is man. The whole structure depends on our viewpoint. You can’t view it now without being affected, or without affecting it—that’s the surprising thing.

Let’s see what else it says here. Comparing the laws of nature and the laws of science by which the world is governed . . . Oh, this next verse is a beauty. This takes us to something that wasn’t supposed to have been discovered until the twelfth century, *Tabula Smaragdina*, which is called “The Mystery of the Kāf” and “The Mystery of the O,” the great circle. Here it calls it the *kāf*, an amazing thing. *Kāf* is the Arabic letter, but it is not the Hebrew letter. The interesting thing is that it goes back to the old *kāf*.

What is this thing that comes to the end? I don’t know what it calls it in the King James. Does someone have a King James here? Here it’s in verse 7. What is it in yours?

“The circuit.”

Ah ha, it uses the *circuit*, and here it uses the word *tāqūphātō*. The word for *circuit* is the word *kāf* here. That tells me a great deal. We won’t go into that, but that’s an amazing thing because this

*kāf* is not the Hebrew letter. It's not written that way. Well, it was once; the archaic letter was that. But that's what it is talking about, the cycle or the *kāf*. Then it says the law of God belongs exactly in the same system; it belongs with this. The law of God is *tāmîm*, perfect; that means a complete circle. "Job was an upright and a perfect man," doesn't mean he was the greatest who ever lived. It means he completed the circle; he did all he should do. *Tāmîm* means "a complete circle." It's an Arabic word; in Babylonian it's the same thing. How big does a circle have to be to be a perfect circle? It can be any size you want. The idea is the form, and it's a closed circle. It has to be an equal distance from the center at all points; then it's a circle. That's the word it used. The law of God is *tāmîm*; it's perfect in that regard.

*Māshîbāh* means *repeating* or *bringing to repentance*. This means "bringing to the spirit a reminder of its true nature." You know what the *yeshiva* is. That's the *atonement*; that's coming back again. It's "bring the spirit back home." That's what we call *at-one-ment*, coming back again. What a thing! Then the knowledges (plural) of Jehovah are absolutely secure; you can say *amen* to them. You must say *amen*; that's part of an ordinance. When somebody prays or blesses the sacrament, people don't say *amen* anymore. You must—that's required. You're not participating if you don't say *amen*. It means "confirmed, be steady, stay where it is." I confirm that—*amen*, and you should say *amen*. *Ahmen* is a Latin term. We think it is a highfalutin sound. But the Semitic term is *amen*, as we say it. [Translating again:] And the knowledge of the Lord is most certain. *Maḥkîmah* is wisdom of a direct and simple sort; you can't argue with it. *Petî* means "the simplicity of a child." Remember, when the Lord came to the Nephites, the first thing he wanted was for them to be like children. This is "the making of wisdom with the simplicity of children." What a thing to say.

Verse 9: It brings conviction with it. It is the conviction of God. *Yōshārîm* is *upright, perfect, proper, of the righteous*—from the secrets of the heart. *Māsamḥê-lēb* protects you from all confusion. The idea is that all you have to do is think about these things. "Relax and let it work on you" is what he is telling here. Verse 10 is an example: The fear of the Lord is purity. The laws that God has set down are true, and they are consistent—they are all the same together. They are consistent with each other; you can test them that way. As they tell us, you never ask anymore if a thing is true or not, but whether it is consistent. Does it work? There are some very striking statements here on that sort of thing.

Then it is desirable; it is lovable. *Ha-neḥēmādîm* is the same root as *Muhammad*. "It is more desirable than gold," is what it says. The word is actually *lovable*. Remember, Brigham Young said you should seek knowledge because you love it. You should seek truth because it is lovable and desirable. That's why—not because it will get you something to eat or it will bring you higher income. He says, forget that. "Greater is its sweetness than honey and the runny honeycomb." *Nōphet* means *to run*, where the honey runs out of the honeycomb. It's sweeter than when you are sucking a honeycomb, you see.

There's a little more here: Moreover, we are admonished by these teachings for our own lives. He was talking about the cosmos; now he is talking about us. In observing these ordinances and commandments, in accepting these facts, there is a great reward or consequence. *Ēqeb* means *consequence*. I think they render it *reward*. If you follow these admonitions that are clear from the Lord [there is a reward]. You know them directly. They are sweet to your taste. Remember, Joseph Smith said, "How do I know that's true? Because it tastes good." A thing will hit you directly if it's true. He tells us here "it tastes good."

I must have neglected this little psalm because it has everything in it; it's amazing.



Then the next one: *Nistār* is the same in Egyptian and Greek; it means “secretly, unknown, caught off guard.” The word *shəgî’ôt* is *tripping* or *slipping*. It’s a *skipping step*, a dithyramb actually. “Whoever slips or makes a mistake in it unaware will know clearly where he stands,” is what it actually tells us. What does verse 13 say? *Mî-yābîn* means “to distinguish, to know, to understand clearly, to exercise intelligence.” The things he has done unaware will be clear to him. That’s what it means. If you’ve made any mistakes that you are unaware of, you will be cleared by them. What does it say [in the King James Version]? Does anyone have this?

I think it is verse 12 in here. It says, “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”

“Cleanse thou me from secret faults.” There you are. It’s not *secret* faults, but *unintentional* faults. They are hidden from you. In Greek *sathra* means “a hidden ulcer or sore.” It cleanses me from things I’ve committed unintentionally, rather than hidden sins.

Then the big sin—the next one is *pride*. “You will deliver your servant from pride by this rule.” *Ētān* means “standing alone independently.” A *yatīm* in Arabic is a person with no family support, an orphan. That’s the same word here. “Thou wilt purify me from a great sin.” That must be what it means. “The words of my mouth shall be for a favor, and the utterances of my heart before thy fact, O Jehovah, my rescue and my Redeemer.” He ends that way. The point about this, when we untangle it, is that it takes us right into the midst of things, as the Book of Mormon does. You just wait; we’ll see about that.

Now, the supreme example of this anthropic principle, or the unity of everything, is in chapter 7 of Moses. Notice the expressions he uses here in verse 30: “the particles of the earth, yea, million of earths like this, . . . and thy curtains are stretched out still; and yet thou art there [there’s the anthropic principle—wherever you go you are there], and thy bosom is there; and also thou art just.” You are there, even to your bosom. Moses 7:24: “And Enoch was high and lifted up, even in the bosom of the Father, and of the Son of Man.” What are these? They are all embraced in one single—not system, because there’s no end to it. It embraces everything. This is right in line with what they [scientists] are talking about these days.

Moses 7:31: “And thou hast taken Zion to thine own bosom, from all thy creations [all the creations are there; they are all one, and he can take one out], from all eternity to all eternity.” It is endless. Verse 36: “Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also.” A little while ago we would have said, that’s absurd. How could the same man who walked around here be doing all that? This is something, but this is the way it works now—as we shall see, I suppose. Verse 37: “And the whole heavens shall weep over them [when one world has to be destroyed the whole heavens shall weep for them], even all the workmanship of mine hands.” They all weep because they all had a share in it; they are all together. You can’t separate one from the system. I’ll have to find some of those passages; there are some very good ones here. In just a second I will. “Wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer?”

See, every world contributes to all the other worlds, so no two worlds are alike. An infinite number of combinations are possible. It’s not monotonous, in other words. “And it shall be Zion which shall come forth out of all the creations which I have made.” Each one emerges out of the others and shares with all the others. Notice, never in all the scriptures does the Lord ever imply or say, there are no creations but mine. He never says that at all. He says, these are my creations; this is what I do, etc.

On page 125 Hawking says, “It seems clear that there are relatively few ranges of values for the numbers that would allow the development of any form of intelligent life.” In creating the world,

as various scientists have recently observed, there are innumerable ways in which things could have gone wrong, but only one way in which they could have gone right. That's against all laws of chance, probability, and everything else. It's one to infinity. It shouldn't happen accidentally. On page 128 he says he finds it hard to credit the strong anthropic principle that this whole vast construction exists simply for our sake. Well, it doesn't; there are other creations. There are worlds without number, but it is also for our sake because we are in it. He goes on: "There does not seem to be any need for all these other galaxies [no, not if there's nobody in them] nor for the universe to be [and this is equally amazing] so uniform and similar in every direction."

Those other worlds are uniform and similar, as in "the other worlds we have heretofore formed." Everything follows the same pattern. It doesn't make them monotonous, but the point is they're all the same substance, all by the same principle. He says those two things are absolutely astounding—that there should be all these other worlds, as far as we know, and along with that they are also uniform, all made of the same substance. The possibility of other worlds is made almost certain by billions of other galaxies. The second is that it's the same everywhere, "like unto other worlds I have hitherto created." Is it monotonous? No, they are all alike, but they are all different. As he says, each one comes out of all the others. They share the common existence. (We just shared those passages.) They weep because they all had a share in the creation of each. There is no end that we can see to them. This is again what Hawking writes: "The quantum theory of gravity has opened up a new possibility in which there would be no boundary to space/time ['from eternity to eternity'; there's no boundary to space/time]. The boundary condition of the universe is that it has no boundary. The universe would be completely self-contained and not affected by anything outside itself. It would be neither created nor destroyed; it would just be." Carl Sagan thinks this rules out God, and he is greatly relieved that we can never close the book on the picture, nor can we on the gospel. That's what it means.

Then another one from Hawking: "Any model that described the whole universe in detail would be much too complicated mathematically for us to be ever able to calculate its predictions [so we're not going to find it, but that doesn't mean we can't keep looking. What do you do in a case like that?] One has, therefore, to make simplifying assumptions and approximations." That's what we just read in this psalm here. That's a simplifying assumption and approximation, trying to say the same thing. He says if we are going to try to figure it all out in detail mathematically, it can't be done. [It's not possible] for us to be able to calculate exact predictions; therefore, "one has to make simplifying assumptions and approximations. Even then, the problem of extracting predictions remains a formidable one."

Let's see what else I put down here. 3 Nephi is like a thrust stage, one of these forward stages, with everything brightly illuminated and standing out in all dimensions. This is in contrast to the flat, faded ancient mural of the New Testament, which is a two-dimensional thing. The spirit doesn't just stand out that way. We have slighted the Book of Mormon. We prefer the New Testament, statistically overwhelmingly. Someone went through all the conference reports to see who quoted most from which, and by far the most quoted work is the New Testament. The Book of Mormon is hardly quoted at all. Very interesting. A General Authority told me that at the conference where President Benson introduced the keynote of the conference, the Book of Mormon, after that nobody mentioned it. That's typical. We don't like it. Why? We prefer the New Testament because it gives us more license and liberty to wax emotional, inventive, and sentimental and interpret things our way. The Book of Mormon won't let you do that. It comes right down here. But when we want to make it live we hire Harry Anderson, the Seventh-Day Adventist artist, who is very literal. That won't work. 3 Nephi, though vividly real, is low key. It's the world as we see it; there are no special effects there. There's no George Lucas or Steven Spielberg there at all. You expect all things to break loose; nothing breaks loose there.

This admonishes us to look at the New Testament again, and we overlooked one of the best verses of all. That's in the wonderful chapter 21 of John. This is the third time the Lord appeared. And if

you want literalism, listen to this. Why do they make John the most mystical? Because if they accept him for what he says, he is crassly physical, as they put it here. Lapidé, one of the most famous Catholic commentators, says it's an "outrageous, insulting thing," what it says about Jesus. This is the way it goes, and it's great stuff I think. This will go [faster] than that stumbling psalm. The psalms are very archaic; they are hard to read. I haven't done it for ages anyway.

"After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples on the seashore of Tiberias, and this is how it happened." It happens that Simon Peter along with Thomas, the one called his twin, and Nathanael, who was from Cana in Galilee (there were other Canas all over the place), and the two sons of Zebedee, who were disciples also [were present]. Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing." Well, he did go swimming; he loved to swim. The earliest record we have, the *Clementine Recognitions*, tell us how Clement met him on the beach. They were having a conference at Caesarea, and Peter would get up very early in the morning and go down and swim in the ocean. Nobody else would, but he would go down there and swim and run up and down the beach. That's where Clement met him. So Peter was a very rugged person. But Peter said, "I'm going fishing."

They said to him, "We'll go with you, and we'll all be together." So they all went out and went into the boat. They fished by night; the guppies run better. That night they didn't catch a thing. When it started to be daylight, there was Jesus standing on the beach. That's a surprising thing. They didn't recognize that it was Jesus. Again, he's not appearing in chariots of fire or clouds of glory—just an ordinary man standing on the beach. They didn't even recognize him—just like Mary thought he was a gardener. He called out to them and said, *paidia*. That means *fellows* or *boys*, an affectionate way a teacher addresses his students—just as a colonel in the Russian army calls his men *dyeti*, *children*. So he said, "Boys [*kids* would be all right], have you had anything to eat yet?"

They answered and said, "No."

He said to them, "Try casting your nets on the right side of the boat, and you will find something." So they acted accordingly. They threw the nets on the right side. They couldn't draw in the nets fast enough because they were full of fish already. They ran into a school of fish, in other words. Then the disciple who was with him, the one they called "the beloved one . . ." Now, is John being modest when he refers to himself never by name, but as "the disciple that Jesus loved"? I think he is giving himself a medal every time he says that. The disciple that Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord." Simon Peter, hearing that it was the Lord, hustled into his clothes because he had been naked while they were fishing. That's a good word [hustled] for it, isn't it? He hustled into his clothes and jumped into the sea of Galilee to reach him at a distance. But the other disciples wisely remained in the boat, he says, because they weren't very far from the shore, about two hundred cubits which is almost exactly a hundred yards. They were just a hundred yards out from the shore. Peter was a powerful swimmer, and he jumped in first. It doesn't say he walked on the water on this occasion, but he jumped in first to get to the Lord. He could beat the boat. Peter was a top man in more than one thing; he was quite an athlete.

They were dragging the net of fish behind them, of course, and that would slow them down. When they finally reached the land and got out of the boat, they saw that a fire had already been built on the beach and Jesus had already fried some fish for them. Now this is altogether too much to take—that the apostles should meet with him around a smoky fire on a sandy beach and eat a beach picnic of broiled fish that Jesus had fixed for them because they hadn't had breakfast yet. Now can you get more down to earth than that? They [Christian scholars] said, this is positively insulting. He shouldn't do this. Is this the King of Glory?

Then they saw the coals burning and cooked fish lying upon them, and bread. He had it all ready for them. (It's the miracle of the loaves and fishes again, only he fixes them this time.) He says,

“Come up here.” Peter came and drew in the net onto the shore, and it was so full of fish that it had broken. There were 153 fish. Everybody at this 153 gives an enormous sigh of relief. “That must be a symbolic number,” they say. “This didn’t really happen; this is a mystery.” Because it told us the exact number of fish, just showing what a good catch they had, this proves that we are in a mystical world, and this really didn’t happen. Jesus couldn’t make it clearer. He said to them, “Come and have breakfast.”

It’s very funny, but in the first lesson of White’s *Grammar*, the most elementary Greek grammar, that’s one of the words you learn in the vocabulary. *Aristeuein* is “to have breakfast.” There was one precious sentence in an old grammar which the student had to translate: “We love to destroy the queen’s girdle during breakfast.” Now, that makes no sense but it exercises your vocabulary. It’s rather a silly thing to be doing—destroying a queen’s girdle during breakfast. But “come up and have breakfast” is exactly what Jesus said to them. And none of them dared to ask him questions. They didn’t dare to ask, “Who are you?” Well, they should know. They saw that it was the Lord. Then Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, just as if it was the sacrament, and the baked fish at the same time. And this was the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after he had risen from the dead. This is the resurrected Jesus. When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?” He started talking to them there. But what could you ask more than that? We are coming really down to earth here.

Some pious commentators, like the great Lapide, find it revolting and shocking. All week now I’ve had visits, letters, calls, and complaints. People find themselves perplexed as if their minds were darkened or something. What distresses them is that nobody answers the questions or will touch these things with a forty-foot pole. In the Sunday School everything is on the creation now. This takes us back to some really elementary questions, and they don’t like to handle them. Usually, if they ask somebody they are turned off or even rebuked by some local authority. The stake president or temple president tells them to accept and not make trouble for themselves or others. That’s no good, but if scientists can live with such galling limitations [we can]. As Hawking says, we are going to have to live with them forever. We’ve just got to make our simplifications; we’ll never be able to solve it. Why can’t the priesthood do the same? If we shed our vanity, the limitations aren’t galling—they’re delightful. There’s work to be done, great problems to get with it. Unexplored territory is always the most exciting.

Hawking says a very interesting thing here: “We have seen in this chapter how in less than half a century [that’s since I’ve been at BYU, in other words] man’s view of the universe formed over millennia, has been transformed. Even Einstein’s general theory of relativity cannot tell us how the universe started off because it predicts that all physical theories, including itself, break down at the beginning of the universe.” This breakdown didn’t cause the physicists to resign in disgust—though the head of the Physics Department at Harvard in 1928, in a famous story that’s told a lot—told the students that it was all over; there was nothing else more to do. Just as Professor Linforth, my professor at Berkeley in Greek, told me there was nothing else to be done in ancient history. It had all been done, and we knew everything that happened. He actually told me that, and he was the top man in the country in that field.

It spurred them on to quantum mechanics; that is what happened. Two interesting facts emerge here on one page. He [Hawking] says, “The laws of science contain many fundamental numbers. They are constants which can be learned only by observation [we can’t invent them; we can’t discover them by thinking]. Nobody knows why. It is also possible that some or all of the numbers vary from universe to universe, or within a single universe. It’s possible that they may not have the same constants that we have. [What is most remarkable and commented on with wonder by everybody is] the remarkable fact that the values of these numbers seem to have been finely adjusted to make possible the development of life. [Then he says it seems clear, as we mentioned before:] There are relatively few ranges of values of numbers that would allow any

form of intelligent life. Everything could have gone wrong. It just has to be certain numbers. He says we don't know whether they apply in other universes, but we know there are other universes. Yet we know they are all one; we know they are all together. Well, this thing is really quite something, isn't it?

We should get back to 3 Nephi which is the greatest revelation we have of this. This makes everything come out; we shall see that. Read it again. Remember, seventeen chapters are devoted to the mission of Jesus among the Nephites here after the Resurrection, which is something.

1. Dr. Nibley translated it himself.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 94  
3 Nephi 9–13  
Christ's Ministry and Teachings

People ask for assignments. Well, we have an assignment; it's to read 3 Nephi. We're going fast over some stuff now. Turn to 3 Nephi 6, and since we have all read it [I'll ask a question]. Is Sister Ivins here? Sister Ivins, this sixth chapter— isn't it something? Didn't it just knock you off the Christmas tree? What's the remarkable thing about it? I think it's the most powerful editorial for us in the whole Book of Mormon, probably. I say that about every chapter, but this one really does it. This one covers all the ground. You'll notice it starts out with a model society. They've been through a long war and suffered terribly. They return as a model society. They reform very wisely. They rehabilitate the enemy and all this sort of thing and begin immense prosperity. And then they start becoming spoiled. Then business becomes everything, and they're divided into classes. Then, lo and behold, you get a secret government, the lawyers take over, and everything collapses. That's the sixth chapter—what a marvelous cycle! It's probably the most condensed cycle. Is it the story of American capitalism? Well, read it carefully; it's very condensed. There's an awful lot [in it], but the next chapter does just like it. And what is the result of that? Thank you very much, Sister Ivins.

Is Tanya Ivins here? Ah, now the next one. The seventh chapter is a different thing, and you've studied it with great care, that being the assignment. A remarkable thing happens: A totally new social system emerges from that. And what is it?

“Tribes.”

Yes, they go back to their original tribal organizations. The tribes had always been in place. The thing was set up and just waiting to take over. They had the whole inner structure going all the time, just as all the Indian tribes do. It's not the tribes that count—it's the phratries. It's the groups inside, the brotherhoods, that always keep the families together, keep the name, keep the clan. It's the Turtle Clan or the Bear Clan or the Snake Clan. It's not the tribe. So they're back to their old tribal system.

Speculating a little bit, Brother Johansen . . . (he's caught in the snow; the Scandinavians couldn't be stopped by snow). Brother Clark Johnson, this could go on forever. This is their normal way of existence, but what has put a stop to the whole thing? We're back to a tribal organization; we're back to square one now. Have we got to go through that dismal routine again? What happens to arrest the whole thing and start a wholly new ball game?

“Destruction.”

Mass destruction. It's not one of the great world destructions, but it is such as we do have. We've had such mass destructions. They talk about the summer of 1983 and things like that, that shook the whole world, changed the whole world. Yes, it changes the demography, it changes the topography, and it changes the culture, too. But only locally. Notice, this is local here. It tells us most cities weren't destroyed. There was an epicenter where the destruction was nearly complete, but people escaped. Others hadn't even heard of the earthquake. It wasn't a sudden, drastic shifting of continents or anything like that—though that was what was behind it.

Well, then I notice the ninth chapter here. They have the new democracy set up. It hadn't lasted very long, had it? Let me see now—we've got all kinds of Johnsons here. Clark Johnson, now what happens? Notice, in every one of these chapters, the whole picture changes as if you had to turn off the lights, change the sets, wait between the acts, and have an intermission. You come back and it's a different scene, after the first one. So now what happens? I would call it the lowering of the shield, or the space shield, or something like that. And you get that in the ninth chapter. What am I talking about, Brother Johnson, when I think of that? Now the people are all gathered here at the temple, and then something happens.

“After the destruction, Christ proclaims [answer inaudible].”

They hear a voice. Now, this is out of the world—this is something. I say, it's just like lowering the screen that they do in these science fiction things, you know. You have a protective screen that shuts you from space. And we do have such a screen around us. We can't see through it at all. The screen is lowered, and all of a sudden in the ninth chapter here they hear a voice speaking through to them, “Wo, wo, wo.” It talks to them, and there's rejoicing, etc. The voice comes through out of outer space, so to speak. The earth does have a magnetic shield, and this is very basic. This has become a very strong issue now, of course, the idea of the nemesis. When a giant meteorite or asteroid strikes the earth—as it does every 26 million years, something like that—it gives it such a jar that the differential that goes between the core of the earth and the inner shell, which is liquid, [breaks down]. See, the inner parts of the earth rotate at different rates, and that produces this current. When the earth is heavily jarred, we're told, it breaks down that magnetic shield. And then, bang! In come the solar rays from one side, a solar wind, and in come the cosmic rays from the other, and in come the showers. The Heavyside layer disappears. About every 26 million years they say that happens. It completely changes the earth and wipes out ninety percent of the species. New species emerge. Well, this is the sort of thing that goes on here. This isn't as bad as that, but we do have that shield that's between us and the outside.

Here I do think it's relevant to talk about the “cone of time.” That is what this book is about, incidentally. He's very intriguing on this subject of the cone of time. I'll draw you a picture of it. You know what this is, the cone of time. I'll show what it's supposed to be like. This is an event; it is called “an event.” We'll make it a real distinctive event. It's a brilliant flash of light that lasts only 1/100th of a second. So the light starts going out from here in all four directions, of course, and here. We'll make it to here and to here. This is as fast as it goes—the well-known 186,300 miles a second. It goes here, and the next second it's here. You have to be here to see it; then you have to be here to see it. But time is passing meantime. Here is a second, or whatever the unit is—a second or a year. You have to be here. The light has traveled this far in this much time, so if you're out here, you'll see it. See, this is the cone. If the next second, the next light year, or the next hour you're out here, then you'll see the flash again. And if you're out here, then you'll see the flash again. The reason it's a cone [is that] it happens in both directions. It goes down this way, too, the past, and also it's round. It goes out in all directions but also all directions like a globe, so it's like the shell of a bubble that you're actually on here.

So here we're going out, and here is one light year. Here is one light year distance, and here's the distance of one light year when the two correspond. You see it—you see the flash now. That's not imagining it. A nova or a quasar suddenly flashes, and a thousand or ten thousand years later we see the flash, the same flash. It's the real event, the same event and no other. You say, oh yes, but if you get closer up to it, then you see the real thing. No, you don't. Light takes time to travel anyway. Remember, one of the basic measures of light is the time it takes to cover the thickness of an electron, which is ridiculous, but that's exactly the unit of time that's used.

So here we have this, and we go out here. Now the point is here—if you travel out here, you can see it. If you get it at the right time and the right place, you'll see it. But what if you travel along here right at the speed of light and you keep looking at it? Well, it keeps shining steadily, doesn't

it? The light is shining, and as it goes out, you go out. You go out all along here, and this is your experience of the light. But it's only a flash. It only lasts for a 1/100th of a second. This can't be the same event. Yes, it's the same event. It's not any different at all. This is your experience of it. In other words, time has ceased to exist. You can see in all the space movies that if you go with the speed of light, as Einstein said, time has stopped. And the nearer you get to it, the slower time goes—Fitzgerald's rule, etc. So here we go out here. The irony of it—what I'm getting at here: What is our experience of reality? You have to be at the time and place to experience that. Any place else this is already happening. If you happen to be here, you will see it, and this hasn't happened yet. So this is nonexistent for you, and this is nonexistent for you. That's finished. It's over and done, and this hasn't happened. Only this very second that you're living in [is reality]. This is the well-known philosophical paradox.

How long does it take for the future to become the past? Well, we came in here two minutes before the class, and the class was still future. Now, already, five minutes after, it's all past. It's as dead as the pharaohs now. It's past forever and ever. A hundredth of a second [before] it was still future, and there was still brilliant hope. A hundredth of a second after, it's all past, and there's nothing you can do about it, you see. So the fact is, we just live in this reality here and only see what's along here. How thick is this cone? Well, it's thinner than the thinnest membrane or film. It's the thickness of time; it has no thickness at all. So again the poets are right when they talk about that. Shakespeare said, "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep." Well, here we are; we'll make a model. "Our little life is rounded with a sleep." Here's our life in the middle, you see. This is sleep—we don't know what happens there. This is sleep—we don't know what happens here. And what about our little life here? Well, it's just a dream anyway, isn't it?

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, act IV, scene 1

And I immediately think of the vapor trails of a plane. That's the rack. When a cloud starts breaking up, that's the rack, you see. And so we come along making a brilliant trail here. All we know of life, all we have to show for our existence is what we remember. If you forget from day to day, you don't exist. That's the agony of Alzheimer's, isn't it? That's true. Then our vapor trail starts breaking up, doesn't it. And before long it's into nothing. Our memory isn't much good. It's an interesting game. I play it all the time now to see just how much I can remember. Does it make any difference? The whole thing is all fused together anyway. Now the interesting thing, of course, is that this is a very important part of the gospel, and the Book of Mormon, too. Hereafter our memories will be perfect. They'll be vivid, which means, right along here your light is shining at present all the time. The time stands still, and you can see this light. If you go with the speed of light, you look back and it's a steady light, not a hundredth of a second—it lasts forever.

It's the same way with our experiences here. They'll be eternal, when we shift gears that way. We talk about our vivid memories that we bring back. A good hypnotist can do marvelous [things with memory]. And many times you can hear of people at the point of drowning or some other extreme crisis. Their whole life will flash before their eyes, and they really mean it [when they



claim this]. They see the whole thing. Our memories play strange tricks; we are strange beings, you see.

Now this is what I'm talking about, the Lord appearing here. You hear this voice coming out of nowhere. That shouldn't happen—that's "nonsense." Common sense doesn't tolerate that sort of thing, etc. There's the story of King Oswui. That's the whole reason we have the gospel. Remember, King Oswui was the first English king converted. He was having a banquet in his great hall, and a Christian monk was present and was teaching him. During the gaiety of the banquet, the hall was lit with a fire. They had the two ends that were open to let the smoke out. They had two beams crossing with horses' heads on them, and they let smoke out. That was a thing they had to have. A sparrow flew through one of those and was panicked in the light. It flew around for a moment in panic and then flew out the other one. King Oswui noticed that and said, look at that sparrow. He comes in out of the dark unknown. He sees a brilliant flash of light for a minute. All he is is confused; then he's gone, and that's it. He said, that's our life. That converted him to Christianity, which he thought might teach him something of what went before and what comes after, but by that time Christianity was not teaching anything of the sort either way. They didn't believe in a physical resurrection. (I could read a paper on the subject, but I won't.) And they had thrown out the pre-existence, which was absolutely basic in early Judaism and Christianity.

Well, while I was looking at the cone of time, I saw a couple of quotations. I'm going to read them to you now, and then we'll resume with the Book of Mormon. Hawking says [in *A Brief History of Time*], "Maybe what we call imaginary time is really more basic, and what we call real is just an idea we invent to help us describe what we think the universe is like." That's what we were talking about. We're stuck with this time business. "A scientific theory is just a mathematical model we make to describe our observations." And Warren Wheeler, a great nuclear scientist in Texas, says, "Science can only describe. It never explains." It will never tell you why. All it can do is describe phenomena. But to resume Hawking's quotation, he says, "It exists only in our minds [that is, the model we make of the universe], so it is meaningless to ask which is real or which is real or imaginary time [it's like Shakespeare]. It is simply a matter of which is the more useful description."

And our friend Gary Zukav says, "Now we'll see that physics may require a more complete alteration of our thought process than we ever conceived possible or, in fact, than we ever could conceive." We don't just change a few ideas and say, well this is abstract; in theory this is very interesting. No, he says, this requires a more complete alteration of our thought process than we ever conceived or, in fact, could conceive. It's the same as the saying of Nels Bohr on that subject. And Bell's theorem is one thing that's really new in physics today. "Bell's theorem tells us that there is no such thing as separate parts. All parts of the universe are connected in an intimate, immediate way, previously claimed only by mystics and other scientific people. Bell's theorem shows that common sense ideas are inadequate even to describe macroscopic events, events of the everyday world."

And Henry Stapp says "Our ordinary ideas about the world are somehow profoundly deficient, even on the macroscopic level [the things you see around you]. Events in the world at large, the world of freeways and sports cars, behave in ways that are utterly different from our common-sense view of them. It should be obvious now that we do not see reality if only because we see so little." We have tunnel vision, you see. We have to work with the knowledge we have, but when more knowledge is offered, we reject it, as a rule. Don't do that. That's a silly thing to do. Remember, as he said, we only see one percent. We can see lots of stars, and we can see out 15, maybe 20 billion light years with new telescopes and all the marvelous things, but they say we see less than one percent of what's really there. It's nearly all dark matter, as far as we're concerned. So we don't know what's going on anywhere, he says.

We have only our memories to show for our existence, and they are a quickly fading vapor trail, as Shakespeare puts it so neatly. So we come to this ninth chapter, and it lowers the shield and shows us that there is something behind it—and this follows then. In the tenth chapter another world really breaks through. It's interesting that Christian theologians today have suddenly become enamored of that expression, *breakthrough*. Christianity was a breakthrough in the ordinary lives of men. It was something different. Well, of course it was a breakthrough. How much are they willing to recognize there—a breakthrough, a recognition, an intellectual breakthrough.

These are the survivors here [in chapter 10]. We're talking about the people at the temple. Notice, the Lord speaks here, and he laments that the whole world has gone wrong. This is the way we should have been. See, chapter 10 is the big breakthrough. There was silence for many hours. They ceased lamenting, and then they heard the voice. And what a calling down it gave! I wanted to do everything for you. I gave you a standing offer, and you would not accept it. I couldn't force you to do it; I wouldn't twist your arm. Your place shall become desolate (it means that quite literally). If you won't be gathered, your place will become desolate [the Savior said]. When they heard that they began to realize what fools they had been. They began to weep and howl for the loss of their kindred. There were three days of darkness and the mourning, etc. The more righteous part of the people, naturally, had gone to the temple, so you had a sort of selective survival here. The destruction hadn't been so great then. And then it lists the parts that were not sunk and buried; notice from verse 13 on. It tells us the places that were destroyed, but there were a lot of places that weren't destroyed. In other words, it wasn't complete destruction. It was just a major earthquake, probably 8.1 on the Richter Scale, or something like that. And notice it keeps saying, "not sunk or buried, not burned, not crushed, not carried away, not overpowered." This tells us that a lot of them were, you see.

It's like a play, you see. They're striking the old set the last day of the play. I have a lot of kids that were in drama this way or that. The last day of the play the whole cast has to stay and strike the set. They not only strike the set, but in the meantime the set for tomorrow's play is already set up and ready to go. That's what we're doing now. They're striking the set all around us, but are we building up Zion? Are we building the new set that should be there when this comes down in a cloud of dust? We've become awfully good at demolitions today. You notice how they can demolish those buildings? Bingo, in a couple of seconds. What we're good at is garbage and demolition. What a civilization!

Well, here it was, you see. In this tenth chapter it tells us something of survival. It gets them ready now. What's going to happen? It says the people of Nephi were spared, and they had been shown great blessings and great favors "insomuch that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto them" (verse 18). So the story is not over. There's going to be another episode. Well, there's some encouragement for us. We can feel good about that for a change.

Now we come to chapter 11. This is perhaps the most powerful statement in the Book of Mormon. I never can read it, because I choke up every time I try to do it. And it's very simple—that's the idea. The stranger is one of their own. You do not dispute. You repent and get your act together, he says. I am pulling the family together, he says. I want to bring you back to the Father again. He appears entirely to individuals. He always appears to individuals. That's what an atonement is. He greets them one by one, he gives them the signs and tokens one by one, he converses with them one by one, he blesses the children one by one. He gives each person to understand; for example, it comes through here in 3 Nephi 11:15. That's the one by one. Then verse 35 is another interesting one. He says, "This is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him [notice it's in the singular—whoever believes in me, I will come to him] will the Father bear record of me."

Notice, here is the cast of characters, and it's not the multitude or the mob or the chorus. It's the Father, the Son, and the individual. The Father also will come unto him, and the Father will "bear record of me [singular], for he will visit him [singular] with fire and with the Holy Ghost." That's an individual. He's not going to visit the church in the abstract or something like that. He comes to every individual there. And then in 3 Nephi 17:21 he says, "And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them [gave each one a blessing—that's something, to receive a blessing from the Lord as your own], and prayed unto the Father for them. And when he had done this he wept again." Well, why the weeping? This enormous contrast. There's joy also—we come to that.

And then there's this one to consider, verse 25. Now we have the multitude. There is a well-known Greek grammatical expression: "The whole multitude rose as a single man and waved his hat." Of course, it was a single man; he waved his hat. But listen, "And the multitude did see and hear and bear record; and they know that their record is true for they all of them did see and hear, every man for himself." He didn't say, well did you see him? You were impressed because everybody else was yelling so they must be seeing something. No, every man saw for himself, even though it was the multitude we're talking about. They heard and they bore record. There were 2,500 of them—men, women, and children. So this is this individual appearance. This is so very important to us here. And then we have a new beginning. This emphasis on children that we get in chapter 11 here is this new beginning. Only the children are uncontaminated. The angels come down and teach them. They don't wither in the presence of angels.

Now chapter 12 is very important. This is where we have the beatitudes; that's the Sermon on the Mount. Notice what a summary. This chapter in these 48 verses summarizes the moral teachings of the Lord here. But what it emphasizes here is there is no rank. The Sermon on the Mount as it's given here and in the New Testament (I was looking at it this morning) is given to the disciples in answer to the question, "Who are qualified to be taken into the church?" They're not general statements. They apply at all times. But remember what he says. The disciples came to him, and he just gave it to the disciples in the New Testament. But here he's not talking to the disciples in an unbelieving world. Here he's talking to all the believers. They're all his disciples here, and he talks to them, but still the same thing applies. What are the qualities of a member of the church? What do they have to have? They should have various qualities. He begins with the third verse: "Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Now he's talking to the multitude who have come to him. This is very appropriate, and it applies all the way through here, doesn't it.

He tells us in verses 40–41 at the end here there is no other plan; no other arrangement will do. This is universal; it's the plan throughout all the other worlds. Again, you say, isn't that going to be rather monotonous? Is it as simple as all that, to go on for eternity after eternity? Well, we see the problems of multiplicity here, how you can multiply worlds and things like that. You can do it with the 16 notes of a scale, but the example that Arthur Clarke gives is the checker game. How many moves can you make in a game of checkers? Well, if you had a million computers and each computer made a million moves a second, how long would it take to play all possible games of chess? It would take 30 billion billion years. That's quite a while, isn't it? Each of a million machines making a million moves a second, you see. If you have 300 million or 30 billion, it doesn't make any difference. It's a very simple factorial. Just figure it out. But that's how complex things are, you see, all these combinations. With only eight notes to work with, how will you ever invent a new melody? Ah, this is up to you. This is where you come in. That's your anthropism all the way, you see. Nature isn't going to invent something that's beautiful and pleasing. Well, it does it all the time, but you have to be there to react to it, or it's not going to be there.

We're rushing through these chapters here. We've read them already and so we want to get on to, well, maybe, the Jaredites—they're a favorite. But we don't get to them yet. After 3 Nephi we get

to Mormon, then 4 Nephi and existence *à la wateau*. That's nice—we have to have that. But that's a short one. As Voltaire says, "Happy the people whose annals are a blank." If there's no history, it means you're having a happy time. Our history consists only in trouble and crime. If you turn on the TV, you're not going to be interested unless somebody's pointing a gun at somebody. That's all you'll find today. There's got to be trouble and big trouble and lots of violence. That incurable taste for violence that we're having now bids very ill in terms of the Book of Mormon.

Well, chapter 12 tells us that there is to be no rank. The Sermon on the Mount is on the qualifications of membership. Who shall be admitted to the kingdom? From verse 21 on, we're told that the old law is still in effect. The old law was well nigh perfect in its way. It's far more humane and covers more ground than our laws today. We talk about the fierce, savage old tribal vengeful God of the Old Testament. Don't fool yourself. Read the laws he gave them. Our laws aren't half so kind, half so just, half so considerate of the oppressed. So it [the old law] is still in full effect, and to be taken more seriously than ever before by the individual. Notice, he tells us here that conscience displaces police orders. You have to have your conscience, the Golden Rule. The first and second commandments he talks about.

I'm sure you have all read chapter 12, but notice this is in the New Testament, too. He says, "I have not come to do away with the law but fulfill the law." You do all this up to now. [For example, there's the savage old primitive law of the Word of Wisdom. People used to get hopelessly drunk, chew tobacco, and they'd take all sorts of things that were bad for them. They'd misbehave and pass out every night from two quarts of cognac, or something like that. This was the way they'd do. Now we're going to do away with that law. Does that mean, well thank heaven, we can now break the Word the Wisdom? Of course not. It means we don't even think of it anymore. It's contained in all the other laws. That's why the Lord says to the apostles, two commandments take care of everything. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. . . . Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matthew 22:37–40.) If you love the Lord your God with all your heart, you won't have to be told not to go out and kill people and not to go out and lie or steal. Even from your enemies you're not supposed to do that—though with us it's a virtue, as Antigone says. We wouldn't have to be told not to do these terrible things if they [the commandments] become just part of our life. We don't even have to think of them. Do you have to rehearse and say, I have to remember first thing before I go out this morning I mustn't shoot anybody? Unfortunately I don't have a gun today. That's no joke. There have been civilizations that have sunk so low. That's going to be part of the course. I have some wonderful stuff from the ancient world to show you what people really go for. And to be so much like ours—it's just embarrassing.

We know the beatitudes here; we won't go through them. I'm talking about chapter 12 from verse 3 on. Who shall obtain mercy?: "And blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy [verse 7]. And blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." No impure thing can stand in the presence of God. If you were impure and had to stand in the presence of God, that would be worse than any hell you could possibly suffer, anything you could possibly imagine—to have that guilt with you. They [the pure in heart] can do it without being withered. "And blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God . . . [and those] who are persecuted for my name's sake, for theirs is the kingdom."

Notice, here are the same old Ten Commandments, but he brings them up and makes them, as he says, matters of conscience. He says, "thou shalt not kill," but if you're even angry [you're guilty]. Fulfilling the law goes further here. If you have the urge to kill, the impulse to kill, there's where the danger is, you see. As they say, guns don't kill people; people kill people. Well, this is the people-kill-people part of it. Well, guns are a great help, you understand—they simplify matters vastly. [There are] over 30,000 murders a year with guns in this country alone; that

breaks an all-time record. Don't get angry, because when you get angry you shift gears into a totally different mood. You're devilish and fiendish in things you might want to do. For a moment you have the impulse to kill. If you had the ability, you'd do it, and that's terrible. Watch the anger, you see.

Verse 22: "And whoever shall say to his brother, Raca [is worse], shall be in danger of the council; and whoso ever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." That's the worst. *Raca* is cursing [and saying] may you die. But worse than that is to call him a fool. To despise a person is worse than to hate him, you see. To be despised is worse than anger. The worst thing you can do is to hold a person in utter contempt, and that's when you say he's a fool. Don't despise anybody. "Therefore, if ye shall come unto me . . . and rememberest that thy brother has aught against thee," clear it up. The Jews put it very nicely in the Talmud, when you think that way against your brother, no matter who it is. "I am insulting the image of God," it says. If that's the image of God, it should always be treated with respect. And you can't despise what you don't know or you don't understand. So to say "thou fool" is actually deserving of hell fire. If you kill your enemy or have that strong impulse to hit somebody, that's not as bad, actually, as to despise him. That's the best kind of punishment. You know how that is—to hold [someone] in complete contempt. First "be reconciled to thy brother." No matter what, be reconciled to him and agree with your adversary. Never burn your bridges behind you, because we're governed by impulse, you see, and we do foolish things. The other person may repent and we may repent. There are many stories about the angels pleading to God to go down and destroy the world in the time of Noah, when they were so wicked. And God said no, give them more time. He is long suffering—*ar-Rahmān ar-Rahīm*, as the Koran says. He is *rahīmān*, gentle. "There is no power and there is no might except to God, and he never uses it." He is gentle and forbearing. He gives men as long as they want, and then they destroy themselves. That's very near the truth, too.

And then he goes on here [verse 25]: "Agree with thine adversary quickly." Don't get into trouble or you'll get cast into prison, etc. Brother John Welch will tell you about this verse. He's a lawyer and has studied this. It has to do with the rules of the ancient law. Then this about not committing adultery. And what's verse 28? Pornography. They don't use the word *pornography*; it's a new word. Pornography is the same sort of thing, isn't it—lusting in your mind and the like? Verse 27: "Behold, it is written by them of old time, that thou shalt not commit adultery; But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart." To look with lust is pornography—the same thing, you see. These things are all bad. This law is going further than the old Jewish law.

Verse 29: "I give unto you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart." To refrain from doing a thing, you must refrain from thinking of it. Then you don't have to refer to the law books, you see. You don't have to read the fine print that the lawyers dig up. Then, to refrain from popular vices, it tells us here, takes real restraint. Notice 3 Nephi 12:30: "For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell." This admits, you see, that these temptations are strong. That's what you're here for—to be put up against them. To resist them requires great will and strength.

Question: "What does it mean to take up your cross?"

Take up your cross? That you will "take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell." The cross and crucifixion did not begin with the Romans. The *Ṣalab* are the oldest sect, "the Christians of the cross." Well, the carrying of your cross and the bearing of a cross is a very ancient punishment. The Assyrians loved it. They loved crucifixion, and you carry your cross. This is a term with which these people would be familiar, I'm quite sure.

And also, you'll notice there was a substantial percentage of crucifixion [in the New World]. If you look at Aztec and Mayan art, especially the Aztec, [you find] crucifixion, posting people up on crosses and nailing them up. [They had] cruel punishments—to be flayed alive, to be eaten by birds, etc. They're quite common in the art. The cross is very common. There is some interesting humor there—very humorous subject, you know. When he says “cross yourself,” that's another time. That means “check yourself,” of course—that ye should take up your cross, deny yourselves, and ye should be cast into hell.

There's an interesting thing that's never been solved. I had two years of Latin epigraphy with H. R. W. Smith years ago. He was the foremost Latin epigrapher in the world. He was at Oxford, and he edited the great *Corpus Vasorum* with the Latin graffiti and the Latin pictures, etc. This was in pre-Christian Rome—way back in Republican times. Always in the schoolroom pictures they had these crosses, and they [the scholars] never could understand why. And there's a school song that says, “The school term is to begin again; take up your cross and get back to work.” So it's a term with which the ancient world was familiar. It's not just Christian—not by any means.

Well, we continue here. Then he talks again about no divorce. It's very easy in Semitic cultures to divorce a person. All you have to do in Islam is to say to a woman three times, “I release you, I release you, I release you,” and she's no longer married to you. It's as easy as that. And it was easy with the Jews, too. But you can't do that anymore, the Lord says in verse 31, except for the cause of fornication, causing her to commit adultery. That's all.

Verse 33: “And again . . . thou shalt not forswear thyself.” But don't swear at all. Forswearing is perjury. But don't make any oath, because when you make an oath, you promise that you will do something, or else do something else. You have no command of that. [You say] or else you will pay a certain penalty or fee, but you're not able to determine that fee. For example, people often swore that they would never shave again until they had murdered the Prophet Joseph Smith. Well, they didn't keep their oaths. But when it's something the Lord says, you can't change a single hair of your head white or black. You can't add a cubit to your stature. You can't make any changes. How can you swear when you don't know? You see, I swear to do something by such and such a date, or else I will do so-and-so. You don't know whether you'll be in a condition to do that or not. He says swear not at all, for the heaven is his throne and the earth is his footstool. You can't swear by heaven—it's not yours. It's the throne of God. You can't control the earth, and as far as swearing by yourself, your head or anything is concerned, you don't know what the situation will be. So you're committing a very grave offense when you commit yourself to a future you know nothing about. To forswear yourself is perjury, but this is to make an engagement you very possibly won't keep. Notice [verse 34]: “Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair black or white.”

But what do you do in a case like that? You don't prove things this way or that way. A person swears in court that a thing is so. Well, how do you know that he isn't lying? You can forswear. Don't swear at all. You say yea, yea, and nay, nay. That's all you can do. You bear your testimony. There's no contention; testimony alone remains. There's no disputation; there's no point to it. When you teach, you point. See, the words *teach*, *touch* are the same as the Greek word, *dactile*, and the Latin *didactic*. *Deiko* means to show. It means to point to a thing. When you teach, all you can do is point to a thing. You can't put it inside the person or anything like that. All you can do is point to it and let him react, you see. And it's the same way here. When you say a thing is so (yea, yea and nay, nay), let him dispute it if he wants to, and you prove it if you want. But you bear your testimony and that's all you can do about it.

A few years ago a convention of Scottish ministers wrote to President McKay from Scotland defying him to make them believe the Book of Mormon, to prove that he could prove the Book of Mormon. They would twist your arm. You can't make a person believe in God. You can't

make a person believe in anything. All you can do is say yea, yea, and that's it. Bear your testimony, and let them see for themselves. The Spirit is the one that will bear testimony as far as they're concerned, but you can't have a testimony for somebody else. So he says don't do that, because "for whatsoever cometh of more than these is evil," comes from the devil. See, that's disputation. Once we start, you say it's black, I say it's white, and we can go on arguing forever because you're convinced, and I'm convinced. There can be "bad blood" between us, etc. But I can say what I think it is and let you think about it. And you can say why you think it's so, and let me think about it. That's as far as we can go. Any more than that is devilish and makes trouble.

And then the "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." I wish the Jews would at least observe that today—that Shamir would observe that in Palestine. There was a Jewish correspondent for the *New York Times*, who is now a citizen of Israel. He coined the phrase, "You put one of ours in the hospital, and we'll put 200 of yours in the morgue." Well, we used to think the eye for an eye was a rather savage rule, didn't we? But when you say, you wound one of ours and we'll kill 200 of yours, that is not an eye for an eye. That goes far beyond the wildest savagery, but I know some of them who are acting on that principle. I knew some of those people well when I was at Camp Ritchie. That's a long way back.

Well, what is our entire obsession? An eye for an eye. The opposite is you shall not resist evil. You can't eliminate it. What do you do? How do you resist it? By doing good. That will heap coals on the head of your enemy, and nothing else will do it. But you cannot do evil and resist it directly. That alone [doing good] can diffuse it. The classic example in the Book of Mormon again is the people of Ammon. They decided the only way they could resist evil was to do good. They had more effect than all the other armies and everything else. Remember when they refused to fight?

And if a person wants to sue you and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also. President [Dallin H.] Oaks was in my ward. He was in my high priest [group], and he used to teach us. He was a lawyer, as you know. One lesson he used to always drive home. He said any settlement out of court, no matter how bad, is better than any settlement in court, no matter how good. Whatever you do, never go to court. This was from a lawyer and judge. He became a [Utah] Supreme Court judge, and he still believes that. Any settlement out of court is better than any settlement in court. So it says if he wants to sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak. Let him have everything, but don't go to court about it. Go with him twain.

Verse 42: "Give to him that asketh thee." If he wants to borrow something, don't turn him away. The old arguments are no longer valid, you see. Here's Antigone, that you should love your friends and hate your enemies. That's the law of the ancient city state. It's just the opposite now: "Pray for them who despitefully use you." There's no way of stopping them from being your enemies, except that. If you don't accept them as your enemies, you don't have enemies then. They may be plotting against you, but they'll have to have some pretty good grounds for action, etc.

Verse 45: "That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." No child of God will hate the image of God, as the Jews say. No child of God is going to hate the image of God, no matter who it is. You have to concede that. And it's so funny, you see. Here we were [during World War II] talking about the Germans, just as we have talked about the Russians. Then suddenly one day, on May 7, 1945, we signed a piece of paper, and all the German prisoners around me were my best friends. We got along marvelously. No wrong at all, no bad feelings or anything like that. It's ridiculous, isn't it that we have to have this enmity?

Verses 46–47: "Those things which were of old time, which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled. Old things are done away, and all things have become new." So that's the cycle of life, you see. We're not going to be stuck forever in this rut. We don't have to stay the way we're

living—remember that. You say, “This too shall have an end.” That’s true, but better than that, there’ll be something better after it. All things shall become new. “Therefore I would that ye should be perfect.” Well, here’s this we like to quote—be perfect. That’s a simple rule. Any questions? Just be perfect, and all your questions are answered. If I have a question in math, all you have to say is, “Well, what would Einstein do?” Oh boy, I’ve got a solution now! That’s it. It isn’t that easy. As I was explaining last time, what they mean by perfect is *tāmîm*. That’s used for “the perfect circle.” The *tāmîm* is a perfect circle. It doesn’t have to be big or small to be a circle, but it has to be a circle. It has to be fulfilled within its particular department and its calling. You can be perfect in certain things, but that means *perpetual repentance*. Notice, this is an ongoing process, to be perfect. He doesn’t expect you to achieve that all the way. As Brigham Young used to tell the Saints, “Learn everything.” Okay, I’ll go home and learn everything. No, you won’t—he knew you wouldn’t. But if that wasn’t the goal, you wouldn’t learn very much. That’s the point. And if you’re not striving to be perfect, you won’t repent.

It’s like this line of [Hawking]. You see the picture here. He has some pictures of it. He draws a line of dots like this and says, here’s a second, you see the flash. You move up here and see the flash. Does it keep flashing? No, it only flashed once, he says. But how come? It just keeps flashing like this all the time. You can see it a thousand times. And a million years later it’s still going on. If you get the dots close enough together, it will be just one continuous flash, like a movie. But that’s absurd. Is it a real event? How can you get that much? Pascal expresses it beautifully—the immensity of the spirit is dependent upon the physical body the same way. He says, “You have to eat bread to survive, but how many thoughts can you get out of one piece of bread?” There’s no proportion at all between them, you see. We’re bringing the infinite and the finite together here, and they do unite in us here. We do have eternal spirits.

We’d better rush on to chapter 13. Now here’s another theme. The theme here in [chapter 13] is there’s no need for putting on a show or hypocrisy and display, or anything like that. This is your social behavior for the world in general here. It includes the Lord’s Prayer. This is the short Lord’s Prayer, but it has the old archaic ending. They tell you the Book of Mormon is a fake because it puts this ending in the prayer [verse 13]: “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” But as Joachim Jeremias has shown, that is part of the old original Lord’s Prayer. And it’s so short here. Verse 9: “Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. [Notice, it’s Zion on earth—it’s heaven on earth. Where his will is done, that is Zion, that is his kingdom.] Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” That is his kingdom. If it comes, that’s where his will is done. Of course, where the king’s will is done, that’s his kingdom. Where it’s not done, that’s something else.

And he uses the word *debts*. Notice, they like to slide over that in the King James [translation] and say “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,” but the word actually is the business, commercial word *debts*. The one thing that keeps us from being united and keeps the kingdom of God from being here is that men are subject to each other. They’re in debt to each other. It’s debt that enslaves us and holds us down. We can’t be free and equal in the kingdom of God [with that situation]. Remember, in Zion they had all things in common. “And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.” (Moses 7:18.) That’s necessary here, so he’s talking about debts. And you see what the great obstacle is to everything now if you mention drugs, or war, or anything else. What’s the big problem in Russia? Economy everywhere you go, and you’re not going to straighten it out by appealing to the Dow Jones.

Verse 12: “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” What is the great temptation? In the Book of Mormon we’re told the four things with which Satan tries and tempts men. They are power, gain, popularity or authority, and the pleasures of the flesh—the vain things of the world. Those are the things [by which] we’re tempted. And don’t lead us into that, it



says. Actually, we have been permitted [to get involved in it]. We've been taken right up to the border, like the hero in *The Pearl*, that ancient Christian writing. Well, you can get into it if you want, or you can take as much of it as you want. It's entirely up to you. But don't lead us into temptation, and don't let us go too far here. Temptation we must have, but let's be careful about that. ". . . but deliver us from evil."

The time's up. I was going to go through this faster. This is a long book. This is not just an epitome. You can read all the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament in half an hour. That's exactly what it takes to read these, too. We've got it all here, but it's different—you'll notice that. It's not radically different, by any means. But see what it means here in this other setting.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 95

3 Nephi 11–17

Church Membership

Christ's Ministry

I just got a letter from the editor of a journal who takes Joseph Smith to task for teaching in 3 Nephi the very same things that Jesus taught in the Old World. Is Brother Warren here? Did you hear what I just said? Did you catch that jewel I just dropped? Well, I'll drop it again. The editor of a Catholic journal told me in a letter that Joseph Smith was merely repeating the New Testament in 3 Nephi—it's just the same old story. Well, what would you say to that? What did he [Jesus Christ] say about that? He explained why he was telling them those things, and what did he say? Remember, he said, these are the same things which I taught the Jews in Jerusalem. Now, here's the question. Would you expect him to teach something different?

“No.”

Why not?

“It's the same gospel.”

Ah, there you are; give that man a “cigar.” But it is different in form; it has a different emphasis, and each chapter has a clear-cut theme. The whole leads to a transcendental conclusion, a terrific conclusion, which is not found in the New Testament. Remember, the apostles thought it was all over after the crucifixion. Strangely enough, the [Christian] ministry of churchmen today still think it's all over—anything that happened after that was a fond imagination of the followers of Christ who created from a beautiful memory a figure of the Christ as the “Super [Person].” That's the general [approach] taken today.

Let's look at chapter 11. I said each chapter usually has one particular theme that carries through. We won't go through this again, but in chapter 11, you notice, he introduces himself. It's surprising the way he comes down and does it, isn't it? He helps them get over the shock of adjustment. You'd think that would be something, wouldn't you?

Then in the next chapter, he does what you'd expect. He takes the next step. He sets up teachers and states qualifications for membership. [It contains] the beatitudes, Sermon on the Mount. Who will you admit to the church? In the New Testament, too, people don't notice that the Sermon on the Mount is not just moral platitudes, not at all. It's addressed specifically to his apostles, just to them. Who will be permitted into the church? These are the qualifications. He tells us here it's a very important thing that it's not the letter of the law, but the spirit. “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” Does that abolish the scriptures or something like that? No. Brother Waldvogel. Isn't there a contradiction there? “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” Yet we're supposed to read the scriptures. Well, that's exactly what we're told in section 91 of the Doctrine and Covenants about translating the Apocrypha. It says there are many things therein “which are interpolations by the hands of man”—which is true of the scriptures. There are many things therein which are true. So how do you distinguish between them? It makes it rather difficult. That's why you have to take the doctrine that every word of the gospel was dictated directly by God. If you leave that out, then at any moment there might be something wrong in the scriptures, something that man interpolated. Well, this is taken account of in this section of

the Doctrine and Covenants. D&C 91:4: “Therefore whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth,” can benefit therefrom. If you don’t have the spirit, it’s not going to help you very much because you’ll give it the literal interpretation.

This is brought out very clearly in the New Testament. What is the argument that the Lord has with the scribes and Pharisees and the doctors of the law, Brother Waldvogel? What’s wrong with their teaching?

“They go by the reasons of men.”

Well, the reasons of men, but what should they go by then?

“By the spirit.”

That’s it. He tells them, you tax the mint and the rue; you make the tithes. With this [they are] careful. This should be done, he said. That’s true—you should keep careful accounts, and that should not be left alone, he said. But you are blind leaders of the blind if you choke on a mosquito, strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. The mosquito is there, but don’t choke on that. The camel is the big thing, you see. And then he goes on and says the love of God is the important thing here, if you have that. It’s the *esprit des lois*; it’s the spirit and intent of the law. As the prophets say, someday in the future this will be written in their hearts. Moses had it written on the tablets of stone, and they had to follow it rigorously, pointing their minds forward. It is all preparation. Everything we’re doing here is preparation. The gospel is preparation all the way along, and we haven’t prepared nearly enough yet.

But see, we have to prepare by observing. We say we observed the laws of Moses, though we knew they did not bring salvation, as Moroni said. But they pointed our minds forward, as the expression goes, just as Frank Cross calls the Dead Sea Scrolls church, the community of Qumran, “the church of anticipation,” because it looks just like a Christian church. But it’s an anticipation, and they say it’s an anticipation. They’re out there in the desert waiting for more revelation. So we get the same thing here then. The letter of the law is superseded by the spirit and intent of the law—for this intent the law was given. The Jews in the Old World, as we know, had become legalistic and pharisaical. What about the lawyers in the New World? The lawyers have laid the foundation for the destruction of this people, he says. They’re working hard at it now.

Now chapter 13—notice, this has another theme. Notice how often the word *reward* is repeated in chapter 13. Verse 1: If you give your alms before men, you’ll have your reward here, but don’t expect any reward there. No reward of your Father in Heaven. Next verse: “Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.” He doesn’t resent their having it. If you want rewards for being famous—if you want to become renowned in Hollywood or something like that—you’re welcome to it. But that’s all you’re going to get; you’re not going to get anything further out of it.

Verse 3: “But when thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.” Reward thee openly how? In the next world? In this life with your own prosperity, etc. But you know where it’s coming from. You know whom to thank for it, but you don’t advertise your good deeds. You keep them covered. Don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing and the other way around. The Lord will reward you; you’ll have your reward, all right, either here or there. Then the hypocrites who pray in the streets, “that they may be seen of men.” Well, you’ll be seen, appreciated, and praised. You’ll be famous, so you’ll have your reward, all right. Happy you. Verse 6: “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret [don’t pray openly on the rooftops, etc. Nephi did,

though, didn't he? He did that for a purpose]; and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Blessings cannot be concealed, actually. But where do they come from? It's always talking about these rewards here and about vain repetitions. What would we say the theme of this chapter is? It's where our values lie—in this world or the other. Think only of the eternal order of things. This is the surprising thing: We want to compromise. We say we can have it here, and we can have it there. We can be respected. We can live in fine houses and be blessed hereafter. The New Testament emphasizes repeatedly, and this does it again—don't think too much of this [world], and everybody knows it. From being a sergeant in the army, Septimius Severus became the most powerful and destructive emperor the Romans ever had. On his deathbed he said, "I've been everything, and nothing's worth a damn." That's true. You'll reach the same conclusion as Citizen Kane; you'll go crazy. You're not going to get any satisfaction there.

This is the reward we want, so he keeps at that—think only of the eternal rewards. Take no thought of the things of this world—forget appearances. Then the Lord's Prayer comes in this particular chapter. Notice how it emphasizes space here. The emphasis in the Lord's Prayer is on space or distance all the time. It begins with "Our Father." So we have a Father, and he's ours, you see, but he's in heaven. He's in the heavens, as it actually says here. It's talking about space and closeness. Then "hallowed be thy name." There's the connection. If the person isn't there, how can you refer to him? How can you call upon him? How can you know him? How can you phone him? Unless you know his name, you're not going to get through at all. The name becomes extremely important as identity between parties who are separated. When we're brought together at the veil or something, you must know a name; you must identify yourself. You are identified by your name, and how do you address the Father? By his name, which must be held set apart, sacred, secret. It's a secret name. Of course, in the temple, it is. The high priest in the temple in Jerusalem uttered the secret name, which was written with secret letters that nobody knew, only once a year in a whisper as he went through the veil. He gave the name to his son, but no one else ever learned it, so there was this particular name which he exchanged with the Lord. This is the point of contact, and our main tie to him is always the name.

Then he says "thy kingdom come." It's an optative [verb mood that expresses a wish]. It isn't here; we're praying that it will come. We're looking forward to it. We want it to come as soon as possible, but we are waiting. There is that distance always. And again "thy will be done on earth," as it is not now. Again another optative—may thy will be done "as it is in heaven." Your will is done up there, not down here. Where his will is done, that is the kingdom. When that comes, then his will will be done here. There's always this emphasis on space; we're talking about two worlds here.

It's very interesting that *mē eisenengkēs* is the word used here, which means "don't let us get too deep in sin." Then the word *rūsthai*, a very good word, which means "to snatch, to rescue, to pull a person out of the water or out of the fire or something, to rescue a person at the last moment." Don't let us go so far that we'll be destroyed. "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Even Cain was delivered from that, you know. Then he says, "And lead us not into temptation." Don't let us get too deep in temptation, but snatch us out at the last moment. Please don't let us go all the way. [Rescue us] from that which is evil or he who is evil, either one—from the evil one or evil-doing. The worst thing is the evil-doing, not the evil one, because we embrace him when we do evil.

And then "thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." This is omitted from the late editions of the New Testament, the Nestle, etc. But as Joachim Jeremias showed recently in Palestine, that was the old archaic ending that all prayers to God had to have. "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory." It has to end with a doxology. He wouldn't have left it

out at all here. They use that as an argument against the Book of Mormon. That shouldn't be in there; that's not in the original text of the New Testament. Well, it is in some of the texts. It's not in all of them, but it had to be there. That's chapter 13, the Lord's Prayer.

How does it get through to him? This is a very interesting thing here. We mentioned the laws of physics which confine us to this earth. We can get away, but with the speed of light. But there are unknown laws of physics which ignore such limitations, and we know that such laws exist. I'll read you just one sentence here from Hawking that shows this. When I pray to the Lord, do I think it's getting through to him in anything like a real sense at all. Well, these men are thinking about it very seriously now. He says here, "If one neglects gravitational effects, as Einstein did in 1905, one has what is called a special theory of relativity. However, this is inconsistent with Newtonian theory of gravity which says that objects attract each other with a force that depends on the distance between them. This meant that if one moved one of the objects, the force on the other would change instantaneously." It wouldn't take 50 light years to change a planet because the motion of every body affects every other body. Of course, he says this ties us completely. We'll never have a complete system because, he says, we still can't solve the problem of three bodies. We know about two bodies by laws of gravitation, but when we have three bodies influencing each other, we cannot predict for certain. We still haven't solved it. They worked 2,000 hours in Chicago with computers on it and came out with an approximate solution, just of three bodies. That's all—not 300 billion trillion bodies, or anything like that. So we're a long way from this. But the fact that we have a force here that gets instantly everywhere and is the strongest and weakest of all forces at once is just a paradox. See, gravitation is so weak; it's  $1 \times 10^{42}$  weaker (we could add zeroes all day long here) than the weak force which holds the atoms together. Yet a power as weak as that crushes the universe. That power and that alone, because it never stops, it never weakens, it's always steady. They say that's going to bring the universe back together and crush it into a singularity that has no space at all but contains all the matter in the universe. It is so powerful, to do all that. Well, this is amazing; it's full of contradictions and everything. But the weakest force is the strongest.

Then he says instantaneously, or in other words, "gravitational effects should travel with infinite velocity, instead of at or below the speed of light." Well, they tell us if bodies influence each other, there must be an exchange of particles. The particles are virtual. They don't really exist on paper, I suppose, but there must be an exchange of particles. So if gravitation has an effect and these two bodies are to affect each other, they must exchange particles. That's the gravitons. They invented gravitons, but nobody's ever found a graviton. They're purely theoretical today. But something has to explain the fact that there's an influence that gets instantly everywhere. That's an astonishing thing—a billion light years would mean nothing. The same thing will happen. So we're dealing with a strange situation here.

Well, let's get to chapter 14. You have decided for the other world, he's telling us here, so don't confuse the two ways of life. Don't get them mixed up. We've been talking about keeping them apart, you know. How do you know who else has got things [straight]? How do you know who's on the Lord's side? He organized them into a church, as you know, right at the beginning and set the apostles aside (they're not called apostles here, they're disciples). So you have a church, but how do you know who's really a saint? This is taken up a great deal in the Book of Mormon. When the case of the Nehors comes up, that's a classic example. How can you tell? So who's on the Lord's side? This chapter is addressed not only to the disciples; this is addressed to everyone. So that's what they're talking about. So he turned again to the multitude, and the first thing [he said was], "Judge not." You're not going to judge anybody. That's not our business, because "with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." You'll be judged by the measure you mete. Accept that. Then here comes this: Why do you behold "the mote that is in thy brother's eye?" A mote is a Brownian particle, one of those little specks that move in a ray of sunlight. You see the dustlike particles that move in there. Those are Brownian particles, that Einstein discovered incidentally. That's what you see in your brother's eye; you wouldn't even see that.

But you have a beam in your own eye. The word they use for *beam* is a *husk*—a piece of dry grass or some piece of garbage that's been blown around. It's something that's been blown around by the wind. You get that in your eye and you've really got something. You don't notice that in your eye, but you notice a little tiny speck in your brother's eye. So don't judge anybody. *Do not*. You may be worse than anybody else.

Verse 4: "Or how wilt thou say to thy brother: Let me pull the mote out of thine eye—and behold, a beam is in thine own eye." And then there's this again in verse 6. When you have something holy, what do you do? Keep it to yourself? Do you share it? No, grant that other people may have it, but don't try to force it on others. In this case, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet." Does that mean that they are dogs or swine? This is not an uncharitable statement at all. The word he uses is *puppy dog*, as he uses it when he's talking to the Samaritan woman. He said, yes, but the dogs can eat the crumbs that fall from the table. The word *kunarion* means a "little pet," the darling family pet. Well, if you give them the choicest crumbs from the table, as little kids do, to the family dog, naturally the little doggie is going to get sick. It's not going to do him any good at all—no benefit whatever, though he might like it. It's the same thing with pearls before swine. Would they appreciate them? Will they do them any good, any benefit whatever? You're not insulting the swine or anything like that. You don't hate them because they can't take pearls. Lots of people can't. It's the same things with the dogs here. I say the image is that of feeding some animal that's not going to be benefited at all, and it's not going to benefit you. See, you're giving away something valuable to you, but be careful; it will hurt the little doggie. It will hurt somebody else.

What do you get? What do you want? Well, you ask for what you want, and you'll get it. You seek, and you'll find; it will be opened unto you. You settle for yourself. If you want anything in particular, these things you ask for, and you'll get them. I remember when Wilkinson went up to Salt Lake once. He was raging and raving about a gift that had been given to the University of Utah by somebody who might just as well have given it to BYU. He [the donor] was a good member of the Church with a lot of money. Wilkinson stormed and ranted, and President McKay asked him, did you ask for it? No, we never asked for it. All right, then. He asked for it, and he got it.

The Lord says, if you ask for it, you'll get it. But you have to ask for it first. You really have to want it. You seek and you shall find. You must seek first. As the Talmud says, "There must be a stirring below before there can be a stirring above." You do not ask a blessing on an empty table. You set the table and ask for the blessing. You make the stirring below first. This had to do with Abraham. He moved first. He had the first move, as he tells us in Abraham [2:12]: "Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee." But he had to seek him first. You must seek first. You make the first move here. If you don't have that desire and that yearning [you don't receive], because that's where you assert your own eternal individuality, your own spirit. You're an independent being, so you make the first move. The Lord will meet you far more than halfway. You knock, and it will be opened to you. So what are you waiting for? It's all spread out before you, he tells us here. He says in verse 9: "Or what man is there of you, who, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone?" It's all there. All you have to do is ask for it when you want it.

Then comes the beauty in verse 12, the Golden Rule. This covers it all in our one-to-one relationships. God says if you want to please me, do as I do. And this is the law and the prophets—do what you would have done to you. Of course we don't do that. The "eye for an eye" won't do there anymore. It [the Golden Rule] doesn't appear for the first time in the New Testament; we know that. A Chinese proverb [has] the same effect. You don't want anybody to hit you. Why should you hit them? Then there are the two ways, and you're going to take the narrow way here. [This is] deciding who's on the Lord's side. The two ways—the narrow way and the broad way—was a basic doctrine of the early church.

Verse 15: “Beware of false prophets.” Samuel the Lamanite talks about them in sheep’s clothing. Inwardly, they are ravening wolves. We insist on judging by appearances, you see. We take them with their sheep’s clothing. Again, we’re judging by appearances. We’ll get fooled if we judge by appearances. “Beware of false prophets . . . in sheep’s clothing.” He’s been telling us all along not to judge by appearances. Now here’s a good example. It works both ways, you see. Don’t be taken in that way.

And then the rule is “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” Again, you’ll see lots of people claiming to be pious in the Church and this sort of thing. Verse 21: “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.” That is the test. But they’ll say, “Lord, Lord”—they can use his name. The name can be used by anyone. People in all other churches pray in the name of Jesus and the Lord. That’s perfectly valid. They can receive answers to their prayers, but the Lord says when they cast the devils out and so forth in my name, “then will I profess unto them: I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” They use the name for that purpose but they do not seek after [him] nor follow his commandments. He says that’s the thing—you have to do what I’m telling you to do here. Well, this is where you distinguish who’s who here. You have no means of knowing that I don’t have a double life, a real humdinger, and I don’t have any means of knowing the same about you. Big surprises [come out] about everybody, you know. He has been living that way all of his life!

Oh, I must read a poem my son wrote some years ago when he was a little kid. It’s a very good poem on this subject. See, we can rave and rant against evil and sin. The preacher can go on denouncing wickedness in the world. It doesn’t affect people at all. They can get away with murder. We can quote the Book of Mormon and all this, but everybody thinks it doesn’t apply to them—people as different as Robert Redford and Senator Hatch, for example. Both complimented me on the same book, but [they have] a very different point of view. They both read the book. They think it’s wonderful, but it always applies to the other guy. This is what Michael has written here. It’s a good poem just the same.

When Anthony preaches, he goes to the beaches  
Converting the fish who can’t make it to church.  
They swarm up to listen, adrip and aglisten  
The trout and the minnow, the pike and the perch.

“Treat all as your brother; don’t murder each other  
For all of God’s creatures are children alike.”  
What a marvelous spirit; the minnows all cheer it.  
They whisper and glare at the murderous pike [they’re the ones who get eaten]

“The root of all evil, great tool of the devil  
Is love of possessions—you’d best do without.”  
What a marvelous spirit; the pike love to hear it  
And cast a stern eye on the miserly trout.

“Work hard. Those who idle will bear harsh requital,  
Who shirks at his labors gets left in the lurch.”  
What a marvelous spirit; the trout just revere it.  
They nudge one another and mutter “Those perch!”

“Eschew fornications and lawless relations  
For sex unrestrained leads to sorrow and tears.”  
What a marvelous spirit; the perch love to hear it.

They glance at the minnows with snickers and sneers.

The saint ends his preaching; the fish love such teaching.  
They watch as his figure recedes from the shore.  
Then greed, lust and slaughter resume in the water  
And all is exactly the same as before.

After all the teaching, you see. I think that's a neat poem for a little kid to write. We won't talk about Michael here.

Let's rush on to the next chapter then. Chapter 15 answers these questions: What is the overall plan? How does this affect the old law? What about Israel in the New World? This is the "other sheep." This tells us a very important thing—that the plan of the Lord is from eternity to eternity and throughout all the immensity of space. But, of course, it's divided. It's divided into the history of this world; it's divided into cycles, plays, acts, scenes, separate speeches, etc. Each is a play in itself. The universe is divided up into various scenes where various things are going on. What has happened in worlds heretofore formed of exactly the same sort of materials? They have their dramas going on, too. There are plays going on all over the place and at various stages of advancement. So this is introduced into this world. There's more than one place where the Lord appears and does his preaching. This brings in the subject of world religions. We're not the only pebbles on the beach here. We claim to have the only religion—how exclusive and snooty we are. But what about these others? This takes up that, the overall plan.

Christ personally here takes over for the transition in this earth. We've got to make this transition to the way of life that was laid down for us in the beginning, that Adam agreed to. He was taught by the angels. We have to agree to that. We have to go through a transition. We've drifted a long way, and the Lord is here personally to supervise that. Notice verse 12 and following in chapter 15 have to do with localizing and with coordinating the operations here. He starts out here in 3 Nephi 15:1: ". . . remembereth these sayings of mine and doeth them, him will I raise up." They wonder about the law of Moses. Well, there's one law, but now you're living under another. It's the same one, only now you're living it completely. The law is fulfilled that was given to Moses. Verses 5-6: "Behold, I am he that gave the law. . . . The law in me is fulfilled. . . . I do not destroy the prophets. . . . [They] shall all be fulfilled."

Oh, I didn't bring my Doctrine and Covenants. There's a very good passage there that I could have brought in here. It comes in later, though. Old things have passed away, but you don't destroy that which has been spoken already. We love to destroy things; that's the great weakness here, you see. We have this turnover. I traveled around with an architect from New York, a friend of mine, quite an eminent person, and he showed me all these buildings his son designed. He said this was built to last for thirty years; it was going to be torn down in thirty years. That's progress, you see. That's the way we do these things. Must all the old things be done away with this way? Don't we have some continuity? Remember, it's like memory. Without memory, you have no identity, and we throw away our memory. We throw our past as we go along, so the America we see today isn't the America of our fathers. [We have] no attachment to it. We're like people with Alzheimer's; we've lost our memories. We're just going around doing the next thing, looking forward to the next moment. We think that's being up-to-date; that's being practical.

Well, he's talking about this, about the old law which is still in effect. But the covenants have not all been fulfilled. Verse 9: "Behold, I am the law, and the light [the object of that law]. Look unto me, and endure to the end." See, the object of the law is to test us. This is the time of our probation here. This life became a time of probation. ". . . and endure to the end, and ye shall live, for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life." That's the object, to get this thing going on an eternal basis, and we're far from it now. If we were to partake of the tree of life now and live forever in our sins, it would be the ultimate tragedy. We would yearn to die. But no,



we're preparing for that. If you endure, if you pass through here, if you can hang on here to the end, then you'll have eternal life. But don't expect anything here.

Then he speaks to the Twelve [verse 12]: "Ye are a light unto this people." This is the promise to Lehi's children who really have a feeling for the land. This is about this land. For the Gentiles it's a commodity, but for the Indians it's sacred. I know. I've spent lots of time among them, and it is holy [to them]. Their religion makes a very important thing of it. When Yigael Yadin was here, a little group of us were having an evening with him over at Kent Brown's house. Yadin was the great Israeli general and commander of the army, and also the head of Israeli Antiquities. He just died a few months ago. He was talking about it. We said, what religion are you? What do you believe in? He said, my religion is the land. That's what I believe in. It's the land. To me that is sacred. That's carrying it pretty far, the land of Eretz Israel, but lots of people feel that way—that the land itself is sacred. No other land would do. There's something special about this place. But this inheritance is not for the Gentiles; it's given to this branch of Israel.

Verse 13: "And behold, this is the land of your inheritance; and the Father hath given it unto you. [It's yours. As I say, we use it as a commodity.] And not at any time hath the Father given me commandment that I should tell it unto your brethren at Jerusalem." When the Peabody Corporation bulldozed the sacred canyon of the Hopis, the Blue Canyon, it was a sad thing. It was a place where they used to meet. Developers, and we have a lot of them now, accused the Indians of pagan reverence for the land—of being sentimental and romantic, whereas they are solid and practical. They're businessmen. We might fight to get a brief income from allowing nuclear waste to be deposited in there, and we do. There are parts of Utah where the people actually fought and got very nasty about people who didn't want nuclear waste to be brought in and dumped because that would mean they'd make money for a few years. But then for thousands of years the land couldn't be walked on; it would be no good at all. That didn't count. They wanted the money the same way. We call Palestine the Holy Land, and yet we scoff at the Indians for believing their assigned portion of the land is holy. They have their holy rocks, as you know, and canyons and streams and particular things. The Greeks and other ancients were the same way. Would you call that nature religion? Well, there's an awful lot of that in the Pearl of Great Price, especially in the book of Enoch. We're not talking about that now, but he makes it very specific. This is your holy land.

Now there are other tribes "whom the Father hath led away." He's calling them a tribe. Verse 17: "[There are] other sheep I have which are not of this fold [and we know this passage, too], . . . and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." That's the theme. This is to bring them together here. And the stiffnecked of the Jews didn't understand what he was talking about. Verse 19: "Ye were separated from among them because of their iniquity." You're going to be rehabilitated. This is the Rechabite principle, as you know. We have to get out. They left wicked Jerusalem so they could live the pure law. The only way they could do it was to get out of town by themselves. This is what happened with the Rechabites. They were separated from among them. Other tribes the Father has separated from them. This is the process, and "because of their iniquity" they know not of them. So we're all living separately because we're not righteous enough to associate. If we associated with each other in a corrupt state, we'd corrupt each other. Verse 21: "And verily I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have; . . . they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." They didn't understand me. But "the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice . . . save it were by the Holy Ghost." That they can have, you see. But they can become Israel; we can see how they can become Israel.

Now he carries this through in the next chapter. What about the rest of the human race, we ask. Well, no one is denied. Here we have accommodation with the Gentiles. Since it's the same gospel, all must be given a chance to get into it. In this chapter, which is so packed with history and prophecy, one is up and the other is down. The Gentiles are up, and then notice what goes on here. In verse 4 the Jews are out and the Gentiles are in, but Israel benefits. In verse 6 the Gentiles

are blessed. In verse 7 Israel is out and the Gentiles are in. In verse 8 some of the Gentiles are unbelieving. They're out [rejected] in the Promised Land, and Israel is scattered. In verse 8 everybody is out. The Gentiles have become unbelieving, and Israel is scattered. In verse 9 the Gentiles are up and Israel is down. In verse 10 and following, the Gentiles begin to slip. In verses 11–12 Israel is taken back again. In verse 13 the Gentiles are given another chance. In verse 14 Israel is held back to give them the final chance. In verse 15 the Gentiles refuse the gospel, and Israel is unleashed. In verse 16 Israel gets the Promised Land. It's up and down, in and out, back and forth. Now this is repeated in some of the chapters that follow, to make perfectly clear what he's talking about here. We've gone rather fast through that. What I'm asking you to do is read this through carefully and see if that isn't so. See who is up and who is down.

Third Nephi 16:10: "And thus commandeth the Father . . . at that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel. . . . I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them." This is the ultimate prophecy in the Book of Mormon. The tenth verse is the great warning. If they will not return, Israel "shall go through among them, and shall tread them down." We have vivid imagery here, but we don't know what it is, what will happen. It's very interesting. Jack Anderson has said all along that he's far more frightened of what will come up from the south against this land than of the Russian threat to us. He said the Russians don't really threaten us, and, as we see now, they don't. But the threat will come when we're so weak they can go through us like a knife through butter, and this sort of thing. If our morals are weak and our economy breaks down, since we have nothing to live for except the economy [they can do it]. There's nothing in our lives except that, nothing to sustain us. What would happen if the economy collapsed? You have no idea how people were broken up and completely shattered by the Great Depression. It didn't faze the Hopis at all. They've always been living on dry sand and nothing else. They didn't lose a thing; they got through beautifully. It's just as hard for them today. But with us, [there were] suicides right and left—the most terrible things happening. I had a project in sociology in which I had to consult with all the pastors in Glendale, California, about what was going on in the churches, etc. I got some very interesting things. Their morale had completely collapsed, just because the economy wasn't holding up. Who cares about that, you see. Then he says [verse 16], "I should give unto this people this land for their inheritance."

After all this chapter 17 is marvelous. This changes the tone completely. This is the happy chapter. After this pageant of mounting conflict and folly, we reach the grand climax in the Book of Mormon, and it's all good news. That's wonderful. The Book of Mormon's the happiest book in the world. The terrible questions without the gnawing doubts are here, you see. After all, we're all we're just one loving family, he says. Christ wants it that way; he sets the example. This is the great intimacy in the church. Remember, when Jesus comes he talks, he prays, he eats, he converses, he even weeps with them. He does everything they do. When they kneel on the ground, he kneels on the ground. He heals them all. Then it's the children's turn, and they alone offer no opposition. Most of this chapter belongs to the children, too. But at the beginning of the chapter he says this isn't just a display. I'm not just putting on a show here. This is something to exercise your minds on. You've got to think about this. He said, I see you cannot understand all my words.

It isn't just that you're impressed by special effects, like *Star Wars*. That's not it at all. In verse 2 he says, you don't understand what I've been talking about, do you? So this is what you do—you go home and concentrate. "Ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father [you pray that you can understand it], in my name, that you may understand, and prepare your minds." You see, we think if we accept the gospel [we have arrived]. A missionary goes out and a family is baptized into the Church, but we have a long way to go here. It's something to exercise the mind. It requires understanding, and you must prepare your minds for it. These people were the righteous. They'd grown up in the church and been baptized. They were those who weren't destroyed. The others were in the church, too, but the church was corrupt on their part. But they [the righteous] didn't understand it when the Lord came. They didn't understand the words any

more than the apostles understood the words when the Lord spoke to them after the resurrection. Remember, at the end of Mark and Luke when he spoke to them, then their eyes were opened, and they began to understand it. We don't have what he taught them [in the New Testament], but this is what he taught the apostles after the resurrection. He's speaking to his disciples here, too, remember. So this is the story. This is the New Testament we have. This is the most valuable part of all, the gospel of the forty days, that we have here. It is missing [from the New Testament]. But it had to have that preparation. He says, this is what I taught the Jews and I'm giving it to you now. So, ponder these things, think about them, and prepare your way. You must make an intellectual effort; you don't just sit around.

Verse 4: "But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel." He's going to somebody else. In the next verse [he says] he's going to the lost tribes. This is a new vista. This is beyond Jerusalem, beyond Zarahemla, beyond the Wasatch. It's the lost tribes of Israel. We don't know where they are. The people didn't want him to leave, and they were in tears. Then he talks about the next epiphany, his "bowels are filled with compassion," because he's leaving. They weep in the New Testament, too. What will we do when you have gone? Again, there's this separation. Christian theology teaches there was none—that after the crucifixion it was the Christ's spirit that suffused everywhere, and it's just love in your hearts and nothing else. It's not talking in those terms only.

He's filled with compassion, and then he asks, are there any sick? He's going to heal all the sick there. Now this is an interesting thing. Verse 8: "I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you." Remember, he couldn't heal them unless their faith was sufficient. That's a very important thing. Remember, it happened during his mission. He could not do miracles among them because of their lack of faith. Remember when he went to his own home town? The Nephites' faith was sufficient, so with one accord they went forth and brought their sick (you can be sure of that). And "he did heal them every one." Now the preaching of the gospel is not a medical mission. Notice, he was healing them so they would be able to hear the gospel the next day. He was going to teach them the next day. He was going to bring them all together. They were to be washed up and prepared for it. They were not only to be healed, but they were to be baptized again. They'd all been baptized. Nephi's order was to baptize them all again. Everybody is going to have to be there cleaned up, washed up, and healed of any disease. Then they're ready to hear the gospel. Then we're ready for him. We say medical missionaries do a wonderful work, like the Seventh Day Adventists. But the gospel begins where the healing ends. The Lord says heal them, feed them, and then you preach to them, as he preached to the multitude. He fed them, and then he preached to them. That was the bread they really liked. He said then I'll give you bread, and you'll never be hungry again if you eat this bread. So this illness is actually a distraction. The gospel requires concentration, and it requires health. These are prerequisites, but they're not the goal of Christianity. They're the preparation to hear the gospel he is going to teach them.

Before he leaves he commands that the children should be brought—all this concern with the children. They're the only ones that can be reached. We have to start with them, with this new generation—just as the great corruption came with the new generation a few chapters back right in 3 Nephi. It says the new generation had grown up not knowing the gospel, and they were lured away by the Nehors and the Gadiantons. They found it was romantic. The young kids found it was romantic to be robbers in the mountains, etc. They joined these secret societies in great numbers. This is the sort of thing that happens, like Satanism and all this nonsense.

But now he commands [verses 11–14] "that their little ones should be brought. So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst; and the multitude gave way till they had all been brought to him. . . . He commanded the multitude that they should kneel down upon the ground. . . . Jesus groaned within himself, and said: Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel." See, this

is the thing. These you'd think would be the most righteous people in the world. But can't the human race ever get going? Must we always louse things up this way? This is the point. Why do we settle, when we're capable of such tremendous things, for such a shabby bargain we make. It's amazing.

He said he was "troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel." They are the ones who should be more righteous. It's the contrast between them and the innocent children that is so moving here.

Verse 15: "He himself also knelt upon the earth." Here's Christ the resurrected Lord kneeling upon the ground. Remember, Moroni didn't touch the earth when he appeared to Joseph Smith. His feet were above the ground; he didn't touch it. He was a messenger from above come to deliver a message. But the Lord had come down here to take us into his arms. He's going to be one of us, one of the family, you see. He goes all the way. And what "he prayed cannot be written." Now we're getting out into these other dimensions, which you can't describe. We know they exist, like a singularity. This is what we're talking about here, but they bore record of it. When he says it can't be written, is he saying that it's impossible, or it's not permitted? Either we're forbidden to write it or we can't write it. Or if we'd write it, you'd misunderstand it. So he's not going to talk that way. This is a demonstration of what is available to the undefiled human race as such, not a sentimental interlude here.

Verse 16: "The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father." Notice what the theme is. What is this theme here? Again we have one of those passages where every verse in succession sounds the gong on one particular word, and the word here is what? Can you find the word in the next four verses? The same word is the center of each of the next three verses [17–20]. What is the word? "And no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father [and] he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome. And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them, and bade them arise. And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: . . . And now behold, my joy is full."

The theme is joy here. They're rejoicing. This is the happiest possible time they're talking about here. The theme is joy, and what is harder to support, great joy or great sorrow or great pain or great suffering or great fear? The joy is the hardest. You have to be pure and righteous, I suppose, to [experience] great joy. It's the hardest thing to take of all. That's what we run away from. We fear it. As I said, we can suffer, suffer, suffer the way they do in the art theatres. You must suffer to produce a work of art. We're great sufferers—like the Russians there's no end to what we can suffer. It's unlimited. But joy is a thing that scares us. It's a very interesting thing that our friend Hawking here says there are certain things that cannot be defined or conceived that are very real in the universe. He gives as the best example, joy. He says you can't confine it or define it. You can't tell somebody else what it is, and you can only take so much. It will knock you out. How much sweet can you take? How much sour can you take? How much of a particular kind of food can you take? Well, joy is strong medicine. It's powerful stuff, and we're preparing to be able to receive it, you see. We'd wither up if we had to receive it now. It sounds like a paradox, doesn't it? But if we were righteous, then we could receive the joy without the guilt. When the joy we're not worthy of is upon us, we feel guilty as hell, so there's no joy at all.

So on with the paradoxes. He took the children and "he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one," again. Never the plural. Even the children are blessed one by one. Verse 22: "And when he had done this he wept again." We read that passage from Moses where Enoch asked the Lord, how is it that you can weep? He [the Lord] said when I consider what opportunities I placed before Adam in the garden . . . I gave him his agency, and I gave him the necessary knowledge. I even gave him commandments about what they should do, that they should love one another. But behold they are without affection; they hate their own

blood. So God weeps, and therefore shall the heavens weep. This earth has to be destroyed, and all the other earths weep for it, because what happens in one part of the universe affects all the others. You see this is right out of our quantum mechanics. One thing affects all the others. They all contribute to the others. They all exchange particles, actually. Everybody's exchanging particles with every other. It's an amazing theory, isn't it?

When he had done this, then, "he wept again; And he . . . said unto them: Behold your little ones." And why wouldn't you weep about that? Do you realize that 40,000 children a day die of hunger? That's what the figure is. That's hard to realize. It's talking about African nations, etc.—40,000 a day is the average of these little children. Remember what the Lord says, Wo unto him who offends one of these little ones. It were better that he had a millstone tied around his neck and were dropped into the sea, if that should happen. It's the little ones we offend. Look at our [society]. Look at the child abuse. Look at the child neglect in our society. It is the most alarming, most increasing statistic we have—the offense to the harmless, innocent children. Parents don't care about them. Nobody cares about them. It's a horrible thing. This seems to be the normal procedure of the human race—exposure and all the rest of it. Jesus weeps when he thinks of it because that's not the way things should be. And he says unto them, "Behold your little ones."

Verse 24: "And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven [and the angels came and administered to them]. . . . And the multitude did see and hear and bear record; and they know that their record is true for they all of them did see and hear, every man for himself; and they were in number about two thousand and five hundred souls; and they did consist of men, women, and children." It explains elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, too, that they [angels] walked around among them, conversed with them, comforted them, and gave them blessings which they would always remember, etc. They ministered to them in that way. That's what angels do when they minister; they bring the word. When Gabriel came in Luke 1, he said, behold, I have come to minister to you. Then he preached the gospel.

"They cast their eyes towards heaven . . . and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them." Why did the angels finally agree to come down? Because the children were qualified to receive them, but the others weren't. The children could receive the angels. Their conversation was with the angels; they mingled among them. The multitudes saw them here with the children and bore record, and all of them saw, every man for himself—there's the individualism again. They were in number about 2,500—men, women, and children. They saw the angels minister to the children. There was nothing wrong with that; they could do that. You see, that's why Moroni had to come to Joseph when he was still a child.

Well, actually, what Gabriel says here in Luke 1:19 is: "I have come to chat with you," and with Zacharias and Mary he uses the same word. *Lalēsai* means "to talk with you." It's the regular Greek word for an intimate chat or talk. Zacharias was absolutely struck dumb. Nobody had seen an angel for 400 years. When he came to Zacharias in the temple, behind the veil, he said, "I have come to have a conversation with you." I've come to chat with you. And he says the same thing to Mary, I have come *lalēsai*. He said to Zacharias, "I've come to preach the gospel to you." So they come and chat. That's what angels do when they come and administer.

Well, I see the time is up now. I was going to take us up to the end of 3 Nephi. What we'll do is go through and "hoe the ground" a couple of times because it's a long book and has important things in it.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

**Semester 4, Lecture 96**

**3 Nephi 11–19**

**Resurrection**

**The Forty-Day Ministry**

**Blessing the Children**

They [the apostles] made lost writings, a lot of them, and they are very rich. I notice that I cite fifty to a hundred of them here in this article, just dealing with the resurrection, that were not known or published in Joseph Smith's day. Why do you think they weren't widely published by the Christian world? They are the oldest writings we have, incidentally. The oldest Christian writings we have nearly all talk about that [the resurrection] and nearly all have the heading "The Things Which the Lord Taught the Disciples in Secret after the Resurrection." Why didn't the Christian world preserve them? Well, it did—under cover.

"They were uncomfortable with them."

Yes, by the fourth century they had got rid of nearly all of them. They had done it quite deliberately—you can follow that step by step—because they didn't like what they said. By the fourth century everything became spiritualized, and they couldn't publish it. They couldn't figure it out. So these things were missing, but now we have them. It would be good to match them against the New Testament; they fit very nicely. But against the Book of Mormon in particular, they recount things happening the very same way. We asked last time, why is it that things happen the same way everywhere Jesus goes after the resurrection? We said, very logically, he is preaching the same gospel.

So there are the three main sources. There is the passion week just before the resurrection. What happened in what is called "the passion week"? Is Brother Clawson here? Brother Clay, what happened during the three days immediately preceding the crucifixion?

"Well, there was darkness."

No, not darkness then. It was at the crucifixion that happened. But just before then, what happened during passion week? The Lord went up to Jerusalem, didn't he? And he manifested himself in the temple for what he really was. How did he manifest himself to the people? Did they accept him as the Messiah, finally? What about Palm Sunday, as it is called, when they laid the palms before him and hailed him as the Messiah? He was recognized by the multitude. [inaudible question]

The point is that we have the three days before, the three days after, and then the three days following them. How long does the Lord give his main sermons to the Nephites? It tells very explicitly; you could even guess it.

"Three days."

Three days, yes. Then it says after that he appeared to them oft. But these things he taught them during three days. So we have three days after the resurrection and the days before the resurrection when the multitude acknowledged him. And the authorities had their chance to see him. When he revealed himself as the Messiah, we are told he did it to the high priests, and the

elders, and the Sanhedrin—the council of the Jews. And they rejected him, didn't they? Remember, they said, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"I am," he said. So where did they take him then to be tried?

"To Pilate."

Yes, to Pilate, to the Romans. He was taken to the Gentiles. He testified before Pilate. When he was asked if he was king of the Jews, he said, "Thou sayest." Notice, that he testified to the Jews and to the Gentiles, to the multitude and to the priesthood. Beginning with the high priests, he revealed himself as who he is. One Roman accepted him. Who was that? Remember the last act of all, just as he perished on the cross, the Roman soldier said, "This was truly the son of God." So three times he witnessed before the Gentiles, the authorities, and the people. And this is exactly what he does in the Book of Mormon during these three days after he comes. Remember, he addresses the multitude and in special meetings he addresses the Twelve. And also he speaks a good deal about the Gentiles; they are going to hear it, too. So it's the same sort of thing. He appears to the Nephites and Lamanites three days after the resurrection and to the Jews three days before. But what about the three days in between? That's very important for our doctrine, isn't it? What are they called? They go by a special name. They are called the *descensus* because Peter tells us that during the three days he [the Savior] went and preached to the spirits in heaven, who were disobedient at the time of Noah. Back to the book of Enoch here. This is called *descensus*, the Latin term for *descent*. It is also called by the Greek term, the *kerygma*, which means *the preaching*. He went down to preach. *Kerygma* means *the preaching*; and *descensus* means *the going down*. This became a very, very puzzling thing with the Christians. This is what embarrassed them and why they dropped the whole thing. And this is the thing that is richly attested in the apocryphal works that have come out now.

He took the same message in the *kerygma*. With three missions, he was very busy. After visiting he must be on the way. Notice, he has an awful lot to do. He must be on the way to other sheep. He must be on the way to the lost tribes of Israel. He left the Jews to come to the Nephites and preach to them. He has many sheep that are of other folds, and he must be on his way. But he visits them oft during the forty days. It was specifically "forty days" in the New Testament; "often" in the Book of Mormon. So you can't accuse the Old Testament and the New Testament of borrowing from the pagans, anything from the heathen here. They say it's the old year rite, etc.

Comment: "In *Jesus the Christ* Elder Talmage writes that Christ came to the Americas six and a half weeks after—that he spent the full forty days in Jerusalem and didn't come to the Americas until after that."

Until he had finished the forty days over there? Well, that's an interesting theory. Brother Talmage was always rich with them. When he was seventeen years old he offered forty-four courses of study at the BYU Academy in those days. That little Welshman knew all the answers; he was a great man, though. I had some nice interviews with Brother Talmage back in the early days. That's a very interesting point, though. It would have been at least forty days for them [the Nephites] too; we're going to see that. That means it wasn't all over in a hurry. It wasn't one session. This is an elaborate thing, and that's very important to realize if he waited six and a half weeks to start visiting here. Meanwhile, the disciples had been carrying out their assignments. Maybe it was at that time that he met them on the road.

About the Easter season, a great deal of folklore and comparative study has developed. Of course, this is the death of the year god and the resurrection, the coming of the spring with the spring rites. *Easter* is a pagan word. *Ēastre* is the rites of spring, which happened at the spring equinox.

The Easter must be held at the first new moon after the equinox. There was a great argument that split the church, whether they should go by the sun calendar or the moon calendar. They've gone round and round. But on this point you cannot accuse the Old Testament or the New Testament of borrowing a snippet from the rites and traditions of the pagans; it's the other way around. Why? There have been some interesting studies made by Bevan and others. We never find in any of their literature or any of their traditions anywhere that God or a god appears to humans and converses with them on a one-to-one basis. That never happens. The nearest to that is Muhammad, and all he saw was the angel Gabriel. He said he saw him at a bow-shot distance, and he filled half the sky. He thought he'd gone crazy and didn't know what he was seeing. It was in that area in between. He ran home. We're told that Waraqa, his wife's brother, had been Christian, so he could answer these things. Muhammad went and asked Waraqa, "Am I crazy? Are these things real?" Waraqa belonged to one of the desert communities, like the [people of] the Dead Sea Scrolls. He said, "Yes, it is real. You will be the prophet to this people." This reassured Muhammad. That's when he had his wife wrap him in blankets. He broke out into a cold sweat and thought he had been losing his mind, until Waraka reassured that he wasn't crazy—that the Lord meant him to be a prophet for that people. I think he was a prophet for that people, but a local one. He never had anything like what happens in the Bible, where men like Abraham and Moses see God face to face. This is something different, then.

The mythology of the gods is always taken back to the Golden Age when men and gods lived together. But after that, the gods (or God) departed from the earth and never came again. That's very, very old. The oldest epic writing we have in Egypt is "Re and the Sun's Eye" which is on that very subject—how gods left the earth when men became wicked and they've not come back again—you don't talk with them.

Well, now we have the Lord on a number of special missions, and he gives special instructions to special groups. In the New Testament as in the Book of Mormon, the time schedule is sometimes puzzling. Somebody asked me last time, well, now wait a minute. He comes and visits them, and if you consider the things he has to do, could that take place in one meeting or in one day? I mean it goes on and on. Here are the teachings of three years telescoped into one meeting. Well, it's obvious that more is meant than that. The whole thing is not delivered all in one package, or with imperceptible gradualness, as used to be thought. Things happen, as you know now, in packages—quanta, as they are called. There are particles or waves or orbits. You must be in one orbit or the other; you can't be in both at once. You can't be in between; you must be this or that. It comes in packages. The gospel is delivered from time to time. There are dispensations when the heavens are opened, and we get a package. We don't get everything in it here—though at the end, Mormon tells us that the Lord taught them everything there was to know. Well, it was everything in that package, because later on he said if you obey these things and keep them I will give you a lot more. But we have to use this word *package*; it refers to the relative situation in which we find ourselves.

In the ancient story of the redemption, the Greek dramas were sacred and designed only to be shown at the spring equinox, the *dionysiac*. On that occasion it was the resurrection and redemption by the king. There's sin, the people have to be redeemed, and a death pays for it, etc. They had degenerated, but all those themes were there. The epic is divided into a trilogy (three plays), the play into three acts, and each act into three scenes. Each one is independent and can stand by itself. In Shakespeare, you notice, any scene is when a new character comes on the stage, someone who hasn't been there before. Then you have another story, another drama, another character, another influence. So every time you have a change of character on the stage, you have a different scene. It's the characters that make the scenes. So it is with the gospel. It is divided into episodes, etc. You can take so much and I can take so much, but we don't know it all at once.

This parallel with the *Descensus* is very striking. Here's the way it goes. Let's consider it this way. In the literature there are two great sources for what happened. *The Teachings of the Apostles* is



the oldest we have; it's very old. Then there is the "Harrowing of Hell." That became a drama. In the fifth century they dramatized it, like a temple drama. But before then, some say they can trace it to the first or second century. That's the "Harrowing of Hell" about the Lord visiting the lower world, when he comes down and preaches to the spirits. He does it exactly the same way as when he visits the Nephites. These episodes repeat themselves. First, as the play begins they are sitting in darkness, as the scriptures say, "them that sit in darkness." Later on in the eleventh and twelfth centuries it was done on a stage erected in front of a cathedral; it was not done in the church. It's very old. In the *Gospel of Nicodemus* it's set forth. It goes back to the fifth century, but there is much older evidence than that.

Well, here the people are sitting in darkness and mourning because of their sins. They are the people that sinned at the time of Noah, Peter tells us. What do they see? They see the Lord descending in a bright light, the same as the Nephites. After three days of darkness they are sitting there mourning at the temple in the ruins and mourning for their sins, and the Lord appears to them. He comes in a bright light. He comes and teaches them and commands the apostles to baptize them, exactly as he does with the Nephites—as far as the teachings, the repentance, etc. It ends in a great procession where, through the work for the dead, they are delivered. They leave Hell, the underworld. It begins with a dialogue between Death and Hell. Hell is worried sick because the Lord is coming and he is going to smash the Gates. They create that drama, that he smashed the Gates of Hell to deliver the dead. The Gates of Hell will not prevail and hold them back. But he doesn't have to smash them because he has the key. He comes down and teaches the people the gospel and then orders them to repent and be baptized. He commissions the apostles to baptize them. Then they come out, and it's Adam who leads the procession because he was the one that fell first. The one who supervises the work for the dead is Adam, and he leads them out in a grand procession at the end of the play. They all leave Hell and go up like that.

So we have this very interesting thing—that the Book of Mormon repeats the same situation. There might be something here worth reading.<sup>1</sup> He descends as a figure of light, as he does in 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon. He announces that he is the light of the world, and then, as here, the whole multitude falls to earth, etc. They knew that he had come to lead them out of the prison. The first thing he did was to address the disobedient spirits as promised. Remember, [one of the first things] he says to the Nephites: "And this is my doctrine: . . . the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me" (3 Nephi 11:32). They were disobedient. We must repent; that's the first thing we do. We are all disobedient spirits in prison. The next thing was to insist that they all be baptized—exactly as in the *Descensus* accounts; he must give the *seal* of baptism to all to whom he preaches in the underworld before they can follow him out of the darkness up into his kingdom. He has come to deliver them from the Gates of Hell that hold them in bondage; this is the "smashing of the Gates theme."

This is where they did away with it. No passage of scripture puzzles theologians as much as 1 Peter 3:18–19; 4:6, the brief notice of the descent of Christ to preach to the dead, "regarded by some," as MacCulloch observes, "as wholly enigmatic," because "the plain meaning of the passages conflicted with the interpreters' views of the nature of life beyond the grave." See, in the church they wouldn't accept that view of life beyond the grave, so they didn't know what to do with Peter. It was "wholly enigmatic." The plain meaning conflicted with the accepted view of what should be hereafter. He descends into what? It couldn't have been the Underworld, St. Augustine says. That's too primitive and naive for words. To what, then? There are three missions of Christ, three descents in the Gospels: (1) as a mortal condescending to mortals—the Christians explain this; (2) as a spirit, ministering to spirits in their deep prison; (3) as a glorified, resurrected being.

The Catholic Church today interprets it this way: The Lord just had one mission, according to them. He is not even going to come again. According to them, we are the spirits who are sitting in spiritual darkness here and he comes to us. Well, that's true. We are in the dark prison of

ignorance and are disobedient *like* those of Noah's day. (That's the way they interpret it.) Thus they confine the Petrine doctrine to the Lord's mortal mission, as does the modern Catholic explanation, that "the effect of Christ's preaching extended to the lost, without His having actually descended to them." That's the official Catholic statement: He didn't actually descend. It says he did, but he didn't actually, because it was spiritually. Says one scholar: "Whether the Petrine passages referred to the descent or not, the doctrine itself, wherever derived, soon became a most vital one in early Christian thought." This is the one they threw out. The most vital doctrine was this preaching to the dead. Then we have the mystery play, etc.

How about these meetings [in 3 Nephi]? How can you contain all these things? How does this go? It's as confused as conference time. I can tell you that. Notice there are different congregations here, and it's just like the New Testament also. It doesn't bother to specify that on another occasion he did this. It will simply say, "He turned to the multitude," or "he spoke to the multitude." That could be days later after the sermon he had just been giving. We get the impression that it is all one talk. We get the impression that Jesus' life was all just one sermon, so to speak. But it is divided up like this, and this is why we mustn't split hairs about these things.

It starts out in 3 Nephi 9:1 saying "all the inhabitants of the earth" heard the voice that spoke. Now wait a minute—all the inhabitants of the earth? Then it immediately qualifies it: "upon all the face of this land." That cuts it down. *Kōl hā-āretz* is the Hebrew word for *everybody* and *everywhere*. You use it and then you break it down into the section you are talking about. It simply means *everybody*. After all, *everybody* and *everywhere* wouldn't have any meaning at all if they were literally to be taken as absolutes every time. When you say *everybody*, there may be somebody in the upper Marianas who wasn't there or something like that. Or *everywhere* or *always*—well, what about seven million B.C., or something like that? There wasn't any time then. We can't quibble about these things. This is a manner of speaking, the language. It doesn't deceive us. What you are doing is analyzing the language. It seems that this is hair-splitting, but you know what he means when he says they heard the voice and all the inhabitants of the earth heard it. Then it specifies in the same sentence "upon all the face of this land."

Then in 3 Nephi 10:1 it says, "All the people of the land did hear these sayings, and did witness of it." Now this is quite a congregation; this is not the same that met Jesus. In chapter 11, verse 1 it says a great multitude gathered around the temple. There Jesus received them one by one, and they worshipped him at the end of meeting. There would be another one after that, the confidential meeting with Nephi.

Question: In connection with this play you cited, "The Harrowing of Hell," did they also have temple work going on for the dead?

Answer: The tradition was very much alive, as you learn from some of the Jewish sources, especially from the stories of the Maccabees, etc. Yes, they definitely had the tradition, and they definitely had work for the dead and that sort of thing. It was in a fragmentary state, but remember it was very secret. They kept it going just the same. This play, "The Harrowing of Hell," was one of the great Anglo-Saxon medieval writings. It was a very popular writing in the Middle Ages, but the English version is the most famous. You know *Everyman* from which Thomas Mann created a German drama. Actually, it's an English medieval drama which is the story of Adam, the fall, and his redemption. It's a morality play and puts it on a strictly moral basis.

Here [in 3 Nephi 11:1] a great multitude was gathered there to worship him. Verse 17 is the end of this meeting. It's followed in the next verse by a strictly confidential meeting with Nephi in which he gives him an appointment, a mission, etc. Then Nephi brings in the other authorities in verse 22: "Then again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them

power to baptize [he was just talking to them, you see]. And he said unto them: On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you.” These were the brethren (theologians, you might say) who were prone to dispute about these things. He is not talking to the whole multitude in all the world when he says this to them [verse 28]: “And there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been [they have been hairsplitting and legalizing, like the Doctors of the Jews]; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been.”

A *disputation* is a *disputatio*, a formal discussion or debate on points of doctrine. He is talking to some of the brethren here, some of the authorities. First it was just to Nephi in verse 18: “And it came to pass that he spake unto Nephi, . . . and he commanded him that he should come forth.” Then in verse 22 he called others likewise and gave them this council: First of all, you are to baptize, but you are not to argue about these things. I’m not preaching these things for discussion and argument, as you have been doing before. Then there is this marvelous verse about contending, a thing you must never do [verse 29]: “I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.”

There shall be no contention among you. You just say yea, yea and nay, nay and let it go at that. That’s what you believe. That’s your testimony, but you don’t start fighting about these things. Then in the next verse he says, “And I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me.” It’s the gospel of repentance.

At the beginning of chapter 12 he introduces the twelve to the multitude. Nephi had been called and the twelve. “He stretched forth his hand unto the multitude, and cried unto them saying: Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you.” So next he introduced the twelve to the multitude. How soon could that be after? That could be another meeting; that could be the next day. You can get a lot done in three days if you keep going. They were deputed to teach a larger group. And [some of] the multitude themselves were deputed to teach a larger multitude. He is talking to them in verse 12 where he says, “For ye shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, . . . for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.”

Verses 11–16, however, are not meant for the multitude. After he introduces the twelve, he says, “And again, more blessed are they who shall believe in your words.” In verses 11–16 he is talking about the missionaries, not the multitude. Notice, he is speaking to them in verse 14. The multitude is there, but he says, “I give unto you to be the light of *this people*.” That could be in the presence of the others, or it might not. Verse 16: “Therefore let your light so shine before *this people*.” He is making a distinction between this body and this people. (This is before the eminent journal of that name appeared.) And verse 20 follows the same way here. Therefore come unto me and follow my commandments which I have commanded you at this time. It’s not of universal application here. He is talking to special people again, you see.

Then we go into chapter 13. You notice, as we saw before, that these chapters are divided into very distinct subjects, into distinct and separate sermons, that should be taken home and digested. He tells them to go home and ponder these things. Each thing is worth a day’s sermon. I don’t think they would all be jammed together as they are in the scriptures because they have to be. This is the way it’s all put together after the Lord comes; it’s actually timeless. It’s another subject he is talking about here, and you ask, can this be the same meeting? He’s talking about giving alms before men, morals in the church, and [hypocrites who pray to be seen of men]. These are the New Testament teachings that apply to all men—lay not up treasures on earth, etc. However, from verse 25 on he picks out the twelve for special instruction: “And now . . . when

Jesus had spoken these words he looked upon the twelve whom he had chosen, and said unto them . . .” He has been speaking to everybody here. These are moral principles that everybody in the church should observe. But now in verse 25 he speaks to the twelve and says: “Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, ye are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life.” Then [he gives] these instructions. You don’t worry about what you shall eat or drink, or how you shall be clothed, etc.

Then at the beginning of the next chapter, the multitude is still there. “When Jesus had spoken these words he turned again to the multitude.” He spoke again to the multitude, but since he turned to them, he had turned aside to speak to the apostles again. Chapter 15 contains what he taught to the other multitude in the Old World before the resurrection. Notice, he says, I am teaching you exactly the same things I taught them. 3 Nephi 15:1: “When Jesus had ended these sayings he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and said unto them: Behold, ye have heard the things which I taught before I ascended to my Father.” He is repeating word for word what he taught before; he is giving the same gospel to them now. Therefore, you must remember these things; you must keep them as I give them to you. This is very important. These meetings are identical, like the endowment. We have the identical words spoken in all the endowments, and we are supposed to remember them. That’s one of the main reasons for going to the temple, so we learn them and can remember them. But they are not liturgical words that we utter; they don’t make up our meetings, etc. They are for our instruction on how we fit into the eternal picture.

Chapter 16 is the great world history chapter, but it’s on an entirely different subject. It’s a new lesson for the day, and the theme is there are many congregations. To all of whom he preaches the same things, which they must write down to preserve in his absence to be compared in due time, like the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph. It’s to show that they all make up one book, and they will become one stick in his hand (Ezekiel 37:16). He is talking about these other congregations. They are all over the place, but they are all getting exactly the same teachings, he tells us in chapter 16. Verse 6: “And blessed are the Gentiles, because of their belief in me.” They are in it too now, but wo unto the unbelieving Gentiles who have scattered this people. So in chapter 16 there are more tribes.

Then is chapter 17 a fond farewell? This sounds like a farewell. The people are weeping and he is weeping to leave them. If he were coming back the next day, what’s all the weeping about? Does he change his plans, or something? This must be the last day. He says, “Behold, my time is at hand. I perceive that ye are weak.” They are weeping and they want him to stay. He says in verse 4 he is going to congregations none of them know anything about. He has to be on his way. But he changes his schedule in verses 5 and 6. I’ll stay with you a little while, and you bring your sick. Note here, what multitude is he speaking to, all the people? Look at the verse 9. How long would it take to fetch all of those who were unable to attend and bring them forth one by one to be healed? They all went home to get their sick and their lame. They came and he healed them one by one. Of course, the healing wouldn’t take all day; the Lord’s healings were instantaneous, as you know—not to the multitude as a whole, but one by one.

Then you ask in verse 11 here—is this the same meeting? “He commanded that their little children should be brought.” Now the meeting with the children is something else; they’re another congregation. He blesses the children also one by one in verse 21; they deserve special attention. The angels minister in a separate meeting in which they do not mingle among the people, just among the children. The people look on and testify of it. They heard what they said, but they didn’t understand it. In verse 24 the angels minister in a separate meeting with the children, while the others are only spectators. “And they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them. And the multitude did see and hear and bear record [they bore record of it, but this meeting was the children’s meeting—this was their Primary]. . . . All of them did see and hear, every man for himself.” There’s that again, so they can testify, and the number

was only 2500. That's very small. They would be lost in one of our big stadiums, wouldn't they? That's not much, after all, but it isn't everybody. It's going to tell us in a minute that it's just a small part of the people. "Every man for himself"—that's cutting it down to a party of one, always bringing that out. In 3 Nephi 18:21 and 34 was he addressing the children? Did they come in their families? Yes, we are told they came in their families, because when they went home, it tells us, they took their wives and children with them and went home. So they were included in the 2500.

There's another exclusive group in an ordinance in which the multitude are excluded in verse 36: "When Jesus had made an end of these sayings, he touched with his hand the disciples whom he had chosen one by one [not the whole multitude], even until he had touched them all, and spake unto them as he touched them [the multitude didn't hear; they were excluded, it tells us in verse 37]. "And the multitude heard not the words which he spake." What he did was give them power to give the Holy Ghost. They didn't know that at the time.

Verse 38: "When Jesus had touched them all [who? all the multitude? all the disciples? Take your choice], there came a cloud and overshadowed the multitude that they could not see Jesus." Remember, it tells us in Acts when they saw him at the ascension, they worshipped him, but there were some who doubted—in that position. What's going on here? You could still doubt that.

We see in 3 Nephi 19:1 that they had been there in family groups, the 2500. "Every man did take his wife and his children and did return to his own home." So they had their own homes. Then immediately they starting noising it abroad to the real multitude. Just a tiny fraction of the people were here. Notice, "All the night it was noised abroad concerning Jesus." It's like Easter night or Christmas Eve, with the great tension and excitement—nobody can sleep that night. Thucydides said, "That night not a man slept." There was great excitement because something was to happen on the morrow. If we were told the Lord was to come tomorrow and we had to notify everybody we could, we [wouldn't sleep]. He said they spent all night going around—nobody slept. So they are getting a vastly greater number of people than the Lord had been talking to before, the 2500. No matter how many there had been, they were just a part of it because it says [verse 3]: "All the night it was noised abroad concerning Jesus; and insomuch did they send forth unto the people [these aren't the people who were there obviously] that there were many, yea, an exceedingly great number, did labor exceedingly all that night [to make contact with all these other people—there was going to be a real multitude this day], that they might be on the morrow in the place where Jesus should show himself unto the multitude." So *multitude* is a very general term [referring to] the crowd that would be there. But they were the multitude.

In the next verse when the multitude was gathered together, this was another multitude entirely (verses 4–5) where it mentions the disciples by name, etc. "And behold, the multitude was so great that they did cause that they should be separated into twelve bodies." [There were] twelve multitudes, and each of the disciples preached to each one of these bodies, and each one did it separately exactly word for word what Jesus had given them. It was like sending out Xerox copies, or something like that. No, it was like the Assembly Hall or the Salt Palace during conference; people go there and get the very same message. It's relayed to them, and the apostles relayed the message. Jesus' words are repeated verbatim here in verses 7–8. "And the disciples did pray unto the Father also in the name of Jesus . . . and ministered unto the people. And when they had ministered those same words which Jesus had spoken—nothing varying from the words which Jesus had spoken [they just repeated the same thing]—behold, they knelt again and prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus."

There are these prayer groups, too; they go off separately. Jesus goes three times. Once he goes, and his face shines. He is glorified, transfigured. Then he goes back and finds the apostles praying and tells them to continue to pray. He goes and prays the second time off by himself. When he comes back, the apostles' faces are shining. They have been transfigured. The third time he comes

back the whole multitude has received it. They were handing down the blessings (we're all in the same family) in twelve meetings (3 Nephi 19:5–6). Nephi baptized a limited number, we are told. While this number was in pentecost, the flames were around them, Jesus came forth from the midst of them and addressed the multitude. Here again, we have a limited pentecost in verse 12–15. The pentecost is for them. He is in the midst of them, and then from them he turns to the multitude. What this is all about we read in verses 20–29, and that's atonement. Notice in verses 20–23 there are how many personal pronouns? There are 39 personal pronouns—me, you, they, him—in four verses. There can only be so many persons, and they are all connected by prepositions—in, with, of, from, etc. So how are these related?

This is taken even further in John, who goes into three whole chapters just repeating like this—John 14–17. If you worry about the godhead and what the nature of these things are, this will really send you. In John there are 126 personal pronouns in this half chapter here. He goes on and on. I've underlined them with purple, and the whole page is a mass of purple. We can read either one, but let's see what's going to happen here. My land, the way he talks! It goes on and on the same way all through these three chapters, and this is what he says. The Book of Mormon is the abbreviated one here: "Father, *I* [first person singular] thank *thee* that *thou* hast given the Holy Ghost [there's a third person] unto *these* whom I have chosen; and it is because of *their* belief in *me* that *I* have chosen *them* out of the world" (3 Nephi 19:20). You notice the cast of characters here is the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, the disciples, the multitude, and then the world to which they preach. Then there's the world which will not accept them, which is completely shut out in John. He doesn't pray for them. These are the ones you have to deal with here.

Verses 20–21: "And it is because of *their* belief in *me* that *I* have chosen *them* out of the world. Father, *I* pray *thee* that *thou* wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all *them* that shall believe in *their* words." That carries it on to another people. [In other words:] I pray thee, Father, to give your spirit to them that I have spoken to, and if they believe me then I pray that they will preach to others, and then them to whom they preach will believe also. They will be included likewise. This is what you call atonement (at-one-ment); they are all being taken into one body. "Thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words [that is, the disciples that hear him on this occasion]. Father, *thou* hast given *them* the Holy Ghost because *they* believe in *me*; and *thou* seest that *they* believe in *me* because *thou* hearest *them*." Notice the direct connection between them and the Father, between them and the Son, between the Son and the Father. If you made one of these diagrams and started connecting them with lines, what you would have is a net in which everybody is connected with everybody else. Well, that's the way the universe is constructed, anyway.

Verse 22: "*Thou* hearest *them*, and *they* pray unto *me* because *I* am with *them*. And now Father, *I* pray unto *thee* for *them*, and also for all *those* who shall believe on *their* words, that *they* may believe in *me*, that *I* may be in *them* [there it is, you see] as *thou*, Father, art in *me*, that *we* may be one." The mysterious connection between the Father and the Son is the same with us. ". . . art in me, that we may be one." There is your atonement. One in what sense? Exactly as we [the Father and Son] are one. Then he goes apart and prays again. Then he comes back and says in verses 28–29, where there are twenty-seven personal pronouns in only two verses (that's really packing them in): "Father, I thank thee that thou hast purified those whom I have chosen, because of their faith, and I pray for them, and also for them who shall believe on their words, that they may be purified in me, through faith on their words, even as they are purified in me. Father, I pray not for the world [that's out], but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me [there's the mysterious oneness of the Father and the Son. How can they be separate persons and be one? Is that impossible? Here it is] that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them."

That's a good deal stronger in John. This brings it on such a personal and intimate basis—it's wonderful. It looks to the preexistence and the postexistence. We'll begin with John 14. Don't be disturbed by this teaching. It's going to be something radically different: Let not your hearts be stirred up or troubled.<sup>2</sup> (*Tarasso* is to be stirred up.) Only believe on God and believe in me. In my Father's house there are many stopping places. *Manere* means "to remain in a place." (The Greek and Latin words are the same.) Here it's a *monai*, which means "to stay overnight on a journey." It doesn't mean a permanent residence. It's a mansion, a place where the duke or the king stays overnight on his rounds, when he goes a *mansio*. It's the same with a *monai* here. It's a stopping place—"a descending place," as the Arabs say. There are many places, and don't be disturbed about this. If it wasn't so, I would have told you. Is that so? Yes, if it wasn't so I would tell you. Many places, places for me, up there beyond, just like the Father and the Son? [you might ask]. Oh, yes, there are, he says. "I am going ahead to prepare a place for you," is what he says. There are many places. I'm going to prepare a place for you up there. That's where your blessing is going to be. John always puts it on such a literal, matter-of-fact basis. They had an awful time throwing it away, and the only way they could do it was to say "it's all spiritual."

If I go . . . The journals are arguing a lot about space now. There is so much space in the Bible. The Lord moves; he comes here and there. God comes down, and Jesus goes [and says] I'm no longer with you but I'll return to you. That was his great promise. Well, this going and coming is very disturbing, but it's very real here. They have an awful time getting around it, as I say. [Quoting again:] I'm going to prepare a place for you. Then I will come again, and I will conduct you to myself, that you may be where we are—"that where I am, there ye may be also."

This *conduct* is a very interesting word because it is *paraleipsomai*. A *paraleptomor* is the person who accompanies you through the temple and instructs you in case you forget something or other. That's the only word these use; it's on all the Coptic and early Greek records. A *paraleptomor* is someone who guides you through the ordinances of the temple, you being an ignorant person.

I shall return again, and I shall guide you through the processes that will lead you to myself, so that where I am you can be also. But where I am going you couldn't go by yourselves. (We are in John 14:4.) He says, where I am about to go, you know the road. Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know the road where you are going. We have no idea where you are going. Good old Thomas wants proof for everything, you know. "How could we know the road," he says in verse 5. Jesus said to them, "I am the road; I am the truth and the life." This has to do with guidance and the Lord who brings all this. You cannot possibly get back to the father except you do it through me. I'll help you get there. I'll get you back there where I am. I want you to be where I am, but I'm the only one who can guide you there—nobody else can. I know the way, and I'll teach you what you must do.

If you recognize me, you would have known the Father. You would recognize the Father if you recognize me. But already you've known him and already you've seen. Then Philip says to him, now wait a minute—you are puzzling, Lord. We say we know the Father. He said, show us the Father. We will be satisfied with that if you can show us the Father. (See, the apostles were just as much "up in the air" as anybody else is here.) Jesus said to them, I have been with you as long as I have, and you don't know me, Philip? Who has seen me, he has seen the Father (the express image). How can you possibly say, show us the Father? Don't you believe that I am in the Father. Then he says, I am in the Father—not that I am the Father, but I am in the Father. You have seen me because I am *en tō patri*.

This idea of being in each other is a possible thing. Things can fuse and be with each other. It's a common motif. "And the Father is in me." I do not say these things from myself that I have been saying. I did not make them up. It is the Father who is remaining in me who says these things.

The word is *menō* or *menein*, “remain in.” He does the works, and I do his works. Believe in me that I am in the Father and that the Father is in me. If not, the least thing you can do is to trust in the works I do. You see what I have done, he says. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he who believes in me will be able to do the same works I do.

There he is handing it down again. I want you to be one, as I and the Father are one. Then he says, we are one, and if you can't believe that, you've seen the things I've done. You put faith in that, and you will be in it, too. You will do the same works. So this is a real at-one-ment, a real atonement. Well, he goes on for page after page here and really packs in these personal pronouns.

He says, you'll do greater works because I'm going to the Father. (He is not going to be around anymore. We are supposed to pray only to the Father, always in the name of the Son.) Whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that I may glorify the Father in the Son. The Father may be glorified in the Son. If anyone asks of me in my name, I will also do it. “If you love me you will keep my commandments.”

He goes on. Those chapters, John 14–17, are the expanded version of this teaching here [in 3 Nephi 19]. But remember, Mormon edited this carefully. He didn't want it to go on forever. He couldn't have the gold plates too bulky, etc. The trivia are left out; [for example] two days later there was a meeting and it was in such and such a place. No, that's not necessary. Just as the New Testament is given us to convey the teachings of the Lord in the briefest and most forceful way possible, leaving out all the incidentals except where they illuminate what he says, we get the same thing in the Book of Mormon, only more condensed. Third Nephi covers the ground.

1. See Hugh Nibley, *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, vol. 8 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 411–13.
2. He is quoting and paraphrasing from his Old Testament again.





# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

JOHN WELCH

Semester 4, Lecture 97  
3 Nephi 11  
The Sermon at the Temple  
Law and Covenant

Okay, Brothers and Sisters—I think it is about time for us to get started. I'd like to first let you know that Brother Nibley left at 5:00 o'clock this morning. Apparently, he didn't tell many of you what was going on, but that's all right. He's on a plane right now somewhere over Chicago on his way to Egypt where he will be present at the opening of some tombs that have never been opened before and the unwrapping of some early Christian burials. He is working with Brother Griggs here on campus. I'll be taking his position, not filling his shoes in any way but directing our discussion for the next couple of weeks while he is gone. We'll have five sessions together before he is back. I'm John Welch, past president of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, general editor of the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, professor over in the Law School, and one of the directors of the Religious Studies Center.

Let me make a couple of general comments about what we hope to accomplish in the next five lectures. First of all, if I were in your position I would view myself somewhat as trying to catch up to a freight train that has been moving about ninety miles an hour for about forty years. Brother Nibley has been working in the Book of Mormon area that long. He has covered an awful lot of territory. I remember when I first had a class from him as a freshman here at BYU, in fact the first lecture I attended. I'd had a lot of ancient history, four years of Latin, and things like that in high school, so I was prepared enough to at least understand and appreciate the incredible things he was talking about. But it still, even that long ago, was a mammoth chore trying to catch up with where he already was. It's staggering to me to imagine your position as a student trying to pick up everything that has happened in the interim.

So I would suggest, especially for this particular class and for the final that I know you're going to have to take, that you look at things like the *Approaching Zion* volume that has recently come out and volumes 6, 7, and 8 of the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley*, especially chapters 27–30 in volume 6, his concluding chapters in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, where he talks about the ways of the intellectuals, the ways of the wicked, the nature of society, and the strategy for survival. I'd also recommend chapters 12 and 13 in *Since Cumorah* and chapters 19, 21, and 22 in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*. That's volume 8 in the *Collected Works*. I think that would help you to catch up a little bit with what he has been up to in the last forty years and put you in tune with a lot of the scriptures that he focuses in on, the phraseology, the mentality, and the gospel orientations. They are all in the *Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* in the library and the Bookstore, and volume 9 is *Approaching Zion*. We have about twenty on the drawing boards in one place or another. It's mostly the latter chapters in each of those volumes where he finally gets to telling you what's really eating at him—what is really driving and impelling what he is telling you.

You will have a final exam, and Brother Nibley told me to instruct you that this is significant. I know I'm a substitute, and I know what the Utah teachers association have told the press: If they go on strike—nothing that happens when the substitute is present will count for anything. That's not your fortune. He has asked me to prepare one portion of your final exam which will cover what we will do here in the next five lectures. That's what I understand is going on. [There were some questions from students about the course.] I understand that there will be one final exam at the end of the semester. I've never known Hugh Nibley to teach any other way. I think my final

exam for Book of Mormon 121, if I remember the question right, was “Write a book review of the Book of Mormon.” That was the exam.

Question: What was your grade?

Answer: Well, I got the highest grade in the class, but it wasn’t a straight A. I think he has gotten lenient in his old age though, so there’s hope. Brother Nibley will be back on Friday, March 9, in time for his eightieth birthday on March 27, which you should all know a little bit about.

I’d like to point out that there will be a lecture next Tuesday night, sponsored by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, by Richard Rust, professor of English at the University of North Carolina. He has recently completed a book on the Book of Mormon as literature. He will be delivering the third annual Book of Mormon lecture. I encourage all of you to attend and will also allow you to indicate to Brother Nibley if you have attended [the lecture] so he will know what you have been up to while he has been away. I think that’s enough by way of introduction. We have some important material to cover, so let’s get down to work.

I’d like to talk primarily about what I call the Sermon at the Temple and spend the next five lectures working on this material. We all know the Sermon on the Mount by that label—that’s Matthew 5–7. The Sermon at the Temple is in 3 Nephi 11–18. It is a monumental text. It is one of those texts that acts as a “Grand Central Station,” a switchboard through which almost everything else in the Book of Mormon sooner or later will pass. There are a couple of other seminal texts like it: King Benjamin’s speech, in Mosiah 1–6, acts in a similar way as sort of the constitution of the covenant that Benjamin placed his people and the Mulekites under, bringing together the Nephite nation and creating the basis for what became a hundred and fifty years of the Nephite republic. These documents are important in the life of a civilization.

Similarly, the Sermon at the Temple replaced everything else that the Nephites had lived under. In 4 Nephi they tell us that they had from this point forward lived only according to the commandments which Jesus had given them while he was there. There was a radical change in life in Zarahemla and Bountiful and in other cities that the Nephites occupied as a result of this Sermon at the Temple. It’s a masterful sermon. It is coherent and specifically organized. It addresses themes that were of interest and would have been a pressing concern to the people in Bountiful and in the Nephite world in that day. Moreover, it becomes an anchor for everything else in the gospel.

Jesus only had a short time to spend with these people at the temple at Bountiful. He didn’t waste a word. What he says is of crucial importance. It’s the kind of thing that you and I can look to as an anchor in our lives to put our bearings straight, to see what is going on in the world, and to see what really matters most in our covenant relationship with our Father in Heaven. I believe, and I wish to submit for the next five lectures for our testing, the proposition that there is unsurpassed power and strength in the Sermon at the Temple—that it is coherent, insightful, and profound—notwithstanding the fact that this section of the Book of Mormon has probably been subject to more ridicule and criticism than any other part of the book. Why? Because it has the obvious inclusion of Matthew 5–7, which to a naive or simple-minded view appear to have simply been spliced in crudely into the middle of a text.

Thus, you have Mark Twain quipping that the Book of Mormon contains passages which he said “were smooched from the New Testament and no credit given.” Or you have the Reverend Lamb, who in the 1880s published a lengthy volume criticizing the Book of Mormon. His conclusion: The book is verbose, blundering, and stupid. He especially viewed this material that I call the Sermon at the Temple as a mere duplication, which you will see it is not, of the Sermon on the Mount “word for word,” to quote him. He saw no excuse for this lack of originality and constant repetition of the Bible. He said, We have such passages already in the Bible, and God never does

unnecessary things; why then give us these chapters again? His conclusion: Careful examination proves it to be unprincipled plagiarism. I wish to take issue with those conclusions and hope that as we proceed you will share with me and we'll be able to develop ideas to help us reach a different conclusion.

Today I'd like to do two main things. First is to establish a general religious setting for the Sermon at the Temple, and then to establish a more specific religious context for this great discourse—and it's more than a discourse. We will begin in earnest our look at the material next time, and I would like you to read very carefully 3 Nephi 11–14. I don't care if you have read it recently; I want you to read it again. I would like you to memorize your choice of any segment of those chapters. Let me just say in general, I don't know how much memorizing you do. Some of you are returned missionaries and you know the value of memorization, of studying and of having things in your mind so that the Spirit can bring to your thoughts those things that you need to be moved to remember. My experience is that if I don't pack a lot of things into my mind and into my heart there is a vacuum there, and it's pretty hard for the Spirit to move a vacuum. If you give the Spirit a few building blocks to push around at the right time, some very significant things can happen in your lives. We don't use our minds for memorizing nearly as much as we ought to. Thinking of Brother Nibley over in Egypt, [I recall] that not long ago it was a requirement to enter the Moslem universities in Egypt that you have the entire Koran committed to memory. That can be done; the human mind is capable of such things. Yet we're so lazy. We have computer disks and books at our disposal, and we feel little need to internalize these materials. You hear stories about the early brethren in the Church riding from Kirtland to Missouri. What do you think they did on horseback all the time? Much of it was spent reciting scripture. They had large portions of the Bible memorized, so I challenge you to do the same.

One of the best things I ever did in my life before entering the South German Mission was memorizing the Sermon on the Mount in German. I was a smart aleck kid at the LTM [Language Training Mission]; that was before the MTC [Missionary Training Center] days. I had all the discussions memorized, and they said, "All right, if you're so smart why don't you pass off the Sermon on the Mount next week for us in German?" I went off and memorized those three chapters and passed them off. I've never done anything better in my life. It's up to you. You do what you want there, but that's your assignment for next time.

Let's go then to the establishing of a general religious setting for the book of 3 Nephi. What is going on in this world? Well, you know a little bit about the Gadianton robbers and problems that were encountered there. First, the obvious thing is that these people were living in the imminent expectation of the coming of a Messiah. They had prophecies that went back to the days of Lehi, Nephi, Benjamin, and more recently Samuel the Lamanite, who had specifically talked about the coming of Christ. I don't know exactly how specific their expectation was. It seems that they still were a bit in the dark about exactly what was going to happen. What Jesus would do when he would come, etc., were questions that they didn't have completely answered, but they knew that he would come, that he would fulfill the law, that he would bring about a redemption, and there would be some major changes. Second, notwithstanding that, they all lived the law of Moses. How do we know that the Nephites lived the law of Moses? How far back did their living of the law of Moses extend?

Student: "Jacob says so."

When does Jacob say that?

"He says, we follow the law of Moses and adhere to those principles. I think he hinted that they lived some other principles, also."

Okay, and they did; they had a broader understanding. It was a preexilic version of the law of Moses, and they also had, coupled with that, the prophetic traditions, knowing of the coming of Christ. But the specific passages I'm thinking of . . .

“Are you thinking about where he says, the law has become dead?”

There is 2 Nephi 25 where Nephi says, notwithstanding the fact that we know that salvation does not come by the law, we live the law of Moses. Were they strict in their living of the law of Moses? Well, look at some of the passages like 2 Nephi 5:10. When Nephi establishes the monarchy in the city of Nephi, he does all the things that kings basically do in getting a society going. He builds a temple—you have to have a temple. He establishes the law. He says, we will live the law. What law is it that he says they must live? It's the law of Moses. He says, we will live it according to its statutes, judgments, ordinances, etc. The nomenclature here becomes important, as we will see in a minute. He says, “And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things according to the law of Moses.”

How long does that continue? Well, in Jarom 5 he says that they were strict to live the law of Moses, and the law was “exceedingly strict.” Then look at Alma 30:3 in introducing the materials on Korihor. Again it says they were strict to observe the law of Moses in all of its ordinances, laws, statutes, etc. [which went on] right down to the time of the birth of Christ. What happens in 3 Nephi 1? [Some people argued that they could stop living the law of Moses.] Why do you think they would have said, we don't need to live the law of Moses any longer? They said, when Christ comes then the law will be done away. The sign of his birth had been given. Isn't it logical then to conclude that we are now absolved from the requirements of living the law of Moses? There were people who made that argument. What did they do about that toward the end of 3 Nephi 1? They had to correct this general misunderstanding; the law hadn't yet been fulfilled, even though Christ had come. There were various things that needed to be accomplished during his ministry and had not yet taken place. It's a logical kind of mistake for them to have made, and the need for them to have corrected it can be seen if you go back and look at 2 Nephi 25. When Nephi is talking about Jesus coming to fulfill the law he is not very specific about when or to what extent. He doesn't say he will fulfill all the law, by the way, which is something that is not taught until 3 Nephi 15. They correct their errors.

One of the things that remains, and also may have led to some confusion on their part is the concept of covenant. It's interesting that Jesus spells that out and says, the *covenant* is not fulfilled in me (3 Nephi 15). Within the covenant is the law—the law is a part of the covenant. By the way, in Hebrew and Greek the word for *covenant* is translated as our word as *testament*. The word *testament* or *covenant* describes the entire relationship between God and his people. That, of course, had not been fulfilled completely, and the Nephites could well have argued that there were certain things in the covenant relationship promised by God that had not yet been fulfilled. One of them would have been the fact that the Nephites had not yet been brought back into Israel. There were still these promises unfulfilled and outstanding. Well, that certainly can't have been fulfilled yet because the Nephites are still living over in Bountiful and Zarahemla, expecting that they will someday be brought back together with these others. Now the law is a part of this covenant relationship. You can fulfill the law and, as Jesus says, still not yet fulfill all of the covenants and all of the promises that have been made to all of Israel.

Interestingly, within the law there are also subdivisions. The law in Hebrew is the word *Torah*. Our English word *law* does not begin to capture the meaning of the word *Torah*, which means more *teaching*. The *Torah* is identified with the *Pentateuch*, the first five books of the Bible. You know there is a lot in Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy that we wouldn't consider as law. I am a law professor, but I look at some of those stories and I think this isn't statutory legislation. This isn't what I would call positive law. But to the ancient Jews the *Torah* embraced all of those teachings in a broader sense. Did Jesus come to fulfill the *Torah*? Well, not in a very specific

sense. Within the law, you have things like the commandments. We already read that pleonastic list that Nephi gives you—we did keep the statutes, and ordinances, and commandments. These are all different Hebrew words. The statutes and judgments are the *mishpāṭîm*. The ordinances and the performances are the *ḥuqqôṭ*, etc. But if you go to something like 1 Kings 2:3 when the kingdom is passed on from David to his son Solomon, he exhorts Solomon to keep the statutes, the *ḥuqqôṭ*; the commandments, the *mitzvôt*; the judgments, the *mishpāṭîm*; the testimonies, the *ʿēdût*; and keep all that is written in the *Torah*, the law of Moses.

Now the question again is, when Jesus comes to fulfill the law, which of these does he fulfill? It's interesting to me that when you go to 4 Nephi 1:12, they say we no longer observe the ordinances and the outward performances, which may be identified with these portions of the law, but we do keep the commandments—especially the commandments as they have now been explained and fulfilled by Christ. By the way the Book of Mormon is very interestingly consistent in its use of this legal terminology. I present this to give you a perspective on what it might possibly have meant to these people to talk about living the law of Moses. To them the law of Moses is not what we think of when we usually think of just the law of sacrifice at their temple. The law of Moses was a very broad concept. It embraced their entire constitutional law, public law, civil law, and private law on commercial transactions. It told you what happened when somebody's ox wandered into someone else's field and trampled on the corn. It prescribed things like oppressing the orphans and the widows. A lot of things were covered in the law of Moses. Well, the Nephites lived the law of Moses. I'd like to give you just a couple of examples to show you right here in 3 Nephi what we mean. I passed out to you a little handout about the execution of Zemnariyah. We have actually in the Book of Mormon quite a lot of legal material. When you stop and think about it, there is the trial of Sherem; the trial of Abinadi; the trial of Korihor; the trial of Nehor; the trial, detection, and execution of Seantum and other people like that. All of these legal proceedings are transacted in accordance with the ancient Israelite jurisprudence and according to principles in the law of Moses.

One of those principles was that a person couldn't be executed except in certain prescribed ways. The punishments had to be meted out very carefully. You had to be sure that the crime matched the nature of the punishment, and so the law is usually explained—when punishment should be exacted in the form of stoning, or execution by the sword, for example, for an apostate city, etc. Jewish law as it develops later becomes much more specific and rigid about the designation of modes of execution and punishment. One of those modes of punishment pertained, in Deuteronomy 22, to the displaying of the executed corpse after a body had been stoned. Deuteronomy says that it was important after the person was killed that the body would be hung on a tree. It's not until the Talmud and the medieval writers that we learn something about why they probably did this in ancient Israel. The main reason was so that people would walk by and this would be notoriously heralded so that everyone would see the kind of thing that happens to a person who has been so infamous as to deserve this kind of punishment.

Not contained in the Bible but found in the Talmudic literature is a little more explanation of how they would go about doing this, and what they would do at the end of the day. For example, just as with the crucifixion of Christ, it was not permissible to leave the body hanging overnight. The body, after all, is created in the image of God; therefore, it would be an offense to God to mutilate or desecrate the body. The Talmud and Maimonides explain that it is important as you take the body down off the tree to chop the tree down. Why? They want to completely eradicate from the face of the earth all memory that this person had ever lived—he is so wicked. In hanging him up on the tree, you are hanging him between heaven and earth. As Brother Nibley has pointed out, neither will receive this wicked person. Then you chop down the tree, because you don't even want people ever walking by and saying, that's the tree that good old so-and-so was hanged on.

There are only two places that I know of in world legal literature that talk about the need to chop a tree down after you have hung a person on it. One is in the Jewish literature that I have just talked about, and the other is in 3 Nephi 4:28–33, with the execution of the notorious leader of the Gadianton robbers, Zemnarihah. They take him and hang him on the top of the tree. When he is dead they chop the tree down. They all stand around and in a ceremonious way chant, May God cause to be felled to the earth all people who try to bring down our country—bring down righteousness—just as we are chopping down this person and this tree. The whole thing becomes a symbolic felling. That’s an interesting little detail—interesting for a lot of reasons, but the relevant one for this lecture is to show the extent to which aspects of the law of Moses and of the ancient traditions and legal requirements were being observed by the Nephites clear into this period. We could talk about a number of others like that, but let that suffice as an example.

Let me then suggest that if you were a Nephite and you were standing around in Bountiful after the signs of Jesus’ death had been given, there would still be a bit of a question in your mind what you should do next. You know that the law of Moses is now in some way superseded. It’s kind of like being in Romania today. You don’t have a government; you don’t have law. What do we do? Do we go about reconstructing the law ourselves? Do we look to the prophet to give us the law? Do we wait for Christ himself to come? This would have been a question that they wouldn’t have had an immediate answer to. They knew that something incredibly important had happened—the destructions made that perfectly obvious. They knew that something was no longer applicable. But the voice from heaven in 3 Nephi 9 hadn’t really clarified this issue very much either. For example, in 3 Nephi 9:17 the voice simply says, “In me is the law of Moses fulfilled.” All right, we know that, but what comes next? In 3 Nephi 9:19–20 the voice says, I no longer want sacrifice by the shedding of blood. The Nephites would have then known that that aspect of the law of Moses was done away. But what is to take its place? The phrase that is used is simply, what I now want is the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. That phrase, by the way, comes right out of Psalms 51:17, and as such was always thought in pious Judaism as the necessary precondition for making a valid sacrifice of any kind. Did that mean to the Nephites that they were simply to go on as things had been? In other words, the broken heart and contrite spirit was still a part of what they were to do, only they weren’t to offer sacrifice of blood.

That is, I think, among many factors a general religious setting for why the people might have gathered around the temple and have been discussing in 3 Nephi 11:1, with great amazement, the mighty changes that had taken place. I think those were not just physical changes, but the mighty changes in their society. Many people were dead, and there were mighty changes in their legal and religious system as well. They were amazed, and they stood and wondered. I think as they pondered on those questions, then the manifestation of the resurrected Christ was precipitated and occurred. I don’t think that just came “out of the blue.” Very few revelations come without someone asking a question. “Have you asked?” Nephi pushes his brothers Laman and Lemuel [to consider]. Joseph Smith received so many of the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants as a result of asking specific questions about the meaning of things. I imagine that as the Nephites stood around the temple at Bountiful they, too, were asking questions—what next? Why were they at the temple in Bountiful? Let’s now turn our attention to a more specific religious context for the Sermon at the Temple. One of the requirements for the law of Moses [was a gathering three times a year]. You will find this in Exodus 23, throughout Leviticus, and toward the end of Deuteronomy. Three times every year all men—and for the Feast of Tabernacles, all men, women, and children—[gathered together]. I suppose women and children came for a number of them. We don’t know exactly, but we do know for sure that all of the families had to be present for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, when they sat in tents or booths around the temple while the king delivered a speech—reminiscent, of course, of King Benjamin’s speech in Mosiah 1–6. Three times a year all Israel had to present itself before God at the temple. What for? Primarily for covenant renewal. When Joshua says (in Joshua 24), “Choose you this day whom ye will serve,” this isn’t the first time Israel has chosen to follow Jehovah. This is a covenant renewal,

very much like you renew your covenants of baptism every Sunday when you partake of the sacrament. At the temple they read the statutes, they read the law, they were instructed by the priests, and they performed certain rituals and ordinances. They had a liturgy that they followed very specifically on each of these high, holy festival days, these feasts. The three that were convocation festivals were Passover, Pentecost, and the Year-rite Festivals, which brought together in the ancient world all of the elements of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement; the Feast of Tabernacles; and Rosh ha-Shanah, the new year, which appears to have been a single ritual complex in the pre-exilic period. They have those three main festivals.

The logical conclusion is that if they are living the law of Moses and still strictly doing so, the observance of the festival requirements would not yet have been abrogated; therefore, it would have been logical for all of this Nephite city to have presented itself before the Lord at their temple—all the men, women, and children. Notice that they are there. That, in my mind, rules out the possibility that this is some kind of a city council pulled together to deal with the emergency at hand. You would only have the men, the elders, attending such an affair as that. But the men, women, and children are there from the first thing in the morning. [The leaders] don't have to run off and get everybody. That's the next day when Jesus says, go get the people in the neighboring villages, or wherever. The multitude is there; they are waiting, I think, to say, as they logically would have, all right we are now here for our festival, but what do we do? We know we're not supposed to offer sacrifice, but what next?

Question: If they were meeting at the temple for that town, does that mean the other towns had their temples? If so, why did Christ pick this temple?

Answer: It's possible that they had other temples, but not likely. It seems in the Nephite history that there was always one main temple. The center of population moved. There was the temple at [the city of] Nephi, but when they left they went to Zarahemla and they built a new temple there. There were some people who were reactionary enough not to accept the new temple in Zarahemla. That, of course, was the Zeniff colony who said, we want to go back and at any cost redeem the land, because that has the real temple in it. Now, why are they up in Bountiful? Well, because in the face of the Gadianon war there was that seven-year period when they had to gather all of their property together in one place where they were a little closer to the narrow neck, which they could defend. They then moved their population center. I would think that this is the main temple of the Nephites.

Question: Why wouldn't everybody have already been there?

Answer: That's a good question. I guess there are some possible answers; we could speculate about that. One is that maybe it's not a feast that they are gathering for. I can't say for sure that it is, but it seems likely to me that it is. Another reason might be that they were gathering for the first day of something and other people were on their way from a distance. That's a possibility; I don't know. You can speculate. Things were chaotic. Maybe they didn't know what to do, a lot of people had stayed home, and it was only the very diligent who had gone to the temple to try to find out what to do next. You're welcome with me, I guess, to wonder why that was the case. [inaudible question] The timing is an interesting question, and we simply don't have an answer to the question of how long after Jesus' resurrection this occurred. The problem is that you have conflicting statements right within the last couple of verses in 3 Nephi 10. The question is how do you read the phrase, "in the ending of the thirty and fourth year"? If that phrase describes the time when Christ appeared, then it was a year-end festival of some kind. On the other hand, if that is simply some kind of an editorial marker that says, I am now going to tell you what happened in the thirty and fourth year, then we have no idea when it occurred. You also have the reference that says "soon after his ascension into heaven." It doesn't say which ascension. Is it the first ascension,—“touch me not for I have not yet ascended”—on the morning of resurrection? Is it the ascension just before the day of Pentecost in Acts 1? We don't know, so that becomes



again an interesting question, a puzzle. We're not quite sure. I think we can get a feel though for the type of general religious meeting this would have been, although not specifically which festival. I have my own preference. I think it was a meeting on the day of Pentecost. The reason is that in ancient Israel the day on which the giving of the law on Mount Sinai was celebrated was the Feast of Shavuoth or the Feast of Pentecost. That was the day that God came down on Mount Sinai to give the law. I guess the poetic beauty and symmetry of having God come down to give the new law on a similar day is almost irresistible to me, but it could have been one of the other festivals as well.

Question: [[inaudible] The question is could I digress and give you a lecture on other aspects of Nephite law that are similar to ancient Israelite law. I'll give you one right off the bat. Take, for example, the exemption from military duty that is given to the Ammonites. This is an extraordinary thing. In the ancient world every able-bodied man had to bear arms. Go back to the book of Mosiah and remember the desperate wars which that little colony in the city of Nephi fought against the Lamanites and how these old kings armed all the men, even down to the young men. Then you have this pocket of Ammonites who have sworn an oath that they won't go again to war, and they are given a military exemption. Why? Well, if you go to the book of Deuteronomy you will find that there were four classifications of people who were entitled to a military exemption. One of them is the group of people who are faint hearted or fearful. You say to yourself, now wait a minute—every soldier is faint hearted or fearful in the face of battle. Wouldn't that, therefore, exempt everyone? If you were a good conscientious objector, that would be the place you would go to to raise that objection. The explanation given in the Talmud is that this doesn't mean anybody who is afraid of anything, but only the people who fear that if they should die in battle things would not be well with them with God. They fear because of their sins and transgressions. You don't want a person standing next to you in the ranks who is afraid that if he dies in the battle his soul will be lost. We can stand mortal fear, but you can't stand divine fear. That's exactly the problem that the Ammonites were in. Anyway there are a lot of other nuances in that particular discussion. It's that sort of thing that you will find all over.

Let's carry on then with some specifics. One of the specifics of the religious context of the Sermon at the Temple may then well be that it was a part of some kind of religious observance, or one of the regular festivals that these people had been observing. Number two: A very important clue is given to us; that is that this sermon is given at the temple. Jesus could have picked a lot of places to appear, as one of you has suggested. He could have appeared at the town gate, out on a mountain, or in a synagogue. No, he chose to appear at the temple. This is a profound temple-related text. We will see in the next lecture that if we are sensitive to temple connections, the coherence and meaning of the Sermon on the Mount all of a sudden snaps into sharp focus. By the way, some New Testament scholars, W. D. Davies in particular, have toyed with the idea that when the New Testament refers to the Sermon on the Mount, no normal mountain is meant. In ancient Israel there was one mount, and that, of course, was the Temple Mount. "Let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord" refers to the temple in Jerusalem. Thus, some New Testament scholars who have sought Jewish backgrounds for the Sermon on the Mount have toyed with the idea that what Jesus is delivering is a new temple-related sermon in the Sermon on the Mount. We will see, and the Book of Mormon corroborates this, that those scholars are onto far more than they suspect.

Number three, in the way of just contextual background information. By the way, let me digress for just a minute to remind you how important it is in interpreting or understanding any written work to think something about the context in which the work arose. If you know something about the audience to whom a speech is addressed, you know a great deal interpretively about why things are being said and what they mean. Exactly the same words given to different audiences can take on different meanings. Knowing something about the context, the whys, and what Jesus is expecting [is helpful]. Who is the audience that he is addressing in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew? We know very little about what that was to mean and how it was to be used. You

can read literally hundreds of biblical journal articles speculating about the context, the *Sitz im Leben*, the audience response, and the reader response analysis of trying to unpack what's going on in the Sermon on the Mount. The Book of Mormon does not leave us with that kind of a problem. It gives us contextualizing information; one example is this temple point.

We are now on point three, if you are numbering them. Point three is that this speech is clearly delivered in the context of covenant making. What actually happens as a result of what Jesus gives in the Sermon at the Temple? It all leads to 3 Nephi 18, where the people enter into a personal covenant and promise that they will keep the commandments “which he has given us this day.” Where are those commandments found? In the Sermon at the Temple. This is clearly a covenant-making text. Thus, for example, in 3 Nephi 11 we'll see that Jesus invites these people to become the children of their Father in Heaven. That's covenant language. How was it that the people of Benjamin became the children of God, “spiritually begotten this day.” In Mosiah 5 it was by entering into a covenant with God and with the king.

Point number four in terms of contextual interpretation is very clear: On multiple occasions in this text Jesus refers to his words as commandments. We will see that biblical scholars have struggled to try to understand what Jesus really meant in the Sermon on the Mount. Are these abstract, ethical principles that are impossible for any human being to really live in this life, or did he really mean for people to try to live these laws? Who did he want to live these laws? Is he talking to all human beings, or is he only talking to a certain group of converted, committed people? Is he talking about rules and principles that are to apply in this world in this day, here and now, or is he talking about rules that will only be effectuated in the Messianic Age in the Millennium or in the age to come? These are questions that the rest of the world stands boggled over.

For example, when Martin Luther ran into the Sermon on the Mount, he found that it was inconsistent with his own views about salvation by grace. After all, it demands that people do things, and indeed do more than just say, “Lord, Lord.” Luther couldn't reconcile that with the rest of his theology and ended up calling the Sermon on the Mount “a masterpiece of the devil.” Why? Because it had twisted what he thought was the real message of Jesus around to something completely different. I just give you that to indicate how difficult it is for people who don't have something like the Book of Mormon to even understand what kind of statements Jesus is making here. The Book of Mormon clearly tells us that he is giving commandments.

There are some other contextualizing points [which we will cover] very quickly. We know that this is a part of the forty-day literature. We know that certain esoteric, secret, and important things happened to the disciples of Jesus in Jerusalem as a part of the forty-day ministry. It was here, we believe, that they received an endowment. Luke 24 talks about them being told to stay in Jerusalem until they are endowed with power from on high. Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and others commented that Jesus himself gave the disciples during this period basically the equivalent of our temple endowment. The purpose of the Sermon at the Temple is clearly stated in 3 Nephi 15:1, and that is that it is of eschatological importance. If a disciple wishes to be lifted up at the last day and withstand the final day of judgment, he must hear and do and remember these things that Jesus has instructed them this day. If they do they will survive and pass into the presence of God at the final day of judgment. That again, is an important clue about what Jesus is talking about, which we will carry on with on Monday.

With these ideas in mind, take a really good look back at the materials in 3 Nephi 11–14 in particular.



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

JOHN WELCH

Semester 4, Lecture 98  
3 Nephi 11  
Christ at the Nephite Temple

For those of you who weren't here last week, I'm Brother Welch from over in the Law School and will be trying to lecture to you for the next couple of sessions while Brother Nibley is over in Egypt. I gave you an assignment to memorize something in the Sermon on the Mount or the Sermon at the Temple. By a show of hands how many of you remembered to do that and actually memorized a few verses. That's good. I'd be curious to know which ones you memorized. [Response from first student is not audible, except that he memorized 3 Nephi 11:34.]

So the teaching of the gospel doctrine is there—right “off the bat,” one of the first things [Jesus] needs to cover. Which one did you memorize?

“I did 3 Nephi 12:3–9 [the Beatitudes], and I also memorized the Matthew ones so I could see when he used the word *all* and when he didn't.”

Good comparison. Well, I hope that you'll keep that up, that you will continue to enrich your understanding of those things, and that it will pay you rich dividends as you internalize those things and make them a part of your life. I'll make a couple of comments before we get started on the subject matter. First, I'd like to remind you again that tomorrow evening is the Richard Rust lecture in the Tanner Building at 7:30. I think you'll be well rewarded if you come. On the roll coming around you'll see where you can check there next time if you do attend. A couple of you asked for a list of books that have been written by scholars about the Sermon on the Mount. I've listed on the board the names of a few: Hans D. Betz, W. D. Davies, Joachim Jeremias, Harvey McArthur, Georg Strecker, and Hans Windisch. Those that were written in German have all been translated into English fairly recently. I take a different approach than most of them, as you will see, but there is a wealth of valuable information in those materials for you if you would like to consult those texts.

Today, I would like to turn our attention to the content of the message of Jesus in the first part of the Sermon at the Temple. This is a sobering, deeply spiritual experience that the Nephites there at the temple in Bountiful were blessed to participate in. I am always humbled whenever I approach this text. I hope and pray that as we go through this material you will be in tune with the Spirit, and that things can be opened to your minds and your understanding. As King Benjamin said, these texts are here that we can relive the experiences that those people were blessed to experience. I hope you will strive to understand this material, not only with your mind but also with your heart, that you can have the blessings of the gospel and the fullness of the priesthood that these materials offer to you and invite you to come unto.

Last week we went through some the basic background material and established that this was a sermon (more than a sermon) delivered in a ritual or festival context at a sacred temple in a covenant-making setting, and that it was part of an esoteric body of literature. Several times the disciples are told that they cannot write or tell everything that is going on here. This invites us to imagine and strive to understand what else might have been going from the clues that are given to us. We have to realize—and this is one of the things that your typical Gentile scholarship on the Sermon on the Mount doesn't do—that what we are given here is only a glimpse of a greater reality and greater experience beyond that which could be recorded there in the records.

I think it goes without saying that if Jesus only had a short time to spend with the Nephites, what he would have taught them would have been things of ultimate importance. It is at the temple that we should expect to find, and in fact do find, a systematic and single presentation of the entire gospel—one that puts you into perspective with all that has gone on, where you have come from, why you are here, and what it will take for you to achieve exaltation. As we will see, this is in fact what we find in the Sermon at the Temple. I will suggest to you an interpretation that invites you to let your mind think about temple, covenant, sacred, and secret kinds of things as we go through this material. I'm not suggesting that what the Nephites had was exactly the same as what you will encounter and have encountered in Latter-day Saint temples, but the elements are there. They are there in a more astonishing and more profound manner than anyone has previously suspected.

Let me come back to the Sermon on the Mount for just a minute, though. There is a problem with the Sermon on the Mount for most non-Latter-day Saint interpreters. It is fair to say that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew has been a real puzzle for those people who have tried to understand it. Take, for example, a statement from Joachim Jeremias: "What is the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount? This is a profound question and one which affects not only our preaching and teaching, but also, when we really face up to it, the very roots of our existence. Since the very beginning of the church, it has been a question with which all Christians have had to grapple, not only the theologians among them, but in the course of the centuries a whole range of answers have been given to it." What is the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount? Hans D. Betz commiserates: "New Testament scholarship up to the present has offered no satisfactory explanation of this vitally important text." I could read you a number of these. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "In modern times it remains possible to understand and interpret the Sermon on the Mount in a thousand different ways."

What's the problem? Why is it that Betz, who is the dean of the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, feels that there has yet to be an adequate explanation given of the Sermon on the Mount? Well, there are a number of problems. One of the main concerns is the question, what holds it all together? Is the Sermon on the Mount simply a scrapbook of miscellaneous sayings of Jesus that have been thrown together out of context—organized by Matthew some time after the death of Jesus? Or is it a coherent sermon delivered by the Master with some underlying organization and structure that, however elusive it may be, is indeed there. There have been a number of attempts made by people to try to organize and conceptualize the theme of the Sermon on the Mount. What does it mean? You'll have people suggesting, for example, that the theme of the Sermon on the Mount is the fulfillment of the old law by Jesus. Others will say, "No, the theme is 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you,' " the golden rule. The problem with any of these interpretations is that none of them can account for the text as a whole. None of them can explain why, if that is the theme, Jesus says certain things as he does. If the theme, for example, is "do unto others and be good to everyone," what then is the statement "cast not your pearls before the swine" doing in the sermon, which seems to say the opposite? Wouldn't you, if you were a swine, want to have good things offered to you?

We have to then turn to some kind of a higher-level explanation, rather than something thematic within the text, in order to find a way to draw the text together and offer an explanation of what is going on in the Sermon on the Mount. The Book of Mormon offers us such a solution. It asks us to think as we read this text about temples, covenant making, etc. As far as I know, it is the only interpretation that will account adequately for all of the elements in the speech, and it does so masterfully. Consider for just an overview the *prima facie* case that what we are talking about here is some kind of a ritual text. As you have seen in your review of this material, it begins in chapter 11 with certain initiatory kinds of ordinances—concerns about ordination to the priesthood, baptism, and a few other things that have to be taken care of before you can go on into the instruction portion of the text. When you get to the actual commandments that are

given, Jesus labels these his commandments several times, but only in the Book of Mormon. This is not a term that is known from the New Testament in this context.

First, we go through, in 3 Nephi 12:18–19, the giving of the law of obedience. What is that law of obedience? It is that we must sacrifice and bring the broken heart and contrite spirit. As the Nephites learned in 3 Nephi 9, as the voice of Jesus spoke from the heavens, that is now the replacement, the new law of sacrifice that they are to live. Next we go to an instruction about not being angry or speaking evil of one another. The third instruction pertains to the law of chastity, and he teaches the importance of the new understanding of the commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” He then teaches them the law pertaining to generosity toward those who are in need, which has been identified in the Doctrine and Covenants as the law of the gospel, as we will see in a minute. He then goes on to explain that they must reach yet to a higher order and teaches them that they must be totally committed to the kingdom of God, that a man cannot serve two masters. A man must serve either God or mammon, and he tells us what we must do in order to lay up treasures in heaven with our wealth.

There are other elements that are involved as well. Even a person who is completely unfamiliar with the Latter-day Saint temple could readily see how a number of other elements in the Sermon on the Mount could easily be placed into a ritual context. For example, we will see that the use of beatitudes was a common and initial statement of promises in mystery religions and in ritual to tell the initiate what the ultimate blessings of obedience would be. We will see that there is a requirement in the Sermon on the Mount that if anyone has hard feelings against his brother, he should lay his gift at the altar and go and be reconciled before coming to proceed any further. There are instructions in the Sermon on the Mount as to how to swear one’s oaths. They should not be sworn by the heavens or by the earth, but they should simply be a *yes* or *no*. There is instruction as to how to pray in a group context, and ultimately Jesus robes his disciples in garments more glorious than the temple garments of even Solomon, and then explains to them how they will pass through the judgment and ultimately be admitted into the presence of God. That is just a skeleton, but it should suggest to you at least a *prima facie* case that invites closer scrutiny of each aspect of this speech in a ritual context.

I propose that we go through the forty-seven elements that I’ve listed of the Sermon at the Temple. I don’t know how far we will get into them today. I’d like you to think as we talk about each of these stages, if you assume a temple or covenant-making context, how each element makes better sense. If it is understood in connection with defining a covenant relationship between man and God, [consider] how it makes better sense in connection with establishing a new order of a covenant people, and how it makes better sense if you imagine it being ritualized, or having at least the capacity of being built into a ritual ceremony. One of the main features of ritual in ancient Israel and elsewhere is to take the great, momentous events between God and man and ritualize those events. The momentous events in the Garden of Eden lend themselves to ritualization. The momentous events of God appearing at Mount Sinai become the basis of Israelite temple ritual as they reenact, remember, and renew the covenant that was made at Sinai. Three days before the appearance of God on Mount Sinai, the Israelites washed themselves and washed their garments to present themselves before they finally “chickened out” in Exodus 19. But that became a ritual part of their observance of that same kind of thing, as most of their ceremonies then became three-day observances. Here, too, we have Jesus speaking three days to the Nephites. It would be, therefore, quite logical for the Nephites also to have ritualized the momentous teachings of Jesus which brought in a new heaven and a new earth in their world.

As we look at these individual elements, I also invite you to think and share with me if you know of others that I haven’t thought of, corroborating factors. Usually, the interpretation that we have been given by people of the Sermon on the Mount is a kind of bland, ethical sort of thing—that Jesus is just teaching ethical principles. It’s nice to turn the other cheek, for example. Therefore, people haven’t thought in terms of temple or ritual origins or connections. We should look for

corroborating factors, both in the esoteric literature of early Christianity of the ancient Near East and in temple typology around the world. Does Jesus mention that we should become a fruitful tree because that is a part [of temple typology]? That's in 3 Nephi 14, "by their fruits ye shall know them." What kind of tree is he talking about? Is it significant that it is a part of all basic temple typology, that the tree of life is present? Is that a connection, or is that linkage too obscure? Those are the kinds of questions we want to look for, especially as we consider possible connections with the Israelite temple. We know that the Nephites continued to observe the law of Moses, as we said last time. We know that, in doing so, they would have followed basic temple ritual as they knew it and as they built their temples modeled after the Temple of Solomon. One of the things that is absolutely astonishing to the Nephites about what Jesus does and gives them is how their old had become transformed into the new. That suggests to me that there are logical connections between what Jesus is giving them and what they had known before. **\*\*help here\***It wasn't that everything was just thrown away from the old and a new was put in its place, but that everything that had been given before, 2 Nephi 11 tells us, typifies of Christ and of the ultimate teaching of the gospel that he would give them here. Those kinds of connections we also need to look for.

With that in mind let's turn our attention to the specifics. First of all, before we get to the forty-seven themselves, we should realize that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew cannot be understood as just coming "out of the blue," out of nowhere. Biblical scholars have wrestled with what kind of things must be presupposed in order for the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew to make sense. For example, it must be, Jeremias concludes, presumed that the people who listened to Jesus already knew something of Jesus as the "light of the world." The light of Christ is presumed as a given in that text. When Jesus says, "I give unto you to be the light of the world," he is sharing with those people the fact that he is the light of world. That concept in Matthew 5 doesn't make much sense unless you assume that they already knew something about Jesus as the light of the world. You have to assume that the people who received the Sermon on the Mount understood something about Jesus initiating a new age; a new world had come. "Thy kingdom come"—that prayer doesn't make any sense unless you already know something of the teaching that Jesus brought a new age, the teaching that Jesus fulfilled the old law, and something of the goodness of God—that he lets the rain fall on the righteous and the wicked, for example. The idea that the disciples themselves will become Jesus' successors is also presupposed in the text of the Sermon on the Mount. It is never stated, but when he tells his disciples that they will suffer persecution for his name's sake and when he tells them that they should not give heed for the morrow, it presupposes that you already understand their role as Jesus' successors.

Jeremias, pages 26–29, tries to explore, just from the text of the New Testament what some of this background must have been against which the Sermon on the Mount has to be understood. It's interesting to me that as you go down his list (I've just given you the main points of his list), each of those elements is prepared and presented in the material that precedes 3 Nephi 12. In other words, I think he has come fairly close to understanding the preface to the Sermon on the Mount, for it is in 3 Nephi, chapters 9 and 11 that Jesus himself announces, "I am the light of the world." It is there that he explains that he has fulfilled the law—"in me is the law of Moses fulfilled" (3 Nephi 9:17). It is clear that the goodness of God stands behind what Jesus is doing, as the Father himself announces Jesus, "This is my beloved Son." Certainly, the role of the disciples as the successors of Jesus is spelled out as he ordains them. One of the things he attends to throughout this is the ordination and giving them power so that they can continue the ministration of the gospel after he leaves.

Let's then turn to some of the specific, initial steps that Jesus and this ceremony present to the Nephites. One: It begins with a thrice-repeated announcement from the heavens. It's interesting that this begins with a soft, small, piercing voice that comes out of heaven. It's not understood at first. It has to be repeated three times before it can be heard, and as it is increasing in clarity and loudness the people finally comprehend what it is saying, "Behold, my Beloved Son, in whom I

am well pleased . . .” It is a way, as you can imagine, of presenting a voice, speaking from heaven from an unseen source, that announces and initiates the ceremony. The presence of God is thereby established, and his involvement in all else that precedes is unmistakable.

Two: Total silence falls upon the people, and they are said to have opened their ears. It’s kind of hard to imagine opening your ears. You can open your eyes, but to open your ears [seems strange]. If the sound is there, it’s hard not to hear it. But in a ritual context, the opening of the eyes and the opening of the ears is symbolic of opening your heart and your understanding to the mysteries—to the secrets, to the rituals, to the sacred things that will then unfold. We know this from King Benjamin’s speech (Mosiah 2:9), where he says, “I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view.” Functionally, something like this could certainly be analogized to what we see in early Christian ritual coming from Cyril of Jerusalem. Brother Nibley has already spelled this out for you in the appendix of *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, that one of the initial ordinances given to early Christians was the anointing of eyes and ears. Cyril says that they ritualized this and said, “. . . that you might receive hearing ears of the mysteries of God.”

It’s another clue of what we are talking about here when the text tells us that their eyes and ears were opened. In fact that happened to them. It will happen to others as this is ritualized and handed down as a part of preparing them “that your eyes may see and your ears may hear.” Jesus specifically said in connection with the teaching of the parables that the reason that he speaks in parables is so that everyone won’t understand. You think, why on earth is Jesus not wanting everyone to understand? Well, there are some things that people aren’t yet ready to receive. He will give them and let them understand at the level at which they are prepared to receive. The same thing is true with the temple. Hardly anything is taught in the temple that cannot be taught outside the temple. Those principles and doctrines are all there for everyone to hear and see, but it is only in certain connections that you really see and you are fully taught.

Three: This is 3 Nephi 11:7. The third point is that the people finally understand the words being spoken by the Father. “Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.” What we have here is the presentation of a pattern, showing that God the Father does not personally minister to human beings. He does things by sending representatives. He sends his Son down to carry out assignments. Jesus very clearly understands and expresses his representative role in all that he does with the Nephites; at the end (3 Nephi 18:35) he says, “And now I go unto the Father, because it is expedient that I should go unto the Father for your sakes.”

What is expedient about his returning? He is returning and reporting, and it is expedient—a word that is used always in the Book of Mormon in connection with the efficacy of saving ordinances. Check the use of that unusual word. It doesn’t mean *expedient* in the sense of “just pragmatic” or “this is an expedient kind of solution, a short cut to get out of a problem.” No, it’s *expedient* meaning “expediting, efficient, effective.” He will then go to report and ascend to the Father, as the disciples bore record.

Four: In 3 Nephi 11:8, the next step is that Jesus then himself comes down. One of the roles of sacred ritual is always to bring the sublime down to earth, and earth up to heaven. The coming down is important, and indeed Jesus comes down, “descending out of heaven . . . clothed in a white robe.” Graphically, he came down with teachings and instructions. He also came robed in garments that are worthy of mention, but given no further elaboration here.



Five: The fifth thing that is mentioned is the great silence that continues. The mouths of the people are closed, and it says, “They durst not open their mouths, even one to another.” They didn’t know what this meant. They didn’t recognize this being at first.

Question: Christ could choose to just appear, but why is it that he always descends or ascends until he disappears? Is there any symbolism in that? Answer: Well, beyond the coming down, I guess it is helpful for a person when you receive a visitation to know where he is coming from. I would rather have him come down than come up. I don’t know that there is any more symbolism than that. This connection between the heaven and the earth though is quite prominent. In the visions in the apocalyptic literature, it is always the prophet who is being taken up into heaven. So one would assume that the heaven coming down to meet him will have to come physically down—although you are right. If Kolob happened to be on the other side of the earth in its rotation, he ought to be coming up through the earth. We don’t know what kind of a landing it was, but it’s a graphic kind of thing. And again, it’s the sort of thing that lends itself to a dramatic representation or repeating for other people to be taught—sort of the thing that occurred. Well, I think the silence is important. The other place, of course, that silence was mentioned is back in 3 Nephi 10:1. After the voice had spoken from heaven and after the destruction and the darkness, you can imagine the agony that people would have gone through as they sat there “for the space of many hours,” it says in complete silence. After all the lamenting, weeping, and tumult they were just absolutely silent for many hours.

Six: Following the silence that is mentioned in the text, point number six is that the people were invited to identify this visitor by the marks on his hands. At first, of course, the Nephites were confused and very cautious, not knowing exactly who it was who was visiting them. But as they discussed it and first thought he was an angel or a messenger (of course, in Greek and Hebrew the word for *messenger* and *angel* are the same), they finally realized that it was the Lord himself. This confusion was only removed as Jesus stretched forth his hands and identified himself as “Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.” Here we have another instance of a place where the Nephites would have recognized, quite probably, the way in which some old aspect of their beliefs had now become fulfilled and new in the visitation of Christ. It is found in Zechariah, a prophet who lived and worked shortly after the time of Lehi in Israel, that we read, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. “And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” The identification by marks on the hand was also something that early Christians understood. For example, in the “Odes of Solomon,” one of the earliest sets of hymns that were used by the Syriac saints in Damascus, we read from the words of one of their texts, “I extended my hands and approached my Lord, for the expansion of my hands is his sign.”

Seven: On realizing who this divine visitor who was with them was, the Nephites responded by falling down. Bowing down—or certainly more dramatically, falling down in full prostration before the Lord—is not only an instinctive response when coming into the presence of a being so sublime, but also a very common element of ritual. Prostration had certainly long been a part of the customary rituals and practices of the Nephites, as we learn in Mosiah 4. Right at the beginning of that chapter, the people, in response to the words of the angel given by Benjamin, all fall down and cry to Benjamin to apply the atoning blood that their sins might be taken away.

Following that is point eight: Jesus asks the people to arise one by one and to come forth and thrust their hands into his side, “and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet.” All of the people then went forth and did this one by one. We have no idea exactly how long this would have taken. There were some 2,500 people who were present—men, women, and children. Perhaps they went individually one by one; perhaps they went as family groups. We don’t know how long each one was allowed to linger as they worshipped and revered their Savior, who they then knew with a surety was the Savior of the world. Perhaps no more than a brief, even token, contact would have been possible in some circumstances. We just don’t know exactly how

long was involved here. It would have taken quite a while if they delayed and lingered to savor that wonderful moment.

Once they had all had the opportunity to pass before Christ, point number nine is the response which seems to be in unison as the entire group sang out with one accord, “Hosannah, blessed be the name of the most high God.” This is reminiscent of Melchizedek’s blessing of Abraham, found in Genesis 14. At this point we might say their mouths were truly opened. The silence was broken with the shout of *Hosannah*, which in Hebrew means “save now.” This phrase is somewhat puzzling to many biblical scholars. It has been alternatively interpreted as an intercessory prayer, asking that the Lord might now send salvation; asking for assistance, that it be given to the Messiah. It has also been understood as some kind of royal supplication addressed to the Messiah, or perhaps a call of triumphant joy. Whatever it was, we know that the phrase *Hosannah* had great Messianic significance, and that it was associated with the anticipated coming of the Messiah, with the cleansing of the temple, and was certainly at home in Israelite temple ritual.

The Hallel, an ancient festival hymn which was a part of Israelite temple liturgy, reads “Hosannah. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.” (Psalm 118.) This was certainly well known in Israel, so it is significant, I think, that in this temple context at the temple in Bountiful all of these Nephites broke forth, crying out in unison spontaneously with this familiar liturgical temple expression. With that, they all fall once again at the feet of Jesus and worship him.

Number ten: He asks one to then come forward. It was necessary for Jesus to ordain men to the priesthood. He first ordained Nephi and then eleven others. At first in the ceremony he ordains them to the Aaronic Priesthood, I assume, because he only gives them at this time the power to baptize. It won’t be until the end of the day (at the end of 3 Nephi 18) that these same twelve are given the power to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost and authority traditionally associated with the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Finally, on the baptismal and priesthood point, number eleven, Jesus then turned to explain baptism in more detail. He explained the manner of baptism, complete with the giving of the words of the prayer that the priest should offer—calling the candidate by his own name and offering the prayer that the baptism might be performed appropriately. These baptisms weren’t carried out immediately as the Nephites heard Jesus at this time. That would have taken far too much time. But they were carried out the very next morning. I’ve wondered why they didn’t stop at that point to go and actually be baptized. One reason might be that as they had come up to the temple that morning it’s quite possible that they had already properly washed and purified themselves, as an Israelite normally would have done in coming up to the temple on a routine day.

This perhaps then gives us one other instance where we might see the old form of washing and purification transformed into the new ordinance or baptism with the coming of Jesus. We know, for example, from excavations around the temple of Jerusalem, dating back to around the second century B.C., that there were *mikvaoth* or baptismal fonts lining the roads up to the temple so that those who were pilgrims coming to the temple could ritually immerse themselves and be then pure to present themselves at the temple. Those kinds of older forms of washings—which are precedented as early as Exodus 19:10 where Moses told the Israelites to wash their clothes and purify themselves against the day when the Lord would appear to them at Mt. Sinai—have now been completely replaced by the true order of baptism which Jesus instructed them in.

Point number twelve: We then turn to assuring the absence of evil from the midst of this people and this congregation. It turns out that it is a standard element of most ritual drama to experience in the ritual some kind of confrontation between the forces of good and evil—with

good confronting evil and evil being driven out and expelled. We don't see an actual ritual combat anywhere here in the Sermon at the Temple, but we do have a simple authoritative statement that the influences of evil and contention should be done away. With this simple statement we hear no more in the Sermon at the Temple about Satan or his power. Only in the Lord's Prayer do we have again a reassertion of the point that those people who have learned and have become righteous then have the ability to be delivered from evil or from the Evil One, as that Greek text may be translated.

In point number thirteen we have the mention of witnesses. Jesus identified three who would witness the making of the covenant on this occasion. This is a unique occasion; there are no other witnesses so sublime and holy as Jesus, God the Father himself, and the Holy Ghost who will witness this dispensation of the gospel in the presence of the resurrected Lord himself. So here we have three witnesses—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—witnessing of the making of the covenant and the giving of the law on this occasion. This also would have, I'm sure, been reminiscent and familiar practice to the Nephites and the Israelites. From the Old Testament we know that it is in the mouth of two or three witnesses that all things are to be established. One may think also of the three messengers who visited Abraham, or the calling of witnesses in Joshua 24:15, where Joshua says, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" and then points out that the people themselves on that occasion were witnesses of what they had done. That is an important element of most covenant making—that it be done in the presence of witnesses—and certainly on this occasion we have that condition fulfilled as well.

After the devil is gone, number fourteen, the point turns to the interest of seeing that all people on the earth are taught the gospel. Jesus twice defines his gospel in exactly the same terms. It is the gospel of repentance, baptism, and becoming as a little child. To those who do, Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is the essential doctrine of the kingdom, and Jesus wants more than anything else that his ordained disciples will go forth to all the people to declare the words which he has spoken to them, for all people should have an opportunity to hear and receive these things so that all of Adam's posterity may participate in the plan of salvation and have the opportunity for exaltation.

In order to ease their way, Jesus then exhorts the people to give strict heed to the words of the disciples whom he has chosen. Point fifteen is his commending of the disciples to these people. Jesus turned to the multitude, blessed them, and admonished them with these words: "Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you and to be your servants." He blessed all who would believe their instruction and accept the words that they would speak.

We only have a few minutes left in this hour, so we will conclude this lecture. Beginning with the next lecture we will begin to move back into material that is familiar to us from Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount. We will begin there with a discussion of the Beatitudes—special blessings that some scholars have also seen to have ritual significance. I invite you to read in preparation for the next lecture especially chapters five and six of Matthew and chapters twelve and thirteen of 3 Nephi. Read them again with this model or hypothesis in mind and I promise you that you will see things there that you have never seen before. I'll look forward to seeing you next week.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

JOHN WELCH

Semester 4, Lecture 99

3 Nephi 12–14

The Beatitudes

Christ's Teachings

We were on [point] number sixteen, if I remember right. Today we would like to continue our probing and developing of the hypothesis that the sermon at the temple provides us with temple-rich material which when viewed in a covenant-making context takes on new and important meanings and significance. I would like to continue to test this hypothesis in terms of looking at each of the elements in the text to see if they can be understood in this way. I would like to remind you, of course, that in this kind of an approach to a scripture we aren't proving something in the sense that we can prove by deductive reasoning or absolute conclusions that this is the only or main meaning of the text. What I am striving to do is open your minds to the possibility that this is a possible way that one can read the text. It would then be up to you to compare and contrast this against other possible interpretations to see which you think works the best. Today we are starting with [point] number sixteen in the Sermon at the Temple, which takes us to where we left off last time, the Beatitudes. Thus we will be revisiting the familiar terrain of the Sermon on the Mount, but now from a different vantage point.

What do the Beatitudes have to do with a temple context? Did any of you think about that as you have been rereading these materials and going through this? What do you see here that works as a temple [ritual]?

Student: Maybe it is the beginning of the ceremony. They are promised all these blessings; then actually go into the covenants themselves.

What kind of blessings are promised in the Beatitudes?

Student: Eternal life.

Yes, eternal life. These are eschatological blessings, aren't they? "Blessed are the poor in spirit." What will the poor in spirit inherit? "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." When will the meek inherit the earth? Only when the earth is sanctified and presented in its immortal state and becomes the celestial kingdom upon which the meek will dwell. Blessed are those who suffer persecution and ridicule for my name's sake, for great is their reward. Where? In heaven. Jesus is promising the eternal blessings, and at the outset of the ceremony tells what those things are in store for those who are worthy to obtain them. You get a foretaste of what this will be in the Beatitudes. Certainly the Beatitudes present us with a benchmark of righteousness—not just a routine, moral sense of righteousness. This list of virtues that you see presented in the Beatitudes is very similar to the list that you encounter in scriptures that talk about the process of sanctification. Look at 2 Peter 1; look at 1 Corinthians 13. Look at the list of virtues that King Benjamin in Mosiah 3:18–19 says a person must put on in order for the atoning blood to purify that person. That's the sanctifying power. Those are the virtues that you encounter in the Beatitudes—preparing the way for holiness and sanctification.

When you turn to other places where we might also find these kinds of virtues mentioned, you also run into ritual or mystery religion contexts. Take the phrase *pure in heart*. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Both of those phrases—*pure in heart* and *seeing God*—are

loaded with temple symbolism and meaning. The *pure in heart* phrase comes out of twenty-fourth psalm—a psalm that is very well described as an ancient temple recommend. “Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord?” That, of course, is to the temple. Who is worthy to enter the temple? Those who have clean hands and a pure heart. And what will they see when they enter the temple? The Doctrine and Covenants tells us those who enter the temple in Kirtland (this is D&C 97:16) will see God. These phrases are referring to temple-type experiences. Such is not completely lost, even on our Gentile scholars. You can find, for example, Hans D. Betz speculating about what on earth these Beatitudes should be understood to mean. His conclusion: The Beatitudes are the entrance requirements for the kingdom of heaven—his way of saying “temple recommend questions” perhaps. Georg Strecker concludes that the Beatitudes are “the conditions that must be fulfilled in order to gain entrance into the Holy of Holies.” You need to do a little research into why they are saying these kinds of things, but they see this list of Beatitudes in a very sacred context.

Another place where you run into lists like this is in Deuteronomy 27, which talks about how the old becomes new and what Jesus is doing. What did the Israelites do at the temple in Deuteronomy 27? One of the things was that the Levites had to stand up and pronounce curses upon the wicked. Cursed be the person who moves his neighbor’s marker stone out in the field. Cursed be the person who leads the blind astray, and things like that. Each time there are twelve curses that they all pronounce. Each time one of the curses was uttered, all of the congregation there at the temple had to say, “Amen.” This is a ritual sort of thing that they went through every year.

Well, look what Jesus does. Instead of the list of curses, he has the list of blessings. As he says things like, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God,” I like to imagine the congregation saying “Amen”—just as they were used to saying “Amen” to the curses. The combination of the cursing and the blessing, to link that one more step closer, is found in the 2 Enoch literature. I refer you to 2 Enoch, sections 42, 51, and 52. In 2 Enoch 42, you have, for example, a list of beatitudes again, and they describe the person who is worthy to enter into the third heaven. You remember in the Enoch literature you have an ascension vision, where the prophet moves from one heaven on up until he finally reaches the ultimate heaven. At each stage it is described who is present at these different points. 2 Enoch 42 talks about those who enter into the “paradise room” or that stage. “Happy is the person who reverences the name of the Lord. Happy is the one who carries out righteous judgment. Happy is the one who speaks truth to his neighbor. Happy is the one who has compassion on his lips. Happy is he who understands the work of the Lord.” There you have a group of beatitudes oriented around lips, understanding, heart, etc. This is from 2 Enoch, James H. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, volume one. If you want the references, I’ll be happy to give those to you.

When you get into sections 51 and 52, it’s interesting that you have both—the beatitude followed by the curse. Blessed is the person who does the good thing; cursed be the person who does the bad thing. That also is spoken in connection, interestingly, with temple material. 2 Enoch 51 says, “It is good for everyone to go into the temple of the Lord.” Section 52 then describes to people how they should praise the name of the Lord in the temple, and it is with these beatitudes and cursings. So I think when we are looking for a context, we don’t need, as Betz does, to go to the Greek mystery religions, where these beatific kinds of expressions (*macarisms*, they are called because in Greek *makarios* is the word for “blessed”) are used as initiatory promises. We can stay right at home in the Israelite temple and Christian material to find this stuff.

[inaudible comment from a student].

Yes, good point. When you start keying into something like this, the text just begins to explode right in front on you with all these different meanings. Why is it this way? What’s going on

here? Linkages and connections. I made the claim in our first lecture that the Sermon on the Mount is like Grand Central Station; sooner or later everything goes through this text. When you start putting the connections together, some exciting things happen.

Number seventeen: What do we turn to next after the Beatitudes? The language about the salt. “I give unto you to be the salt of the earth.” There has been a lot of literature written about the importance of salt in covenant making, in purification, etc. I go no further than Doctrine and Covenants 101:39, where we have a definition of who comprises the salt of the earth. It says that it is those people who enter into the everlasting covenant—“they are accounted as the salt of the earth.” Again, that is very explicitly in our literature connected with covenant making and a covenant clue. You can, of course, also find other things, like the code of instruction used for the scribes in the time of Jesus. We have this from Rabbinic sources—the scribes taught that in order to be righteous a person must be modest, humble, industrious, and salted. No one quite knows what the word *salted* means in that context, but it is in connection with their becoming a member of this group.

Number eighteen: We have a reference to light—becoming the light of the world. “I give unto you to be the light.” And the commandment is given to “let your light so shine before men.” Is it [going] too far to suggest that we have here a creation image? In the beginning “God said, Let there be light.” In the creation of the new heaven and the new earth, he says, “Let your light so shine.” The righteous become the light shining unto the world. Perhaps there is some symbolism there and a little clue as to why the creation story is so frequently associated with temple material, even in the Jewish literature and other places in the ancient world.

Number nineteen: We then turn in 3 Nephi 12:19–20 to Jesus beginning the instruction in earnest as to what a person who will enter into this covenant must agree to do. The first instruction is that you must come with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. This, as we have said before, is none other than the new law of sacrifice. The temple connections here are obvious because sacrifice was the main thing that was done in the ancient temples. Now it is replaced with the new law that takes the place of the shedding of blood under the law of Moses. Interestingly, for those New Testament scholars who argue that Matthew was responsible for putting together this collection of sayings of Jesus and, therefore, that it reflects material that would have been used or known in Christianity maybe twenty or thirty years after the time of Jesus, the text in Matthew 5:19–20 is their Exhibit A to prove that the Sermon on the Mount could not have been written by Jesus. It is not only Exhibit A, it is about the only evidence that you have within the Sermon on the Mount to present that argument. What is the essence of the argument? It is the use of the phrase *least of these*. Whosoever shall teach people not to keep the commandments, he shall be known as the “least in the kingdom of heaven,” *elachistos*. Paul, you will remember, in 1 Corinthians calls himself “the least of the apostles.” And what was he out there teaching? Well, he was teaching people that they didn’t need to live the law of Moses any longer. That, of course, presented enormous conflict in the early Jewish-Christian communities, as reflected in the epistle to the Galatians. There was a conflict. How much of the law of Moses do we need to keep? The logic is that the reference in Matthew 5 has to be a reference to Paul after the time Paul called himself that. Now, whether you agree with that logic or not, it is striking that when you go to the Book of Mormon those verses are among the very few verses that are absolutely absent. What you have in the sermon at the temple in the place where that text about keeping the least of the laws [is found in the Bible] is the presentation of the law of obedience and sacrifice. Interesting. Make of that what you will.

Number twenty: The next point Jesus says, again turning to the old and bringing about the new, “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, and it is also written before you [the Nephites had these records, of course, in writing as well] that thou shalt not kill.” Jesus then said: I don’t want any anger; I don’t want any ridicule; I don’t want evil speaking. Why is this so important? Why does this amount to the equivalent in significance of murder under the old rule?

Well, the Lord placed enmity in this world for one reason, and one reason only. Hatred is here so that we can hate evil. What does the devil do with that enmity? He says, fine—all right, God, you have let evil into the world; then I will take that evil and with it I will make people hate one another. He misdirects our hatred and our anger—a typical strategy that Satan is going to try to employ. Jesus says if we are going to reverse that, we’ve got to rid our lives of anger and hostility, especially toward a brother. It says you can’t call another *Raca* (fool). It’s a derisive word, laughing at what he is doing. Why? When you laugh at a brother or a sister in whom resides the spirit of God, you are ridiculing God himself. The early Christians taught that doctrine, and for that reason you have councils referred to in the early Christian literature where people were brought before the council because they had spoken evil of one another. This was grounds for excommunication. This is worse than death itself. Why? Because it reviles and defies God and his presence in the community that is being formed. How? By the covenant relationship that these people are entering into. Gentile and Jewish scholars have noticed this kind of thing. In the Dead Sea Scrolls the *Manual of Discipline* places a very high premium on the need for harmony within the community. I’ll read from a commentary on the *Manual of Discipline* 7:8: “Anger against a fellow member of the society could not be tolerated under any circumstances. Punishment applied in any case of a member harboring angry feelings.”

This is an important element of bonding the community together, and for that reason the Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount move to the next element, number 21, a discussion of the need to reconcile. If you know that your brother has hard feelings against you, it is your responsibility to go and reconcile yourself first with that person. Then you can come and present yourself to the altar. But what does Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount? If you have any hard feelings, leave your sacrifice at the altar and go and reconcile yourself. Then come. Why? So you can present yourself pure before God. Obviously, it seems to me this is understandable in a context that is talking about more than just getting along with the neighbor across the back fence. This is talking about the ritual integrity and the covenantal harmony of the community that’s being formed.

By the way, biblical scholars look at that passage and wonder what on earth it’s doing in the Sermon on the Mount. It appears to be intrusive into the text. You have, you’ve heard it said of old, thou shalt not murder; I give you the new law. You’ve heard it said of old thou shalt not commit adultery; I give you the new law, etc. There are three places where Jesus quotes from the Ten Commandments.

By the way, the Ten Commandments have recently been analyzed by Moshe Weinfeld at Hebrew University in Jerusalem as also temple related materials—presenting the requirements that a person must satisfy before approaching the temple in Jerusalem. I don’t know if you know this, but as you went up toward the temple in Jerusalem there were ancient warnings saying, “Caution, you are approaching sacred territory. Do not come any closer if you are not pure.” They would list the Ten Commandments or things like that so that people would know that these are the requirements. If you are not complying with them, you had better not come into this sacred place. There are also some Greek temples that have similar kinds of inscriptions on the foundation stones that require a person coming into the temple to be pure—not just through some kind of ritual, but also pure in conduct and in their heart.

People look at the use of the Ten Commandments here and say, “Why on earth doesn’t Jesus just stay right with the Ten Commandments? He sticks in these intrusive kinds of passages. As they understand it and with the limited tools they are trying to work with, it doesn’t cohere. It doesn’t make any sense why this should be there; therefore, it is viewed as intrusive and probably somehow a sign of a disparate collection. The view that we are exploring here doesn’t require you to go to that kind of a contortion to understand why this would have been a logical and important part of this instruction.

Number twenty-two is easily recognizable as the law of chastity. The old law of adultery is now upgraded to the requirement that a person must be pure in heart and remove from your heart all of the desires or impulses. You cannot even look upon a woman [with lust]; that is tantamount to breaking this sacred covenant—obviously a very, very high standard. Again, most Protestant scholars look at this text and say, “My goodness, this is impossible. Jesus couldn’t have expected anybody to live up to this; therefore, he must not have been intending this to apply to mortals in this human condition. It must only be something that will apply someday somewhere in the Messianic Age.” We have an interim explanation for that. It’s not just everyone in the world who should strive for this, but it is those people who are willing to enter into certain sacred covenant relationships involving sexuality and marriage for whom this high standard should especially apply.

I would like to draw your attention also to the fact that when we see in the Sermon at the Temple this law dealing with adultery, we encounter for the first time the notion of penalties. When you take upon yourself this requirement, two penalties are mentioned. First of all when you take this upon yourself, you take up the cross. In other words, you confront here the arresting idea that at this point the disciple is prepared to take upon himself the very symbols of the form of the mortal punishment that Jesus would suffer. That’s how serious you are about entering into this covenant.

The other thing in the Sermon on the Mount not present in the Sermon at the Temple talks about tearing out your eye or cutting off your hand. Bodily mutilation was not meant certainly by Jesus to be literal, but figurative kinds of things, where you are saying as you enter into this covenant, “May this happen to me should I violate this covenant.” That, by the way, was a common form of covenant-making in the ancient Near East. Usually, they would take a little animal. Delbert Hiller’s book called *The Idea of Covenant* (John Hopkins Press) describes the standard mode of taking a small animal and either cutting its throat or cutting its belly open as two people make a contract. It needn’t be a religious contract; it could also be just entering into some kind of a business deal. They would stand and say, “If I break this contract, then let this happen to me.” The animal represented the person who would be the violator. I think we are also encountering similar kinds of things in the Sermon at the Temple.

This also, as you go to number twenty-three, helps to explain the next point, which also is a great puzzle to most people who read the Sermon on the Mount. That’s the teaching about divorce. How can Jesus say that there should be no divorce except for fornication? Is he intending this to apply to all people universally, worldwide? Certainly the old law was a very easy form of divorce. All you had to do was present the bill of divorcement, and divorce could be immediately effected under the book of Deuteronomy. Jesus is saying, no, for this people, for you here a higher rule applies. That makes good sense, given the context.

The next point, number twenty-four, has also been misunderstood. This is Jesus’ teaching about oaths. You have heard it said of old “Thou shalt not forswear thyself.” In other words, don’t perjure yourself. Usually, this is viewed as a restriction or a prohibition against committing perjury on the witness stand in a legal proceeding. That’s the technical term under the law of Moses in the Ten Commandments. Jesus said, I don’t want you to swear any oaths, except by saying yes or no. Some people have said, well then Jesus is opposed to all oaths of any kind. We know that can’t be the case, because if you go to Matthew 23 you will see Jesus’ practical teaching about oath making. What he objected to there was not the making of oaths. People were swearing by the temple, etc. He said, fine, but just remember that when you swear these oaths you are swearing not by the temple or by the altar or by the temple gold. Don’t get into a big argument about which you are swearing by. You are swearing by the spirit that dwells in that temple. He wanted people to swear oaths. What then is he saying in Matthew 5 or 3 Nephi 12? Swear not at all, except in this way. I think he is talking about a specific context in which certain oaths are to be made in this way—there we will only swear in this manner. I think that [explanation] makes very good sense in a number of New Testament texts that we won’t talk about.



Number twenty-five: We then find in verses 38–45 the teaching about turning the other cheek, going the extra mile. If a person asks for one piece of clothing, give him two. The Lord lets his rain fall on the righteous and on the wicked. Well, it's at this point that we start looking for something related to the law of the gospel, and indeed the Doctrine and Covenants doesn't let us down. D&C 104:18 defines the law of the gospel as follows (this is the only place I know of in scripture where this term is defined): "Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment." What we have then in this part of the sermon can, I think, aptly be described as the law of love, the law of the gospel. It's a law, by the way, that is taught not only in the New Testament, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Book of Mormon, but it is also in the Old Testament. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" was not a phrase invented by Jesus in response to questioning Pharisees. He is quoting there from the book of Leviticus.

We then turn to a transition stage in the text. Jesus then says, I want you now to become perfect. What does the word *perfect* have to do with a temple context? Perfection, being perfect. Does that sound like a word that might have some potential here? It's almost like he is leaving one phase and says, all right, now we've talked about the law of Moses. We've left that room, and we are now going on. You remember which priesthood is involved in the law of Moses—it's the Aaronic Priesthood. Now we are going to make a shift; we are now going to go on and become perfect.

The word *perfect* in Greek (*teleios*) means "to become finished or completed," and it is a common word used in the ancient mystery religions to describe the person who has been fully initiated in the religious ordinances. Let me give you a couple of examples of that. Some of them come from "The Secret Gospel of Mark," which was published by Morton Smith. This is found in a letter of Clement of Alexandria around A.D. 200 [inaudible question] That is a quote from Arndt and Gingrich *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. The medieval lexicons were put together mostly by Catholics. Most of our dictionaries and lexicons these days are done by Protestants, and the Protestants have a general antipathy against ordinances. You aren't saved by ordinances [according to them]. That was one of Luther's main points, so whenever possible a Lutheran is going to give you a translation that is compatible with his view of salvation—which is salvation by grace. You become perfect in an ethical sense or a moral sense. That will be the primary meaning listed. When you go to the medieval texts, you will see that the sacramental dimension of these words receives much higher prominence.

As I have said, I go way back to "The Secret Gospel of Mark" from 200 A.D. This was published by the Harvard University Press in 1973. It's a very interesting text. We don't have the text of this gospel, but Clement of Alexandria tells us in this letter that there is a second gospel of Mark in his possession. He was the archbishop (I'm not sure that's the right title) of Alexandria at this time. He said, "We have a text that Mark claims to have brought with him from Rome after Peter's death. We keep it here, and we only show it to certain very worthy people under sacred circumstances. He had to write this letter that has been preserved because word had gotten out that this secret gospel contained certain things. Clement is saying, "No, it doesn't contain those things at all." He doesn't tell us what it does contain, but he does say (and I'll quote this from Morton Smith's own translation): It contains things "for the use of those who are being perfected [that's our word again]; nevertheless, Mark did not divulge the things not to be uttered, nor did he write down the hierophantic [the priesthood] teaching of the Lord, but he brought in certain sayings, which he knew the interpretation [of], as a mystagog [in other words, someone being inducted into the mysteries], would lead the hearers into the innermost sanctuary of that truth hidden by seven veils. [This is Clement again:] We read this only to those "who are being initiated into the great *mysteria*." The word is a very clear word out of the Greek mystery religions.

Well, we don't know what to make of this, but you can conclude, I think, that in early Christianity there was a text that was preserved. We don't know what it was. Maybe it was just the Sermon on the Mount; maybe it was the Sermon on the Mount with a few annotations; maybe it was something completely different. [Student comment about the Clement text. He said the text says the candidate was naked with nothing but a linen cloth over him.] Good point. We haven't got to the garments yet, but we will.

Anyway, Jesus then says, "I would that ye should become perfect." I don't want to suggest that that's the only meaning of the word, but it is certainly a powerful meaning of this word. You should also think of yourself as becoming perfect not just in going through an initiation or a ritual ordinance, but in living true and faithful to it. That will bring even greater perfection. Well, as you turn the corner into chapter 6 in Matthew or chapter 13 in the Book of Mormon, what do we next encounter? Almsgiving—giving of your substance to the poor. You are promised here that if you do this you will be rewarded in the open. We will come back to that in a minute.

Item number twenty-eight proceeds with instruction as to how to pray. Jesus begins by telling people how they should pray in private. When you (the word there is singular) go to pray, what should you do? You go into your closet, and there you pray not with a lot of words and repetition, but just pour out your heart unto the Lord. Then Jesus says, "But when ye pray . . ." The word there is plural, so we are talking about a group prayer. Here is what you should say. Then he leads them, I think, in a prayer. We know it as the Lord's Prayer. Brother Nibley has not published this, but in Sunday School classes he has described the Lord's Prayer itself as an archetype of the mysteries. He sees in it the typical elements of all of the mystery religions—an *arche*, a protology or beginning. "Our Father which art in heaven." You begin in the heavens. [Then there is] an *omphalos* or something relating that to worldly events—the worldly bread, the debts. "And forgive us our debts. . . . Lead us not into temptation." Finally, [there is] what he identifies as the *sphragis* or the seal, which is placed on the prayer: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." So it might become just in itself a microcosm of the entire ceremony [inaudible student comment] Yes, an archetype of the ceremony itself. It contains the archetypal elements of the mystery religions' ritual.

We might pause and say something about this seal for just a minute: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." Many of you are aware that in some of the early manuscripts, indeed, the better manuscripts of Matthew, you don't have the long ending to the Lord's Prayer. It just ends "Amen." That, of course, is not the case in the Book of Mormon, which gives you the long ending. Biblical scholars, Jeremias in particular, have argued that you cannot imagine a prayer being offered by a Jew (and Jesus was a Jew) that didn't end with some kind of doxology praising God. Jeremias isn't sure what doxology Jesus might have used, but he has no doubt that one would have been there.

The question is then why doesn't Luke (in Luke 6 and 11 when you have the sermon on the plain and the teachings of Jesus are comparable) end the brief prayer that he gives in chapter 11 with any kind of doxology. There the manuscripts are clear. It just ends with an "Amen." It might be that when you are in a temple context, you are more inclined to include a doxology, the praising of God. But when you are out in the fields teaching people how to pray, you would close with a simple "Amen." I refer you to Strack and Billerbeck who have gathered some Talmudic sources on this point. They describe the prayers that were offered in the temple on the day of atonement. They say after the people and the priests standing in the forecourt hear the name of the Lord cried out, then they all fall down on their faces, and they say, "Praised be the name of his glorious kingdom forever and eternally."

In the temple one does not answer simply “Amen.” How did one answer? “Praised be the name of his glorious kingdom forever and eternally.” In other words, it was a part of the special ending of a prayer. On the day of atonement that longer ending would have been appropriate. If we are right that Jesus is appearing to the Nephites on a day that had ceremonial significance, it cannot be counted as an error that the Lord’s Prayer ends with the doxology in 3 Nephi.

Well, we are to number twenty-nine. We now learn that fasting, washing, and anointing have something to do with this.

Number thirty: We then learn that total dedication to the kingdom of God is the next requirement. A man cannot serve God and Mammon. Your eye must be single to the glory of God. It’s interesting that phrase—the singleness of your heart and eyes to God—appears in Doctrine and Covenants 88 when it is again describing the process of sanctification.

Item thirty-one: Jesus then turns to his disciples and tells them, don’t worry about tomorrow. You will have sufficient for your needs.

Item thirty-two: He then talks about garments. In Greek the word *enduo*, from which our word *endow* is directly derived, has two meanings. *Enduo* means “to clothe, to put on clothing.” It also means “to take on characteristics, virtues, and intentions.” When a person is endowed, the person is clothed. Jesus told his disciples not to leave Jerusalem (Luke 24:49) until they were “endued with power from on high.” The clothing represents the robes of God’s righteousness. The atonement occurs when one is encircled by the robes of God’s righteousness, but this only occurs as these attributes are taken on—the attributes set forth in the beginning in the Beatitudes. Joseph Smith spoke frequently about the need to be endowed in the House of the Lord. It’s interesting that Jesus expresses this idea by saying to his disciples, I will give you clothing. And the word there is *endumata*. I will give you garments that are more glorious than whose? Than the garments of Solomon. He, of course, is always connected with the great temple.

Moving quickly, we go to item thirty-three. We then are prepared for the judgment—how to withstand the judgment. First we are told the principle by which we will be judged—for in what manner you shall judge, so shall it be judged against you; with what measure you mete, so shall it be meted against you.

Number thirty-four is an interesting and again, as we mentioned, a very troubling passage for many. This is the requirement that you cast not your pearls before the swine. What on earth is this text talking about? In a temple context does it make any sense? By all means. Jesus goes on to say, and cast not your holy things . . . The clue couldn’t be more obvious. “Cast not your holy things before the dogs.” He’s talking about a covenant and an obligation of secrecy at this point. There are certain things that are not to be divulged. Interestingly, we also encounter a penalty. If you do, they will turn and rend you and trample you under feet. Those are common curses that you will see referred to in the Old Testament, reserved for those people who violate the covenant.

Point number thirty-five is 3 Nephi 14:7. We have the old familiar verse, but now think of it in a new setting. “Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” There’s a three-fold petition. Point number thirty-six promises that if it is asked properly who will be there to open unto you? The Father. He will give you a good gift, for what father is there if his son asks for bread will give him a stone. You are asking for the bread of life. Are you going to be stoned to death? If you ask for a fish, an obvious symbol of Christ, will you be given a serpent, the obvious symbol of Satan. You will be given a *gift*, another word for *endowment*.

Point number thirty-seven is the common and well-known phrase, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” What’s the thrust of that in this context? A man cannot be saved

except with other people. The first obligation of a person who has been converted is to want to share the principles of the gospel, the opportunity for salvation, with other people. What more could be given? If you would like to be saved yourself, you must make this opportunity available to other people.

In number thirty-eight we are told that we must enter in through a narrow opening. Strait and narrow is the gate that leads to life eternal. We are taught the principles of two ways. We are told that there are signposts and markers that will help to guide us on our way through the narrow gate. Interestingly, those words themselves are the words that are used to describe the function of certain symbols that appear on the veil, to describe and remind you of the undeviating course that a person must follow in order to enter into life eternal.

Point number thirty-nine is the discussion about becoming a tree of life—a tree that bears eternal fruit. For those that do not bear the right fruit, they will be cast out and thrown into the fire. Those who bear righteous, worthy fruit [will be rewarded]. The words here for *good* and *evil* are not your normal moral words, but are talking about those things that are exalted, or those things that are corrupt.

Finally, number forty: We are told that if we do this we will then be allowed to enter into the presence of the Lord. Not those who just say, “Lord, Lord” will enter into his presence. You must have more than even the ability to cast out spirits in his name. What is it that these people lack that Jesus will have to turn away and say, “I know thee not”? *To know the Lord* is a common expression in Amos and elsewhere in the Old Testament. Amos 3:2 is a good example. *To know the Lord* means to enter into a covenant with the Lord. The Hebrew word for know is *yāda*<sup>c</sup>. It has a broad range of meanings, but certainly one of them is covenantal. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” In what sense has God only known Israel? By means of the covenant.

That takes us not to the end of the Sermon at the Temple, but to the end of the familiar terrain of the Sermon on the Mount. We will finish next time with a few more comments about the Sermon at the Temple. I would like to give you a written assignment to be turned in on Monday. You’ve heard me talk about this for three lectures now. I would appreciate this; I guess I don’t have the power to require it. Nibley will decide if he wants to give any weight to such an assignment at all, but I would appreciate it if you would write a page or two reflecting on some of the implications of the interpretation and of the hypothesis that I have presented to you thus far. The implications are broad. As we said earlier, when you start to see this passage in a way that no one else has ever really looked at it before, the text begins to explode right in your hand. Things start to take on meanings, and connections start to come alive that you might never have thought of before. I would like you to reflect on those implications and the broader implications about what this means for the Book of Mormon itself. We have been told in prophecy that the Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the gospel. How well and how completely it contains that fullness we never have previously imagined. Thanks, I’ll see you next Monday.



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

JOHN WELCH

Semester 4, Lecture 100

3 Nephi 15–18

Sacrament Prayers

Implications of the Sermon at the Temple

Today we'd like to finish up the last few elements in the Sermon at the Temple and then consider some of the implications of this approach to these chapters of scripture.

Of course, right after Jesus concludes the familiar material from the Matthean sermon, we begin in 3 Nephi 15 with a statement that puts all of this again back into perspective as to what it is doing. There Jesus says, "Whoso remembereth these sayings of mine and doeth them, him will I raise up at the last day."

Again the point that we made at the outset was that one of the main purposes for this exercise, this instruction that Jesus is giving to the people, is to allow them to be able to be lifted up at the last day to withstand the final day of judgment. This general eschatological, judgmental orientation is then reinforced by what Jesus says. Notice also that just before you begin the Matthean material in the last part of chapter 11, you have the image of the person who builds upon the rock and the contrast with the person who builds upon the sand. That also comes then at the end in 3 Nephi 14, forming a kind of frame or an *inclusio*, which is a device frequently used in ancient literature to help people to see what the orientation of a passage will be. So we have that double reference helping us all the more clearly to see this focus in the Sermon at the Temple.

Chapters 15 and 16 then move into what I would just term a lecture on the nature of the covenant. Here Jesus responds to some of the questions that people have. They're not sure how it's possible that the law of Moses, as we discussed in the first lecture, could be entirely fulfilled when there are still a number of outstanding prophecies and promises that obviously have not yet been completely satisfied. Jesus explains how that will be, how the law has been now transformed; but all of the promises that God has made, of course, are not yet materialized. They will be brought into effect both for Israel as a group and for individuals personally in due course.

In point number 42, at the conclusion of that lecture, the beginning of chapter 17, Jesus then again turns his attention to instructing the people further as to what they should do. The first instruction, 3 Nephi 17:1, is that the people, if they are going to comprehend what he has said, must ponder, must go home and think about the things that have been said and done. I think that's an important instruction that tells us that there are deep meanings in what Jesus has given—just as the temple for us is something that is never exhausted, that you must always ponder and think and pray about. So Jesus instructs his people that that's what he wants them to do with this text. It's not just a matter of doing, listening, and remembering, but also pondering and internalizing and thinking about very deeply.

Item number 43: In 3 Nephi 17:5–9, Jesus then calls the people to bring any of the sick or afflicted that they might have so that Jesus can bless them. We have then the touching scene of Jesus blessing all of those in this multitude who had any affliction or handicap or any kind of illness. A comparable function, I suppose, is served in our own temples by the prayer roll, which is placed on the altar for any of the sick or afflicted or any people who need special blessings. It seems to me that Jesus turns to a similar function. It is interesting to me, although this is

certainly not a part of any kind of ritual that would then be given by Jesus to the people, but they turn around and reciprocate to him with the washing of the feet—not with ordinary water, but they wash his feet in their tears because of the gratitude and the love that they have felt for him, having spent this day or whatever time it was with him.

Point number 44: Jesus then turns to bless the parents and the children. We frequently hear of this material. It's used in many Primary meetings and Primary inservice lessons to show how Jesus loves the children. We overlook, however, the first half of the blessing when we do that. The first thing Jesus does is to call the parents, and he blesses them. It's interesting to me that there's some discussion given, although we can't be very sure of exactly how the people positioned themselves or where they were, but the text talks about these people being round about Jesus. Jesus is in the middle somehow, and he calls first of all the children to be brought to him. It seems to me that they would have, as children naturally do, just thronged around him—just encircled him in kind of an internal circle within the multitude. And then it says that the parents stood around the children, all round about them. So it's almost as if you have Jesus in the middle with a circle of children around him, and then the parents encircling them. After Jesus blesses the parents, then he turns to the children and blesses each one of them. I think it's significant that the text says, after he concludes this blessing, that he turns to the parents and says, "Behold your little ones." It seems to me—and again I just suggest this for your pondering—that Jesus is doing something more here than simply saying: look at your little kids—aren't they cute? Aren't they cute little guys? He's saying "behold your little ones." In some sense now I think they are their little ones, in a sense that they weren't prior to the time this blessing was given.

At that point you remember that the parents witness what has gone on. Angels descend and minister, and thus this portion of the Sermon at the Temple is witnessed by God, angels, and the parents as witnesses. The suggestion, of course, is that some form of priesthood blessing has been given which now brings these families together in a special, spiritual way. They would never be the same as families, in any event, having experienced this great event together as a family unit.

In chapter 18 we turn then to point 45, where Jesus will give the people a new name. The new name that they are given is the name of Christ, which they take upon themselves by way of covenant. It's interesting that we now encounter the eucharist, the sacrament, where Jesus divides the congregation into the groups and has the disciples minister unto them, giving them each the bread and the wine as tokens of his body and blood. In so doing, as they partake of that, they covenant and witness that they will keep the commandments which he had given them this day. We usually think of the sacramental covenant only in connection with our baptismal covenants. But as I understand it, when we partake of the sacrament every Sunday, we renew whatever covenant we have ever made with God, and so it is the full range of covenant relationship that's being renewed and enriched and represented by that.

I'd like to digress for just a minute to talk about the sacrament because I think it bears on the general question of whether or not it is reasonable to think that the Nephites took what they experienced on this day and incorporated it somehow into their religious liturgy and ritual. I think one of the strongest evidences of that is in the sacrament prayers. If you compare, and a few people have done this, 3 Nephi 18, where Jesus administers to the bread and then administers to the wine, the words and phrases which Jesus uses there all find their way into the sacrament prayer that you find in Moroni 4 and 5—that they will take upon them the name of Christ and always remember him. In 3 Nephi 18 it's all cast in the first person. Jesus, of course, is saying that you will keep the commandments which I have given you, that you will always remember the body which I have shown unto you. Someone has taken this—whether it was Nephi himself or whether it was Jesus himself, we don't know—but someone has taken this experience and then cast those words and phrases into the prayer that the Nephites I think immediately begin using as their sacrament prayers.

It is interesting to me that as Latter-day Saints we do not technically observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The prayers that we administer, the sacrament that we participate in, is really the sacrament of the Lord's appearance, because it is from the Book of Mormon that we know those prayers. We don't know those from the New Testament or from anything in early Christianity. The way in which the priests administer the sacrament is explained in the Book of Mormon and follows this prototype. What that says to me is that we generally spend our time during preparation for partaking of the sacrament thinking [of New Testament scenes], and this is certainly appropriate. I don't mean to take away; I mean simply to augment. We usually think of the Last Supper, the Upper Room—the events that preceded the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. It seems to me that we should add to that an effort to try to spiritually place ourselves into the context of the Sermon at the Temple—that we should try to see ourselves as having experienced the same thing that these Nephites did. It is their prayer that we use. A couple of questions:

“When Christ was in the Old World, first he said the prayer and then he broke the bread and administered the wine. But now and also on the American continent he did it the opposite way. Is there any significance to that, do you think?”

I had never wondered about that. The question is whether it makes any difference whether the bread is broken prior to the blessing, as seems to be the case in the New Testament record, or the other way around. I guess I'm not sure.

They are told right at the outset that this is a covenant, that I want you to partake of this. Then they are told, now that you have done this, this is the meaning of what has happened. I don't know. It's an interesting question. I would have to think about that.

“The Joseph Smith Translation changes the order of that?”

In John?

“It's either Luke or John. The other question is, how do you think the liturgy and rituals here in the New World compared with the Old World? Did they use similar prayers?”

Well, that's a good question. The question is, did the prayers that Jesus then initiated here in the New World track very closely what he would have given to the apostles in the Old World? The problem there is we don't have much of the eucharistic literature from the first couple of centuries. There's a little bit. There's a lengthy treatise by Lietzmann on the liturgical material—the baptismal prayers and the sacramental prayers from early Christianity (third century, fourth century), a wide variety of it. I've looked at that. I don't see much in the way of similarity that would indicate [they were the same]. You see basic things that are there. You'd always expect that, but in terms of verbatim similarities, no, not that I've found. Part of the problem here, too, is that to us the sacrament is a very open thing. Anyone can come and watch us administer to and pass and partake of the sacrament. What we're seeing here [is that] when Jesus finally gets to the pinnacle, the last thing that he is going to present to these people—it is the sacrament, a very sacred inner ordinance. In early Christianity the love feasts, the agape feasts, the eucharistic experience was kept extremely secret. In fact that was one of the things that led to so much speculation about what the early Christians were doing off in these things. People assumed that since they were called “love feasts” they must be R rated or X rated or something. That was part of the reason that the Christians then made the sacrament a more public event in the second century. I point that out simply to say that whatever those prayers were originally, they were kept very sacred and very secret and that explains, I think, to some extent why we don't know exactly what Peter and Paul would have been using as they went around and administered the sacrament to the faithful there. It's an interesting question. Maybe someday we'll know more about it.



There is a little difference that I think you might also want to observe between the Old World and the New World. For those who see this as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the prayer (and Paul reflects this) on the bread was always "eat in remembrance of the body which was broken." It is the broken bread, the symbol of the breaking there that becomes important for the Old World. But in 3 Nephi 18:7 what does the bread symbolize in the memory of the Nephites? You should partake of the bread in memory of the body which I have shown unto you. The Nephites didn't see the breaking [of Christ's body] as John and James and Peter did, and Mary and Martha and those who were there at the cross. For them it was a symbol of the resurrection—the life, the blood, the bread of life—a little different orientation.

You might also want just to note and put this in the hopper to think about as well: Although we don't celebrate the sacrament today in our temples, in the Kirtland Temple and in the Nauvoo Temple that was standard. In fact, as a part of the dedicatory service for the Kirtland Temple, after Sidney Rigdon finally got through with his two-and-a-half-hour sermon (Sidney was into long sermons), they broke for the afternoon and came back. Then following the dedicatory prayer and a number of testimonies and speaking in tongues and so on, then the twelve apostles administered the sacrament to all who were present. That was also done in the Nauvoo Temple.

We move then to point number 46. After the sacrament is administered, Jesus then gives the people instruction about the importance of continuing worthiness: that no one is to be allowed to participate in the sacrament—and by that I would understand all of the ordinances and instructions leading up to and a part of the partaking of the sacrament. Everything that Jesus has done, whatever is going to be continued of this—no one is to be allowed to participate in these from this point forward unless they are proven worthy to do so. Something along the order of a temple recommend is perhaps suggested here, that priesthood authorities are not knowingly to allow people to participate in these ordinances unless they are worthy to do so.

Finally, the last thing that Jesus does before he ascends that evening is number 47 at the end of chapter 18. He lays his hands upon the twelve whom he has chosen and gives them the power to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost. I think that's an interesting thing to observe. Jesus, of course, had called them as twelve in chapter 11, but if you look carefully, the text is very precise and says that at that point, Jesus gave them only the power to baptize. That of course is the Aaronic Priesthood or the Levitical Priesthood, or something equivalent in the Nephite jargon. But by the time they have completed this day, they are now prepared to take upon themselves the Melchizedek Priesthood. So there's something that has happened between chapters 11 and 18 that I think is significant from a priesthood advancement point of view, and I think that too fits very nicely into what we have been suggesting as the essence of this experience altogether.

So with that the remarkable first day of Jesus with the Nephites concludes. You can imagine going home that night and indeed having been fed and impressed. When Jesus says go home and think about this, there's certainly a lot to think about. Can you imagine having just had this all thrown at you? You remember when you went to the temple or when you were baptized or whatever it was. It doesn't all sink in right at first; it takes a while. And you can just imagine how these people would have felt after not just a first discussion or a second discussion, but basically getting the whole banquet in one sitting. Really rather staggering.

I would like to turn my attention now to the assignment that I asked you to think about, and that is just a question of the implications of this. As I've thought about this I would like to divide the implications into four different groups. I'll suggest a few that I've thought of and perhaps you would like to share some that you've come up with. There may be more than four groups, but for purposes of being a little bit organized, if you try to think where your ideas might fit if you want to contribute them, let's do it this way. (1) There are implications for the Book of Mormon in what I'm suggesting. (2) There are implications for our understanding of the Sermon on the

Mount, the New Testament, early Christianity, and the apostasy. (3) There are implications for our own temple worship and temple attendance. (4) There are implications for our reading and studying and understanding of scripture in general.

Let me come back up to the first one, some implications for the Book of Mormon. If this is right, does it change our view? Does it affect our view of the Book of Mormon? As I said last time at the end of class, the Doctrine and Covenants affirms that the Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the gospel. One of the criticisms that has been raised by people—some legitimate and serious seekers of truth and others who were simply trying to discredit the Book of Mormon—is if the Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the gospel, why doesn't it contain some of the things that you Latter-day Saints think to be of ultimate importance? It seems to me that perhaps we can answer that question now in a more powerful way than we had ever suspected before. Indeed, of the Book of Mormon it is said that it will be viewed as a weak thing, as a thing of naught, and that it is out of some of the things that will be viewed as the weakest of all that the Lord will turn those into great strengths. Sometimes we look beyond the mark. There it might be right under our nose, and yet we don't see. We don't perceive. Our eyes and ears are not attuned, and we're not ready. Or maybe it just is that it is not the time for those kinds of things to be brought forth. I don't know.

It seems to me that there are some implications here for the translation process of the Book of Mormon. It has been suggested not only by critics of the Book of Mormon but some very astute students of it, including B. H. Roberts and others, that when Joseph Smith got to certain portions of the text—after all, translating was a very difficult process—that he would simply open his King James Bible [and take material from there]. If he found that Jesus gave some kind of sermon, what kind of sermon might Jesus have given? [Joseph might have asked]. Well [a person might] kind of crudely splice into the text a body of known material, because, after all, it seems to work. I now find that to be a much less likely explanation for the similarities between the King James language, and indeed the King James translation of the Sermon on the Mount, than I had before. It seems to me to run against any likelihood that these materials could be worked into a coherent whole from chapter 11 to chapter 18 in the way that we have seen it work. It fits exactly into that kind of context so neatly, if indeed this is just some kind of expedient or crude kind of incorporating of foreign material that doesn't belong. But more than that, it also seems to me to fly in the face of a lot of historical information about how the translation took place. In this light we probably now need to go back and think this through one more time. At least the testimony of Emma in 1879 was emphatic that Joseph never had notes or books or any materials in front of him. David Whitmer [similarly testified] in the 1880s. I recognize these are late testimonies; nevertheless, they are by people who were present and understood and saw this process of translation. They never saw Joseph Smith using any other books or notes. As was the case in most of the translation of the book as we have it, if Joseph was using the seerstones with his head in the hat, it would be very difficult to put on the table anywhere into that kind of configuration a book that he was somehow pulling out and using.

People say, well, what about the curtain? Wasn't he sitting behind a curtain so that he could deceive everyone? No, [according to] Emma and others. Oliver Cowdery's wife, Elizabeth Ann Whitmer Cowdery, testified in correspondence that you would have no reason for being prejudiced, that she often sat and saw them translating. Yes, there was a curtain, but the curtain was only over the door to prevent people, at least at the Whitmer farm, from breaking into the room and surprising the people who were working. There may have been a curtain between Joseph and Martin Harris when the 116 pages were translated. All of the description of the curtain stuff comes from some early statements that were attributed to Martin Harris, some of them coming through Charles Anthon. So it may have been that, when he was using the Urim and Thummim, a slightly different method of translation was in place, especially if Martin Harris, as the Doctrine and Covenants calls him, "that wicked man," was not yet one whom the Lord wanted the see the plates or the interpreters. That would make some sense. But for Oliver

Cowdery there would be no reason to withhold from him a view of these things, partly because Oliver (and you can find this in Dean Jessee's collections of the personal writings of Joseph Smith) received himself a vision of the Lord and of the plates prior to the time he joined Joseph Smith. It was in March of 1829 that he had that vision, and the Lord said, I want you to go and be his scribe. That was why on April 5 Oliver Cowdery showed up in Harmony, Pennsylvania, to help Joseph. So he had already been certified by the Lord as one who could see the plates. I think that might explain some of the difference there.

In any event, I think that the accounts we have of how the translation took place support the idea that what we have here is in fact a more literal representation of what was actually on the plates than just some kind of nebulous, general interpretation. David Whitmer said that in the translation process a character would appear to Joseph, and then he would give the translation. It's interesting to me that he says that sometimes in that translation process, one character would end up being a whole sentence. Other times a character would only represent a word. In other words, we wouldn't expect to find a one-to-one correlation between what is in the English translation and the symbols on the plates. But everything that is translated into English has some equivalent, whether it is a symbolic or more of a literary kind of equivalent, it was, at least in David Whitmer's mind, something that was coming from the plates and not just being incorporated in from the rest of Joseph's memory of scripture. I don't think he had these things memorized. Perhaps in some deep, profound, psychological sense the biblical texts were imbedded in his memory, and the Lord was able, through the felicity of the spirit, to bring these kinds of things to his memory in a way that is supernatural and extraordinary. Maybe that would account for it, but certainly not, in my opinion, pulling the book out and just reading from it. Question?

"I just have a question about the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. The Joseph Smith Translation renders it differently, but in the Book of Mormon it has it exactly as it has it in Matthew."

Right. Well, the Sermon on the Mount in the Joseph Smith Translation is not exactly the same as the Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Mormon. I account for that because the JST makes it clear that Jesus is giving that instruction at that time. The way you have it in the JST is at the very beginning of his ministry when he first calls the Twelve and sends them on a mission. It is being used in a missionary context there. I conclude from that that Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount more than once. The basic text remained the same, but certain portions of it could be changed to adapt it to the various audiences or the needs or circumstances. I think he gave it when he called the apostles and sent them out—when they needed to have power in order to act in his name. I think he gave it to them again after the resurrection and before he left in Luke 24. I don't know how many times he gave it. One of the premises of New Testament scholarship is that Jesus said everything only once, and therefore our chore as scholars is to try to plow back into the text and find what the original form of the saying was. When you compare, for example, the prayer in Luke 11 with the prayer in Matthew 6, or the Beatitudes in Luke 6 with the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 [you see this]. The task that the critical New Testament scholars have taken upon themselves is to find what the original form of those Beatitudes must have been. That assumes that there was only one set of Beatitudes and that Jesus only blessed people once and that Jesus only taught people how to pray once. I guess I just find that really hard to believe. He worked for three years. Any of you who have preached the gospel for a couple of years know that you give the same discussion more than once. And it's not always exactly the same, as hard as the MTC might try to make it that way.

Well, that's jumping a little ahead to implication area number two, though, for implications on our understanding of the New Testament. Before we leave this point of translation, let me make just a couple of other points. There's an interesting thing you should know a little about. Well, let me give you this example and then explain some of the others. In Matthew 5:21–22 there's the saying, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. . . . But I say unto

you, That whosoever is angry with his brother . . . shall be in danger.” Now in your King James version you read, for “whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause,” Okay? In other words, if you’ve got a good cause, then you’re okay. But if you are angry with your brother without a good reason, then you are in danger of the council and the judgment. Now that phrase, without a cause, is this little Greek word *eikē*, and it’s kind of hard to translate exactly what it means literally, but likely or something like that. Now, [you notice an] interesting thing when you go to the earliest manuscripts, several of them—[such as] P64 and P67. This New Testament manuscript dates to around A.D. 200, among the earliest New Testament manuscripts we have. Also [there is] the original hand of the Codex Sinaiticus, one of the better of the New Testament codices, and several other minuscules and other early Christian Fathers. When they present this material, they drop this word. I mean they don’t drop it—it’s just not there. So it just says whoever is angry is in trouble.

Now you look at 3 Nephi 12, and you’ll see that the phrase “without a cause” is not there. New Testament scholars have concluded that this is probably the original, the better reading, to drop this, because Jesus rarely gave people excuses or escape hatches. He doesn’t say, whosoever looks upon a woman to lust after her with good cause is okay. No. The harder sayings of Jesus are the ones that are usually consistent with the rest of his preaching. So here we have one place in the Book of Mormon where the New Testament manuscripts make a difference in the meaning of how we understand what Jesus is saying, and the Book of Mormon conforms with what appears to me, and I think most would agree, to be the stronger reading.

There’s another one like that in 3 Nephi 12:10. In Matthew it says for whosoever shall suffer persecution and so on for righteousness’s sake shall be blessed. Now as people have tried to translate the Sermon on the Mount in Greek back into the Aramaic that Jesus might have spoken, that is a very difficult expression to put back into Aramaic. A very strong and cogent argument has been made that Jesus didn’t say that we should suffer for righteousness’s sake, but that in Aramaic that most likely would have been “whosoever will suffer for the Righteous One’s sake.” In other words you’re suffering for whom? For God. He is the Righteous One. The Book of Mormon is consistent with that where it says that you will suffer for my name’s sake. It is the Lord that is behind that.

Now there are about ten other significant places in the Greek manuscripts where it appears that there were some differences in the early manuscripts. They’re significant from a very technical kind of textual point of view, but they don’t, in my opinion, result in any difference in the meaning of the passage. In other words, in some places the Greek will say “whoever is angry with his brother.” In other places it will say “whosoever is angry with his brother,” and some places will just say “who is angry with his brother.” Well, there we have some textual confusion. Was it who, whoever, or whosoever? But does it matter in English how you render it? I can render that any one of those three ways into English and then ask you to tell me which of those three in Greek it originally was and you can’t tell. You could render all three of those Greek expressions with the same whosoever in English. And that’s the case, I believe, in all of those other places where we have variants. The one place where it does make a difference, the Book of Mormon delivers the needed translation.

Well, other implications that occur to you for the Book of Mormon, its meaning, its message? Yes?

I think there are a lot of stories in the Book of Mormon that can be interpreted in that same sense with covenants and temple symbols.

Yes. Now that we know that they were seeing the fulfillment of the old practices in this new, and also knowing how important temple ritual was in ancient Israel, we can start looking at places

like 2 Nephi 6–10 which is a covenant speech that Nephi wants Jacob to deliver to the people. We can now look at Mosiah 1–6 with a new set of eyes, which of course has a lot of similarities [to the covenant text in 3 Nephi]. The covenant language in Mosiah 5 is directly related to the language that we have in 3 Nephi 18. All of the promises—taking upon yourself a new name, promising to remember him always and keep his commandments which he has given you—those phrases are right there in Mosiah 5. Also look at Alma 12 and 13, where Alma is describing a manner in which priests after the Order of the Son of God are ordained, a manner in which they can look forward to the atonement of Christ. It's a symbolic type of ordinance, more going on there than just a simple ordination by the laying on of hands. Yes?

“One thing I noticed is the way Doctrine and Covenants 84 talks about Moses trying to preach the gospel parallels 3 Nephi very closely in the way he's trying to prepare them to see the face of God.”

Yes, you're looking at Exodus 19, washing your clothes and preparing. Of course, they chicken out at the end and say, Moses, you go do it.

“The law given to Joseph Smith in D&C 42 also parallels very closely.”

That's right. D&C 42 was known as *the law*—these are the rules by which all people who participate in the new and everlasting covenant are bound, and notice the similarities there again to the Ten Commandments and basic teachings that are present in all of these texts. That's a good point. Any other Book of Mormon implications?

One of the theme songs, of course, of President Benson's administration has been that we still labor under a condemnation because we have not remembered “the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon.” Look at the phrase there in the D&C 84:57. The problem is not that we have forgotten the Book of Mormon. The problem is not that we don't know the story of the stripling warriors, etc. The problem is not that we don't have Arnold Friberg paintings etched in our minds. You know, we remember the Book of Mormon in those kinds of ways, but what the Doctrine and Covenants tells us that we must remember is “the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon.” Of course, one of its purposes is that we might know the covenants and know that we are not cast off. That's right on the title page, so perhaps we need to attend much more to the understanding of the covenant relationship that the Book of Mormon is trying to create between us and our Father in Heaven and Christ. All of these kinds of texts work into that objective.

Well, what about implications for the New Testament? If what we're saying is correct about Jesus' teaching, what does it do to your reading of the New Testament materials? Any things that go off there? First of all, what about the composition of the Sermon on the Mount? [There is] the idea that Matthew, late in life sat down and pieced together out of his scrapbook, his treasures of truth or whatever he kept, little sayings of Jesus, kind of on the order of the Gospel of Thomas. Well, it seems to me that when you have a Socrates, a Jesus, a Buddha, whoever it is that stands as the fountainhead of a powerful new religious movement or ideology or philosophical school, it is rarely the followers who come traipsing along behind, especially when they are fishermen, who somehow impose upon these miscellaneous sayings a coherent order. Somehow we have this view, and maybe it's created by something of an enamorment with evolution, that things always start out simple and then get complex; therefore, Jesus' gospel must have started out with simple sayings and then the complex structures were added ecclesiastically after the community was somehow formed. It seems to me that that isn't necessarily the way we ought to view this. It's more likely to me that the powerful historical fact of Jesus has to be understood in conjunction with his being the source of not just a few aphorisms or proverbs, but an entire world view that is put together in a coherent whole. It seems to me that that's a more likely interpretation and that the reasons offered by textual critics to the contrary are interesting and teach me to read the text very carefully, but they don't explain what I see going on here.

“It just occurred to me that we’ve been told to keep journals now for how many years. Would Matthew not have recorded things and then just written his testimony from his journal?”

Well, I’m sure that Matthew kept records. By training he was a person who was a record keeper.

“We just have what was written 70 years later. From what record was this written?”

Yes, and the New Testament scholars are moving away from the radical idea that I’ve presented here that Matthew somehow just pulled this all together. There are too many things in the Sermon on the Mount, even as we have it, that are inconsistent with the agenda that Matthew seems to be imposing on the text in other places where you can see that he’s doing it. And just vocabulary. I can’t remember off the top of my head, but I’ve looked at the vocabulary in the Sermon on the Mount, and there are an astonishingly high number of words in the Sermon on the Mount that are used only in the Sermon on the Mount and never again in anything that Matthew writes and rarely in anything else in the New Testament. It bears the characteristics of a pre-Matthean text that Matthew didn’t write. Surely he incorporated it into his record, but I can’t imagine Matthew pawning off in A.D. 70 a gospel and saying, here, this is what Jesus said to us on the mountain. You remember? Hey, there were people who were still around who remembered, and they would have said, gee, I don’t remember Jesus ever saying that. And how’s this going to be bought? How’s this going to be pawned off on people? Their memories were not that short. Besides that, there are too many evidences that the Sermon served a role in the late thirties and early forties in the ward or branch or community in Jerusalem—it’s actually called a synagogue still in the epistle of James. And it was used according to the best scholarly opinion right now as a cultic reminder of the covenants that people made when they joined the Christian church. So it served a role that indicates that it would have been a text known and kept and not just created late in the day.

Well, it invites us also to look—every time you see other passages in the New Testament or in the early Christian literature where Sermon on the Mount phraseology is used—to wonder now. It takes on a higher level of spiritual significance. It’s got an aura about it if this text is more than just a moral discourse about turning the other cheek and being a nice guy.

There’s another thing in terms of apostasy if you look back again and reread 1 Nephi 13 where Nephi prophesies about the loss of plain and precious things. At large in the land generally among Latter-day Saints is the idea that what happened was that plain and precious things were taken away from the record. First of all, somebody came along and with some scissors excised things that were plain and precious. That’s not what Nephi says if you read the order in which he presents the apostasy and the process by which it occurred. First, he says, that they will take away plain and precious parts from the gospel. And next, they will take away the covenants of the Lord. And third, as a result, plain and precious parts will be left out of the record. The process is first a change in the understanding of the gospel. Once the gospel is changed, they don’t understand how to use or have the power to administer the covenants. Once those things are gone, then [in] the later collections of records [they] have a hard time understanding or explaining, perhaps omitting certain things that they just aren’t doing anymore. The cause is not a textual problem; it’s not a transmission or a scribal problem. In fact I think in many cases the plain and precious things can still be right there in the record. But if the knowledge has been taken away from the gospel, and if the understanding of the priesthood and the covenants are gone, then you can read exactly the same words and just understand it in a completely different light. The result is exactly the same either way.

Well, that’s the bell. We have one more session together, which will be on Wednesday. We’ll wrap this up and try to pull together a bit of an overview for the remainder of 3 Nephi as well. Thanks very much, and I’ll see you next Wednesday.



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

JOHN WELCH

Semester 4, Lecture 101  
3 Nephi 19–4 Nephi 1  
Understanding the Sermon at the Temple  
Zion Society

Today is the fifth and final lecture that I will be giving to you. I want to thank you for your attention and your attendance, and I'm sure you're looking forward to Brother Nibley's return. He'll be back on Monday, if all things go as scheduled.

Several of you have asked about the material that I have been presenting to you and whether written notes or a written version of this is available. Hopefully by the first part of the summer there will be a book in print called *The Sermon at the Temple*, which is being published jointly by FARMS and Deseret Book Company. And I don't give that to you as an advertisement, but if you can wait that long—and I'm sure you can—that would be the best place to get the material in print.

Last time we were just winding up our reflection on the various implications of some of this, and I just want to take a minute to again thank you for the thoughts that you shared with me. I appreciated those written remarks. If any of you want to turn in any more—I know some of you asked if today would be okay—certainly that is fine.

It seems to me that there are wide-ranging implications for our lives and for our understanding of the Book of Mormon, [other] scripture, the temple, and a lot of other things as a result of our understanding of the Sermon at the Temple. As I indicated at the beginning of the lecture, I see this as kind of a Grand Central Station that sooner or later all of the paths of the gospel will run through or by. The Sermon on the Mount is given at a mountain that is very prominent on the horizon, a very prominent feature in the landscape of the gospel. And I think the more familiarity you have traversing its trails and knowing its paths, the more your life will be enlightened, and the more you will walk in the ways of truth and righteousness.

Looking at the way in which some of these things have emerged through our own study, I've come to appreciate even more the way in which the Lord reveals his will to his prophets, line upon line, precept upon precept. It's fascinating to study the way in which the temple ordinances and temple endowment were revealed to Joseph Smith. When he walked out of the Sacred Grove in 1820, he knew many things and certainly knew for a surety certain things better than anyone had known for several millennia. But he didn't know everything; things still had to be revealed. Pieces came, a bit at a time as a part of the dedication and temple work that was done in the Kirtland Temple, and things that came to him as he was preparing for the ordinance work in the Nauvoo Temple. It's fascinating to me to see how even though these little bits and pieces came a piece at a time, in a life that was certainly far from tranquil, when you get to the end, when Joseph's mission was finished, the entire picture is there. The pieces are all together and in place. That's something that at least I have difficulty attributing merely to happenstance or serendipity.

I also think that it helps us to reinforce and understand passages of prophecy going back to things like Isaiah 2. Reread the first couple verses of that chapter sometime, where he talks about how in the last days "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, . . . and he will teach us of his



ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law.” Isaiah is not talking about any ordinary mountain. The Sermon on the Mount is certainly also no ordinary mount, and the Sermon at the Temple no ordinary sermon.

In terms of our reflections on the scriptures, how often we need to be reminded that it’s only the one-hundredth part of what the prophets know that can be contained and communicated through the written word, in even the scriptures. We can appreciate even more the soul-searching complaints of Moroni and Nephi who wished that they had more power to be able to say those things that they knew and that were in their hearts, and how they realized that even though they have presented us with a powerful text, it is still weak by comparison to all that they would like to have us know.

Well, what were the aftermath effects of the Sermon at the Temple? Let’s look at what goes on in the rest of 3 Nephi and into 4 Nephi and just look at what takes place beyond. On the second day, of course, we begin with the baptismal ordinances, where all of the people were then brought; in the first part of chapter 19, the multitudes are divided into groups and they are baptized. Second, they are instructed in prayer. In chapter 19 Jesus has them pray, and it’s interesting that he says, continue in prayer, and he goes off and prays individually. Then he comes back and checks up on them to see how they’re doing and exhorts them and admonishes them. We have three prayers of Jesus in 3 Nephi 19. Actually, with the third one, it says that the words could not be written of the things that he prayed.

I did a study a few years ago comparing these prayers in 3 Nephi with the prayers of Jesus as are found in the New Testament. There are about nine places in the New Testament where you actually hear Jesus praying, where the gospel writers tell you what he prays for. I was impressed that the things that Jesus was praying for were not always the things that we pray for. When we pray, we ask a great deal. We ask the Lord that we will do well on our tests, etc. Did you see the article in *Time* magazine this last week about the evangelicals who ask you to give your shopping list to the Lord, etc.? Obviously, we have a long way to go as a culture in understanding the power and purpose of prayer. Just think, what is it that Jesus communicates to his Father in Heaven about when he turns to prayer? Of course, again, we only have a small fraction of what it is that he prayed for. We know that he would go up and pray all night long, especially on the mountains. He would go out into the countryside and pray.

But of those things that have survived in the scriptural record, step number one in his prayers is thanksgiving. He is always grateful whenever the Lord has revealed anything to his apostles or when the Lord has bestowed the gift of the Holy Ghost, as in 3 Nephi 19, upon the faithful. He is grateful, but he’s not just grateful for all the wonderful things that the Lord has given us. Often we seem almost arrogant in our gratitude. Aren’t we grateful for all the blessings that we have, and how blessed we are? If you’re not careful, that kind of sense of gratitude becomes precariously similar to the prayers of the Zoramites on the Rameumptom. But it’s Jesus who prays with gratitude for the revelation of God. Of all things we should be grateful for, we should give thanks for that. Of course, we should give thanks in all things. The Doctrine and Covenants says that the Lord is most displeased with those people who do not acknowledge his hand in all things, so we need to be cautious there, too.

“Just a real quick comment: I talked to someone in my Sunday School class when I was teaching, and he mentioned that he had the opportunity of listening to President Benson pray. He made the comment that about 90 percent of that [prayer] was in thanksgiving; only 2 percent was asking, which was interesting.”

Yes. And he has less need for the asking than we do. But maybe we should strive to be living a life that is worthy of that kind of model. That’s good.

The second thing that I've noticed that comes up in Jesus' prayers (and this is also present in 3 Nephi) is that he asks for forgiveness. Now, we ask for a lot of things, but the thing that Jesus asks for consistently in his prayers is forgiveness. That's a lot different than asking for that new house or for that diploma. Forgiveness. He says it on the cross in a prayer, "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." And he tells us right in the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer that we will be forgiven our debts as we forgive others. We should ask, petition, for forgiveness. I think that is item number one, if you're putting a checklist together of those things that we should pray for.

And third, the final thing that you see Jesus praying for is the expression, "Not my will, but thy will be done." So often we forget that and [emphasize] the importance of trying to put our will beyond the will of anything else. And that's also in the Lord's Prayer. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." So you see these elements not only in the actual prayers that Jesus offers in 3 Nephi 19 but also in the very model that he gave in Matthew 6 or 3 Nephi 13.

Following the prayers, we have in chapters 20-24 a lengthy sermon on the nature of the covenant relationship between God and his people. Having formed the covenant in the Sermon at the Temple, he can now talk about the future of the covenant people—about the coming of the New Jerusalem, the gathering of Israel, the role of the Gentiles, the position of the remnant of Jacob, that which is to come. He can quote and explain Isaiah 54 which promises the security of the establishment of God's people, etc. Question?

"Yes, I had a question about prayer back in chapter 19. I've heard an explanation before, but I've forgotten it. Here in verse 18 the disciples pray to Jesus instead of God the Father."

Well, let's look at chapter 19. In verse 6 he says they should "pray unto the Father in the name of Jesus. And the disciples did pray unto the Father also in the name of Jesus." Now, verse 18: "And behold, they began to pray; and they did pray unto Jesus, calling him their Lord and their God." I think that if you read both passages together, they are praying to Jesus in a way but knowing that they are praying to the Father through him. The way I've always understood that is to read verse 18 in the context of all of the instructions that have been given.

"In a dedicatory prayer Joseph Smith prays to Christ also in the Doctrine and Covenants."

I suppose it is proper, if you wish to pray to Jesus in some sense. Jesus is God; he is a member of the trinity. I don't mean that in a sectarian sense, but he is a member of the Godhead. Some prayers are prayers of thanksgiving; some prayers are simply prayers of expression of devotion. One could certainly pray to any exalted being in that sense, I suppose. But Jesus himself has told us that in terms of coming to the Father and praying to the Father, we should always pray through him and through his name. A couple other comments on this?

"Just one point worth mentioning. A few verses after that, when Christ is praying to the Father, he says [verse 22]: 'And they pray unto me because I am with them.' It was because he was in their presence."

Okay, so the point there, again, is read on and you'll find [the answer]. I tell my law students that's the first rule of statutory construction—read on. Usually you'll find a little more if you're puzzled about something. And so he says here, I am with you, so pray in that way also. You have at the end of chapter 12: "Be ye therefore perfect even as I or your Father which is in heaven." You've got there the merging in a way of the roles of the two, especially when Jesus was physically present there. Those are good points.

The discussion about the covenant relationship has imbedded in it also some interesting exhortations by Jesus telling us that we ought to study the scriptures; steering us toward the words

of Isaiah which are great; showing Jesus' concern about the accuracy of scriptural records to the point of having the Nephites produce their records, which he audits. I don't know how thorough the audit was, but at this time of preparing tax returns we can appreciate having your records produced and the audit going forward. But he found, of course, a place where he thought there was something important that had been left out—showing us the importance of each individual word and passage in the scripture.

And what you'll see here, I think, in the aftermath of the sermon is that Jesus is emphasizing certain things which we would emphasize. After a person has been brought into the Church through conversion, we tell them to do certain things, and what are they? To continue in prayer, to study, to attend church, and to do those basic kinds of things which Jesus again is setting forth for them.

We have then next a quotation from Malachi 3-4 toward the end of Jesus' second day. Why those chapters? Well, they pertain to the final judgment and to the day in which the Lord will come and the earth will be purged and burned. It tells about those who will be destroyed in the Second Coming and those who will survive the Second Coming. So the text fits again very profoundly into the overall context and the whole message. Again, it is not just a collage of unrelated materials that are being given to us, but if you read the entire thing [you can see that]. Victor Ludlow has done a good job of looking at the overall logic of this second-day covenant sermon. I commend to you some of the work that he's done on that.

We have also on day three the establishment of the church, starting in chapter 27; the giving of the name of the church; the explaining of the importance of the name of the church, that it is the church of Christ, it should be called after the name of Christ, etc. That's not just an idle thing, but it's related to the fact that the name of Christ has been taken upon these people by way of covenant and, therefore, the Church describes those people who have entered into this covenant relationship with Christ.

You have a number of miracles that are reported: raising of the dead, healing of the sick, seeing of great visions. In 3 Nephi 28:13: "They were caught up into heaven, and saw and heard unspeakable things." [The had] great experiences while Jesus was there with them.

He taught them for three days, but chapter 26:13 tells us that even after that he continued to appear to them on many occasions, so we don't know how many times he was there or how long this lasted. And even after that initial occurrence, the Book of Mormon will affirm that Moroni, for example, later in the history also was visited by the resurrected Christ.

The book of 3 Nephi then ends, as many covenant texts do in the ancient Near East, with a series of warnings and admonitions. Having entered into a covenant, people need to be reminded of the seriousness of what they have done. At the end of King Benjamin's covenant ceremony, Mosiah 6, the first order of business was to appoint priests to remind people of the covenant that they had entered into, to recall to their memory the seriousness of the commitments that they had made. So again as you see in many ancient Near Eastern covenant or treaty documents, it's appropriate to end with a number of *wo's*—wo to people who don't live up worthily to these things, wo to those who spurn the works of God, wo to them who deny the revelations of God, wo unto them that shall "say at that day, to get gain, that there can be no miracle wrought by Jesus Christ."

Finally, in chapter 30, [there are] exhortations to all the world to turn "from your wicked ways; and repent of your evil doings, of your lyings and deceivings, and of your whoredoms, and of your secret abominations, and your idolatries, and of your murders, and your priestcrafts, and your envyings, and your strifes, and from all your wickedness."

What was the effect of the establishment of the church of Christ among the Nephites? Well, we turn the corner into 4 Nephi and enter into the golden years, where for four generations the Nephites lived in great peace and unity and righteousness. In a way this is certainly the culmination of all that the Book of Mormon has been striving for. As the book speaks to our day, it is also the goal which we are still striving to attain. Let's just look at some of the attributes that these people took on and try to measure in a way how we're doing as we are striving toward a Zion community. I'm sure Brother Nibley will talk about this theme as well.

First of all, it seems to me that there was no government. I'm not sure what we make of that. Less government is better? Well, in an imperfect world maybe some government is better than no government, but in a perfect world, the less government the better. All of a sudden, with the law being gone, with the old being done away, you no more will read in the Book of Mormon about judges, about the reign of the judges or about the officers of the old system. All we have reported in the Book of Mormon after this point is the ecclesiastical rule of the disciples of Jesus Christ. We learn that if there are any disputes or problems, that three of the elders will go and will talk to the person and try to work the problem out. If it can't be worked out, then they are brought before the congregation. We try to get them to confess and work with them and if not, then there are ecclesiastical sanctions that can be brought. But there's no indication that you have prisons or courts or any of those things, which I take to mean that the Nephites took very literally the words of Jesus in 3 Nephi 12 or Matthew 5 about having no disputations and settling quickly with anyone that you are in controversy with. Coming from a law professor, this may sound odd to you, but the litigious nature of our society is something that is not healthy in most ways. There are better ways, in most cases, to resolve your problems than going to court.

While that had a profound and beneficial effect on the Nephites for about four generations, I also think that it ended up producing somewhat of a political or government vacuum in their world so that once the righteous basis of this society deteriorated, there was nothing left to take the place of the church; people began splintering off and forming other organizations. One thing that is astonishing as you look at the Book of Mormon record is the rapid collapse and demise of something that was so good. How was it that it came unraveled so quickly? I think one reason is, as I've explained, that if you've taken away your military, your governmental superstructure, all of your political organization and all that you leave besides the church is something of a tribal or family substructure of the society, there won't be anything left to fall back to, once the religious fervor of the people and their righteousness is gone. I think that presents a realistic view and shows that the Book of Mormon record isn't just fantastic—that all of this could collapse so quickly. I think it's only logical after this kind of an experience.

Well, what other kinds of clues do we have? Go to 4 Nephi and look through some of the first twenty verses. Pick out some of the characteristics that this society enjoyed. Number one, they were all converted to the Lord. It wasn't their economic philosophy, it wasn't their political ideology that brought about this kind of unity. It was their conversion to the Lord Jesus Christ—their faith in him and their willingness to submit to whatsoever the Lord required. That then brought on a number of gifts and made it possible for other things to happen, such as the elimination of contentions or disputations. The text certifies that those things were done away.

Verse 2: "Every man did deal justly one with another." We have a long way to go in that regard. Verse 3: "And they had all things common among them." It appears to me that for a long time the Nephite economy was based on the principle of common ownership of land. Even in Israel there was no such thing as fee-simple, absolute ownership of real estate. The land of Israel belonged to God. A person in the tribe of Manasseh or Benjamin or whatever could be assigned to occupy land during his lifetime and had a life interest that could then be passed on to proper heirs, but a person in the house of Israel could not sell his land on the open market to a non-Israelite without there being a right of redemption, so that any other person in the tribe could come and redeem that land. Also, the farmland outside the community was typically not owned

privately, but at the beginning of every agricultural season the town fathers would meet and by lot they would assign each of the men the particular strip of land that they would farm. That would go to people who were able to farm. As people got older they would get smaller lots, and the stronger men would be given larger ones. It only makes sense because how else are you going to get the crops raised?

In Mesoamerica a similar kind of thing was the common practice, where people would come in as managers. Since the people who had vested interests within the city often would squabble about how these assignments would be made, it was somewhat common for outside managers to come in and make these kinds of allocations of land distribution on an annual basis. I've wondered if that sort of mentality didn't contribute somehow to the willingness of the Mulekites to have the Nephites come in as a minority party and manage their political affairs in the city of Zarahemla. I think they got more than they bargained for there, more than just managers. But the point I'm making is that as you look into some of the assumptions that existed in this world economically, having all things in common was not as difficult for them to achieve as it would be for us, where so much of what we have is completely privatized. Of course, they then turned in the Nephite world to other symbols of wealth, mostly gold and silver and costly apparel, tangible personal property, things that are portable. I guess if you're pulling up stakes as frequently as they did to move from one city to another, the real basis of wealth isn't going to be in the land but in these other kinds of things.

But imbedded in that whole view of property is this idea that what is mine is not mine in a radical individual sense. It is mine [in that] it is entrusted to me for stewardship. It belongs to the community in some sense, and I have an obligation to work the land or to use what I have for a common benefit and not just for my personal aggrandizement. I think that's the attitude that the gospel is still trying to get us back to in teaching us the principle of the law of consecration—even the law of tithing. The law of tithing is simple to live if you realize that it is all the Lord's to begin with, and all he's asking from you is a mere ten percent of his own. Therefore when we don't pay tithing, we are robbing God because it belongs to him and we are keeping something that doesn't belong to us at all.

They understood that and they implemented that. They had all things in common, and that produced, of course, great unity. "There were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift." [They were] all equal in the church, all equal in the community, and this brought about, of course, extraordinary peace in the land.

What other clues do you see there? A lot of health. The Lord blessed them with health. He healed the sick. The disciples saw that there were blessings individually given to people. They were productive. We talk a lot these days about self-esteem, and I think one of the best ways to get a little self-esteem going in the lives of the youth you may be working with is to help them have some success experiences. The Lord prospers people when they are doing righteous things and when they are being productive. Fourth Nephi points out that the blessings of the Lord, the rebuilding of cities, the productivity that brought about again great self-esteem and good feelings about this.

Verse 11: They were married and given in marriage. The importance of family [is evident], and notice that verse 11 couples the blessings of marriage and the blessings that come from this in this society with the promises which the Lord had made unto them. What promises had the Lord made in connection with marriage? Well, we don't know. At least I'm not aware of any place in the text where those promises are spelled out. You can imagine what they might be, but there's a clue that Jesus promised them something that would be in that 99th portion of the text that we are missing.

They fasted, they prayed, they met together often, and they listened to the word of the Lord. As a result, this led again to no contention, no competition, no WAC basketball conference championships—things like that, I guess. What does it lead to? [A condition] (verse 15) caused because the love of God dwells in their heart. Let's not lose sight of the importance of the great and unifying commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, might, mind, and strength." That's what it's all about. We talk a great deal about obedience, being saved by obedience to the principles of the gospel, but what does it all lead to? Why are we out here running around being obedient? King Benjamin gives you an answer to that in Mosiah 5:13. He says if you want to know the Master, you have to serve the Master, "For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served?" The purpose is to bring us to the love of God and allow us to return our love for our Father in Heaven. I think they achieved that, and they note that specifically in the text.

Well, as you know, this was too good to last for very long. Just as it is interesting to ponder the attributes that made this unity and righteousness possible, the text is also very explicit in the steps that took place in the undoing of this golden era. What was number one? You go to verse 24. They multiply, they spread upon the face of the land, and the first twinge of difficulty is what?

"Pride."

They were lifted up in pride, and they began this just by the wearing of costly apparel, fine pearls, and things of the world. [These are] fairly simple sorts of things. You think, well, that's innocuous, but as President Benson has powerfully communicated to us, that's the front end of a very slippery slope, with a long and rapid decline. Yes?

"Wouldn't the division start in verse 20 when the people started separating into Lamanites again?"

Well, okay, they begin to have Lamanites. It's not identified as a sin, I guess, is what I thought of. It is possible as the land gets larger and larger that there has to be some kind of political subdivision. But maybe you're right. [Comment inaudible]

I don't think he says that there shouldn't be, but verse 17 up above says that in fact there weren't any -ites.

"It says one of the reasons they became Lamanites is that they revolted from the church."

Verse 20: "... a small part of the people who had revolted from the church and had taken upon them the name of the Lamanites; therefore there began to be Lamanites again in the land." Well, okay, so first of all you've got some splintering, and that creates a bit of a problem. I guess I was thinking more internally—what's happening among the righteous and within the church itself? As is typically the case in the Book of Mormon, the problem begins internally with the concern of pride. But that's a good point.

"The only thing I can think of that would cause that is pride."

Yes, why would certain people want to revolt and become Lamanites again? It could be their own pride, wanting to reaffirm their own cultural diversity, or it could be something that was aggravated by the unwillingness of certain Nephites to accept the Lamanites— reminding them perhaps of the fact that in their history were traditions of the fathers that were not acceptable, etc. These labels die very slow, lingering deaths, and we certainly have not been able to rid ourselves of all of these labels either.

As President Benson's talk indicates, this pride manifests itself in all kinds of ways; it's not just a haughty feeling. I assume you have all read his conference talk from a year ago. If you haven't, keep it on your desk and keep looking at that, because it's the word of the prophet to us and certainly something crucial for our well-being.

This, of course, then leads in verse 25 to the privatizing of goods, the division next in verse 26 into class structures, and the conversion of their economy into a monetary-based economy where people try to get gain. Then this leads to the denial of the fact that there was a true church. Everybody's okay; there are a lot of good ways to live—that kind of mentality. That then leads, before too much longer, to the denial of parts of the gospel, which is the logical inference that you must draw from the idea that there are many true churches. Well, if there are many acceptable churches, then certain parts of the gospel must not be very important because they all don't have the same parts. That then leads to a breakdown of the distinction between the sacred and the profane, which at the end of verse 27 you see happening. They then become willing to administer that which is sacred, even to those to whom it had been forbidden.

Well, this process continues on into the end of the Book of Mormon. I like Brother Nibley's collection of words, which you will find in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* volume on pages 530-31. He looks at this long-term process and says first they became privatized. Then they became ethnicized—they taught their children to hate the Nephites or the Lamanites. Then they became nationalized, militarized, terrorized, regionalized, tribalized, fragmentized, polarized, pulverized—and eventually vaporized. That's what's in store there.

I'd like to turn my attention now to just a few comments about the Book of Mormon in general and these chapters that we've been looking at. The Book of Mormon is one of these amazing books to me that is going to wear us all out long before we will ever wear it out. It is amazing to me how a book that is so simple can be so complex, how a book that is so accessible to the Primary children of the Church can also be so challenging to a room of very bright young students like yourselves. This book is a miraculous book in many, many ways, and one of its miracles is the way in which it has so many characteristics and attributes and dimensions and features so that every time you come back to the book, it speaks to you in a new way—partly because you are now in a different position in your life. It spoke to me differently as a teenager than it did as a missionary, than it did as a young father, than it did as a bishop, etc. You'll find that as you go through life, if you will take it with you as a companion, it will talk to you. No matter where you are, it will meet you on its terms. It will come to you and meet you on your ground—whether you are sinful, or doing a pretty good job with righteousness, whether you are well informed in the gospel or whether you are the most recent convert. It will speak to you, and it will reflect to you the true condition of humanity, the true state of how we are to return to our Father in Heaven, and what the plan of the gospel is all about. I've got my list of words: I think the book reflects reality, profundity, accuracy, subtlety, complexity, antiquity, artistry, variety, verity, remarkability, and a lot of other -ities. You can keep going on and on.

I'd like to just mention a couple of these and illustrate the point I'm trying to make. Look at reality. There are few books in the world that speak the truth as bluntly to individuals and to whole societies as does the Book of Mormon. It tells it the way it really is. It talks about reality. Just look at that cycle of nations that we see in the rise and the fall—what made the Nephite nation great and what finally brought about its undoing. Profundity: Look at the little phrases. Imbedded in these texts are profound truths about the real nature of what's going on between you and the eternal worlds. Take something as simple as the teaching of repentance in 3 Nephi 18:32. We can think about repentance as a revolving door, where every time you repent you run to the bishop and get this taken care of. We even talk about that. I've got to go "take care" of this with the bishop. Repentance isn't "taking care" of anything. Repentance in Book of Mormon terms is more profound. It talks about returning and repenting with full purpose of heart. There's a profound message in the return aspect of repenting, rethinking, and returning to the Lord with

full purpose of heart. Repentance isn't complete until we have really meant what we are doing. Brother Nibley has said there are only two things in this world that we can do very well. We can't build very good buildings—they come falling down after a few years. We can't build very big dams—they get washed out after a while. We can't paint perfect pictures. We can't do anything very perfectly. But the two things we can do perfectly are to *repent* and *forgive*. Forgive ourselves, forgive other people, and come to the Lord, to return to him with full purpose of heart. The Book of Mormon, I think, tells us a lot about that.

Accuracy: The Book of Mormon is incredibly accurate as a text. We look at something like 3 Nephi 26:4-5. These are Jesus' last words at the end of the second day. He spoke about "the great and last day, when all people, and all kindreds, and all nations and tongues will stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—If they be good, to the resurrection of everlasting life; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of damnation."

We won't take time right now, but compare that with Helaman 12:25-26. As Mormon was giving that [speech] about the dust of the earth being greater than man because the dust of the earth will obey, he concluded his chapter by saying, "But we read that in the great and last day there are some who shall be cast out, yea, who shall be cast off from the presence of the Lord." We will stand before God to be judged. "They that have done good shall have everlasting life; and they that have done evil shall have everlasting damnation." Now it is interesting. He doesn't say as we read and then tell you where, but somewhere he has read that. Where has he read it? He has read it exactly here in 3 Nephi 26. Now, he hasn't yet abridged 3 Nephi 26, but he knows it is there. He has read it, and he quotes the text. That's really rather remarkable. Here you have Joseph Smith going along translating, and he quotes a text that he hasn't even encountered yet, which he will later find in 3 Nephi 26.

Same thing happens in Alma 36:22. In the middle of Alma's conversion story, where he's telling Helaman about how he was converted, he says that his soul did long to be in the presence of God and he thought he saw "even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God." Twenty-two words there in Alma 36 are not just a loose paraphrase, but an identical, word-for-word quote of 1 Nephi 1:8. And at the time Alma 36 was translated, 1 Nephi 1 had not yet been translated. Again, a remarkable occurrence of a quotation that's very, very precise. Imagine that Joseph Smith as he was translating along turned to Oliver Cowdery and said, hey, here we want to quote Lehi. Read back to me what we had Lehi say back in the first part of this or that. Oliver Cowdery would have walked off the job. And yet the text is accurate, down to some of these minute details.

Subtlety: That's a master of understatement. When Jesus says you should settle quickly with people in your way, he says you won't come out of that jail until you've paid the very last senine. Well, a senine, of course, is a monetary unit of exchange in the Nephite world. It happens to be the smallest gold unit, but not the smallest coin, because the silver neas was a smaller amount of money. But in subtlety it doesn't tell you why he's using a senine there. But if you go back to Alma 11, you'll find that is the amount of money that a Nephite had to pay a judge for a day's service on the court. So there's a reason for that. But the Book of Mormon doesn't tell you all these reasons. It gives us more credit than it ought to. It assumes that we'll be smart enough to figure some of these things out.

We'll take one of the last ones, artistry. We've only got a minute to point out something here. Some of you may have encountered some passages that have been described as chiasmic in the Book of Mormon. I was the one who on my mission in Germany first ran across chiasmus in Book of Mormon studies and came back to BYU to do my master's thesis under Brother Nibley on that subject. So I have been blessed in my life with an appreciation, and many share this, of the artistry of this text—it's amazing. Look, for example, at 3 Nephi 17:5-10, the account of the healing of the sick in that text. Verses 6-7 have a little chiasm imbedded in them. Look at the



repetition. “Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you. Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither.” Then he lists eight different types of sickness that they should bring, and then he repeats himself. “Bring them hither and I will heal them [the sick will be healed], for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy.”

Now this isn't just a cute little device that somebody's using; it's employed in the text to intensify our sense of contrast and feeling for what is going on. This is done beautifully as you compare verse 5 with verse 10. Notice in verse 5 the beginning of this account of the healing of the sick. The emphasis is upon the eyes. Three times Jesus casts his eyes around about the people, and he sees that they have tears coming down their eyes, and they look as if they would want him to stay. They look steadfastly upon him. You have three impressions of the eyes of the people there. And at the end, what happens? They all bring forth their sick who had been healed, and three times the emphasis is now on the feet. They bow down at his feet; they worship and kiss his feet; and they bathe his feet now with their tears, bringing you back again to the beginning of the system. The people from their eyes to their feet have experienced Christ. Literarily the piece is beautifully done to help you feel that you with your eyes can see what has gone on, and that with your feet you can walk the path that Christ would like you to.

I'm glad to share with you my testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. I hope and pray that it will become a great light and companion and a happy friend in your life forever. And I leave you this testimony in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 102

4 Nephi 1  
Zion Society

Every book [in the Book of Mormon] is the most marvelous in the world, but this is really something. If we get stalled in it for the rest of the semester it would be worth it. They're all like this, but this is a particularly important book. Of course, I'm referring to that miraculous work, 4 Nephi. It's an epitome; it's a digest. The whole Book of Mormon is there. You don't have to read anything but this one book. You've got the roll so I can't ask you questions. How many chapters does it have? One. Does it get it all in there? Yes, it does. It contains the best case and the worst case. It describes them, and it explains them all in one chapter, in one book. It's a marvelous thing.

For us, the worst case is easy to imagine, easy to describe. We could all sit down and write very good compositions on the worst possible case in our [society]. But if it came to the best case, we'd all be stumped. We wouldn't know what to do or what to say. And what does that signify about our place on the scale of excellence in the universe? What does that mean? I could imagine most vividly, in fact, from personal experience. All the time I can think about the worst possible case and see all sorts of things. But then you ask me, what's the best possible case that could happen in the fate of the nation here that we're talking about, the Nephites. Well, of course this describes it. But for ourselves, we can't imagine it. Of course, we're so close to the other. If you put it on a scale, say like the Doomsday Clock or something like that, we put the worst case down here and the best case up here. We're somewhere down here right now, aren't we? We have a long way to go. So here we have this marvelous book.

It's very, very short, for the reason that Voltaire explains: "Happy are the people whose annals are a blank." If people live happy lives, what are you going to write about them? We've mentioned this before. Without your crime, murder, rape, etc., you're not going to have any prime TV. We just have to leave that out. Is their life empty and boring? This is the question we have to [consider].

We were out digging among Egyptian villages [recently]. Life in an Egyptian village and life in a Hopi village are very much alike—very stable, no change at all in thousands of years. When people go away, they come back. They get bored with life anywhere else, and they come back because it's much more exciting—all sorts of pleasant things going on, a very interesting situation. There's another side to it, too. But it's stable and unchanging, and it's unchanging because they're the happiest societies. They don't want to change. But there's a big problem here, you see. Why wouldn't you live in a Hopi village or an Egyptian village, which are exactly like the villages in the models for 5,000, 6,000, and 7,000 years ago? Same village, same people, same donkeys, same crops, same palm trees, same geese, same mud houses built on exactly the same pattern—thousands of years, in and out, go on and on with perfectly happy people. They're very happy people, and yet they go to the city still—and the city is hell. There is no more hideous and marvelous city in the world than Cairo, but they go. Why would you go there? What's lacking in that life? Well, of course, the problem is one of boredom. There's more than boredom—it's guilt, you see. What about your capacities? You can go out to the field and work in the day and make a living. You can have enough. The soil is extremely rich, and they can go on living. The problem now is population; they're getting so overpopulated. There's not enough to go around. It's getting rather desperate everywhere in the world. But, aside from that which has only happened

very recently, you'd feel guilty staying in the village. Why would you feel guilty staying in the village. Why would I feel guilty? Remember what Hamlet says,

What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and godlike reason  
To fust in us unused.

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act IV, scene 4

We must use our capacities, but we're not going to have a chance to use them all out there. We're going to see what happens here.

The Greeks cut loose and the Egyptians, too. The Greeks came to learn from Egypt; this is another story. But the fact is that the greatness of Greece and the Egyptians, too . . . But remember when Odysseus is talking to the Phaeacians, he introduces himself. Then he says, "I live in Ithaca." He was the king of a little rocky island and nothing else. Why didn't he stay home and rule? Why was he traveling all the time? Remember how *The Odyssey* begins. He goes everywhere and sees everything and suffers everything. He's willing to do it for his curiosity. But he explains. It is a rough and a rocky land with poor soil, but it's great for raising young people. I cannot imagine a more happy land for that sort of thing, he says. But then they have to get out and go find out something. There's more. After all, if you live in a rocky unproductive soil, the sea is all around you, and you see other lands, you're going to get moving. This natural curiosity is what makes the Greeks uniquely great; their situation called for it.

This was what would happen. Yet, should we be bored now, as if there were only a limited number of things that we could think about, only a limited number of things that we could combine or do? We'll see what the solution is here in the Book of Mormon.

The most remarkable document on this is a Mandaean document. I've decided to read from it this morning because it's very good. In all the things I have ever read, this is the only description of heaven that [is convincing]. The [attempts of the] doctors of the church are pitiful. They have no idea how to describe heaven. There's the choir who will sing forever and the beatific view of God. You look at God for a million years and that's all you'd want. You'd be completely absorbed in it. Well, it might as well be the heaven of the Buddhists. It might be like a drop of water absorbed in the ocean. They don't know what heaven is going to be like. They're awfully good on hell. Well, it's the same thing, you notice, with Dante in *The Inferno*. He can give you a detailed, blow-by-blow account of everything that goes on there, but when he gets to heaven, you get the ultimate singularity of God as an infinitely tiny point of light with everything revolving around it. But with an infinitely tiny point of light, you don't feel particular love or devotion to that as your Father. That is a singularity. But anyway, the Christian fathers couldn't handle it; the Christian churches can't; nobody else can.

But this document does. It's the only thing I've ever read [that does], and it comes from those remarkable people, the Mandaeans. The Mandaeans turn up; they still survive, about 6,000 [of them], almost like the Hopis. They're now living in the marshes and in the Shatt al-Arab where the Tigris and Euphrates come together. The last hundred miles [the rivers] run together in vast marshes, and they live in these houses (you may have seen them in the *National Geographic*) made entirely of reeds. They build temples and everything of reeds. They live there, and they have these old records. They call themselves the Church of St. John, because they're followers of John the Baptist, who left the Jordan, they say. When John the Baptist was preaching by the

Jordan, they were part of his community. You get this in the Dead Sea Scrolls. When the others were driven out, they went, too. They went north, east, and then south down the river, and this is where they finally ended up, these Mandaeans. They have a *Gospel of Truth*, which they call the *Manda de Hayya* (*manda* is the teaching, you see, *manda* of life). Mandaean is an eastern Aramaic dialect. We have their records on plates, very much like the Book of Mormon. They fled and came way off here and settled there. What else do they call themselves? Oh, yes, they're the Sabaeans. That means *baptists*. They're the followers of John the Baptist. They're best known as the Sabaeans. You can spell it with an *i* or an *ae*, either one. They're the baptists, and they follow John the Baptist. They do very remarkable work in silver. etc. But their preachings depend very much on the ordinances. They have lots of important writings and the ordinance of the 1,012 questions.

Lady Drower was responsible for getting some of the plates from them. They are lead plates. You can imagine why lead. Gold is rather expensive, they are poor people, and any other thing they write on is going to rot. They live with their feet in the water. After all, they live in the marshes. They live on floating villages, like Titicaca, of reeds, marsh. Everything is wet and muggy, and so they keep their records on these lead plates. Well, anyway, we have this remarkable writing.

Remember, Paul says, I'm not going to try to tell you about these things. 1 Corinthians 2:9: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." We can't talk about it because we haven't experienced it. But this I'd like to read to you now because I think it's a wonderful thing. They must have had some knowledge to put this down like this. As it starts out, it gives God enthroned in absolute stability in the beautiful city, the city of Zion, where there are no earthly trades. All wear robes of glory. We get a picture now, but it does get more realistic as you go, though. "Robes of glory, girdles of splendor, radiant crowns. All are happy, wise, and gentle, free of any malice or spite or rancor. There is no lying or deceit. There is no fraud. They're clothed upon in glory, dwelling together in perfect oneness with each other. They visit each other, and yet they do not intrude on each other. Nor do they agree in social deceptions, in the tricks of society."

Hans Vaihinger in the early twentieth century wrote a famous work in its time called *The Philosophy of "As If"*. Everything we do in our society, the way we get along with each other, the way we grease the wheels that make things go is an assumption that things are what they aren't. The person signs a letter "your obedient and humble servant," and he's nothing of the sort. That's the *as if* which governs everything. We talk as if politicians were honest. If we didn't act as if, then we would get nothing done at all. They're as crooked as a dog's hind leg, but we must have an *as if* here, you see, in all things we do. We're here as if we were studying zealously and learning all the things we should. We're not, but if we didn't act as if we were, we'd never be here. We'd never make a beginning at it. He [the Mandaean writer] says there's no *as if* here; everything is the real thing.

[Translating from the document again:] "They're brilliant in their various firmaments, their galaxies. Every one has its particular glory. They exchange scientific knowledge with each other, and they understand their systems mutually." This is the picture we get in the book of Moses, too, when he talks about worlds without number. "And though they are millions and untold millions of parsecs apart, yet they shine with a common luster. And they breathe a common atmosphere," you might say.

Well, that helps things out in solving some of the problems, I suppose, in "Star Trek." When you land on another planet or moon or something, you can always breathe the air, for some reason. This says that's the way it is. "They breathe a common atmosphere and inhale a common odor," it says, "and they share the same common truth and understand the same laws of science and of living." Of course, we teach that all the time—"as has been done in other worlds which we have

hitherto formed.” It’s all on the same plan using the same elements, and this goes on the same way here.

What do they do though? “They communicate mutually their true sentiments, their true feelings as well as their doctrines and their logic. [You do not conceal your true feelings and emotions from each other, and honest people don’t.] Death and corruption have no power over them. [Of course, that’s an important thing.] They are ageless and never lose strength. They know no sorrow and suffering. Their flight never wearies, and their garments never spot. Their population is optimum and constant. [If it’s necessary to change, it will change—up or down as they need.] They’re not the victims of fuzzy thinking [vagueness of thinking], nor are they doubt-ridden in their dealings or in their calculations. Ageless and without physical defects. No conflict, no competition [why should there be?], no slavery, no jealousy, no harmful creatures, no plants or animals that weaken and harm.”

Of course, it’s possible to find islands that don’t have them. They don’t have snakes in Hawaii or in Ireland for that reason. Various lands are blessed with happy situations like that on this earth. We have patterns for this. We have examples of this all over the earth. You can find that such a thing is possible; it is conceivable. They bring them all together here, you see. There are no harmful creatures [in this description]. For example, it always amazes me in Utah that we have no poison oak. You can go out and lie down on the ground and sleep somewhere. I used to take my kids out. But you can’t do that in the South. There are chiggers and fire ants and burrs wherever you put down; you can’t do it. It’s the same way with the other harmful creatures here, and poison oak especially. I could never go out anywhere in California without getting poison oak; I was extremely susceptible to it. It’s not like you would be out all the time, but I was always getting it. In Utah, no poison oak—that’s marvelous! Is it possible to have no poison oak? We had a house in Berkeley when I was teaching there that was completely surrounded [with it]. It was a beautiful house, but it was completely surrounded with vast, lush growths of poison oak. It was perfectly natural, but it’s worse in the East. All the hedges in the Harvard yard, and especially at Princeton, are loaded with poison ivy, and the students all get poison ivy in the spring. When things start getting warm in April and May, everybody blossoms out with rashes and water blisters and everything. It’s horrible. When it says there are worlds in which these things don’t exist, you can believe it. There are places here where they don’t exist. It’s rather nice.

It’s very interesting that we’re getting ideas of this today. It’s going to place great emphasis on the environment here because that’s important. Heaven is a surrounding, it’s a state of mind, it’s an environment. You create your environment and it creates you. It says, “All their environments are beautiful and unspoiled. And yet their unobtrusive dwellings have magnificent views. Their seas are calm and tranquil [no pirates there]. Everything throbs with joy. Their wants are few. They can fly through the air and even visit other worlds. They are so pure that power flows through them without burning them.”

In any conveyor of power, what will burn it up and cause trouble is impurities. And when you’re so impure [you have problems, too]. It says that power flows through them without burning them up, but we can’t risk it. “It thrills them and supports them,” this power that they can take. What do they do? We’re going to get the same thing in 4 Nephi here. “Prayer, study and meditation [rigid mental exercises] and praise are their basic exercises. Their company is calm, gay, and utterly delightful, radiating their happiness in common with every form of life.” See, that every form of life may fill the measure of its existence and have joy therein. So he says they have joy along with all the other forms of life in nature. They don’t intrude on it at all.

They’re completely individual, you’ll notice. It’s not just a lot of ciphers here turned out from the same mode. We’re the ones that are that way. This is a common expression. You understand what it means, but if you analyze it, it’s absurd. This is one of those things you get in language, you see. How can you [explain] “here there were twenty damsels, each more beautiful than the other.”

Well, how could each be more beautiful than the other? It's impossible. But you know exactly what he means when he says that, you see. When you view this one, you gasp, and with the next one you gasp, too, etc. This says the same thing. "They're completely individual. Each is more remarkable than the other, each more illustrious than the other. They lack nothing. Their dwellings are magnificent. All around them is beauty. They can move as fast as thought or as fast as gravity." You can do that. That's what thought can do. That's why you can pray and get instant contact without any trouble. "When they walk it is with a brisk and easy motion like a ray of light. They live on the treasures of the Jordan [see, they say they came from the Jordan at the time of John the Baptist] and the fruits of the trees [it seems they're vegetarians—back to Eden again].

Then it talks about how the air and confusion of this world make such things seem impossible. He says when I describe these you won't believe them because it's so alien to anything we experience here. "But there we recognize our own potential," he says. We could do it here if we would, you see. Then he talks about the creation. "It was from such a world that the most high God appointed a deputy to come to this world for the creation." This was Hivil Ziwa, who was always called Gabriel. See, they can't give the credit to Jesus because they're disciples of John the Baptist. They left before [Jesus began his mission].

When we say, "Come to Jesus, come to Christ," what do we mean? It's not just a sentimental expression. Come to the mourner's bench, come to Jesus. It's come to him to be taught. Come to him for instruction. It says here the most high God appointed a deputy to this world, calling Gabriel to go down to teach. He is going down to the creation here, but the point is, you don't make direct contact with God, as we are here, God being what he is. We must be instructed first; we must be prepared for it. We must be told what the situation is. We must receive the proper briefings before we can go into the presence of God, and that's what the Lord is for. He is the intercessor. "Come and learn of me," he says. He is the great teacher. He is there to teach us and prepare us to go into the presence of God. We hear these things all the time, but we don't realize how actually true they are. You can't graduate into another world with one step. The culture shock would wipe you out just like that. You can't do that, so the Lord prepares the way. There are many mansions, he told us in all those passages we read from John and 3 Nephi—"I go to prepare a place for you." I'll come back and get you when the time is ready, when the place is ready. He comes and he goes; he visits and talks with them. He goes to one group. He goes with another group. It's rather a complicated thing, but it's all being arranged on a very matter-of-fact basis here.

So the most high God appointed a deputy to this world, and that was Hivil Ziwa. That's just the word *Abel*, the son of Adam who was Hivil Ziwa, the eternally living Abel, who is also called Gabriel. "He said to him, go down to the world of darkness [he's going down to the chaos]. There is matter there, he says. Go down to the world of darkness where everything is in a process of slow combustion [of entropy, you see]. A totally false and counterfeit world until it has been organized in its present state, a world where everything is wrong. Go down there and check the darkness and get to the bottom of the mysteries of material existence so that we can construct something better of it. Then form and condense an earth from these things. Unroll the firmament above it and fix it there in its proper situation in the midst of the other stars and systems. Give them a sun in its splendor. Give them a moon with its pale beauty. [I've left something out there. I'd better go back and fill it in, I guess.] Cause the earth to bring forth all sorts of plant and animal life to give variety and beauty to the scene. [There again] mountains and hills, great rivers and small streams to give variety and beauty." The first concern of God was to give variety and beauty to the earth, you see, when he started forming it. It's meant that way on purpose. We're not supposed to destroy it. It comes first. And the same thing with the tree, that man might look upon the beauty thereof. "And create the animals and the beasts and the fishes and all manner of flying things, male and female, each after its kind, to serve Adam and all his race."

Actually, the ecosystem with all its animals, wild and otherwise, we now know fit together indispensably in a controlled system which serves man. If we start breaking that system down and destroying creatures, saying they have nothing to do with us, we're going to get ourselves into trouble. So they are all created to serve man and to serve each other, too. They are there for our purpose. The Lord has told us already the basic principle of ecology. These things are there to serve us. Don't destroy them; use them wisely as we should.

"Then finally, when this was done, create a man and a woman. Accordingly, the angel Gabriel came down, spread out the heavens, and condensed the earth. Adam and Eve were created, and then their spirits came to animate their bodies. Then the Lord says to him, go down again to the earth and take your two companions with you [so the three are sent down to teach Adam] and instruct Adam in all things. Teach him [this is very interesting, what he's supposed to do in being here] that his heart must expand, that his intelligence must grow, that his mind must be illuminated."

See, he's out here to have an experience, to be aware of things. He's not here to eat and sleep and exercise and all that sort of thing. That's necessary in its way, but it's not the object, you see. We move beyond this. We come down here for this greatest of all exercises, which will give us plenty to do. "Instruct him along with the two angels that accompany you. Converse familiarly with him on a perfectly equal footing—that he will understand what you are talking about, and you'll understand him. Warn Adam and Eve to be on guard against the tricks of Satan. He has a plan, too. Teach them prayers and hymns [again 4 Nephi] for their defense. Command them to marry and be fruitful. Give them the law of chastity. Teach them to be peaceful and faithful. Above all, they must avoid Satan's big pitch. They must not desire gold nor silver nor the riches of this world. They are not to worship idols or images of anything in this world."

This is a long thing; I should copy it further. I'll go down and complete it. I think that's a remarkable document coming from very early, probably from the first or second centuries A.D. These people must really have thought things out to get it as good as that. They got your best science fiction in there. Well, now let's go on with the first verse of 4 Nephi here.

"Brother Nibley, did that originate with these people?"

No, they brought it with them. They didn't originate it there. They said this is what John the Baptist taught them. He was Hivil Ziwa on earth, John the Baptist. They take the places of each other.

Now let's see what we have here. Civilization consists of the things that surround us, we know here. Now we are going to see something else here. This is a very interesting thing—as it advances these things become more and more expendable, not more and more necessary or more and more numerous. If you go back to the 1840s in America, people were surrounded by an unbelievable clutter of things that were not needed. They have disappeared now, but if you go through the ads of old papers you'll find that they had all sorts of toilet articles and items of dress, etc., that turned out to be of no worth whatever. You notice, as a machine becomes more and more perfect, it becomes more and more expendable. It used to be to get across the ocean you had to have an enormous 80,000-ton ocean liner. It used to be you had a massive railroad system. We reduced that to planes, and they get smaller and smaller, less and less necessary. It used to be that we had these enormous Victorian meals, the Edwardian meals. The board was groaning with every kind of [food]. It was as bad as McDonald's for the cholesterol. They ate themselves to death, and all these things were unnecessary. As they become more civilized, they become more simple and more austere. As we mentioned before, in the great civilizations you have one standard dress—as you do in heaven or the Pythagorean society. The brotherhoods, remember, live that kind of life, and it's a very austere and simple life. Fourth Nephi actually is a utopia. I've

written a bit on utopias, but this is the perfect state, how it would be. Is it possible? These utopias were speculative writings. You know the great ones, the four great utopias.

This is another question. Do you find when you're engaged in a fascinating project that it helps to be quarreling or have threats or plots or danger or rivalry or bitter competition? Does that help your work at all? Why can't we do away with those? It's unthinkable for us to do away with those. That's a strange thing. Then why do we find life boring without an adversary? Who or what puts into our minds that we have to spoil things, that we have to contend and all that sort of thing? The business must be a rat race, a dog-eat-dog world. It subsides into that inevitably every time we start doing things our way. Should it be that way?

Let's get to the second verse now. "And every man did deal justly one with another." Well, this covers a lot of ground, you see. The people were all converted, both Nephites and Lamanites, no contentions or disputations, "every man did deal justly one with another." Isn't that being a bit idealistic? Is that utopian yet? Of the four Platonic virtues, the first is justice, which is *timē*. That is to give everything that is due from you and to take what is due to you. If you give less than you should, then you're *mikropsychos*, you're small-minded. Aristotle in the fourth book of the *Nichomachean Ethics* talks about this. Then you're small-minded and petty. You're confining yourself if you give less than you should. If you take less than you should, you're also being small, petty, and cautious. You think you're being virtuous, like Scrooge, in being abstemious—the billionaire who goes to work taking his lunch in a brown paper bag, things like that. We admire that man's abstemiousness. Well, what is all his money [for]? He's a very mean-spirited person. That's what Scrooge does. But it says there "every man did deal justly one with another." Is this more satisfying to deal justly? That means they had relationships, they had deals, they had bargains, etc., but you didn't try to take the advantage if you dealt justly.

Is this more emotionally satisfying, though, than charity? If everything is just charity, you give the charity and that's all. Charity is the higher law. As the Arabs say, "The brave man never asks the odds, the generous man never asks the price, the good man never asks questions." You just go along with that. But what about this bargaining business? Well, that's all right in its realm. Willard Marriott gave an interview on the four secrets of success. The first one he said is drive a hard bargain. Well, now, is that a good thing? Yes, it is, if you're playing with a person who also drives a hard bargain. He says that himself, you see. He says if you drive a hard bargain, the other guy will respect you because you're playing a game. It's done in the approved spirit of gamesmanship. He's an able opponent. He understands how you're playing, and you understand his motives. But you mustn't force others to play that game, who aren't as well equipped for that. Can you do that? See, what Satan wants to do is to force everybody to play that game, as Isaiah said. "He who turneth away from evil maketh himself a prey." If you won't play the game, you'll become a victim. And, of course, they'll pluck you if you don't. This is what happens; this is the way we do it. You're forced to play the game by your rules. Must you do that? Or a game fitted for your physique? Should I be forced to play basketball? I've never been very good at it. It's the idea that we must all play the same game—rich or poor, weak or strong—everybody out playing the same game to benefit those who play it more efficiently than the others, etc. The starving peasant, the mill hand, or the mine worker coughing his lungs out—it's no game for them or young people who are forced to accept substandard wages. A 300-pounder is fighting a 100-pounder, and he says, "You do these things my way, don't you? Aren't you sporting about these things." So, the stock market is all right as a casino if you accept these blue chips for what they're worth—nothing, just as chips, just as tokens, and this sort of thing.

Well, let's take the third verse here. "And they had all things in common among them [this is the stinger, you see]; therefore, there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift." The late Malcolm Forbes, you may have noticed, had a \$2 million birthday party a few months ago, and now he's dead. He used to say, "Nothing makes



free like bucks in the bank.” He was careful not to invite anyone to his birthday party who wasn’t either very rich or very famous. That’s *mikropsychos*, small-minded. And in the same way Cain said “I am free; his flocks fall into my hands.” He wasn’t ashamed of what he had done. God said, well, what about Abel? [Cain replied] well, he wouldn’t play the game. He says he was perfectly free. I’m not his keeper.

Everyone is healthy and happy. What do they have to do now? “There still continued to be peace in the land.” See, they’re neither rich nor poor. Today we are compounding both poverty and wealth. Today they’re moving farther apart, as you know, and each is becoming greater. Poverty is increasing as wealth is increasing, so we’re going to have some very helpful hints here. “The thirty and seventh year passed away also, and there still continued to be peace in the land.” And this is what happened. Now this is an interesting thing here, because it’s referred to a number of times. “And there were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples of Jesus.” Now always throughout this whole book, one whole chapter, there are the disciples of Jesus as special people. The whole society accepts the gospel, but there are certain ones who have very special powers, marvelous powers of doing miracles, etc. They are the ones who are progressing. They are the ones who have got beyond this. It just gives us a hint and tells us they were there and doing certain things. They remind us of the ancient brotherhoods. Notice what it says here: “. . . wrought by the disciples of Jesus, insomuch that they did heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cause the lame to walk, and the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear; and all manner of miracles did they work among the children of men; and in nothing did they work miracles save it were in the name of Jesus.”

These gifts are all for solving problems, you know. And all for solving problems beyond our skill. These brethren went beyond that, because later on in the whole society they stand apart as a different group. We’ve always had them, this particular group of saints.

And so the years pass away in verse 6, and the Lord prospers them, and (verse 7) “they did build cities again.” Now, here we have another interesting question. Well, *prosper* is a good word here. *Prosper* is a favorite word of the rich. John D. Rockefeller always used to use that word. When one of his crooked deals was successful, he said “we were prospered.” The Lord prospered us. He gave the Lord credit for it, but [said] we were prospered. But here the word prosper is used for a society in which there are no rich. Apparently you can prosper as a society, as a group. Brigham Young used to say that, you know. I could make this people the richest people on earth, but we have to be rich as a people. As soon as we start being rich as individuals that way, then that will spoil everything.

Then in the next verse we read that it was an urban civilization. Now, wait a minute. What about the Garden of Eden? They caused Zarahemla to be built again, and many cities had been sunk, etc. They rebuilt their cities, and it was an urban civilization. So the question arises, which do you prefer. The Garden of Eden, you see, is the way things should be. That’s paradise. That’s the paradisiacal order to which the earth is to return. The tenth article of faith says we’re going back to that. “The earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.” We’ll live in an Eden. But what about the city? It’s the city of Zion. Zion is very much a city, very much a community; they’re all of one heart and one mind. They have no poor among them. He called his people *Zion*. They were a city, a walled city, a city for protection, a city of light, etc. How do you have the two? Well, of course, you combine them both. This way the Lord came and talked with Adam in the Garden, but he also visits [in the city]. He’s in the center. You can always call on him in his office in Zion. But here we have the urban civilization, which is a heavenly city. We talk about the heavenly city, the heavenly Jerusalem, etc., and yet we have the other one. Well, you know we can combine the two very nicely.

The lords of the earth, after they’ve made their great deals in real estate, what do they do? They go out by themselves as far away as they can get from the city life they have created, because our city

life is becoming pretty vile, with our inner cities being what they are. Everybody's trying to escape, and now they're trying to capitalize and, of course, make profit on the wilderness. Wilderness is the thing that's a premium now, if you can get that. They realize the only happy life is there and so they are never content with those things. Yes, the lords of the earth choose some isolated, fair part of the world for discussing their problems, whether you have a think tank or a convention. They'll go up to the Sierras or they'll go to Alaska or somewhere for the oil business to hold a conclave and discuss their great matters. Even the military will meet in the most pleasant of surroundings, to get near to nature—a strange thing.

Well, now we come to this very interesting verse, the tenth verse. They “became an exceedingly fair and delightsome people.” That's important, too. Does it mean that they had to have perfect bodies, and we're always aware of that fact? Not a bit of it. When a thing is *fair*, it is as it should be. You talk about fair play, a fair game, a fair proposition, a fairly good way of doing it, a properly good way of doing it, a fairly good job, etc. A damsel is fair if her features are in the right place and she has the right measurements, we say. That's not necessarily the same measurements we accept today. But to be fair is the way we imagine it should be. This is the way St. Augustine picks it up from Plato, for example. Plato himself says the fair is the *kalos k'agathos*. *Kalos* is *right, proper*, every way it should be. *Agathos* is *good*. To be fair and good. Of course, it's aesthetically pleasing as well. In the *Euthydemus* he says a golden bowl can be as ugly as a dung basket is beautiful. The dung basket is simply designed, functional, etc. It can be a beautiful object, where a golden bowl with all sorts of fancy Victorian frills and geegaws on it can be absolutely hideous. It's the function and the rightness of it. When you look at a thing, you know that's right. Of course, this is the platonic doctrine of anamnesis, which we will not pursue here.

To be “fair and delightsome.” *Delight* is enjoyment without lust. That's the difference, a great thing here. Again, it's a platonic idea, isn't it. In your feeling toward nature, you are drawn toward what is lovable, what is endearing, what is rightly proportioned, what is pleasing, what is beautiful, what you've been looking for, what delights you. And with no desire to ravage and exploit with lust, vandalism, power, gain. Notice the four things [emphasized] in the Book of Mormon—power, gain, praise or recognition, and lusts of the flesh. They have nothing to do with *delightsome* and nothing to do with *fair*. *Fair* means things are as they should be, and *delightsome* means causing and giving enjoyment without lust of any kind. In our society you must control and possess and master a thing; that's what Satan wants. This is what Satan does. Why do we do it? It's very interesting. A popular theme today, even with little children, is Master of the Universe. I guess we pick it up from some of the space TV shows—these subtle powers, the master, the one who wants to master the universe. He is always turning up at various places. The “good” and the “bad” of this power are equally vicious because each one's after the same thing. Each is out to destroy the other. The other is wicked because he is trying to destroy me. I'm good because I'm trying to destroy him, and he takes the same point of view. These are toys they sell at the ZCMI, etc. You get these two monsters with names. One is red, white, and blue, and the other is black or something like that. They slug it out for the rule of the universe. Well, for such a morbid scenario to be taken seriously by five- and six-year-olds is quite something. I hear they stopped those toys at ZCMI, but I don't know. They still play Dungeons and Dragons, Robber Barons, etc. Sheer power, you see, the glory of power. As the great Henry Kissinger said, “Power is the best aphrodisiac.” That's what he wanted it for, and he wanted plenty.

So we fulfill the law of entropy with a vengeance. Modern civilization is working on it. A vast landfill is what we're producing. The city of Cairo is a vast landfill. At all times in all weather, no matter where you are (you can stand on the balcony of a hotel 25 [stories] high), you smell burning garbage. It's just constant. That's what we're doing. We're producing garbage. In Cairo burning garbage is the characteristic smell of the city. That's the question. We haven't decided what to do with ours yet.

What about the next verse? Verse 11 says, “And they were married, and given in marriage, and were blessed according to the multitude of the promises which the Lord had made unto them.” These things had been promised. God knows what will really make us happy. He would promise us that. There’s a famous Arabic cycle of stories called the Khadir legends. Khadir was the green man. He was the angel. He was a water sprite, and quite a figure. But people go around wishing for things that they shouldn’t have, and terrible things happen to people. They say, “Why is this, why is this?” Then Khadir comes around and explains, “If this hadn’t been so, it would have been worse for you.” You don’t know what you really need after all, so Khadir is always telling you. In this case, the Lord knows what would make us happy and what’s good for us, but we have the three-wish motifs, as Solon said. Remember, we have our wishes, but we never wish for the right thing. It is a famous folktale. You get it in all folktales, where the man is given three wishes by the fairy. He says, “Well, I wish I had a nice sausage.” This is a Dutch story. He had his sausage, and his wife said, “I wish it was on the end of your nose.” So it was on the end of his nose. The third wish was just to get it off, and he had no wishes left. This is what we do. We wish for the wrong things, and we end up holding nothing at all. Solon has some very nice verses on that.

Now the Nephites trusted God to know what was good for them. Ill-gotten gain is not gain at all. It [the important thing] is what we should have, not what we want. You all know the story of the “Pardoner’s Tale” from Chaucer. Everybody overreaches everybody else. The three thieves pulled off a job, and they were going to celebrate under a tree. They sent the youngest one off to get some wine from the village that was nearby, and while he was away they plotted to kill him so they could share the treasure among themselves and not bother about him. So when he came back they killed him and then they drank the wine to celebrate. But in the meantime he had poisoned the wine, so that was the end of the story, you see. They were all out. Chaucer tells us that one in the “Pardoner’s Tale.”

Well, then what do we have here? Verse 12: “And they did not walk any more after the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses.” Now here’s what they were doing. They were actually engaged in this. They had to work at it, but their life wasn’t dull here. They [were] “continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.” Again, we must get an idea of what this word *fasting* means. It’s a very old English word. I wrote down the dictionary meaning on the back of one of these. I can tell you easily enough what it is. *Fast* is the same word as *feast* and *fest* and *festival*, and *fasti* in Latin. It means to hold fast to something, to observe something carefully. But it means to exercise self-control. Fasting means to hold yourself back. That’s what it really is. Fasting is to correct excesses. It’s to hold firm. It’s self-control. That’s the dictionary definition of it, and then it branches off into other things. Fasting is self-restraint. They forewent the pleasures of eating when they weren’t hungry. They gave up the pleasure of drinking when they weren’t thirsty. That’s fasting, you see. We don’t do that. America is all overweight. You know the great curse of our time is overweight. The main thing we’re suffering from [is that] everybody’s overweight. We’ve been eating when we weren’t really hungry, or we may have been still hungry, but we didn’t stop when we should. When you fast, it’s self-control. It isn’t to starve yourself to death and become so weak you topple over. That’s not fasting. That’s excess, too, as far as that goes. Then you are losing control just as well.

What are the advantages of fasting? Well, it’s more pleasurable. Our number one problem, I say, is being overweight. Brigham Young had something to say on that. He said we all eat too much, we wear too much, we work too much. And that was in those times when they did. If we all ate less, wore less, and worked less, we’d be a better, happier, and wiser people. When I said that to Ernest Wilkinson, he “went through the ceiling.” He thought we couldn’t work enough or become too rich or anything like that. We used to have some nice go-to’s with each other. He put up with me because I knew he was a lawyer, and he believed in adversarial things. Most people were intimidated by him, but he was one of the few men around who was smaller than I, and so we got along fine.

The child cannot resist all the candy. If you give him more, he wants to go on eating it. But at a certain point we have to tell the child he's got to start fasting. Well, the ninth candy bar is going to make him sick, but he'll eat it just as sure as anything. Wouldn't fasting be better for him? Wouldn't restraint be better for him? See, fasting is to keep yourself within bounds. Remember what the Lord tells us—appetites, desires, and passions must be kept within the bounds the Lord has set. It means any kind of appetites like that. In other words, the only way you'll keep them in bounds is by fasting. The Book of Mormon tells us later on, you must withhold yourself from certain activities which you might find pleasurable for the time being, and perfectly natural as far as that goes. But you must deny yourselves. It's perfectly natural to want to eat until you bust, but you must deny yourself. We must fast. So this was necessary to preserving this order of society and to bringing it about.

“. . . continuing in fasting and prayer.” Prayer of both kinds. There are the two kinds. The one is when you put what you really want and what you really feel into words. That's your very personal prayer. To be sincere it must avoid mechanical repetition like a prayer wheel. Yet if your wants are few, you'll naturally have to do a lot of repeating there. You just want a few things, so we have the Lord's Prayer. “Give us this day our daily bread,” and this is in the Book of Mormon, too. And then the very next thing is “thy kingdom come.” People have commented on the absurdity of that, such as the famous author, Joseph Conrad. This is what he says. “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Great things. Great thoughts, and then suddenly it starts coming down to the economy. “Give us this day our daily bread.” Well, that's the big obstacle to this, you see. The big obstacle is as soon as you have to depend on somebody else for your daily bread, that's not the kingdom of God. That's not the way things are done equitably. That's where the stumbling block is. And forgive our debts—and the Book of Mormon says *debts* using the business term, as we forgive those who owe us—as we forgive our debtors. Now that's the obstacle to the kingdom of heaven, so that comes next. The Lord's going to take that out, and it's the same thing here. Our wants are few. What are we going to ask for? It requires intense introspection, you see. “Where do I go from here” is what you ask every time you pray to the Lord personally. Where do I go from here? Is there anything I need or that I haven't done? You find out there's plenty to do. You can't stand still.

And the other is the continuing prayer. He says they prayed continuously. Schleiermacher talks about that. That's the mutual awareness. Well, they prayed together, both meeting together to pray and hear the word of the Lord. Fasting and prayer, personal prayer, and you meet together, and that's the continuing prayer. Well, we haven't got that here. Of course, we can't get stuck on the shortest book in the Book of Mormon, but it covers so much ground and has so much of the other in it.



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 103

4 Nephi 1

Prayer

Peace

Prosperity

Well, [because of] a rather severe jet lag, I took a very potent sleeping pill last night. It's just begun to take effect. It's always slow with me.

It has been announced in the news today that the Reorganized Church has denounced the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. I can almost equal that. In Cairo the Church meets on Friday, because Friday is the sacred day of the Moslems. The shops close on Friday, and we have our Sunday School on Friday. That's our Sunday. It feels just like Sunday, it looks just like Sunday, it smells like Sunday. In every respect it's a Sunday—there's no difference to us at all. The day is Friday, but it's a good time. The interesting thing is that the Christian churches all observe Sunday in Cairo. To be in keeping with them, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church also faithfully observes Sunday as the Sabbath. Now when you consider that their entire religion is built around the idea that you must have the Sabbath on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, and nothing else will do, [that is strange]. We're all [gone] astray because we observe Sunday instead of Saturday, which Constantine introduced in the fourth century. [In Cairo] the Adventists are all going to Sunday School on Sunday. It's a strange world we live in.

But we are in a stranger world, too. We're in 4 Nephi now [discussing] why that was a marvelous book, etc. Now we're down to the twelfth [verse]. Notice we're taking time on this, but we don't want to take too much time. You can't take too much time. The whole book is here. This is an epitome of the Book of Mormon, 4 Nephi. What were they going to do? How did they spend their time? This is the point. As we saw the last time, the great issue is going to be boredom. You've got to do something. If there are no more crimes and violence, none of the elements that make for prime-time TV, what are you going to do to make life interesting? Well, it says they spent their days in continual fasting. We talked about fasting; it's far more than you think, when we say fasting here. And [they spent time] in prayer and in meeting together. Why did they meet together? To pray and hear the word of the Lord. Prayer is the main activity, apparently. They spent their days in fasting and prayer. Of course, fasting is not a conscious operation, but in prayer you have something in mind. You're doing something when you pray. You're doing the thing that we do most in this world. The very essence of our existence here is to pray. We pray all the time. That's an individual thing. They gathered together to pray, and they had individual prayer.

What is a prayer, anyway? Should we ask some people things here? Prayer is a broadcast, announcing that you are here. It's a personal signal, and nobody's going to escape it at all. It's an announcement of your presence. Sometimes when you're under great pressure or in great danger, you are willing to sound off and say, here I am—do something about it. But nobody can escape that. It's spontaneous and it's irrepressible that you will pray. It's an appeal for help in desperate situations, but not always that—you're announcing your presence all the time. To whom are you announcing your presence?

They say the monks of old would go out into the desert to pray. Well, Jesus went up into the mountain to pray, and Jesus went out into the desert to pray. Why do you go out to the desert to

pray? Because you're praying to a particular person, a certain one. Do you pray when you're in a crowd? Well, you do, yes. They pray to be seen. Remember, Jesus talks about the Pharisees that spread their phylacteries and pray to be heard. They pray in public places. They pray in the marketplaces and on the street corners. They pray on the towers, and they have a trumpet sound when they go to make their alms and give their prayers. So we're always praying. We're praying to each other, we're praying to the Lord, we're announcing our presence to everybody all around. It's the ultimate expression of our ego, that we're here. It's a very interesting thing. It's an announcement of our dependence also, and hence *religio*. There's always a time when a person will say, "O God," no matter whether they're atheists or not. That's *religio*, which means religion and a connection with somebody else. It reestablishes the tie that has been denied and broken. In a great crisis, people will pray.

You put into words what you want and how you feel. Prayer is as natural as breathing. It expands your awareness. It puts you into the big picture. You're not satisfied with being just in a hole, being nothing and being unnoticed. You must be noticed, and you must notice. We mentioned that before. You are always aware of God, and God is always aware of you. You can't break that. That's what the Arabs call the *faṭra*. Every time you breathe you say, "Allah, Allah." Incidentally, in a very good branch in Cairo, when they talk about God, they talk about *Allah*. "God be with you till we meet again," they sing. God is *Allah*. That's the only word you can use [in their language], so don't worry about that. But you announce your presence. The *faṭra* is a prayer you do unconsciously and in your hearts. Remember, when they couldn't pray aloud, the Nephites prayed in their hearts. They were suppressed and held as prisoners, etc. Then you're particularly aware of it. But you're particularly aware of another person who is aware of you. This is this mutual awareness. You're not alone, and it preserves your individuality. It heightens your individuality. "Here I am" is what you say.

The word *amen* [is used] when a group is together. *Amen* means "it's my intention. I approve that." Part of the ordinance of prayer is saying *amen*. We don't say *amen* when we should, not even with the sacrament, but you should say it. That's part of the ordinance. It's very important—"and all the people shall say amen." That's in the Dead Sea Scrolls, right on the first page where things are said about the prayer. That shows that it's your prayer, too—that you want to participate in it along with the others.

Another thing about it is that it's a real activity—and we engage ourselves up to the eyebrows in it. We're just in it all the way, but we have no instrumentality. We don't use instruments at all. That's a very interesting thing about prayer. We don't have prayer wheels, and we don't have rosaries. See, the rosary wasn't adapted until the seventeenth century by the Roman church, and it was adapted from the Buddhists through Jesuit missionaries. The rosary is considered something quite sacred now. [They] have prayer beads and worry beads, but we don't use instruments. No instrumentality. So where do we stand? Where's the reality? Is there real content there? Well, I think there is, now that we know how certain things are projected. First, prayer is individual. It puts into words what you want and how you feel. That's very important to do. That puts you into the picture. Remember, Joseph Smith when he was a child—the first time when he went to the Grove he said never before, neither he nor his family, had ever prayed out loud before. Why would the Lord need your words? He knows what's in your heart, but the words are for you to formulate. The *word* is very important. "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). It's through the word that we communicate. We saw that before. The only way that we exchange our own ideas and match our own universes is by the word. We have the seven preceptors, but there's only one projector. What I say is what you learn about my existence and my universe and we can share it that way. If I falsify through the word, the easiest thing in the world to do, it throws everything into confusion. It's a real horror. The worst of crimes is the lie.

So the individual puts into words what he wants and how he feels. That helps you and formulates you. That puts you into the picture and places you at the door ready for the interview. You brush yourself up and get ready for the interview because [you wonder] is the Lord really going to hear you? We've talked about that, too. Can that possibly happen? We've talked about the speed of gravity and the speed of light. There are some things that are instantaneous in their effect, and gravity is one of them. It's absolutely a complete mystery—nothing can be made of it at all. In a famous letter to Richard Bentley, Isaac Newton said, no sane person could possibly accept the reality of that, and yet it's so. That's the way it is—bodies can influence each other through empty space instantaneously at any distance. If that can happen, he says, it can only be through the operation of God's mind force.

To be sincere, you can see it must avoid mechanical repetition. We say we do not wish to multiply words before him. What do you do when you multiply? You repeat. You don't add when you multiply. You don't increase when you multiply, you just repeat. You repeat over and over again: Five times five is twenty-five—five repeated five times. When you multiply words, you just repeat words, and you do it automatically. This becomes a very common thing, as if repetition added to it. The scriptures say we do not multiply words, and yet so many Ave Marias are supposed to have much more value than half that many Ave Marias, or so many turns of the prayer wheel or so many Pater Nosters are supposed to have more value. No, multiplying words isn't going to do it at all in what you do here. We must avoid this mechanical repetition and prayer wheels.

What I'm talking about is how these people [in 4 Nephi] fill their time. Remember, they are not having any wars. There is nobody sick or anything like that. They have everything they want. Nobody is hungry. They didn't have to work any more than just to cover the minimum necessities. What are these people going to do, you see? This is the whole thing that puzzles us, too. But prayer is the main activity to get things going. It puts things on a special footing here.

Our wants are few, so how can you avoid repetition in prayer? I tell the Lord what I want, and every time I tell him, I tell him the same thing, because that's what I want. I don't want everything else. What about it? You can add, as I say, this multiplying that goes on. I've stood in churches and heard people say things hundreds of times over and over again. In a litany when there was a drought in Bavaria, they said, "Hear us, hear us, hear us." Or in Greece, they said *kyrie eleison* all morning. Or, as Paul tells us, they shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians; great is Diana of the Ephesians" for three hours without stopping. They thought that would be an acceptable prayer. Well, that's just automatic. You're not getting anywhere with that. It doesn't delight you; it doesn't delight the Lord or anyone else. That's not what we're supposed to be doing.

How do you avoid this repetition, multiplying words this way? Well, this means that when you pray and you have asked for everything you want for now, intense introspection is required. Either you've already arrived and you have everything you want, and that covers everything you can imagine, and you're not going to progress or anything else anymore—or something is missing and you've got to pray for more. The question you keep asking when you get to the end of your prayer is, "where do I go from here"? The Lord says, I've heard all that before; now you're capable of more than that. What do we do next, you see? Notice in verse 12, they engaged in continuing prayer. Again, this is what I say is as a *faṭra*. You're aware of God all the time, and he's aware of you. This is what Schleiermacher called *Abhängigkeit*—the feeling of absolute and total dependence at all times. There is dependence but also a feeling of companionship—a feeling that you're not just some creature moving along like an ant crawling along the ground or something like that. Somebody is aware of you and you are aware of him, whatever else the human race [might be doing]. The one that you are in contact with is the greatest of them all; it's your Heavenly Father. He's able to be aware of you, and you're able to be aware of him.



We saw this in the case of Jesus introducing himself to the people one by one, blessing the children one by one. He knows your name, and you know him. It's an intimate personal relationship shared by nobody else, and that's not selfish because you know he has it with everybody else. That makes you friends with everybody else, too, because you know that you have a common friend and who it is. I told you about Brother John Hayes, the registrar, didn't I? He used to live kitty-corner across the street from me years ago in Provo. He had been registrar at BYU for forty years. It was a small school, but all the students passed through his hands, so to speak, and he knew all the students who ever went to BYU. He not only knew them, but he was interested in them. For that reason he knew their family histories and their troubles. He would meet a student twenty-five years after [graduation] and ask, "Did your mother ever get over her arthritis?" or "Did you ever move from Nephi?" "Is your father still in the cattle business?" He'd know all about them. Every student he knew all about, and he was no superman or anything like that. He was just good old Brother Hayes. He was interested; that's why. If he could know everybody individually, don't you think the Lord could know you? It's no problem at all for him. He knows you as an individual; you'll never be anything else but yourself to him. You'll have a friendship with him as intimate as with anybody else.

How can it be that intimate? Well, look. I used to think when we had one child that he was our life. He was marvelous. Little Paul thrilled the daylights out of me, but when we had eight it was just the same. Grandchildren are just as thrilling, just as wonderful, just as individual. No difference at all, and it could go on forever and ever. So don't worry. We're in a community here in which everything is going to be very jolly. There's going to be no boredom in this kingdom it's talking about here, not for the 240 years, anyway.

Let's go on with this prayer business that was continuing then and meeting off together. Well, you see that. You'll be drawn to people who've had the same experiences you have. This would be nice. You say, isn't it enough to pray and study alone? Those are important, of course. We read that wonderful account in the Mandaean community text from the third or fourth century—maybe even earlier than that. They are all different, where it talks about the various worlds, etc. All the worlds are different. Each has something to contribute to the others. Each can take something from all the others. The combinations are different in each one. So as the worlds get more and more numerous, they are more and more different. They're more and more distinct, yet more and more dependent on each other. They more and more enjoy each other's company, that wonderful thing about going and visiting each other and that sort of thing. This is a conceivable situation. We don't run out [of interesting things to do]. See, the whole thing is it abolishes all selfishness. The interest goes out to everything else. It's an outflowing feeling. "Three cheers for the universe," as the famous New England philosopher used to say.

Each there had something to give and needs more from the others. Everybody gains. The exchange increases the rich variety of our society, and especially the multifaceted genius of every individual. It's a remarkable thing to see [for example] the Egyptians, those amazing people. They did things we couldn't think of doing; they were a most marvelous people. They were the most stable society on earth because they were the most friendly. The great productive periods [were] the first six dynasties—it's a very interesting thing. That's when all the great stuff was produced, and there are no signs of war. We find no weapons. We find everything else in the tombs. You won't find weapons, you won't find any signs of conquest, you won't find the victor model—the victorious conqueror or anything like that. It's only in the later dynasties, the Middle Kingdom, when the Asiatics moved in and mingled, that you get the usual trouble. But these things aren't necessary. It's an amazing thing what's going on in this Book of Mormon here. The exchange increases the variety of society and the multifaceted genius of every individual in it. You're surrounded by beings as highly aware of your presence as you are of theirs. How much would you keep back from them? Your *sacer egoismus* is inviolable. You always have that. That's the wonderful thing about the Egyptian—he always leaves you his name and address and his

genealogy. He's not going to be absorbed into an ocean of being. It's himself. He's going to be preserved and he's going to rise in the resurrection. And it's the same thing here.

Well, how much would you keep back from such people? You're not going to turn yourself inside out like some fantastic sea monster or make an exhibition of yourself. It's funny that these things are what's done in society in which people are suspicious of each other—in which they're jealous and competitive. There is where they try to show off. There's where they try to be exotic and excessive, etc., and it ends only in the saddest dissolution, a pitiful state of things. This is my work and my glory, to share with everybody else (Moses 1:39). They can have eternal life and immortality, too, just like I do. We get all of this in the book of Moses.

So we are literally a family then. We're praying separately and we're praying together. The worlds, we are told, maintain a lively exchange with each other. We know that by the comet shuttle now. This is actually no longer a myth. It's a fantastic thing. I gathered together [some examples of this] in that work called ["Treasures in the Heavens"] where the worlds exchange knowledge, etc. There's a poem that Isaac Newton wrote, a very good one on this. It's Isaac Newton's hymn.

Praise the Lord for he has spoken.  
Worlds his mighty word obey.  
Laws that never can be broken  
Hath he for their guidance made.

This is Isaac Newton himself, this idea of worlds without number that God has given a common order to. He has given laws that never can be broken for their profit? Benefit? Any word that you want to put in there. I hadn't thought of that for many years, but that's a marvelous poem, and it comes from such a person, too.

Well, then, we have worlds maintaining a lively exchange with each other in the comet shuttle, each mixed with the parts of the others in its own peculiar combination. The numbers and variations are infinite as the number of worlds themselves.

Then we're told there was no contention among them [in 4 Nephi]. Is there any wonder about that? There's no contention. What, no plot in the play? We're not going to have any fun without contention. With us, after the buildup, after the climax, after the denouement, they ride into the sunset or they live happily every after. The play must end there, because the author or the playwright has nowhere to go. After all the problems, after all the dirty work, after all the dangers have been passed, then we say, "The cloudless skies are all serene. Oh joy, oh rapture unforeseen." They have no place to go, so the author has nothing to do but end the play. But that's where the play should begin. What kind of fun are they going to have after that if they've lost all the excitement, if it's all passed away? This, as Spangler says, is the ultimate disaster to civilization. After all our problems are solved, then we have nothing to do but collapse into a pile of ashes. We're not going anywhere. *Problemlösigkeit* is the absence of problems. We've got to have an answer here.

What do the Nephites do after they reach this condition? The only scene open to them after that, he talks about. He talks about mighty miracles. Now we have a very interesting thing that's going on repeatedly to a small nucleus of brethren, the brotherhood, that have this superior knowledge. They perform these miracles among themselves. The rest of them don't. They're just a normal society of people behaving themselves at last. But you see they get mentioned quite often here in significant situations. The only scene was the realm of mighty miracles. That's a world we know not of, you see. They were not ordinary people but something beyond our reach. Again, they're called the disciples of Jesus, and they appear as a very special group in this book. We are told in verse 13, "There were mighty miracles wrought among the disciples of Jesus," not just by the

disciples but they were wrought among them. Apparently not among the rest, though the rest were all members of the church. It tells us in the second verse that they'd all been converted, yet the mighty miracles were limited to this group among the disciples of Christ. They had knowledge, powers, and understandings beyond the rest. This has always been an ongoing tradition in human history—that there are human groups, isolated people, both men and women, who possess knowledge above the others which is kept secret. The idea is that it couldn't be shared without becoming corrupted, misunderstood, or lost, in other words. That's what the Lord tells the disciples when he meets with them behind closed doors. He says, don't tell these things to the others. It's like giving pearls to the swine and throwing your food to the dogs. They wouldn't appreciate it at all. It would just make them sick, and it would be lost on them. There's nothing wrong with them, but this is something special.

This idea of special groups guarding their secrets, this esoteric [information], naturally led to the idea of all sorts of fake societies, all sorts of cultists. At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, it just became a rash. Everybody and his dog was joining these secret societies, with freemasonry taking the lead. They were trying to invest themselves in an air of mystery, of superior knowledge that others didn't possess, etc. But Joseph Smith actually did possess such knowledge, and if you don't believe it, look at the Book of Mormon. He gave us that. But it's very common for people to fake this for escapism—to escape the dullness of life and to make a big show to enhance one's importance. You're going to get this all the time. We have secrecy in business, government, and all sorts of things to give us this air of superior knowledge. All governments today are becoming secret government. It's nonsense and it's dangerous.

But here they are without the contention. Now where do the Nephites come? I say the only scenes open to them were these mighty miracles. Again, the disciples of Jesus appear in this special world. We're told that mighty miracles were wrought among them, rather than by them among the general public. This is confirmed later on in this book here. In a nation where all are members [of the church], this denotes a special brotherhood experienced beyond our kin. In other words, they're the people in the laboratory. They're doing the big stuff that we don't know anything about. This becomes apparent in the next verse, you'll notice. Look in verse 14. It tells us when these ordained disciples died, there were other disciples ordained in their stead, replacing them individually just as if it was a special group. "There were other disciples ordained in their stead; and also many of that generation had passed away. And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land."

I notice they use the two saecula here in this book. A saeculum is a complete human life. The generation is a hundred years here, and a little later on it's 110 years. That's the Roman seculum. That's a cycle in which the last person is alive who was alive when the cycle began. When that person dies, then a new cycle begins. A new cycle is one in which no person in the preceding cycle still lives. With the Romans it was 100 years; with the Egyptians it was 110 years, which became the normal life cycle. We have some noted Egyptian sages that lived to 110. In verse 18 it's going to tell us about that.

Verse 15: "There was no contention in the land because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people." Well, again you can see that. There was no problem if it did dwell in the hearts of the people. That would condition every thought and action, you see, if it dwelt in the hearts of the people. In any crisis we'd wait to get our directives from him, if the love of God dwelt there. The solution would be forthcoming. We're not going to have contention if we're waiting upon the judgment and the instruction of God, and if the love of God dwells in our hearts. It's impossible; it's out of the question. As soon as we start contending, you see what happens to that. It would be most retrograde to that. It would be completely opposed to it in every way.

Verse 16 reads like the famous negative confession, 125th section of the Book of the Dead, in which a person lists all the sins he did not commit. As Benjamin tells the people, there's no end to the list of sins I might make that you might commit. I can't go on telling you all the things you mustn't do. I'd better tell you the things you must do, because there's no end to the ways in which people can offend God. We leave it to the Jesuits to make these long lists, such as Molinos in the fifteenth century. They labored scientifically to make the longest possible list of sins that persons could commit, and then they had to be rated by number. This was the doctrine of probabilism. A certain sin would rate 6.2, and another sin would be 8.9. But in the list of sins, you can get a very, very long list. Well, of course, the thing is ridiculous because the whole thing is the state of mind in which the act is done. It's not the act itself, but the intention or the mood. I mean a thing that might be very virtuous in one condition [is evil in another]. Nephi committed the ultimate sin when the Lord absolutely insisted that he do it. He explained why he should when he murdered Laban.

This reads like a negative confession here. Is this what you call a good society, just because "there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God." Well, must we be so negative? What was there? Why do you tell us what there was not? Well, these aren't negative at all. These things are all unnecessary, and by denying the negative, of course, it makes it positive. There's no problem here. All the vices listed represent the absence of some vital quality, not a positive contribution of any sort. For example, envy is what? Well, it's the absence of full self-achievement. That's your own lack again. Or strife is grabbing for something you lack, something in which you're defective. Or someone who's blocking you is your strife. Or, tumult is raising hell for lack of getting enough attention yourself, getting into things. Whoredoms is a very defective family life. Lying is an inadequacy of knowledge or recognition or underachievement—they always take to lying. Lasciviousness—lack of sensitivity, lack of taste, lack of self-control. To lack all those lackings is to miss all that emptiness and frustration. It's simple algebra—two minuses add to a plus here. You should be at peace with yourself and all the world. How could there be a happier people if you lacked all these things? They're all frustrations, you see. If you hadn't done any of them, you would be at peace with yourself and the world and feel good about everything. You couldn't feel happier.

All these books came out a few years ago on how to feel good about yourself—I'm all right, you're all right, aren't we wonderful, etc. Rather pitiful [efforts] trying to buck up your morale. But if you're devoid of these things, you would be a happier people.

In the next verse, the negative catalog continues: "There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites." Would they miss their robbers and murderers? Would we miss them if we didn't have them? We'd miss them terribly on TV, and the ratings would drop.

In this class we always used to use Brother Woods' reprinting of the first edition of the Book of Mormon. It was better than this, but it didn't have chapter and verse in it. It wasn't divided into verses, so it was very hard to locate passages for discussion. You couldn't say such-and-such a verse, so we don't use it now. But I notice looking in it yesterday that *-ites* here is not spelled this way at all. In the first edition, instead of *-ites*, it's as if it were special word. It has there were no manner of *ites*—as if an *ite* was a member of some nation or other. Well, that's exactly what an *ite* is. If we look in the Oxford English Dictionary, we learn what an *ite* is. It's a suffix denoting one of a party, a sympathizer with or adherent to, a native or citizen of, or the like. It covers a lot, you see. This is a neat turn of language that's used here in the Book of Mormon, and it achieves great economy because it expresses without the slightest obscurity the meaning. Nobody's fooled for a minute about what it means when it says "nor any manner of -ites."

Incidentally, the dictionary here states that it's strictly a political term. It's not an ethnic term. And we're told here that those people who went with one group were called Lamanites, and the others who went with the others were called Nephites, but that included all sorts of people. The skin color had nothing to do with it. There were the four Nephite tribes and the three Lamanite [tribes], but again they weren't tribes, they were mixtures. They'd been intermarrying freely all along, it tells us here. So remember the race question in the Book of Mormon is very complicated.

It's quite impossible to misunderstand what's meant here. That's what's so neat about it. These ellipses are very characteristic of language, and you use them where you don't need further expression. You get them in the Scots ballads, etc. "The king has written a bra' letter, and signed it wi' his hand, and sent it to Sir Patrick Spens, was walking on the strand." You don't need relative pronouns there. "Sent it to Sir Patrick Spens, was walking on the strand." Who was walking on the strand? You don't need it. See, ellipses is when you leave out words you don't need. And you'll always leave them out when they're not necessary at all. What if it used some alternative term for *-ites*, "nor any manner of party members or sympathizers or others with their adherents, other natives, or citizens of other groups, or the like." Well that would be more confusing. But when it says "nor any manner of *-ites*," it's as clear as a bell. It's one of those neat tricks that Joseph or Moroni pulls, or something here. It used to be *vites*, which means a *branch* or *twig* or something coming out like that. So [it means] any manner of twigs, offshoots, other branches, sidelines, or anything like that.

So they have this happy condition. Verse 18 tells us, "And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings." When all your wants are supplied, do you sit around prospering in this case? ". . . and prospered until an hundred and ten years had passed away; and the first generation from Christ had passed away, and there was no contention in all the land." What were they doing just prospering? It uses the word *prospering*, which has always been limited to a person of great personal wealth. They consider themselves as prospering. Here prosperity always refers to the community; you prosper as a community. Then here is where it tells us [about the generation]. "The first generation from Christ had passed away." A hundred and ten years, as I said, is the Egyptian generation. That's the fixed Egyptian maximum life span.

Verse 19 shows us what was really going on, which is not recorded here. "And it came to pass that Nephi, he that kept this last record (and he kept it upon the plates of Nephi) died, and his son Amos kept it in his stead." They had been keeping records here—well, what were they recording? As we said the last time, "happy are the people whose annals are a blank." In happy times, there's nothing to record. On the other hand, there's the famous formula of Horace *Non numero nisi serenas* that they used to find on Roman sundials. "I record only the happy hours." Only the happy hours are worth recording and remembering. They're the ones we want to keep in mind; they're the ones we want to enjoy. All the other types we wish were over. If we could only get this over and forget it, [we say]. It's funny, and yet that's the stuff we make history of, the stuff we'd like to get over and forget. We're strange, perverse creatures, aren't we?

But notice it shows that what was really going on is not recorded here. Notice in all the preceding verses also in this book when they're telling us what went on, it's always only in the most general terms. They're not giving places, dates, names, individuals. Not a single concrete episode is given here. That's the remarkable thing about this document. You feel that you've had a survey of the society and the people, but you haven't been told one single specific thing. And yet in general you know very much what it would be like to live there, that it would be most delightful. But speaking in general terms, this is how it was. No names, no dates, no places—only what the whole people did as time went by.

It tells us Nephi and Amos were recording here. What did they have to record? Delightful reading [probably], but not to the grim purpose of the Book of Mormon. It's left out. We could write you

wonderful stories about it—comedies of manners and all sorts of things. It would be quite delightful, I imagine, but that's not what the Book of Mormon is for. Remember, this is the grim record. This is a warning to us, and it gets down to business because immediately there is trouble. There's trouble in Eden now. Verse 20: "A small part of the people who had revolted from the church and taken upon them the name of Lamanites; therefore there began to be Lamanites again in the land." The name of Lamanites. They gave themselves that name because that was the traditional name.

Why did some people revolt from the church and call themselves Lamanites when everything was going so well? People used to leave the Church in Utah all the time. They all became Gentiles. Then they called them Gentiles and jack Mormons and gave themselves names like that. But, why did they leave? Well, ask them. The same reasons then as now for the most part. This being a system that embraces all aspects of life, they felt too many demands were being made on them. It was just too hard, too much effort to keep it up. See, keeping up a virtuous society [requires], as it tells us in verse 12, fasting and prayer and meeting together often. That's just too strenuous, because they had to dedicate themselves to intense thought, we're told here. Later on it tells them that this is it. As we saw in the case of the Mandaean people, it is all in the realm of intense mental effort that our time has to be spent. That's where the work lies. Even athletes tell us nine-tenths of the game is the mental effort, and numerous experiments show that. So they could go on and on and have no end of activity to keep them busy, but it required increasing mental effort and they just weren't up to it. You get bored and weary with that sort of thing. You don't rest enough. There's a tendency to overdo. I'm sure that would have something to do with it. I get into that all the time. I overdo, and then, blah—forget it all. But I know we all do that when we push ourselves.

For the most part they felt too much is being demanded. They were asked to give up too much. They walked in too strict a path. But this wasn't the church that was demanding that—it's nature that demands it. Nature demands our sobriety and refraining. The Word of Wisdom is a perfectly natural sort of thing. It's nature that demands the Word of Wisdom. It's not an arbitrary rule or anything like that. The people are finding that out now—that's the thing. Imagine that the time should come when nobody can smoke in planes anymore—you should live to see the day. You just forced that on us, that's all [people might say]. Before, people would say, I would leave a church that won't let me smoke in an airplane. Now you can't smoke because it's wrong.

We learn that population was booming—that's a problem in verse 23—and there was great prosperity. There it is again. Does that mean there were a lot of rich people? Hardly, for we are told that they had all things in common. That, said Brigham Young, is the very thing that makes people rich. And what is this prosperity in Christ? Jack Welch called my attention to something in the last *Time* magazine. The Episcopal Church is preparing a theological reply to all the evangelists that are swarming in the country, TV evangelists, etc. They're preparing this reply, and one of the accusations is that they're becoming more and more like Mormons. Well, they have to get something to agree with; they have to have something to talk about. This is what the science fiction people [claim]. Orson Scott Card tells me about what they call the "Mormonizing of science fiction." Everybody else runs out of ideas, but you get them in the Book of Mormon.

I was going to talk about this prosperity in Christ. It's one of those cliches that the evangelists use—come to Christ and prosperity in Christ. But what does it really mean? What are you really saying there? Well, what is progress? It's moving forward, progressive. It's upward mobility, it's advancing, it's eternal progress. It's not standing where you were. And it is not upward motion in the company, in the corporation. That's become a fetish now, but that is a contingent loyalty. Now we see what prosperity in Christ means. That's the difference. It is this upward motion. It's increasing favor and advancement. You might even call it promotion, to use the favorite military and corporate word. But those loyalties are contingent loyalties. They can be broken without a qualm the moment another company gives you a better offer. This happens, you see. You sing

the company hymn, you're loyal to death, etc. Then you get a better offer and immediately you're off and to hell with the company. This I've seen happen many times, and it's an acceptable practice. It won't be held against you. You won't be regarded as a traitor if you go to somebody who offers you more money. You're just being loyal to money; that's the whole thing, you see. So that's your contingent loyalty. Shakespeare knew it. Remember King Lear? Everybody was licking his boots except his one daughter. His two older daughters couldn't follow him enough. He was everything. He was the big boss. He was Mr. Big. Would he like this? Would he like that? Everything he said was just wisdom itself. They just fell all over themselves until he abdicated, and they became the heirs. With the property in their hands, they just threw him out of the house and had nothing to do with him. They kicked him out. The only person who went with him was his faithful clown who says,

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,  
And follows but for form,  
Will pack when it begins to rain,  
And leave thee in the storm.

William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, act II, scene 4

See, you have your faithful hanger-on. Yes, J. B.; no, J. B. I always thought so, J. B. You said it from the first, J. B., etc. These company sycophants are "that sir which serves and seeks for gain, and follows but for form," Well, what happens? He'll "pack when it begins to rain, and leave thee in the storm." He won't be loyal to you when it's stormy. He'll pack up and get out and go with some other outfit. You can't beat Shakespeare. He's got the answers to these things. They were just as cynical in his day altogether.

So prosperity in Christ is to exercise loyalty to the only master who can give you permanent promotions, so to speak. This is beginning to sound like an evangelist. You don't talk [about this] in those terms, but that's true. It's not contingent; it is going on forever. This is prosperity. Remember, *prospero* means "to move forward, to advance, to get better and better." This is our eternal progression, and it's only in Christ that it can happen. He is the agent through whom we must act. He is the one who keeps us in touch with Heavenly Father and to whom we must go. That's why we turn to Christ and go to Christ and come to Christ, because he's the one who can give us instructions to get further. He's there to teach. Come to me—I will teach you [he says]. There are no schemes, no conspiracies, no cliques or stratagems such as are taught in business schools.

Then this is what happens—the thing goes sour. (Oh, we're not going to finish the book today.) So in the 201st year there began to be—ah hah—look, here comes the cloven hoof. "Those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world. And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them." Well, this is familiar. This is the time we're living in now.

I'll bring something to quote next time, but this is what happens. The pride is back. High fashion is in. People have been behaving themselves, living austere and sober lives, and exerting themselves mentally, which is the hardest work of all—terrible strain. It's the blight of life, the demon thought. People will do anything to escape it. They get tired of it and give it up after a while. People won't keep it up—it's too much. And this is what happens here. So instead of that, I say, the pride is back. The fashion's in, the mink and the jewels. This is what brought about the revolution. It was the Gilded Age, the Gay Nineties, the Roaring Twenties, the robber barons, the Newport Beach, the H. L. Hunts, the Reagan Revolution. They all ended the rule of austerity and honesty. It was too much.

And the name of the game, it tells in the next verse, is privatizing. They were going to get back to private things. Verse 25: “And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them.” Everybody is out for himself now; you’re no longer your brother’s keeper. Equality has become distasteful. A famous man said, “Without poverty there is no true freedom.” That was Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society. What next? They began to be divided into classes. Wouldn’t you know that must happen then? Of course. “. . . to build up churches unto themselves to get gain.” The widening gap here inevitably produces a class society. These verses very closely parallel the story of our time, especially of our decay. I have a good quotation here from Henry Commager, the foremost American historian, who says, “In the 1980s for the first time in our history we became a class society.” So this is very relevant to the moment we’re living in right now. I think the Lord has timed all these things here. I have all sorts of statistics here we won’t go into.

The bottom 20 percent of our people in income lost 6 percent of their income between 1979 and 1987. The top 20 percent gained 11 percent in their income between 1979 and 1987. One moves this way, the other moves this way, and the gap gets wider. So it is a class society. No wonder the Book of Mormon zeroes in on this point. We read also here that the economy was rich ground for church business, a stock theme through history everywhere. This idea of this leading to the riches of the churches isn’t peculiar to the Book of Mormon either. The primary purpose of churches is to get gain. It doesn’t start out that way, but after the first five minutes, that’s all it is. I’m thinking here of the spread of prosperity of religious cults at every time in history in the past. [They build] splendid and ornate churches to the glory of God to impress the public. All this is shared by the parishioners enhancing this position. Well, how wealth enters into it we’ll mention tomorrow. We must get on to the book of Mormon and the book of Ether. That’s one of my great favorites. But 4 Nephi has a lot to tell us.





# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

**Semester 4, Lecture 104**  
**4 Nephi 1:27–Mormon 2**  
**Church Growth and Decline**  
**Mormon Leads the Nephites**

We're following the sad declension by which the earthly paradise in 4 Nephi declined into the type of living hell which we find in many parts of the world today. This is one of the most valuable texts we have in the world—there's nothing like it. It shows us step by step exactly how it happens, so let us pay attention. I hoped to finish it the last time and get on to the even more tragic book of Mormon, perhaps today.

We got to verse 27, and here we see that the new churches retained their traditions, of course. They were not seeking to be original. They claimed to be the old true church. This is the cafeteria theory of the church, you know. Some years ago my son was a bishop in San Francisco. There was a rich man in the ward who delighted in the gospel because he said it is just like a cafeteria. You can take what you please, and you can leave the rest. Well, that's exactly what was happening here, you see. We are in 4 Nephi 1:27: "There were many churches which professed to know the Christ, and yet they did deny the more parts of his gospel." They took some parts. They kept parts of the gospel, but they got rid of others they didn't like. Well, we do that the same way. "They did deny the more parts of his gospel, insomuch that they did receive all manner of wickedness." And they went further than that. They had the gospel. They denied most of it, though, but they still had the forms and the ordinances and they administered them. They "professed to know the Christ." They accommodated their doctrines to the market. They supplied temple recommends on demand. It says here they "did administer that which was sacred unto him to whom it had been forbidden," to the wrong people. They knew what was sacred. They claimed to have it and sell it. Verse 27 tells us a lot. Well, every one of these verses is loaded, you'll notice.

It was very popular. The church grew phenomenally as a result of this. Remember, this is the church we're talking about. This is not apostates. Give them what they want and you'll win. This is the Nehor story already. Remember, the Nehors were so permissive and they taught the people exactly what they wanted to hear, so the Nehors grew like crazy. We do that today, of course. You have a survey. You take a poll and decide what people want, and then that's what you give them. Then you'll get elected, of course. Verse 28 also teaches another thing—that the phenomenal growth of the church is no proof that it's true at all, or that it's on the true path. It grew faster than anything because it was very popular. So don't use popularity as a gauge either.

There was a more active group that aggressively attacked the original church. They made fun of their miracles. Well, who would make fun of a miracle? Miracles are at a premium. They are what we want. "They did despise them because of the many miracles which were wrought among them." They could see the miracles. Well, miracles do not convert people—that's another point. The miracles had a very opposite effect here. They despised what they couldn't see. Of course, miracles are going on that you may not recognize as miracles, too. Remember, as Buckminster Fuller tells us, "It's all a miracle in the end." As Morris Klein, the great mathematician says, "It's all mystery." A mystery is a miracle if it happens at all and you can't possibly explain it. What is a miracle? It's a *miraculum*. It means "a little thing that makes you wonder." Notice, it's a diminutive. *Mirara* is to wonder, to admire with open mouth in admired amazement. So that's what a miracle was, and they despised anything like that. They just brushed them aside, and you can do it with everything. But they had the power and the authority. They had the office. You'll

notice here (verse 30): “Therefore they did exercise power and authority over the disciples of Jesus.” Well, if they belonged to another church, how come they exercised power and authority? Not legal. It’s religious here, because it was a sacral state, “. . . who did tarry with them [the ones that were foolish enough to remain], and they did cast them into prison.” It didn’t do much good, though. They were aggressive and obnoxious; they grew up in the heart of the old church; and they gave a bad time to the old disciples of Jesus. They singled them out as an element which would have to be removed, along with their miracles. But the others having retained their integrity also retained their powers, and they couldn’t be stopped. They kept right on.

Now we’re getting an interesting situation, and all this is going on inside the church. They’re not divided into two others. It was the same way with the persecutions in the Reformation and afterward during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. You find the same sort of thing going on. The best example is with the Jews, as we’ll see.

In verse 31 what do we have happen? The people hardened their hearts and sought to kill them. That’s a strange phenomenon. But no, “. . . even as the Jews at Jerusalem sought to kill Jesus.” Here you see it. We’re not dealing with opposite religions here at all. The situation in Jerusalem was the same thing. Jesus and the Scribes and the Pharisees and the doctors and the multitude all followed the law of Moses. They were all preaching the law of Moses. Palestine was the scene of all sorts of cults. You wouldn’t be persecuted for not being a Jew. (We see that in the Book of Mormon, too.) The cult of Jezebel, for example, flourished at that time, but that was in Philistia. The Jews would go over and practice that. But the Greeks were very influential and the Egyptians were very influential in [Palestine] at the time of Lehi, and their religions flourished and were not persecuted or anything like that. That isn’t the issue at all here, you see. But if you don’t want to believe, miracles will only offend you. And remember the miracles of Jesus, culminating with the raising of Lazarus, turned the leaders of the Jews against him the most. It was the raising of Lazarus from the dead that made them finally decide that he would have to be put out of the way. They couldn’t let this go on any longer. But it’s all inside the church. The whole thing is going on there [in 4 Nephi].

Then in verses 32 and 33 they do these various things to them—pretty rough treatment. They wouldn’t treat outsiders this way. As I said, there were many cults in Palestine. You were not blamed if you don’t belong to that particular cult. Only a Jew could be punished, you see, by the Jewish law. They couldn’t lay a finger on anybody else. After all, the Romans were much stronger than the Jews in the time of Christ, when the Lord was there. The predominant religion was that followed by Pilate. Well, the tenth legion was there, and they had their cults. They had the cult of Mithra. It was very strong even at that time, and later it flourished.

These people seemed determined to ruin their own happiness. Notice verse 34. They went on hardening their hearts “for they were led by many priests.” It’s a religious movement, you know. They’re led by many priests. In the early seventeenth century you get the same sort of depravity—the restless, violent, cruel times. Everybody was cynical and heartless. They changed religions all the time. It made no difference. You had to have one or the other. And when you changed from one, you started fighting the other, and the other way around. They started going back and forth the same way. Look at the wars of Wallenstein, Gustavus Adolphus, and the rest of them. They would cynically change sides and go on fighting. This strange, insane cruelty doesn’t make sense. What kind of a history is this? The people harden their hearts, are led by many priests, and set up many churches. “And they did smite upon the people of Jesus; . . . they did dwindle in unbelief and wickedness.”

It’s the old bad business they’re back to, and it’s pretty bad. Well, you see it in the world today. Did you see just yesterday that the Christians in Lebanon resumed shooting at each other? I mean really going at each other hot and heavy with artillery, firing mortar, and everything else all day long. This is two Christian sects in the middle of Beirut, which was always considered the most

sophisticated, the most educated city in the East. You know what it's become now. Well, right before our very eyes these silly things are happening. They ruin their own happiness. Why do we do it? Well, of course, there's somebody there making it happen, because these people are normally very friendly. After all, the Jews and the Arabs and the Christians have lived very peaceably together in Beirut for some hundred years. Then all of a sudden, they have to destroy each other, but especially themselves.

Then this is an important thing, too, being led by the many priests. In the second century the church broke up into lots of sects. Epiphanius lists 88 different churches, all these splinter groups. The second century was the century of disbelief. But every single sect regarded itself as the old original church and all the others as offshoots or splinter groups. The same thing happens here. There are various churches here, each one claiming to be the original church, having the same basic doctrines, etc. So this insanity goes on. They were led by many priests and false prophets. Verse 34: "And they did smite upon the people of Jesus." That group is always there, you'll notice. It keeps pointing them out again and again. There's that little nucleus called the people of Jesus that remain faithful. They're always very much a minority. "And thus they did dwindle in unbelief and wickedness." And then finally comes a real showdown. The movement ended in this great division of the people. Like the Thirty Years' War, finally the division had to come. You had to be on one side or the other. But people switched easily and often, as I've said before, and each time they heartily hated the other side.

The true believers finally asserted themselves and broke off communion with the others. Notice what happens in verse 36. This is a strange thing happening. See, this is all one big mix; it's time to sort things out. "There arose a people who were called the Nephites, and they were true believers in Christ; and among them there were those who were called by the Lamanites—Jacobites, and Josephites, and Zoramites." These are the three tribes among the Nephites. There were the [three] Nephite tribes and the [four] Lamanite tribes. They always kept their tribal identity—we've noticed that all the way through. It's a very mixed ethnic picture, and they probably had their dialects, too. Well, there's indication of that, too.

Here the Nephites dominated the church and gave it to the whole people. Now, when they break off this way—this has happened before. In the case of Joseph Smith, for quite a while all the members of his family were still communicating Christians in various churches. Some were Presbyterians, some favored Methodism, etc. But then there came a point of decision, when it became very clear that what Joseph Smith had given them was something totally different, and then there was a complete break. Then the persecution began in earnest. But for a long time the family was distributed among these [creeds], and then it became perfectly clear when they accepted Joseph's vision what was happening. The same thing happened here. It was the Nephites who broke off here. They called themselves Nephites, and they were a very small minority. You get the impression here because of the three tribes, etc., that it was a rather arrogant thing. They called themselves the true believers, and they broke off and made the true church. No, it tells us down here in verse 40 that they were a very tiny minority, actually. "And the more wicked part of the people did wax strong, and became exceedingly more numerous than were the people of God." So they weren't pulling any fancy stuff at all. They were just a small minority that decided to keep on by themselves, and this would get them into all the more trouble.

So the three tribes of [Nephites] broke off from the rest and renounced the whole thing. Again, this happens in our time. Notice this is another familiar phenomenon sociologically. We talked about Lebanon. You couldn't tell the difference between a Maronite Christian and a Jew or between a Sunnite and a Shiite Moslem in Beirut at all until all of a sudden they broke up into different factions and started fighting each other. It's the same thing in Iran today. After World War I all of a sudden the nations of the Holy Roman Empire emerged as individual nations with individual religions, individual languages, and everything. They'd always had them, but then they asserted themselves and excluded all others—like Serbia. There's a Serbian church with a Serbian

cross and a Serbian service—quite different than the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia. Then you had Slovenia, Slovakia, Bohemia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Each one had its own language and [culture]. It wasn't until after World War I that they all broke up and became absolutely separate, independent, proud nations with their own traditions, etc. So it goes and comes. Then another time they'll be united together. The Soviets brought them together again. They've tried for a United States of Europe, so we break up and we separate. It's the same sort of thing here. The feeling of union is very strong at some times, during world wars, for example. At other times the feeling of sectionalism is very strong, such as when Texas was an independent republic, the South flew its Confederate flag, etc.

A German professor by the name of Joachim in the 1930s wrote a massive work called the *Wandlungen der Weltanschauung*. In every society throughout history, from the beginning, there has been a century of binding and a century of loosening—a century when things come under strict controls and rules, and then a century of liberalizing, of breaking down. And you'll notice these are the two tendencies that go on—the gay and melancholy flux. From time to time we become more severe, more strict, more militant, etc. Then another time we become more liberal and lax. He [the German author] said that happens, and it usually runs by centuries. The eighteenth century was one of relaxation, because it was under people like Joseph II, Catherine the Great, and Frederick that there were these great liberal kingdoms. First you have the enlightened despots who let people do anything they wanted. That was the eighteenth century, and then in the nineteenth century everything tightened up with Napoleon. Anyway you have these alternate periods of binding and loosening. Which period are we in today? We're in a period of binding right now, aren't we? We're helpless, we're almost brain dead today. People do not take independent ways that are free in thinking, and things like that. We don't think about anything anymore. This is quite a contrast to earlier generations of the Church. It was all very different in the last century when I was young [laughter]. I am an Edwardian, you know. I was born during the reign of Edward VII [in 1910]. It's wonderful to be Edwardian; there have been poems about that.

So this is what happens. We see this sort of thing. Well, the Indian tribes are now trying to assert their individuality—just as today the Soviet satellites are asserting theirs. They're breaking loose. This is what's happening. Well, the same thing happens here. We've seen they broke up into tribes before; now this is happening again. Don't be surprised if it happens at certain intervals, because that's the way things go.

We're back to square one now, verse 39: “. . . even as it was in the beginning. And they were taught to hate the children of God, even as the Lamanites were taught to hate the children of Nephi from the beginning.” Here's Ireland, here's Lebanon, here are the Philippines, here's Cyprus, here's Armenia, here are the Sikhs, here are the Afrikaaners, etc. All the things that go on go way back. The Azerbaijanians and Armenians [are fighting] today, you know—the Malays, the Sri Lankans, and the Chinese. All throughout the world these splits are going on today, where they're teaching their children to be proud of their own culture and to hate the opposition. And you get some terrible things happening with this utter hatred. Iran is a classic example with the hostages, etc. It's irrational, wild, and extreme. You think the Book of Mormon is exaggerated. As it heats up here it becomes more and more like our world. A few generations ago this didn't make much sense, but it certainly does now. So they taught their children [to hate], even as it was in the beginning. We're told it began in the beginning with the children of Adam—the Cainites and the Sethites or Sethians, those who followed Seth. Cain taught his children to hate them and this went on ever after.

What we have here is a very religious, cult-centered civilization. You see what's emerging here, the well-known Mesoamerican pattern of religion with the familiar imagery of the overdone [art], the great ceremonial centers, and the vast wealth, ceremonial and otherwise, that we have here. Verse 41: “And they did still continue to build up churches unto themselves, and adorn

them with all manner of precious things.” This happened—the building of churches and hundreds of these towers with all their processions and their great display of precious things. So things are moving and we expect a direction here. The same thing happened with adornments during the Counterreformation in the seventeenth century. That produced the Baroque—this lavishly overdone, ornate lavish Baroque style of southern Europe, which was largely victorious. It made such an impression on the people; they got such an appetite for this theatrical, overladen, heavily burdened, gold-plastered Baroque with little putti and plaster figures all over the place. It’s quite impressive, but they said this is what heaven is like. The same thing happens here, this emphasis on adornment as a counterreformation.

The next [development] is inevitable. Our good old pals the Gadiantons must emerge now. This we’ll have to expect. Verse 42: “The wicked part of the people began again to build up the secret oaths and combinations of Gadianton.” That was irresistible. This is added to verse 41, where they get the forms, the ornamentation, the adornment, the splendor, etc. Now we get the Aztec aspect of it, the Mongol, the Mahdi, *deus vult*, the fanatical, the savage. Bloodthirsty human sacrifice and things like that follow later, but this comes in here now. In Christianity and Islam alike, they were the most cynical, the most greedy, the most cruel, and the most sadistic when they were most pious. It was a great thing—because only God could authorize the bloody things they were doing, so everything was in the name of God. The name of God is perpetually on their lips. A single syllable in English, all you have to do is use it and that justifies anything you want to do. God wills it. It’s God’s idea. The slogan of the Crusades: “It is the will of God.” [This is used to justify] anything we do. When King Solomon heard that the Queen of Sheba was approaching him through the desert with her army, her hordes, he said to his jinns, you go make a tunnel underground. You get to her at her camp as soon as you can and bring her throne back to me. He was going to surprise her with her throne when she came. But be sure you do it quick because we must rob her before she becomes a Moslem. It won’t be legal to rob her after she’s a Moslem—that would be wicked. But as long as she’s not a Moslem, we can do anything we want. So go and steal her throne, he said. That’s a story about Solomon. Well, that’s the principle of the thing. Like with us, of course, the Ten Commandments protect only our friends. They apply only to people we like. Thou shalt not lie; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal. Well, you’re not going to lie, kill, and steal from your friends, are you? It’s all right with your enemies; you get medals for that. The Ten Commandments only apply about 50 percent, just to the people we want to apply them to. There’s nothing wrong with killing and robbing from enemies, destabilizing their economies and things like that [spoken in irony].

Now, what do we have here? Verse 43: “The people of Nephi began to be proud in their hearts, because of their exceeding riches, and become vain like unto their brethren, the Lamanites.” I was thinking of something that St. Augustine wrote. “Oh wo to thee, thou tide of human custom. Who can resist you?” When all the people are doing one thing, no one can resist it, even though the Lord told the Jews, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.” Just because everybody’s doing it, that’s no excuse. Well, here, this is what happens. Everybody gets swept along in this evil tide now, even these good people who were holding out. It’s an amazing picture here. The people who were called the people of Nephi, these righteous people, “began to be proud in their hearts.” Ten guesses why—of course, “because of their exceeding riches.” Here we go again. There is where I came in, you might say.

The greatly outnumbered Nephites began to go along with the others, of course. It was the custom. They were completely surrounded by these people, so everybody went that way. If riches were the name of the game, they could show them a thing or two, and that’s true. As you remember, people like the Quakers and certain abstemious sects, like the Dutch Reformed, quickly got very rich because of their thrifty, hard-working, sober habits. Then they became just like anybody else [because of] their riches.

So here it is now. There is the stroke of doom again. Verse 43–44: “The people of Nephi began to be proud in their hearts, because of their exceeding riches, and become vain like unto their brethren, the Lamanites. And from this time the disciples begin to sorrow for the sins of the world.” This is the turning point. Here again, we see throughout history the disciples of Jesus remain a distinct group, you notice. The disciples begin to sorrow. They must be a very small group now, really oppressed. The disciples were something special. But it’s the fatal response to the call of riches that seals the doom of the people.

The semester’s running short now. I was going to read you something from the Roman Satirist. The only great thing Rome produced was this marvelous literature of satire. It describes their civilization right down to the ground. It’s so much like ours you wouldn’t believe it.

“Please take time.”

Not today. I didn’t bring it with me; we’re not going to talk about it. It’s very funny; you’d die laughing because you’d recognize everything there. I mean it’s devastating. There was never such a commentary on wealth as Petronius [gave]. He just burns their ears, but it all comes home to us, very much so. But this is the one that seals it, you see.

Verse 45: “And . . . when three hundred years had passed away, both the people of Nephi and the Lamanites had become exceedingly wicked one like unto another.” Well, so much for race and everything else—the good guys and the bad guys. This is not two different kinds of wickedness, you know. They’re all playing the same game. When you talk about power, gain, popularity or authority, and the lusts of the flesh (the four things that Nephi talks about), they all play that. It’s a leveling out process, a one-party system in which everything is approved or covered up. They’re all good guys now [in their eyes].

And it tells us in the next verse that they are a business civilization based on commerce and finance. “The robbers of Gadianton did spread over all the face of the land; and there were none that were righteous save it were the disciples of Jesus. [You still have that nucleus there; I’d like to know who they were.] And gold and silver did they lay up in store in abundance, and did traffic in all manner of traffic.” Notice they laid up gold and silver. It was based on finance and commerce and all manner of traffic—exchange, commerce, business, banking, and all the rest of it. These things were far more sophisticated in the ancient world than we’ve been willing to think before. They had common stock companies and everything else. We’re not sophisticated today. And this was rich soil also for the spread of the Gadianton group.

Then in verse 48, the stroke of doom again—it had come time now to hide up the records and get ready to close up shop. It’s all over when it reaches this point. Notice the finality of that word. “Ammaron, being constrained by the Holy Ghost, did hide up the records which were sacred—yea, even all the sacred records which had been handed down from generation to generation. [See, they’re going to close up shop now. We’ve reached the end of the story. We might as well go home here.] . . . even until the three hundred and twentieth year from the coming of Christ.” He hid them up for the same purpose that they’ve been hid up since the days of Adam. Enoch tells us that he hid up the books of Adam so they wouldn’t be destroyed in the flood. That’s the way the *Pistis Sophia* begins, with Enoch burying the books of Adam. He hid them up in solid and cemented them in, very much like the plates Moroni had. There was a stony shrine, a piece of solid rock with a hollow in it that was cut out and squared. He plastered it up, put in another rock, and cemented it in. That would weather the flood. That’s just a story, but it is tradition that the record has been hid to come forth in a later time. But it was always hid after the last entry had been made. It had to be pretty near the end so that you wouldn’t miss any of it, and then it was hidden up to come forth at a later time, after the earth had passed through some great trial, some great change. We know now about the ages of extermination— that these great trials and changes do take place. There have been periods of extermination when whole

civilizations have been wiped out. We'll get that when we get to the Jaredites. I thought we'd finish this chapter today.

If you have tears, prepare to shed them because we come to the book of Mormon now. It starts out with a colophon which tells us it was an autograph. It was written by his own hand. The colophon should tell you what the book is about, who wrote it, and under what circumstances. Mormon 1:1: "And now I, Mormon, make a record of the things which I have both seen and heard [eyewitness account, you see], and call it the Book of Mormon." This is after Cumorah, after the whole thing is finished. This is the last conclusion that he's putting in here, and it's before the other stories. Don't think that this is following in chronological order. It isn't. This is when the whole thing is over. It is, as Tennyson would say, "the last echo of a great cry." This is the Book of Mormon proper, just this little book here. But it tells the whole story again. Here we go.

Verse 2: "And about the time that Ammaron hid up the records unto the Lord, he came unto me (I being about ten years of age)." Now obviously, Mormon was in all modesty a phenomenal person. He was chosen to lead the armies at sixteen (there have been generals that young before); he was recognized as a person of amazing gifts and talents. He's the one man about whom the whole thing centers here. He supports the people, then he withdraws himself. Then it breaks his heart; he has to go back to them again, etc. He's perhaps the most outsized figure in the Book of Mormon, and there are some gigantic figures in the Book of Mormon, like the brother of Jared and Nephi. But Mormon is the most tragic figure, and he is the most epic figure, actually, even more than the brother of Jared.

Ammaron came to him when he was ten years old and said, I see that you're a pretty smart brat. No, he said "I perceive that thou art a sober child, and art quick to observe." You know what's going on, so I have advice. In about fifteen years from now—see, he knows the time's about fifteen years—when you're twenty-four, you go to "a hill which shall be called Shim." Incidentally, it's an interesting thing here. The Lord does not hold any special grief for stupid people. We should not cultivate that in the Religion Department or anywhere else. The hill of Shim is very interesting. What's the Arabic word for shim? It means *north*, north country. *Shim* is *north* in any Semitic language. Of course, you get *shimal* from that—the same sort of thing, the left hand when you're facing east. It's the left. And sure enough we learn a little later on that when they go further north, they get to the hill Shim. So here's another one of those places where the Book of Mormon just casually tosses off just a bit of evidence at no extra charge. But people don't notice these things.

Therefore, go to the hill Shim "and there have I deposited unto the Lord all the sacred engravings concerning this people." He knew that the movement would be northward. It wouldn't be safe for them to remain south when they start into this long tragic retreat here.

Then he says to Mormon [verse 4], "And behold, ye shall take the plates of Nephi unto yourself, and the remainder shall ye leave in the place where they are." Just take the plates of Nephi. Those are the ones we have. When will the others be found? Where's the hill Shim? "And ye shall engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that ye have observed concerning this people." So you add to them, bring them up to date as of fifteen years from now, he says.

Verse 5: "And I, Mormon, being a descendant of Nephi . . ." There is another interesting comment on racism. We think the Nephites were the descendants of Nephi. Well, then what's he boasting about being a descendant of Nephi. It's a rare thing by now. A pure-blooded Nephite is going to be hard to find around there. Plainly all the Nephites were not descendants of Nephi, as we see in verse 8 here. He says they call them "the Nephites"—the Jacobites, the Josephites, and the Zoramites. This war was between the Nephites and the Lamanites, and they called them that. They're all divided this way into parties.



He was eleven years old, and he was taken by his father to a land southward to Zarahemla—the big city, the big capital. He was impressed as a little kid, he says. The land was covered with buildings, and he never seen anything like that. “The people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea.” Now this is important for the Book of Mormon, you see. We talk about such vast numbers—well, we’ll see what vast numbers are. When they gather all their forces for a big war down here, how many do they have in the army? Thirty thousand—that’s just one division. In our army 27,000 would make a division. He calls that as numerous as the sands of the sea. Well, as an eleven-year-old, he’s impressed. You’d be impressed with these things. So we have to be very careful and not be simplistic when we read the Book of Mormon. When this kid tells us that people in Zarahemla were as numerous as the sands of the sea, how many hundred trillion people are there? It doesn’t mean that at all. It’s a metaphor here, as it were the sands of the sea.

There began to be a war between the Lamanites and the Nephites while he happened to be there. Happy event. It’s like a visit to Beirut, isn’t it? “And this war was between the Nephites and the Lamanites and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites.” They’re operating on a tribal basis now. Verse 9: “Now the Lamanites and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites were called Lamanites [it was just a political title, that’s all], and the two parties were Nephites and Lamanites.” They were parties. They were not nations. They were not families. They were parties who were called Nephites and Lamanites.

Verses 10–11: “And it came to pass that the war began to be among them in the borders of Zarahemla, by the waters of Sidon, [as it usually was, the waters of Sidon was a classic battleground]. And it came to pass that the Nephites had gathered together a great number of men, even to exceed the number of thirty thousand.” Wow! Almost an army division, you see. Well, when you consider that the Russians had 150 divisions on the line at one time, that’s an army that is an army, you see. Do you know that during World War II the British never committed more than three divisions at a time? You got from the BBC that they were fighting the whole war, but they never committed more than three divisions. They couldn’t afford to; they had lost too many [in World War I].

Well, anyway, the Nephites beat the Lamanites. Three cheers. Then the Lamanites withdrew and there was peace for four years. Verse 13: “But wickedness did prevail upon the face of the whole land.” It didn’t do them any good. (Let’s see if I have anything very wise to say here.) These four years of peace brought no improvement. The Lamanites were still the bad guys, but that’s not the problem, you’ll notice here. The Lamanites withdrew and there was peace, “but wickedness did prevail upon the face of the whole land.”

As Shevardnadze and others say, we hear quite often the saying that America must have an enemy. The enemy right now we’re picking in desperation is poor old Castro. The enemy must be the embodiment of evil; he can’t just be an enemy politically. He’s is now being compared to Ceausescu, although he’s a good friend of Mandella and Gorbachev and people like that. This is so we can go on. We have to have this evil enemy, so we can go on being the good guys without having to repent. This is a great convenience.

Well, anyway, removing the danger left the Nephites free to do their thing, and they just got worse. The brethren depart in verse 13, and things get very bad. There are no gifts from the Lord anymore. The Holy Ghost doesn’t come upon them anymore because of their wickedness. They’ve gone all the way, and yet they don’t worry. They’re not going to think about repentance because they know who the wicked people are—they’re the Lamanites, of course.

Verse 15: “And I, being fifteen years of age . . .” and he’s still sober. Well, after what he’s seen, I think he would be. Therefore he’s the one who says I’ve seen nothing pleasant in all of this since the days of my birth. What a time to live! And so this happened. There were no gifts. They had

cut the wires and then complained that there's no revelation, no messages. They cut themselves off, and God cuts himself off. Everything *can* shut down. There is a horror plot when God removes his spirit entirely, when there's nothing left but evil. There are such pictures, and we have them. Read the writings of Lucan or Salvian or the Lamentation Literature which is very great, both the Babylonian and Egyptian. Read the border ballads from Scotland. Talk about bleak, horrible situations. Or if you want a document of absolute personal despair, read Scott's journal when he went to the South Pole. Remember, none of them survived. The journal that comes to us came from the tent where they were all found dead. There are times when the Lord turns off the power completely. This is very dangerous if we go on thinking we don't have to repent because other people are wicked. That's what we've got the Book of Mormon for. We're going to see a lot of that. We're just beginning to warm up here.

Notice in verses 15–17, the boy Mormon is in the position of Abraham—remember, when he was young. He said he tried to persuade his family, but they “did utterly refuse to listen to my voice.” In fact, his father even volunteered him for sacrifice. It got that bad. “I did endeavor to preach unto this people,” but this was not going to do any good, so [the Lord] shut him right up. “I was forbidden that I should preach unto them; for behold they had willfully rebelled against their God; and the beloved disciples were taken away out of the land, because of their iniquity.” As we read in the Jaredite case, the prophets mourned and withdrew. There's nothing else you can do. God forbids him to preach; more preaching would be damnation.

So who takes over? Well, naturally the Gadianton element—about as low as you can get. Verse 18: “And these Gadianton robbers, who were among the Lamanites, did infest the land [notice, that they mingle with Lamanites here and add their forces to them] insomuch that the inhabitants thereof began to hide up their treasures in the earth; and they became slippery, because the Lord had cursed the land, that they could not hold them.” Remember, that's exactly what Samuel the Lamanite had said—you place all your love in your riches. Behold your riches will become slippery that you cannot hold them [Helaman 13]. Of course, they do. I mean the stock market can be wiped out in an hour. That did happen. I'm not just talking about the October 19, 1989, but I'm talking about October 1929, which I remember very well, when everybody got wiped out. I mean completely wiped out. So these things can happen. They became slippery that they could not hold them.

The very same thing happened at the end [of the Roman Empire]. I mentioned Salvian. He described what happened in the fourth century. The Roman Empire collapsed suddenly, as you know, and everything became slippery. That's why you find such interesting treasures all over Europe, because they were hidden on that occasion. Everybody hid up their treasures on the chance that they might come back and get them. Very tragic cases. Hundreds of these treasures are found. The most tragic, I suppose, is in the Cave of Letters of the Jews from when the Romans occupied Palestine. Not at Masada—we find some of them there, but in the Cave of Letters, which is nearby, we find where the people hid out for the last time. There they all died because they couldn't escape. They were in these huge caves there in the Wadi Hēver. They give us their letters and their parting words, etc.

In Europe at the end of the Roman Empire, the Bagoudi took over. They were just wandering bands that would get together and go over and start looting and raiding. They became the terror of the whole country. They continued among the free companies way down in the fourteenth century—just bands that go everywhere. And there were robber barons who set up their own castles on the passes and taxed any merchant who went through, or wouldn't let them go through. But everybody was fighting everybody else.

Well, these hells have been achieved. In fact, for long periods of time, they have been the normal condition. Life on earth has been utterly insecure. How can we be completely insecure? Well,

hang around—you'll see how it can be completely insecure. Remember at the time of the Crusades how they broke up. In 1348 there was the Danse Macabre, the plague, and all these things.

It's like the end of the ancient world here now. This is what happened at the end of the ancient world. What did they do? They went to sorcery. Everybody took to magic at that time. Everybody that was haunted. Remember, another expression from the Book of Mormon—"we are surrounded by demons," they said. How do we account for it? It reaches the point of sheer desperation. Verse 19: "There were sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics [you put your only trust in these sorts of things—in astrology, in chance, in luck in the market, etc.]; and the power of the evil one was wrought upon all the face of the land." A spiritual vacuum, you see.

I saw the pocket contents of hundreds of German soldiers during the war—well, thousands, as a matter of fact. I had to go through them. It was different from World War I. They said just about every soldier [in World War I] was carrying a Bible. We didn't find any Bibles [during World War II], but we found rabbit's feet, lucky charms, and *crux ansata*—you found all sorts of superstition. They were superstitious, but they had no faith. It was a very sad thing. Everybody feels helpless. Everybody feels haunted. Magic and witchcraft take over [in this situation] because what else can you do? Charms and talismans abound here at this time.

Then, lucky Mormon—he launches his career. At this time they choose him to command the army, and he's fifteen or sixteen years old. Mormon 2:1: "There began to be a war again between the Nephites and the Lamanites. And notwithstanding I being young, was large in stature; therefore the people of Nephi appointed me that I should be their leader," at sixteen. Well, Prince Eugene was that age. Napoleon wasn't much older when he won the Battle of Marengo. He had been chosen the same way. Palnatoki, the terror of the North, who ruled from Jomsburg at the mouth of the Vistula, was the great commander of the pirates of the North. He was twelve years old. So there are prodigies in the military business, like Prince Eugene, extremely young. Alexander, you know, wasn't exactly aged. Remember, he was thirty-two when he died, and his conquests were all made in his twenties. Mormon must have impressed people, because he impressed Ammaron as being phenomenally smart, sober, and observant. He'd given that impression all along, so the people knew that they had a person of real stature here, and also large physically in stature. Mormon is a heroic figure.

Now the great retreat begins—fifty-five years of falling back now. It's very, very sad. Verses 2–3: "Therefore it came to pass that in my sixteenth year I did go forth at the head of an army of the Nephites, . . . and the Lamanites . . . did frighten my armies; therefore they would not fight, and they began to retreat towards the north countries." It doesn't become a rout yet, but the big retreat now begins. They're not going to do it. This retreat is a rear-guard action. Remember Chief Joseph who retreated for three years with the U.S. Army after him, to get over the border out of Montana. And there were the retreats of Darius and Alexander. We can think of all sorts of retreats. The retreat from Moscow [by Napoleon's forces] was over 2,000 miles—that's some retreat, you know, falling back all the time. It wasn't necessarily a rear-guard action because they weren't being hotly pursued. But there are other retreats. Zukav built up this enormous reserve, almost 150 divisions waiting for him, and from then on it was just one long retreat for the Nazis all the way from Stalingrad right back to Berlin—a tremendously long retreat. This is the sort of thing that's going to happen here. As a matter of fact, it's not as long as some of those retreats. Well, there's Xenophon's classic work on the march of the ten thousand—you might say they'd lost their shirt and were trying to get home.

Anyway, they fall back on a place called Angola (things move fast here), take possession of it, and make preparations to defend themselves. They dig in to hold out there. They fortify the city. This is the system they're going to use. They fall back on strong points, fortify them, and try to hold

them. But they drove them out and out of the land of David. Then they came to the land of Joshua, which was on the shores west by the seashore.

Why would they have these names of biblical lands here? Well, that's what we do all the time when we name our own lands. All the names we give to our lands and cities are those we had in the old country. As far as naming them after heroes of the Old Testament, this is exactly what people would do. In upstate New York, Joseph Smith's country, you have a Rome, an Athens, and a Syracuse. You have all the old classical names of towns up there. We carry our old names over, and we keep our traditions. We don't invent names cold, unless they describe either the founder of the city or some peculiar thing about it—Battle Mountain or something like that.

Verse 6: "And we marched forth and came to the land of Joshua, which was in the borders west by the seashore." We could follow these on the map—sad story. There they gathered again together in one body. That's a bad sign, when you gather together in one body. You should keep two bodies so you can counterattack and all sorts of things. As Clausewitz says, beaten armies tend to bunch together for a feeling of security in each other's presence and feeling that in mass and in number there is strength. It's a dangerous thing when this happens, and it happens here. What a picture!

What a marvelous verse this is [verse 8], describing the complete breakdown of government. This is exactly as things were in 1917–18 in Russia and in Eastern Germany. In Berlin I actually heard descriptions of it from people who went through it. "But behold, the land was filled with robbers and with Lamanites; and notwithstanding the great destruction which hung over my people, they did not repent of their evil doings; therefore there was blood and carnage spread throughout all the face of the land, both on the part of the Nephites and also on the part of the Lamanites; and it was one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land." Let's hope we never live to see that. There have been science fiction [stories about that]. Ray Bradbury has written a story inspired by this verse. It's possible, you see.

Verse 9: "And now, the Lamanites had a king, and his name was Aaron," and here we have a super army of 44,000. Now we're getting big armies, almost two divisions. "And it came to pass that I beat him with my army that he fled." Ah hah. Now, this is a very nice thing happening here. Mormon finally checks their advance. There's a complete breakdown of public order.

If you wanted to have real fun and were very rich, the thing you used to do in the forties and fifties was fly down to Rio. That was the place to go. Don't go to Rio today. If you're found in the inner city of Rio, you're as good as dead today—or in some countries like the Sierra Leone. A marvelous Persian girl, who joined the Church, married the ambassador to Sierra Leone who is a black man, a very fine man. They lived there, and she had a great influence in Sierra Leone, but at the time there was no law or order at all. Nothing was safe, and nobody was safe. So we have these conditions in the world today, and [if you go there] you'd better stay in your hotel and keep your blinds down. These are the instructions they give you wherever you go today. If you go to the American Embassy, they'll tell you, sorry, we can't protect you. You'll just have to do the best you can. Get out of the country if you can; maybe we can get you out. This is the way they talk everywhere now. What a world we live in! Saved by the bell. It could get worse and worse.

He was twenty-three years old, this kid from the farm who wrote all this stuff, and don't try to tell me he made it up.



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 105

Mormon 2–5

Conflicts between the Nephites and the Lamanites

From now on we really plunge into the depths. We're on Mormon 2:13, and what a powerful statement this is: "My joy was vain." Remember, he thought they would become righteous again because they were sorrowing, but that didn't work at all. "Their sorrowing was not unto repentance, because of the goodness of God; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin."

We know the stock market has crashed numbers of times, but do we learn anything from it? Do we repent at all, anything like that? There is this tragic situation of no repentance—no disavowal of misbehavior or anything like that when crimes are committed. We've done no wrong, we've made mistakes, we've had bad advice, we've been misinformed. We've done it all for the good of this, that, and the other, but no one ever really admits that we've been in a state of awful wickedness. That's what brings it on. The classic example of this we have with us now. We never knew such a perfect case would exist as what we do have now. What does this fit perfectly? The sorrowing of the damned. Sorrow for their sins, what they have done, what's brought this on them? No, but "because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin." What's the attitude of people with AIDS? They sorrow, they suffer, they want a cure. We have to do something. They have to be saved, but never do they show any inclination to repent of what brought the thing on. If we only had the cure, then they could continue in their own ways and feel happy about it. They sort of resent being unable to do that. So this is a peculiar case in which this applies all the way. They sorrow, but it's the sorrow of the damned and they sorrow just for one reason—that they can't go on doing the very thing that's brought them into this terrible path. If they had a chance, they'd go right on doing it forever. The Lord must call a halt here sometime. So now he's going to do it.

In the next verse we have another psychological note, you'll notice: "They did curse God, and wish to die. Nevertheless they would struggle with the sword for their lives." There's another one, you see. "What should we have," said Hitler, "a terror without end, or a terrible end." We have the choice of a terrible end or a terror without end. That's the situation they live with; they'll go on struggling to the last ditch. But, they got both. They got both the terrible ending and the terror without end. The reason was that they were beyond repentance, as we read in the next verse. This is even more horrible. Notice the mounting despair here.

This is the question we have to ask as we read the Book of Mormon here. Does this have to be? We see it's happening, but does it have to happen with us? Remember, this comes to you, O you Gentiles, that you may be wiser than we have been. Now these things are happening just exactly in the grim declension in which we see them occurring today. This horrible thing is said here now, that the Lord should ever withdraw his grace; "I saw that the day of grace was passed with them." Here is *atē*. That's what *atē* is, the point of no return. You know about the four stages in Attic tragedy, I mentioned, by Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus. The four stages are *olbia* and *koros* and *hybris* and *atē*. *Olbia* is when you're prosperous, you have everything, and you're living a happy life. That's happiness. Then with that you go on and you get full. Today, overweight is our main problem. We eat when we're not hungry, we drink when we're not thirsty, and that's small pleasures. See, we just talked about that with the fasting. In 4 Nephi when they lived as they

should, they fasted constantly, which means not eating what you shouldn't, or what you don't need.

Then you get *koros*. That means crammed full. *Koros* is when you're fat and you've had too much. Then comes the terrible state. Things have been going so well with you and you're so prosperous. That's the famous word you all know—*hybris* is presumption. [You think] you're responsible for your greatness. "I have done this thing." Then comes a vanity which is fatal, and then comes a point of no return which is *atē*. That's when you do everything you can to get yourself off the stage. That's when the villain or the hero, as the case may be (it's a heroic tragedy), cannot be saved. The last words that Clytemnestra speaks to Oedipus are, "You poor thing." This is the only thing I can say to you. He's completely loony. His grandeur has gone to his head, and he won't take any counsel from anyone. She says, that's all I can say and all I ever will. She's finally seen the light, because that's *atē*. That's the point of no return, and you're finished. The only problem then is not to keep you lingering, because there's no point to continuing the suffering. It doesn't have to go on forever and ever—that's terrible. So, the problem is to get rid of you, and so you do it. You have a sort of fascination in which everything you do is the very thing that will accelerate your demise. You do all the wrong things, all the things that will get rid of you—the right things, in this case. That's called *atē*. Have we reached a stage of *atē*? Here they've reached it, you'll notice. God's grace is always extended, but what do you have here? This horrible statement, "I saw that the day of grace was passed with them, both temporally and spiritually." They're not going to be able to get back on their feet economically or any other way. They go together. It's an awful statement.

And then, "For I saw thousands of them hewn down in open rebellion against their God, and heaped up as dung upon the face of the land." This mass destruction [is evident]. We've mentioned the age of extermination we live in—how many thousands of acres are being destroyed of the world every minute and how many hundreds of species are disappearing every week, etc. We're ringing down the curtain now; everything is folding up. This is an age of extermination. There have been such things, and nothing makes this clearer than the Book of Mormon (we get this when we get to the Jaredites very soon) and the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. That's what they emphasize. We've been through this cycle before. It's not a single cycle, as everybody used to suppose, on the old linear evolutionary line. We just evolve and progress—oh, no, you don't. You periodically collapse, and then you go through the misery all over again because we all have to be tested by the same tests. But, they were "heaped up as dung." Well, the nearest thing to that would be a nuclear situation. It had to be mass slaughter, but they did go crazy. They were wild about this.

Then another terrible thing happens. The Nephites try to disengage. You feel it here in these fateful words. We've been asking the question all along—where is it all leading? Well, this is the answer. The day of grace is passed. When Troy is just about to fall, the king says, well, this is the last day, and the time we can never avoid. We can't avoid it anymore—it's come. We were Trojans. We'd put it this way today—now we're history. Well, we're soon to become history. It was nice and pleasant history, but there's reassurance here. We're being told this because there's a chance it doesn't have to happen again—though it will.

Well, the Nephites try to disengage. A very interesting thing is going to happen. They began "to flee before the Lamanites . . . to the land of Jashon." They've had enough of fighting the Lamanites just because they're Lamanites, or fighting the Nephites just because they are Nephites. The game of good guys and bad guys doesn't make sense anymore. The withdrawal becomes a rout here.

Now they go to the city in the north where Ammaron had deposited the records, the city of Shim. I brought along a dictionary. They went to the hill Shim to the city Shim. They're falling back

toward the north, and this is what we read in the dictionary. I think this interruption is worth it because these little veristic touches in the Book of Mormon are really something. *Šaʾm*, which is related to *šim*, means the northern region. The point is they go to the hill Shim, which was to the north quite a ways. They've been falling back, always toward the north and east. That's their western frontier anyway. They go to the place where Ammaron hid the records, which he said was in the hill Shim up in the north. Verse 17: "And behold I had gone according to the word of Ammaron, and taken the plates of Nephi." Fifteen years had passed. He was now around 24 years old. Verse 18: "And upon the plates of Nephi I did make a full account of all the wickedness and abominations [Where are these plates? We don't have them.]; but upon these plates I did forbear to make a full account." This is why he's not going to harrow up our souls here with giving us the whole story after they disengage. A full description of the plates would be overdoing it and would just make us sick. This is another powerful statement here. I mean they just ring like successive strokes of doom, don't they.

This one now, "I did forbear to make a full account of their wickedness and abominations [because], for behold, a continual scene of wickedness and abominations has been before mine eyes ever since I have been sufficient to behold the ways of man." What a powerful statement, and how powerfully put, too. The interesting thing is, this used to sound like a very fanciful and climactic statement, like the guy had some imagination. But just consider today how many adults can make that statement, in Lebanon, in Ethiopia, or in Afghanistan. I mean people who have grown up to about twenty-four years old as Mormon was. Or in El Salvador or in Cambodia. You can name a dozen places (like Ireland, for that matter), whose people have seen nothing all the days of their life but a continual scene of wickedness and abomination. In all those places this is continuous. And in our own inner cities there are many young people who could say that—I've seen nothing but a continual sight of wickedness and abomination before my eyes. He may have been sitting in front of the TV all that time. He could say the same thing—nothing but a scene of crime and sex and big money and above all violence and murder all over the place. We just love it. That's your prime TV, "a continual scene of wickedness . . . since I have been sufficient to behold the ways of man." The power with which Joseph expresses those things! The Book of Mormon is something, isn't it. So his [Mormon's] heart is "filled with sorrow because of their wickedness." He has not had a happy life. As I said, many people of twenty-four can make the same statement today.

So they're driven north. Here it comes again in verse 20: "And it came to pass that we were driven forth until we had come northward to the land which was called Shem." See, there's north again.

"What language is Shem? Is that a Hebrew word?"

It's basic Semitic [and means about the same thing] in all Semitic languages. *Šamôl* is the left hand; *Šaʾm* is the old name for Damascus, the north city—well, it still is, as a matter of fact. *Šamôl* is north one when you're facing east. It applies in Egyptian or almost any Semitic language. This is a Lebanese dictionary; it used to be Palestinian, the Arabic that Nephi's people would have spoken, being Transjordan people who were half Manasseh. We needn't go into that, but he mentions again here that it's northward.

Notice they're hunted and driven—it's a rout. You'd be surprised that they are going to come back and win the whole thing back again. Are they in for a happy surprise. It's never too late, you might say. They make a big stand in the northern city of Shem, and then Mormon turns the tide in verses 24–26. "And my words did arouse them somewhat to vigor, insomuch that they did not flee from before the Lamanites." Their great leader was able to turn the tide (and this has happened before), but he's without hope. The interesting thing is that the military situation is not desperate; it's very much in their favor. They're going to win three big victories in a row now.



They're going to take everything back, including the land Desolation. They had no need for despair militarily, but that's not the problem, is it? We're properly armed and ready and marshalled for war; we've made our Cold War preparations on and on and on. That's not the problem at all; that's not going to solve a thing. That wasn't the issue [in the Book of Mormon either].

Notice in verse 27 that they actually conquer everything. "We did go forth against the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, until we had again taken possession of the lands of our inheritance"—the whole works. This certainly makes Mormon the greatest general in the Book of Mormon because of the things he's able to do. The Lamanites and the Gadiantons, the bad guys, were willing to accept a treaty which was good for eight years, it says here. They were willing to accept terms in a treaty. "We did get the lands of our inheritance divided." This was the agreement in verse 29—a settlement that the lands to the north of the narrow pass were to belong to the Nephites. They fled up there, so now that they're there they're going to keep that. And what divides them is a narrow pass. Now the Isthmus of Panama is not a narrow pass; it's 20 miles wide. We're talking about the great narrow passes which allow either side to control them, you see. The Nephites could stop the Lamanites there, and the Lamanites could stop the Nephites there. This was the ideal place to make the boundary for the treaty here. You think of the famous passes like the Cilician Gates, the Khyber Pass, the Caucasion Gates, the Sankt Gotthard, or Echo Canyon here, or Cumberland Gap, or Thermopylae. There are narrow passes that control history, and the Isthmus of Panama is not one of them. Let's not get into Book of Mormon geography. There was a pass somewhere where they control it. The narrow passage was the one that the Nephites or Lamanites could hold. Of course, that's the best possible place to secure by treaty, which we learn at the beginning of the next chapter here. So the land south belongs to the Lamanites, the land north belongs to the Nephites, and there's a pass between them, which can be controlled by both, like Khyber Pass.

Then in the next chapter [they have] ten years of preparation and cold war now. After a victory like that they have good chances, but [it is] without repentance. We'll get them this time, we say in a cold war. ". . . preparing their lands and their arms against the time of battle." Cold war—that's what we do. We get more missiles than they get. We're preparing the big thing, you know. Then the king of the Lamanites sends his challenge. He sends a formal challenge in verse 4. Well, what goes on? The thing is, you should use the time repenting, but they had no intention of doing that. Verse 2: "Cry unto this people—Repent ye, and come unto me, and be ye baptized, and build up again my church, and ye shall be spared." It's never too late here. He had withdrawn his spirit. [Mormon] thought the day of grace was passed with them, but still the Lord holds out his hand to them. But "it was in vain." They wouldn't listen. He gave them a chance for repentance. That's what he calls it, "a chance for repentance. And behold they did harden their hearts." They didn't take it. Because of the victory they thought they could do it themselves. They thought it was a military problem, as we do today.

Verse 4: "The king of the Lamanites sent an epistle unto me, which gave unto me to know that they were preparing to come again to battle against us." Now that's the chivalric manner of war which was throughout the ancient world. You'll notice it especially in the book of Ether. But here it is all strictly according to form. It's a formal challenge, an ancient tradition. General Taylor who commanded the 101st Airborne Division was of the old school. He was the old heroic do-and-dash, sword-in-hand sort of guy. The first objective was to take Carentan. We held up for a whole week in Carentan. He said, I respect the colonel who is defending Carentan. I want to invite him to tea and congratulate him. So I was commissioned to take a white flag and go over and invite the colonel to come and have tea which General Taylor before we blasted them out. We couldn't blast them because they blasted us out. It was back and forth and back and forth at Carentan. They called it [the tea party] off at the last minute, but he was determined to have it. Well, that's the heroic, chivalric way of doing it. That's the chess game idea of battle [practiced during the] seventeenth century and eighteenth century when Prince Eugene or Prince

Bernadotte would be on one side one day one year and the other side the next, giving them his advice and counsel as a professional.

The Lamanite king sends them terms. Throughout this, you notice, the Nephites always are given a choice—they're given a chance. Can't we talk about this? Can't we do something about this? The Lord is lengthening it out as long as he can. He's giving them as much rope as possible, and they're going to hang themselves on it just as sure as anything.

Notice in verse 5 the narrow pass, "And it came to pass that I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land Desolation, to a city which was in the borders, by the narrow pass." Well, Desolation goes with it. It's a place of battle, a place of war. It's a place not being farmed or densely occupied. A good defense zone is what it is, you see. But land Desolation—that's the old word *ḥorba* or *ḥōreb*. Muslims divide the world into the *Dār al-Islām*, the pacified world, and the *Dār al-Harb*, the people who are dedicated to war and destruction. That's what they do when they conquer. So you get a very good picture. See, here's the pass and the desolate country around there. They'd fought lots of wars there. It was the natural place for battle. There are such places in Europe, as you know. I mentioned those passes, every one of which has been the scene of many battles.

The Lamanite king sent an epistle that they were preparing to come to battle again. Well, Mormon's people gathered themselves in Desolation and fortified themselves with all their force and beat them. That was sensible because they were on the defensive. Clausewitz' first rule of war is always be on the defensive. The defensive always has the stronger side. That's a general rule. You might find some exceptions to that, but not with Clausewitz. He says you always have the advantage. Mormon will tell us what happened there and why they lost later on.

Well, they beat them, and in verse 8 they beat them again. A great victory now. They slew a great number of them. Here are two victories in a row; the Nephites were doing all right. Mormon was wrong all along here [it appears]. They decided they were unbeatable because of this great thing, and revenge becomes the motive. Verse 9: "And now, because of this great thing . . . they began to boast in their own strength, and began to swear before the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren who had been slain by their enemies." Here is the standard scenario of the Western, of course. The bad guys do bad things for the first half, and the good guys get revenge for the second half. And we love that revenge—catching up with them and shooting them or blowing them up, etc. That revenge is the main scene—the Green Beret motif, you see. John Wayne or someone is the good guy who doesn't want war or anything like that. Then they [the bad guys] do something very very bad. Then the thing we all sit on the edge of our seats and relish is the revenge that follows, because innocent people have suffered, etc. Then he's not Mr. Nice Guy anymore, then you really go to it. This is the theme of countless police stories, detective stories, and Westerns. Mr. Good Guy goes and cleans up the bad guy, but only after he's been driven to the extreme. He has to avenge the blood of his brethren.

Well, how about this noble motive of avenging the blood of your brethren—the private eye plot, the police officer whose pal gets shot, etc.? Is not avenging the blood of your brethren an ideal? Isn't it an obligation? When they started winning, they made it a big thing. That's what they were going to do. "And they did swear by the heavens [you know they're very religious about this—for God and country. "Kill a Gook for God," as we used to say], and also by the throne of God, that they would go up to battle against their enemies, and would cut them off from the face of the land." Finally they're going to settle the Lamanite question once and for all with a big battle, because they've got them on the run now. But they shouldn't have done that.

And from that time on, Mormon says, I was through. Now here was their greatest general, the great hero, the one who had won the battles, etc. This was the ultimate folly, the last straw. The

leader renounced his commission. The [Nephites] were still wicked, but wicked men can never be on the right side, including ourselves. He became a conscientious objector, you see. It's not the side you're on at all. We said for years—Noriega's an s.o.b., a murderer, and a thug—but he's our murderer and thug. We used him, you see. He's a villain, but he's our villain. The side you're on makes a difference. Well, it doesn't at all [actually]; it's equal. Notice, he's said it twice about the Lamanites and Nephites—nothing to choose between them. They were equally bad.

He said, "Behold, I had led them, notwithstanding their wickedness I had led them many times to battle." The great-hearted Mormon. Why? Because I loved them, he said; I had to do it, "according to the love of God which was in me, with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them; nevertheless, it was without faith, because of the hardness of their hearts." They're not going to do anything without faith. Mormon was the true hero. He was the true patriot, but he would not say, "my country, right or wrong." My country may not always be right, but my country right or wrong. He wouldn't say that. As soon as they were wrong, he said, I laid down my commission. I became a conscientious objector, an idle onlooker. I wouldn't have any part of it, he said. He went all out to make it right, but what can you do without faith? He says he had no faith here. (What other wisdom have I written down here?)

He gave them three chances. "And thrice have I delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, and they have repented not of their sins." They didn't get the point at all. But then when they reached the point that they swore "by all that had been forbidden them by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that they would go up unto their enemies to battle, and avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren." I repeat, what could be a loftier, more noble ideal than avenging yourselves in the manner of Rambo for the blood of your brethren? That's the theme we're all wrapped up in today, and this, he says, is going to wipe them out. This is what they should never have done, because it has been forbidden. "Vengeance is mine [the Lord says], and I will repay." And from that time, Mormon says, "I utterly refused to go up against mine enemies." He wouldn't fight at all. Well, well. It's very serious when the general won't fight.

He becomes the conscientious objector here. And what does he do? He becomes an idle witness. He becomes a reporter now. He's going to report the whole thing for our benefit, so it must somehow apply if this is the work he does. Verse 16: "I did stand as an idle witness to manifest unto the world the things which I saw and heard [by idle he means he's busy taking notes, but he's not fighting], according to the manifestations of the Spirit which had testified of things to come. Therefore I write unto you, Gentiles [ah hah! It is addressed to us; we're the Gentiles on the land], and also unto you, house of Israel, when the work shall commence, that ye shall be about to prepare to return to the land of your inheritance."

Remember how the house of Israel shall be judged. This is what the issue is; it has nothing to do with all this fighting back and forth, such as you find in Israel today. He writes for all of Israel in the last days. You do not divide into armies as good people and bad people. There is no dark side and bright side. Read these verses 17 to 19 very carefully here where it says [verse 20]: "And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me." Well, what's the end of it all? What's it all getting to, and why is he telling us? This is it, you see. The issue is something totally different from all this. All this is just a distraction. This is Satan's way of engaging ourselves and getting ourselves committed here, because this is the thing you must be thinking about. "Ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." Every soul—back to the old individualism that's so strong in 3 Nephi. Every individual for himself. "Every soul who belongs to the whole human family of Adam; and ye must stand to be judged of your works, whether they be good or evil." Every individual, and that's the real issue, not which side is winning and all this glory, flag-waving, drum beating, etc.

Verse 21: “And also that ye may believe the gospel of Jesus Christ” and also that the Jews shall have another witness. According to these verses, you cannot claim a reward for being on one side or the other. Well, we say, we need an enemy. America needs an enemy, and he has to be the embodiment of evil so that we can go on being the good guys without having to repent. No one mentions that word *repent*; that’s a naughty word. You’ll lose any election if you mention it—believe me.

So we come to the next sad chapter, and the Nephites take the offensive now. Things are going to turn up now, you’ll see. They hadn’t stopped winning yet. “And now it came to pass that in the three hundred and sixty and third year the Nephites did go up with their armies to battle against the Lamanites, out of the land Desolation [the Nephites were driven back]. And while they were yet weary, a fresh army of the Lamanites did come upon them.” The Lamanites took the city Desolation back again. So here’s this see-saw war. They’re winning it back again. So what the Nephites do is consolidate, naturally. “And the remainder did flee and join the inhabitants of the city Teancum.” Now they’re using a silly system of check dams, so to speak. You have a check dam which doesn’t need to hold back much water, but it will hold back enough, and then another check dam, etc. The only thing is if you have an exceptional rain, one check dam breaks, and that compounds a rush of water on the next which was not built to contain that. So that’s overrun. Once the top check dam or any of them breaks, the whole thing is wiped out. This is what happens here. They started checking things this way. They’d dig in; “the remainder did flee and join the inhabitants of the city Teancum” so that when Teancum fell, it was a bigger calamity than ever. And here’s the fable for our time. I say this is the number one principle of our good friend Clausewitz here. Never, never do the foolish thing of going up [to war] if you don’t have to, absolutely. Deuteronomy 2:5–17 is very good about aggressors.

Verse 4: “And it was because the armies of the Nephites went up unto the Lamanites that they began to be smitten; for were it not for that, the Lamanites could have had no power over them.” But they took the aggression and went over. They had to punish the [Lamanites]. We were half-way through the Korean War and there was peace in the air when one of our generals said, “We have not punished them enough. We must continue the war so we can punish them.” Well, the Lord says here, “But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished.” They’ll be punished all right, but pray that you won’t be the punisher of anyone, because it’s by the wicked that the wicked are punished. “For it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed.”

In verse 8 we get a third victory for the Nephites. They take possession of the city of Teancum. “And it came to pass that they were repulsed and driven back by the Nephites. And when the Nephites saw that they had driven the Lamanites they did again boast of their own strength; and then went forth . . . and took possession again of the city Desolation.” They’ve got it back again. Back and forth it goes. This is one of those like the first day of the battle in which six hundred thousand men were killed—something like that—and they gained about forty yards. That’s the kind of generalship we had, and we still do.

And so they took everything back and “took possession again of the city Desolation.” And the Lamanites came again against them, back and forth, “and yet the Nephites repented not of the evil they had done, but persisted in their wickedness continually. And it is impossible for the tongue to describe, or for man to write a perfect description of the horrible scene of the blood and carnage which was among the people. . . . Every heart was hardened, so that they delighted in the shedding of blood continually.”

Verse 12: “And there never had been so great wickedness among all the children of Lehi”—war as the supreme wickedness here. Ah, but the Lamanites start taking it back now, in verse 13: “The Lamanites did take possession of the city Desolation [how many times had Desolation changed hands now? There are many cities like that]. . . . And they did also march forward against the city

Teancum, and did drive the inhabitants forth out of her, and did take many prisoners [of war] both women and children, and did offer them up as sacrifices unto their idol gods.”

We mentioned their religion. We’re getting into the Mesoamerican Mayan, and especially Aztec, practice of mass sacrifice of prisoners on a tremendous scale. They did it to the point where it reduced the population so much. There are some very interesting studies made of that recently. At the drop of a hat, prisoners had to be sacrificed. It was not just a sacrifice that was symbolic once in a while; then it became an orgy of blood. That’s what they used their sacred towers for after that [development]—sacrifices unto their idol gods. That’s what they did. We’re already moving into the Mesoamerican horrors there. Well, this was a real outrage. The Nephites certainly have a righteous rage here in verse 15. They had a right to be mad at this. The Nephites win again, and they have eight years of peace, after all that. Well, this goes on and on. See, they could repent any time here.

This is another one of those statements in which the Book of Mormon, as epic writing, achieves real height with lofty expressions. The four conditions that Matthew Arnold said are found only in Homer you find in writings in the Book of Mormon here—the nobility, the speed, the loftiness, the simplicity, and the directness of language. He said you find that only in Homer, but you find it in the Book of Mormon, too. For example, [Mormon] says “And from this time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites, but began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun.”

I talked about this age of extermination, and that’s what happens. Whole species, whole areas of the world, whole populations have suddenly just melted away like the “dew before the sun.” They haven’t been attacked by anything of particular violence except big corporations and their exploitations, armies, plagues, and lots of famine. But we don’t pay much attention to it. It happens here, it happens there, and they begin to just disappear “even as a dew before the sun.” And great institutions [decline]. Some of you may have seen yesterday that article about the Exxon Valdez. Exxon started out doing everything right, but they just got lax in all regards, and everybody just let them go ahead. Nothing can happen [they thought]. They paid no attention to the lanes or the ice. The Coast Guard stopped giving signals. They could have set up more radars, but it was expensive, so they didn’t. All sorts of things they could have done, and they just didn’t care. The captain went to sleep, or was drunk—it made no difference. Only one man on the deck of this enormous ship as big as a city [paid attention to what was happening]. They’re all overworked because a small crew saves money. If anyone got sick, there was no one to take his place, etc. Well, there’s no villain there or anything—it’s just [apathy].

As I mentioned before, I’d like to read to you from some of the Roman satirists on why Rome collapsed, but it’s generally agreed that this is what happened. All the old studies end up the same way. Idris Bell calls it “a fatty degeneration of the intellect.” I used to talk an awful lot about the decline and fall of Rome; that was my own special study. Rostovtzeff said they just couldn’t think of anything new—it was just the same old stuff. I’ve written some things on rhetoric and the effect that public relations had on changing values and making people feel secure when there’s no security. Playing it with smoke and mirrors and words, is what you’re doing. A very highly developed study [indicates that they had] public relations gimmicks which were better than ours today, and just destroyed the ancient world. And so it goes. It just melted away. You can’t point to one particular villain.

Well, again the Lamanites come and beat the Nephites in verse 19, and they fled again to the city of Boaz. Verse 21: “And when they had come the second time, the Nephites were driven and slaughtered with an exceeding great slaughter; their women and their children were again sacrificed unto idols.” Now the sacrifice. What will we do with these people? Well, we’ll sacrifice them and make a virtue of it, and that’s what they did.

Verse 22: “And it came to pass that the Nephites did again flee from before them, taking all the inhabitants with them, both in towns and villages.” So the migration has become a rout, and everybody has joined in it. It’s an irresistible rush when [invaders] come—people pushing baby buggies, hauling wagons (cars break down, etc.), carrying things like old junk and grandfather clocks on their backs. People do the strangest things when they evacuate.

Notice where they’re going: “And now I, Mormon . . . did go to the hill Shim, and did take up all the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord.” Hiding the records was a sign that things were over. Now it’s time to move them and hide them. He’s going to move them to Cumorah—that’s where they’re going to end up, I’m sure. This is far up in the north here.

Well, here’s a remarkable thing about Mormon. After all that the great heart of Mormon [becomes evident]. A truly tragic figure, he’s larger than life here. He says [Mormon 5:1], “I did go forth among the Nephites, and did repent of the oath.” He had taken an oath that he’d never go and fight again because the Lord had forbidden them to seek revenge. He said he took an oath, but he broke it because his love for his people was so great—talk about a hero. “. . . and did repent of the oath which I had made that I would no more assist them; and they gave me command again of their armies.” He’s the last man they trust. Here’s a man we can finally trust. Mormon will solve it. He’s pulled us out before; he’ll get us out again, [they said] a la Napoleon. The French rallied to him again and again, and he pulled them out more than once. “For they looked upon me as though I could deliver them from their afflictions [as though I were the one who could save them—it’s very flattering]. “But behold, I was without hope.”

Notice again, here is the essence of tragedy—the fact that there is no hope here. He does the heroic thing, but he’s devoted to a lost cause. He dies for the cause. He knows it’s not going to do any good, and yet he does it for the people—the truly heroic figure. “But behold, I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities [at the last minute they could have repented, but they wouldn’t repent. As I said, *repent* is a dirty word in our language; we don’t use it at all], but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them.” As I said before, you tend not to.

So they flee to the city of Jordan, “driven back that they did not take the city at that time.” He sets up a defense in depth that worked so very well for Moroni. He invented the defense in depth, which was very effective. “And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city. And there were also other cities which were maintained by the Nephites, which strongholds did cut them off .” We won’t go into the strategy of that, but it was invented by Moroni. It was very effective, and it was the only thing that could stop a blitzkrieg in World War II. The armored divisions could form a defense in depth, where they couldn’t bypass you and leave you. They’d have to take each one, and that slowed them down and made all the difference.

Verse 5: “And it came to pass that whatsoever lands we had passed by, and the inhabitants thereof were not gathered in, were destroyed by the Lamanites.” This is a rout, a migration in size. In 1939 and 1945 the Russians retreated all the way from Central Europe clear back to Stalingrad. Half of Europe, an enormous continent, was evacuated. They fell back all the time, and they burned. It was black earth. They burned the towns and villages. This has been done before. Their towns, villages, and cities were burned. Well, it was done at the siege of Moscow—that’s the way they stopped Napoleon, as we know. Napoleon got there with a blitzkrieg, but then he couldn’t get back because there was nothing to live on. The Russians had destroyed the crops and burned the villages. This is what they had done here. Joseph Smith knew a lot about these things.

Verse 6: “And it came to pass that in the three hundred and eightieth year the Lamanites did come against us to battle, and we did stand against them boldly; but it was all in vain, for so great were their numbers that they did tread the people of the Nephites under their feet.” They are

hopelessly outnumbered here—this is something out of *Star Wars*. It really has epic dimensions, doesn't it.

So all they could do was run again. They took to flight. The person who can go fastest is the only one that will be saved; it's every man for himself now. "Those whose flight was swifter than the Lamanites' did escape." That was it. You had only one object—every man for himself. Get out as fast as you can—just run. Well, they're not going to win any wars anymore. They're not going to check them anymore. "And those whose flight did not exceed the Lamanites' were swept down and destroyed." They were run over like a tank division coming up behind them.

Verse 8: "And now behold, I, Mormon, do not desire to harrow up the souls of men in . . . such an awful scene of blood and carnage [anymore—this is enough. Haven't I told you enough?], . . . but I, knowing that these things must surely be made known," or you're doomed to repeat them. The main point is this: if we ignore the lessons of history, we're doomed to repeat them. These things must be made known. Why should these awful things be made known, and be made known unto us? As Brother Benson says, it's particularly for us in our time. Well, that must be very, very relevant, so we must pay very close attention here. What can we do about it? He's going to tell us what we can do about it. ". . . and also that a knowledge of these things must come unto the remnant of these people, and also unto the Gentiles [now we come to an amazing passage here, and this is what the Gentiles are going to do], who the Lord hath said should scatter this people, and this people should be counted as naught among them." [This describes how the United States] treated the Indians, and this is what happened. The Indians were very strong. They were half the inhabitants of the continent in Joseph Smith's day. But this is what was going to happen. "Therefore I write a small abridgment, daring not to give a full account of the things which I have seen, because of the commandment which I have received, and also that ye might not have too great sorrow because of the wickedness of this people." If I told you the whole thing, it would cripple you. It would weaken your hands, as the Lachish Letters say at the time of Lehi. The prophet telling the people too many things weakens their hands. They become slack and helpless. It has a paralyzing effect. I don't want to tell you too much, he says, "that ye might not have too great sorrow."

Verses 10–13: "And now behold, this I speak unto their seed, and also to the Gentiles, . . . for I know that such will sorrow for the calamity of the house of Israel; yea, they will sorrow for the destruction of this people; they will sorrow that this people had not repented that they might have been clasped in the arms of Jesus. Now these things are written unto the remnant of the house of Jacob [these are the Indians]; and they are written after this manner, because it is known of God that wickedness will not bring them forth unto them; and they are to be hid up unto the Lord. . . . And this is the commandment which I have received [I'm not going to give these records just to anybody]. . . . And behold, they shall go unto the unbelieving of the Jews; and for this intent shall they go—that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ."

You get a strong impression that the Jews [I'm part Jew myself] are not going to accept it until they've got a good beating, too. After all, they're in very bad condition right now. They're not only outnumbered, but they have extremely difficult problems to solve. What are they going to do? They must be brought low, apparently, and this is what it tells us here, "that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance [that one back there and this one here, as far as the inheritance goes—so there's going to be more roughhouse ahead, we can be sure of that], . . . for this people shall be scattered, and shall become a dark, a filthy, and a loathsome people." I brought something really hot, but I won't be able to read it. Again, these are common terms which do not refer to race at all and have nothing to do with the ethnic. This is a term that is used in the prose anciently to describe [people in negative terms]. You can talk about a kike, a yid, a wop, a dago, or anything like that. They're described in the same terms. This people shall "become a dark, a

filthy, and a loathsome people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us, yea, even that which hath been among the Lamanites, . . . and they are driven about as chaff before the wind.” Various things like this happened in 1832. The great march, the Trail of Tears from Florida into the Oklahomas, happened under President Jackson in 1832.

Verse 17: “They were once a delightsome people [see, *delightsome* is what they were, which means *cultivated* and *desirable*; it has nothing to do with race or anything like that to be delightsome]. . . . But now, behold, they are led about by Satan, even as chaff is driven before the wind.” They have no purpose, no direction, no control. They follow their lusts and their lists and they do what they want to, as Satan leads them about like chaff before the wind.

Verse 19: “And behold, the Lord hath reserved their blessings, which they might have received in the land, for the Gentiles.” And at that point, we’ll grind to a dead stop, because there’s something I want to say the next time before we get to the Jaredites. But be of good cheer. The mere fact that this is given to us shows that there is hope. There’s hope for somebody—you can be sure of that.





# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 106

Mormon 1–5

Wickedness in War

I haven't thought of anything all day long yesterday and today except that book of Mormon, Mormon's book—that's the real Book of Mormon. The whole thing is there, and it's a haunting book. It can't leave you alone. If you see these dark circles [around my eyes], blame Mormon for that.

The questions are, are the Nephites stubbornly bent on doing the wrong thing? What is this everlasting harping on repentance? He won't leave that alone. What is the wickedness that the Nephites must repent of? People fighting for their lives don't bother with a lot of hanky-panky. That's not what interested them. That's just the point. The fighting is the thing; that was the wickedness. To set about deliberately and systematically killing people you have to have a mindset, and this has to be developed. You have to work up to it. Remember in the Book of Mormon how Korihor works on the people to do it. Alma repeatedly talks about the great reluctance of the Nephites to slay their brethren and the great reluctance of the Lamanites to do the same. People have to be trained and commissioned and put in order and conditioned for that sort of thing. Mormon shows us how far this mindset can go, because he [describes] it all the way to where it becomes actually a debauchery. It becomes addictive to the people; they have to have a bloodshed. This actually happens in the case of Aztecs and people like that, and he tells us what causes it. Do you remember Mormon 4:5? The cause was this: If they had not gone up against the Lamanites to war, they would not have been overcome. Then he says, "for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed." We're told [some of] the Lord's first words to the Nephites were there shall be no contention among you, for all contention "is of the devil." Somebody is stirring people up to this sort of thing, and this happens. This is what we're told—that there is a source for it.

You say, why would people go against their own best interest? Why would they do anything so insane? Well, the fact is that they do, and we are told that it is the evil one that stirs us up to that. There is such a stirring, and he tells us where it's all leading to. Mormon tells us where this is all going in the end. In the eighth chapter of Mormon he takes the roots of the trouble right back. He's talking about us now, and he puts us into the picture with the perennial conditions there and the purpose behind everything. He tells us where it's all leading, and with the last verse he brings us right down to the point at which we join the Nephites at this particular juncture of their history. Mormon 8:41: "Behold, the sword of vengeance hangeth over you," and it shall soon descend because of the things you've done. Well, we're not to that yet, but this brings us right to the point.

The Book of Mormon tells us what we're getting into and where it is all leading. President Kimball in his bicentennial address tells us how far we've gotten and where it has already led us. This is going to be required reading. I'll have this photocopied the next time. It'll set you back twenty cents, but it's worth it. On the occasion of the bicentennial [of the United States] President Kimball gave this great address to the Church and to the world. He quotes familiar passages from Mormon, Moroni, and Alma in this. His talk is based on the Book of Mormon. So this is going to be required. You'll find it very useful in the essay which you write, among other things.

Another thing that's going to be required is this, which I'll have photocopied. This is going to set you back sixty cents. This is called "The Book of Mormon and the Ruins." It deals with the main issues, archaeological, etc., as taken out of the latest works on Mesoamerican archaeology. It's highly unoriginal. All I've done is steal from a lot of people who know something about it, supposedly, and put this together. I think you'll find it very useful as a summary. I'll have it next time. This is going to be sixty cents, and this is going to be fifteen cents. Is that price prohibitive? Or would you rather have a \$40 textbook? We say the Book of Mormon is a textbook. It's an insult to have a summary or syllabus or something on the Book of Mormon, which is the supreme syllabus. It has been edited with consummate skill for our benefit. As Mormon's going to tell us, these few plates I've kept out to edit for you, and all the rest of the plates are still stuck in the Hill Cumorah—or were stuck there then. So I'm going to have these photocopies, and you'll be able to get them the next time. I really recommend that you read them. They'll help you a great deal.

Now, back to Mormon again; we can't leave him alone. The constant refrain, as I said, is repent. The subject is repent of what. We saw Mormon was a very astute person. When he was eleven years old, his father took him to the town and he saw all the soldiers and the usual battles going on. It was a terrible thing. They had several battles, and then there was peace. Remember, he was a kid eleven years old. Just four years later, war broke out again, and whom did the people choose for their commander in chief? Mormon, who was going on sixteen. Does that ever happen? It's happened lots of times. We'll see that when we get to the Jaredites, and we can match it up against many cases in world history where this happened. Commanders as young as that have been common. But he tells us you can see why that's so. He had a very high profile. Not only was Ammaron aware of his smartness, but he [Mormon] was a large, powerful person, very impressive, and he was always getting involved. His sympathies are so that after he's sworn that he'll never fight again, he does go back and fight again. He can't leave the people alone. He must take a part in there. He was commanded to be an idle onlooker, and he wouldn't be an idle onlooker. Finally, he broke his oath, he says, and went back again, though it was without any faith and hope at all. Yet that was his greatness of spirit. His love of the people was so great that he had to do that.

But remember it tells us in Mormon 1:16 that he tried to preach to the people, so he had a high profile. He made himself a nuisance, and they wouldn't listen to him—just like Abraham did, too. Well, that would certainly draw him to their attention and give him a high profile. We're told that he was large and powerful beyond his age and a very impressive and very smart person—obviously the ablest person around. So they chose him. But they have the wrong priorities, the wrong policies, the wrong practices. There was simply no talking to them. He says in verse 17 here: "I was forbidden to preach unto them, because of the hardness of their hearts."

Now this hardness, you'll notice. What are the two expressions that are used? Hardness of heart, and what is the other having to do with the neck? The people are hard-hearted and stiff-necked. Hardness and stiffness are lack of adaptability, lack of flexibility, etc. Hardness of heart, we're told, put a curse on their doings—just like hardness of the arteries. When you start getting old, things get hardened. They squeak and don't work so well, and the joints are the same way. They become stiff, stiffness of joints, stiffness of neck, hardening of arteries, hardening of everything else. What is that? That's inability to change or refusal to change, to yield, to adapt. They can't repent, you see. So that's the thing that holds you back, and when you reach a certain stage, when you've lost all flexibility and you won't change, then it's time to ring down the curtain. There's no point to going on with the story because you're not going to repent. Of course progress and everything else is progressive repentance. You have to repent. But their sins harden into policy now, just like concrete. Nothing's going to change them, and that's Mormon's problem. This is what he says is going to be your problem, too. We can see it today.

So "wickedness did prevail upon the face of the whole land," he tells us in verse 13. Well, specifically, what wickedness? What's he talking about? Well, he says it goes hand in hand with

unbelief. They wouldn't accept the charismatic gifts. They wouldn't listen to the prophets. They wouldn't trust in prayer or things like that. They were solid, practical, down-to-earth people, supposedly—materialists, positivists. For them that's where the solution lay. We will do it our way [they said]. No other program got a hearing, we're told. They had made up their minds; there was no point to talking to them. The result was a desperate search for economic security. It's always going to collapse every time. Notice, putting all your money in the vault and hoping you can save it that way. See, they started burying it, but it was slippery. They couldn't hold on to it. They were absolutely desperate for this security which they didn't have, and they sought it, of course, in building up safe capital reserves and all those things. They had all the usual solutions that didn't work.

Strangely, these hard, hard people were given to superstition and magic. That's true, too. I would have you read some of the books of Francis Yates on that subject [dealing with] the seventeenth century. In corrupt periods people get very prone to magic and hocus-pocus, like the superstitions of the stock market, etc. As the ancient world collapsed, everyone put their stock in sorceries and witchcrafts, so to speak, and magics. If these things didn't work, it was fortune. Demosthenes put this on his shield. When Greek democracy collapsed, everybody just started to say, it's just a matter of luck. It's just chance. It's fate. That's all it is. So everybody started worshipping Tyche, who was luck or Lady Fate. They started carrying medallions, charms, rabbit's feet, and all these things. As I said, the German soldiers were loaded with them, but had no faith in anything. They had not just swastikas but they had Christopher medals and every kind of trinket you can imagine, but they had no Bibles.

And again, the strength of the opposition was scary. They ran away. And then we reach a classic situation in Mormon 2:8. There are statements in Mormon here that simply knock you down. "The land was filled with robbers and with Lamanites; and notwithstanding the great destruction which hung over my people, they did not repent of their evil doings; therefore there was blood and carnage spread throughout all the face of the land, both on the part of the Nephites and also on the part of the Lamanites; and it was one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land." That is an all-too-familiar situation. Read Froissart from the fourteenth century. The whole fourteenth century was a horror. Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror* brings that out. It deals with the utter horror, along with the plague and all the rest. But before that in the fifth century, Salvian made a trip to just about all the churches throughout Europe to report on the moral situations in them. Again, his picture is horrendous—just like this. There was no security, blood and slaughter everywhere. And in the second century that's what Polybius gives you all the way through. And then, above all, there is the rich Lamentation literature, periodic from Babylon and Egypt. It goes way back, right to the beginning and describes this world every time. There's a complete collapse of a dynasty; it takes years for them to get back again. They go to a little dark age, they lose everything, and then they finally struggle back again. But this is the situation you find, and you find it again and again. There are definite centuries in which this happens—times of extermination, and we are approaching one of them. In fact, we're in it up to our knees already. We're getting deeper all the time.

This is what the Book of Mormon is talking about. They did not repent of their evil doings—on both sides they didn't, neither the Nephites nor the Lamanites. They were equally bad because the only evil doings that concerned them were the evil doings on the other side so that vengeance became the name of the game. The other people are doing evil—well, they were doing evil, so we have a good case, you see. Nixon's book called *The Real War* brings that beautifully where he talks about that. We are the good guys; they are the bad guys. He says that may be a fiction, but that's the way we must think of it. They're entirely evil, and we're entirely right. It's this black and white. Well, that's the way they began to think. But then the Nephites did something we don't do. In the verse 10 they began to repent, but it wasn't a change of heart, he says. It was a change of policy brought on by economic disaster. Nobody could hold on to anything.

Now we get an inner-city idyll here in verse 10—mugging, rip-offs, murder. Why not? This was their social life—“no man could keep that which was his own, for the thieves [that’s people who come in and steal], and the robbers [that’s people who rob you legitimately in white-collar crime], and the murderers, and the magic art, and the witchcraft which was in the land.” Everyone was a possible victim here. Nobody was safe. Total insecurity. And this is the way you feel today if you want to walk around in some of our inner cities. Everybody’s bedizened and befuddled by these magic arts. It’s the mystique of the gangs and the graffiti. There’s a mystique and magic there. They get themselves up in fantastic, spooky costumes; paint their faces; draw their weird graffiti; and have their secret signs. Then there’s the devil cult. There is satanic worship all over the place, which is supposed to thrive here. I don’t know whether it does or not, but I’ve heard some cases all right. But it’s this Satanism. That’s the witchcraft we’re talking about. It’s funny how many people take it seriously, utterly silly though it is. So we always get this mystique of the gangs.

Of course, with the Indians, this is very real, too. This is no joke. The one-horn society is very real. If you go down to the Southwest Indians, you’d better look out for them. They have powers that are not necessarily supernatural, but which are unexplained. I’ve twice seen cases in the Snake Dance. First, the old man leading the Snake Dance in the ring had a gigantic rattler, and it whacked him so hard he was knocked right down off his feet. He got up and continued to dance. They do not take the poison. In fact there was one little kid nine years old who was a member of the branch there. He was in the Snake Dance. A big rattler he was carrying got him right under the eye. It swelled up like a bee sting for an hour or so and then went away, and that was all there was to it. They don’t take any drug or anything. Well, what have they got that we don’t have? You’d pass out if that happened.

In verse 11 notice this brooding evil, this feeling, “Thus there began to be a mourning and a lamentation in all the land because of these things.” You go back to visit an Indian village at a certain time, where they were once people of great faith, but they will have forgotten it entirely. It hit the Nephites harder than the others, we’re told, because their guilt was the greater. This mourning in the village, this tension in the village—you know when things are bad and it’s best not to go there. The danger is worse today in some of our cities. I mean you feel that, the brooding evil of the place, the danger of it. I felt it very strongly in Damascus. I was there the week that they hanged the two Israeli spies in the public square there. The hotel was right on the square, and there were pretty wild things. Then the next place we went to was Jordan, and there was a big mob there. Just for our benefit (there were just three of us) they had to bring tanks down from the palace to scatter them. The next day I talked to all the people, and we got along fine. They were perfectly normal, perfectly nice people as far as that goes. They got them whipped up. It was Nasser’s agents working on them. Well, we won’t go into that, but what I’m talking about is that these situations do exist now, and this world is terrible.

Mormon says, well now they’re being sad; they’re being properly scared. Now’s the time for repentance. Not a chance. Remember Michael’s [Nibley’s son’s] poem, “Mayhem and slaughter resume in the water, and all is exactly the same as before.” After all the preaching, etc. Well, why wouldn’t they repent? Because they regret what happened, never why it happened. That’s what makes them sorry, you see, like the AIDS patient. What has happened? It’s terrible, terrible, terrible. But why it happened never bothers him. He doesn’t feel guilty about that at all. That’s so with all our sins and crimes here. It was the same thing. As he said, the only thing that made them sorry was that the Lord wouldn’t suffer them to go on doing what they were doing. It was not the thing they did that made them sorrow at all, but the results of it which they didn’t like at all. So it was the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them. Too bad. It has to have an end, you see. That’s what hurts the worst. We have sold ourselves on a binge. That’s what Catullus says—Why can’t I go on having fun? Why must I be impotent? He says this because he lived a vile life. Virginia Woolf, Eleanor Wylie, and other people like that [who said] I burn my candle at both ends. And Edna St. Vincent Millay and other American poets from another time—the Algonquin set, the people who lived it up. It’s pathetic, you see, because it’s

got to end, and it ends rather soon. They burn themselves out quickly, and then it's resentment and bitterness. So it wasn't repentance at all [with the Nephites].

And then they cursed God and wanted to die. Why would they curse God? Well, I've heard that a thousand times. They curse God because he allows such things. If there was a God, he never would permit such things to happen. That's what I heard all over the place; you hear that often. We actually made a cult of this in high school in my day, which was many years ago. Everybody learned Omar Khayyam's *The Rubaiyat*, you see:

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin  
Beset the Road I was to wander in,  
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round  
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!

See, God sets these traps for us. We're wicked people, and when we fall into them, he says ha, you sinned.

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make  
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:

[You gave us Eden, you gave us the serpent.]

For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man  
Is blacken'd—Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

You made us this way—who's to blame, anyway? You're God, you're all-powerful. So there was all this cursing of God, and they wanted to die, of course. It was terrible, but they feared death. They fought desperately to postpone it. I imagine in this case they had nothing to gain by it. It's a pretty horrible thing to look forward to anyway. So there's no contradiction here. They cursed God and wished to die and fought for their lives. Those things go together. They're inseparable. We get another case of that.

And then the terrible words in verse 15: "I saw that the day of grace was passed with them." Well, right to the end the Lord's going to give them plenty of opportunity to repent. This is going to be the sad thing. They're going to have it right to the end. Anytime they want to they can change. I mentioned *atē* the last time. The prime sin in which they are indulging is war "in open rebellion against their God, and heaped up as dung upon the face of the land." It ends up as mass slaughter. As I said, many people of Mormon's age today can make this astonishing statement [verse 18]: "A continual scene of wickedness and abominations has been before mine eyes ever since I have been sufficient to behold the ways of man." Nothing else. Notice the nature of the wickedness here is open, public, and visible. This is quite different. It may fester underground, but this comes out. This is so open and so brash. Of course, now we have the TV to splash it right on and use the ratings to make what is popular and to bring these things before us and make it public and visible so people are more responsive.

It fills Mormon with sorrow [with] no prospect of improvement in this life. And here we have the great force of Mormon's character in verse 24. He checks the flight and turns the tide to victory. They're going to have about a dozen victories after this. They're going to win hands down. The Nephites actually have the military advantage, as the Israelis have had all along—though they're smaller, they're outnumbered, and sometimes their weapons are far inferior in number. Yet they had certain military advantages of position and morale and all the rest of it. They could have saved the day anytime. That was not the problem at all, just as it isn't the problem in Israel now. So we have a Nephite victory in verse 24 and following. They win, and then in verse 26 there's

another victory. But the military situation is grim, he says, because it's now man for man. It's missile for missile. We count with them, you see. We're on the same base they are.

Here we have an interesting thing. There is no strongest army. This is a strange thing. They've tried it again and again. Armies are always equal, so this idea that you could be overwhelmingly strong is a myth. That was the Prussian myth that upset them. The great Prussian Generalstab was going to have the great army that would conquer and control Europe. Of course, that was so with France—Napoleon did it. And the Chinese have done it and the Romans. It's the ideal to have the great overwhelming army. What always happens in every case? When you have an army stronger than any of your neighbors, all your neighbors gang together and form leagues and alliances until their armed forces are equal to yours. The threat is equal to yours, and then they have to do it. As Moroni knew, no army can long permit the enemy any advantage in special weapons, armaments, tactics, uniforms, or anything else. It must be met and countered. The Germans had a certain color uniform which was superior to ours. Instantly we adopted it. The Russians had a shepatovka which became the anti-tank gun. Instantly the Germans and everybody adopted it because it was the best. The Germans had superior helmets to ours. We had the flat helmets. Instantly we had to adopt them. They had heavier tanks. We had to make our tanks like a Pershing tank, had to imitate them. You have to if you're going to meet them. You can't let them have an edge and advantage for too long or you're going to lose your shirt. So armies always come to resemble each other exactly before the war is over. You'll notice wherever you look now in the news, you can't tell which is which—the same type of helmet, the same type of fatigue suits or camouflage suits, same types of weapons. If we arm our men with automatic weapons, they've got to be armed with automatic weapons, too. So then everybody, including the people on the street, could go around shooting up liquor stores, etc. They have to have their automatic weapons. So this happens, you see. You're not going to have overwhelming force. Armies are always equal. The proposal was made not long ago by a certain person here that we must have an army and navy so strong that no other nation or combination of nations on earth can ever threaten us again. It's an utterly absurd statement. That was a policy of a recent president.

In verse 27 there's another great victory for the Nephites. And they win everything back. And what does Mormon call this? A great calamity to my people. Well, what was it? Was he crazy? No. The calamity, as he explains it, is because of their wickedness and their abominations. That's the calamity. Winning victories isn't going to help. It's going to justify them, make them feel all the better. So, more reasonable than many of us today, in verse 28 they make treaties. They make treaties with the Lamanites and the robbers—willing to divide the lands of their inheritance, which they'd won back. We wouldn't go so far. We say no treaties with terrorists, no treaties with communists, nothing like that. We'll never move an inch, etc. It doesn't do us any good. We have to treat with them if we're going to get prisoners back or anything like that. We're always contradicting ourselves and stumbling over each other, internecine fights in departments, etc. But they make a treaty and it holds. But notice in verse 29 they're willing to accept their own lands as a gift from the Lamanites.

And then, after all, it's still not too late, in Mormon 3:2–3, if they'll only repent. But they didn't realize this. He says that they were given another chance for repentance. We have three great blessings in this life. The first is life itself, the chance to come to earth and have a body. The second is to have progeny, of course. And the third is, after that stage, the Lord allows us to live on, giving us more time to repent. As Nephi says, he extended our lifetime so we'd have more time to repent. That's the great third boon he gives us. Spend your old age repenting—that's the thing you have to do. Remember the first words of Christ to the Nephites? This is my gospel, that the Father calls upon all men everywhere to repent. But people haven't the slightest inclination to repent today if they can find other people doing wrong. In fact, a review came out yesterday of Mr. Nixon's new book in which he says everything said about him that wasn't complimentary was a myth. All those things are myths, he says. Talk about someone who has no idea of

repenting. Well what about the things they catch him on tape saying. He says, I changed my mind after that. All this is a myth, he says. I did not do a single wrong thing. Well, you're not going to have repentance with that attitude. Who wants to repent? None of the Watergate gang repented. They said we had bad advice, we did what was best, etc., etc. We can always make excuses.

But notice he keeps hammering away, *repent*. He saw that in this peace the Lord was giving them a chance for repentance, but they didn't realize it. No one can ask for anything better than that, than these three blessings—life itself, progeny, and a special time for repentance. They turned it down. They blew it again. Their eyes were on the Lamanites whose king sent them a formal challenge to meet them on the traditional battleground, Desolation, near the narrow pass. It doesn't say neck of land; it's near the narrow pass. As I said, the Isthmus of Panama is not a narrow pass. No, they wouldn't consider that. They said, we have more important matters to consider.

The phrase you hear a million times is “there's a war going on.” That's the stock answer. War will always have your number one priority. We can forget about repentance, but Mormon's lesson is that it does not have number one priority. The whole ninth chapter is taken up with that. Here's where their priorities should have been. When you say there's a war going on, that puts everything on the shelf. As Cicero puts it, once you take to arms, once a war begins, all laws are suspended. All rules are suspended, and that's exactly what Clausewitz says. To talk about the laws of war is an absurdity. The only way you use laws of war is to give you an advantage. You appeal to the laws of war for a pause or something—just to give you a better chance to get a dig at the enemy, but you're into strategy and tactics. Strategy is defined as deception practiced on an enemy. That's what wins. You must deceive. Don't let him know what your intentions are, what's your strengths are, what's your positions are, or anything else. Fool him all the way. That's strategy, and that's the only way you're going to win. The great general is the great strategist. That's why Napoleon was such a great general. As his father said, “Little Napoleon always lies. He's going to be a great man.” See, this would come first. After all, that's what they'll always tell you. Can you wait here? Will you do this? Will you meet me? Can you fulfill this obligation? No, there's a war going on. That puts you in the clear; you say that over and over again.

But with that philosophy, however, in verses 7–8 there's a Nephite victory, and another Nephite victory. They've been winning. Their policy is paying off. Why should they listen to Mormon here? These are great morale boosters. Now they take a sacred oath: “before the heavens” they're going to do the noble thing and avenge the blood of their brethren on their enemies, etc. We said this is the standard theme of the American Western, the crime fighter, and the war films. Mr.-Nice-Guy-no-more goes out for revenge, and that's exciting and satisfying. That's the kind of plot we like to see. So they were out for the stock solution to the problem in [verse 10]. We've had these Lamanites on our hands all these years. How do we solve the Lamanite problem?

Verse 10: “And they did swear . . . that they would go up to battle against their enemies, and would cut them off from the face of the land.” That would settle it once and for all—get rid of the Lamanites. And when they did that, that was it. That settled it as far as the Lord was concerned. The Lord told Nephi in 1 Nephi 2:23–24 that it would never work, you see. Right at the beginning of the Book of Mormon in the second chapter, the Lord already tells Nephi that solution is never, never going to work: “For behold, in that day that they shall rebel against me [the Lamanites, descendants of Laman and Lemuel], I will curse them even with a sore curse, and they shall have no power over thy seed except they shall rebel against me also [that will give them power]. And if it so be that they rebel against me, they shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance.” I'm going to keep the Lamanites in place all the time as a scourge “to stir them up in the ways of remembrance.” You'll never be able to beat them except by righteousness, by doing what's right. They'll have no power over you [in that case]. Don't worry about them—you're not going to beat them on the field. They'll always be stronger than



you are, but they'll have no power unless you rebel against me. Then they'll have power over you. But the only way to meet that, you see, is, "And if . . . they rebel against me, they shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance." So that's what they're doing. They're stirring them, all right, but they just make them madder and madder. They have this one man, Mormon, trying to stand out and say, can't you see the point of all this? Can't you see what you're doing? But they were out for the stock solution to cut them off.

Well, for Mormon that did it. He would have nothing more to do with them. His love and loyalty were boundless, as he says in the next verse, but he knew all along that he couldn't save them. Now here's your paradox. I prayed with all my heart, but without faith [he said]. Do you pray without faith? He prayed with all his heart, but without faith, because he knew they would not change. And later when his great heart overcomes his decision, he accepts command again. He tells us in Mormon 5:2, "But behold, I was without hope." He accepted the commission again but without hope. Here's a man leading his people without faith and without hope. We're not going to get far without faith and hope. But he has charity, oceans of charity. That's the thing, giving something and expecting nothing in return at all, and he does. He knows it's a losing cause. As C. S. Gordon says, that is the essence of the heroic position—the hero who does the right and heroic thing knowing that he's living for a lost cause, that he will never be able to win and is doomed.

He says three times he pulled them through and gave them another chance. To do what? To repent, of course, (verse 13). But for them it was only another chance to "beat the damn Lamanites." We're going to get them this time. But this was the last straw when they swore this ringing oath in the manner of our stock heroes to avenge the blood of their brethren. At that point God gave Mormon a direct command. He said you're out of it. Don't have anything to do with it. "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay; and because this people repented not [when they had the chance] after I had delivered them, behold, they shall be cut off from the face of the earth," not just the face of the land. They'll be finished. They'll become extinct.

Well, they repented not. Repented not of what? Of what they were doing. Their behavior and policy were all absorbed in one thing, the activities of war. The Lord commanded Mormon not to move against his enemies in verse 16, to be a witness and a first-hand observer for our benefit, and for our full consideration before we make our big moves in the last days, as it says in verse 17. "Therefore I write unto you, Gentiles, and also unto you, house of Israel, when the work shall commence, that ye shall be about to prepare [notice commence, about to prepare] to return to the land of your inheritance." Just at the point when we're poised and ready to take things over. And they haven't taken over. We have not gone back to the land of the inheritance of Zion, and the Israelis have not reclaimed the land of Israel that had been promised to Abraham. So this is just the first step we're in now, but things move very fast.

Then everybody must know this, he says in verse 18 and following—all of Israel and the remnants of Lehi's people. These passages now are pure prophecy. These were prophesied way back 150 years ago, and we've seen it has followed right down the line. We thought it would never be. In my day this sounded far away and long ago. It was a romantic story—the story of the Indians, etc.—but didn't apply to us. There was just too much bloodshed, etc. Things like that don't happen in civilized societies. That was before World Wars I and II.

What should they have been thinking of instead of war? Well, Mormon 3:20 tells us: "And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me; therefore I write unto you all. And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, yea, every soul." This is what you should be concerned about, he says here. It's the individual obligation to do the right thing. We're going to be judged on an individual basis, not on membership or affiliation or office or patriotism, but for our "works, whether they be good or evil." The gospel will be made accessible to all those who read this, at that time, he says verse 21. They will have the

gospel, the Bible. They'll have all the rest of it by the time they get this, and Mormon's message to one and all is repent and prepare to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. That's where the real problem is. As opposed to this we have the futile slogan, "there's no substitute for victory."

Well, the Nephites in the next chapter start losing in a big way. Wickedness and folly ruin them, and Mormon 4:5 says it was because they took the offensive that they lost everything. But they had to do it [they felt]. They had to judge and they had to punish the Lamanites for their many offenses. That was their undoing. Leave the punishment up to God. Mormon 4:5: "But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked [don't let that worry you]; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished." We should leave it all up to God then and not try to police the world—though it's a great boon, as you know, to the military industrial complex. We're moving into that against which General Eisenhower warned us so fervently. But that's the thing that keeps it going, of course—policing all the world. I'll never forget the excitement when General Taylor burst in. He later became Chief of Staff, as you know, shortly after that. He burst in and he'd discovered the solution to all the military problems—the brushfire war. We'll have little wars going on everywhere that we'll be able to control throughout the world. It will provide training, promotions, and all the rest. It won't be costly in terms of lives because of our great superiority of weapons, etc. The brushfire war was to be the solution. What did we get out of it? Korea, Vietnam, and the horrors that followed. Well, that was a very interesting day. He burst into the tent all excited.

Then in Mormon 4:8 there's another Nephite victory. That proved Mormon was wrong, premature, disloyal. Their policy is working after all. Why should they give it up? Oh, boy. They were more than a match for the Lamanites. The slaughter went on on both sides, as it does today, and the Nephites stuck to their policy, which is called persisting in wickedness continually. That what he calls in [verse 10]. This, of course, is the shedding of innocent blood, which every war does [particularly a] perpetual war like Vietnam. There are those who delight in the shedding of blood continually; it becomes addictive. But if one delights in watching the shedding of blood, is such a person innocent? That seems a favorite diversion with us as with the Romans. It became an insatiable appetite for them—they had to have the shedding of blood. People delight night after night in watching the shedding of blood, crime, murder, sex, riches, all this sort of thing. That is the prime-time stuff that the advertisers think the public demands, and we're getting that. So to delight in the shedding of blood is to delight in the spectacle as well as in the participation.

In verse 12 he said there never had been greater wickedness. Well, there was a war going on. That was their justification. And it was all perfectly legal, everything they were doing. It was the laws of war, as I said. They could feel perfectly moral about it because they had declared war, though we make wars without even declaring them. Congress must declare war, you know, but we don't bother about that anymore. In verse 14, as in the case of the Aztecs, there's an uncontrollable appetite for the shedding of blood, which they justify on religious grounds. They ritualize it. They use these slaughterings as sacrifices on religious grounds, a horrible thing. It's so bad it must be holy to be tolerated, so we have Satanism and things like that. But it went all the way. Naturally this made the Nephites angry—talk about righteous rage. If they do that to your women and children, wouldn't you be righteously enraged? Well, they were righteously enraged here. And they won another victory in verses 14–15. That proves that revenge is an effective stimulant. It is that. War and atrocity stories pay off to the troops. It's good for motivation. But a year later the Nephites [begin to] dissolve "as a dew before the sun." Just like that.

Remember, I had to go in the forefront in a jeep as fast as I possibly could. We'd get ahead of the lines as fast as we could and watch the Nazi war machine dissolve. Everybody started shedding uniforms, insignia, and badges. Nobody had been a Nazi at all, all of a sudden. They just melted away. There was not an army left, just like that. It says they melted "even as a dew before the sun." The Nazi war machine was duly absorbed into our own.

Then in Mormon 4:23 there was a third fateful visit to the hill of Shim up north. Mormon is the only one willing to repent. And he repents backwards, you see. His humanity overcomes all his other feelings. He repents of his oath he'd made; he shouldn't have taken it in the first place. We're not supposed to swear at all. He disobeys God's command. They thought that Mormon was the miracle man, that he could deliver them. He would save them; he was the man that had won three times already. Why did he give in to them? Well, why did Socrates not leave Athens? His friends all came and told him, up north we have plenty of friends who will be only too glad to accept you there. The richest men in Athens wanted to help him out. The doctors of the schools had ganged up against him, but he wouldn't leave Athens. He could have left Athens to save his life. They said, well, why don't you save the Athenians from committing this great crime in putting an innocent man to death?

He said, look, I've been living in Athens all my life. I knew the kind of people these were. They're my people. Now is not the time to skip out, you see. The time to give anti-war speeches is when you're having your war rallies before you go into war. But after the shooting's begun, you can't be fastidious and say oh no, I don't like war, so I won't have anything to do with it. Then you should volunteer for the nastiest job you can get. That's a strange contradiction, but it's the same thing here. He's like Socrates. I would be a hypocrite now if I ran out after all these 70 years I've been here and haven't left you. I knew what was going on here. I'm not that kind of a fool. Now is not the time for me to withdraw. And it's the same thing with Mormon. I've known these people and I've loved them all along. They are fools, but they're my people and I love them [he might have said], so he went back. But he says in verse 2 that it was without hope and without faith, but with charity. He asked for no return. He never said, I'm doing this for your own good. Here is the smartest, cleverest, most great-hearted figure in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon deserves to be named after him; he tells us the whole truth and nothing but the truth here.

They struggled for their lives. Well, why wouldn't they call on God even in extremis, like in extreme situations? Well, they'd "stepped in blood so far," like Macbeth. "Should I go no more, return would be as tedious as go o'er"—I might as well go through with it. This is the paranoid condition which they were in. A paranoid's not going to repent, you know that. It would only damn them and make them ridiculous. The mood is one of total defiance, a condition frequently met with among paranoid commanders who commit suicide. This is vividly expressed in the German war hymns and Shakespearean tragedies. A person reaches that point of no return, which I said is *atē*. That's when you're not going to change, even though you'd give anything if you didn't have to go through with this. But I must force myself to do it [they say].

I will tomorrow  
(And betimes I will) to the weird sisters.  
More shall they speak, for now I am bent to know  
By the worst means the worst.

Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act III, scene 4

I've got to know the worst; I must have the worst happen. As Hitler said, we must have our choice between a terrible end or going on in terror without end. We have that choice. This is the situation these people are in, and it's sad.

But what happens in [verse 3]? Another victory, and then another one, and then another one. There are three victories in a row here. Twice more they gained the advantage. The military advantage has often been theirs, but that was not the issue; he says in verse 6, "it was all in vain"—not what becomes of them, but what they become. And he's not enjoying this at all in verse 8, but he must make his report. God has commanded it. These things must become

common knowledge to the Indians and the Gentiles on the land. It's not enough for them to turn away with the idea that there can be no hope at all. That would turn them off. We mustn't go too far with this, because there is always that hope. He says, that's why I'm not going to tell you the whole story. It would turn you off. It would turn your stomach. You would feel lost in that case, when men can become so vile. But Lehi's people, the Jews, Israel, and the Gentiles, he says, must realize where their only advantage lies. All this has not been necessary. He says that's the point. That's what so sad.

In Mormon 5:11 he says they will realize that it might all have been so different, "For I know that such will sorrow for the calamity of the house of Israel; yea, they will sorrow for the destruction of this people; they will sorrow that this people had not repented that they might have been clasped in the arms of Jesus." It might have been so different. They didn't have to go through with that sort of thing. It will play a role in restoring the Jews, he says, to the land of their inheritance. They're having dire troubles and approaching disaster because they won't see the principles set forth by Mormon here. They're not reading the Book of Mormon now. There's more to come, in other words. We're told here that there is more to come. They have not yet suffered in the land as the Nephites did in theirs, before they learned their lesson, you see. They've suffered plenty, though.

But the descendants of Lehi will know what it is to suffer. (I get a chance to read that after all now.) A complete, repeated defeat and humiliation after knowing the right way. They're rootless, homeless, and driven. Whenever wealth is found on their lands, they're driven right out now. I have some examples of that. This is from the January 17, 1990, news: Ronald Vertrees, president of the Customs Clearing House, a Denver-based drilling supply firm [for oil wells, etc.] wrote a letter to the Navajo tribal council. They are an independent nation. They have treaties with the United States, you see. They made a rule giving priority in hiring to young Navajos because they have awful unemployment there. To work in the oil wells on their lands, they gave priority to Navajos. This makes this man furious, you see. He protests favored treatment in hiring practices of Navajos on their own reservation. "Given the historical facts, we consider ourselves to be members of the conquering and superior race and you to be members of a vanquished and inferior race. We hold your land and property to be spoils of war, ours by right of conquest [Mormon would have something to say to this]. Through the generosity of our people you have been given a reservation where you may prance and dance as you please, obeying your kings and worshiping your false gods." He had no conception at all what their culture was, you see.

"Contacted Monday, Vertrees said he had no regrets about sending the letter." And there was no outrage or anything like that. Well, when Albert C. Fall (who spent the rest of his life in jail incidentally) became Secretary of the Interior in 1921, few people realized "that along with various schemes to defraud the Indians of their land, oil and mineral rights, [there] would be injected into the plan a false commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles H. Burke, to deny the Indian the freedom of religion he still enjoyed [freedom of religion in 1921 was taken away from the Indians], as provided for in the Bill of Rights. Rarely, until recent times, was [this freedom] even considered as applying to religions of the Indians of the United States. In fact, it was a government policy to aid missionaries in converting the Indians to one or another of the Christian denominations. [Baptists, Mennonites, and others were brought in by the government in 1906, and the Mormons were all ordered out. They were ordered away from the Hopi and Navajo reservations, but the others were brought in.] Definite stipulations curtailing Indian freedom of religion were contained in the official Bureau of Indian Affairs regulations, often referred to as its Indian Religious Crimes Code. The suppression of the Sun Dance ceremony at the insistence of missionaries and government officials led to the enactment of a regulation which, although aimed particularly at the Sun Dance, concluded 'all similar dances and so-called religious ceremony shall be considered Indian offenses punishable by incarceration in the agency prison for a period not exceeding thirty days' [so any Indian dance like that was considered a crime]. In 1922 the Senate passed the Burson Bill, taking the most valuable agricultural lands

from the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico [well, there have been worse things since that]. In the spring of 1923 Commissioner Burke wrote this to all Indians: ‘I feel that something must be done to stop the neglect of stock, crops, gardens and home interests caused by these dances or by celebrations, powwows, and gatherings of any kind that take the time of the Indians for many days. No good comes from your give-away customs at dances, and it should be stopped. You do yourselves and your families great injustice [this is a crooked Irish politician who went to jail just after that for a great swindle] when at dances you give away money and other property, perhaps clothing. I could issue an order against these useless and harmful performances, but I would much rather you give them up of your own free will. I urge you to hold no gatherings in the months when seed time, cultivation, and harvest need your attention.’ ”

Of course, those are the sacred festivals in the law of Moses—that’s when all ancient peoples [held them]. The Indians are forbidden to hold the meetings at that time. “ ‘And at other times to meet for only a short period and have no drugs, intoxicants, or gambling and no dancing that the superintendent does not approve. If at the end of one year the reports show that you reject this plea, then some other course will have to be taken.’ ”

Confiscation of half of the best agricultural land was the penalty for that. Well, we see that Mormon knows what he’s talking about when he says they’re going to be ground down.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 107  
Mormon 8–9  
Extinction of Moroni's People  
Roman Satire  
Spiritual Gifts

Now we're going to get down to cases. Here you'll notice Moroni takes up the story. He picks up the record at his father's command and takes over the record at this time. And here's a sad picture. This has all happened after Cumorah. It's all over now, and Moroni has been running for about fifteen years. This is about A.D. 401, so this is fifteen years after Cumorah. He writes the rest of Mormon's book. He's had plenty of time to think it over—we can understand that.

[Some of] the Nephites escaped southward and were hunted by the Lamanites—everything is in confusion, and his father has been slain and the rest of them. “I even alone remain to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people.” They are all gone. Well, here you think, this is an epic theme, the last survivor, like “The Ring of the Nibelung” and the last survivor, Richard. When great armies break up and scatter, you'll find last survivors moving around in a country, disguising themselves in various ways and managing to carry on. But the last survivor is a real figure, and he's a tragic figure. In Scott's work “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” on this particular subject, there's a last one.

It's very interesting that in the current *National Geographic*, the cover story is devoted to the last photographs of the last time we're ever going to see a dozen or so different, well-known, rather exotic animals that are disappearing from the earth. These photographs represent the last time they'll be seen. So talk about extermination—he's the last of the Nephites. You have read Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* and the sad passing. Tribes have passed away, and there has been “a last man.” Dolly Pentreeth was the last woman to speak Cornish, and philologists used to beat a trail to her door. Yes, there are such things as the last people and the last survivor, and Moroni was one of them. Of course it's infinitely sad. This shows that *survive* is a dirty word. We like the word *survive*, but it's a dirty word. It means to live after everybody else is dead. You want to be the lucky one.

John Chrysostom was perhaps the most eloquent orator of the late fourth and early fifth century in the Christian church. He said that in Antioch, when he was there, before the great earthquake everybody was running around saying, I wish there'd be a big earthquake and kill everybody in Antioch but me; then I'd be the richest man in Antioch. And that's the way everybody felt about it. I want to survive; I'll be the richest man when that happens. Well, Antioch was destroyed, and there were very few survivors indeed. It was one of the most total earthquakes ever recorded.

But notice. Could anything be sadder than this? Well, remember the refrain in Job, “And I only am escaped alone to tell thee” (Job 1:15). The only survivor in Job's house comes to tell him. Or the ancient mariner [Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*] “It is an ancient Mariner, and he stoppeth one of three.” He tells this grim story that's very sad, you know. You can make quite a list of lone survivor stories. The point is that they are real, and how many are we going to have now? Who wants to be the lone survivor? Just hold up your hand. Well, *Moby Dick* is the same thing. He's the lone survivor. After all, he's writing the story. He starts out, “Call me Ishmael.” He's the lone survivor, the wanderer in the earth, the one who's all alone.

It's a sad situation, but they [the Nephites] are all gone. Mormon 8:3: "I fulfill the commandment of my father, and whether they will slay me, I know not [infinitely forlorn, but are not all ruins so? This is what happened]. . . . I am alone. My father hath been slain in battle, and all my kinsfolk, and I have not friends nor whither to go." Is this survival you look forward to? Verse 7: "And behold, the Lamanites have hunted my people, the Nephites, down from city to city and from place to place"—they're all gone, but it hasn't settled anything. Notice, the military solution is no solution; it certainly isn't here. You may have heard Mr. Fallows yesterday talking about that. Who won the Cold War? The Japanese won the Cold War. It's going to cost us our boots.

The Lamanites have hunted them down. He says, "And behold it is the hand of the Lord which hath done it." See, you count on war for your victory and your success, and we won. Both the Germans and the Japanese were knocked out, but they're the ones who won the Cold War and became instantly affluent. We had already begun the Cold War before the last one was over. We were planning to march against the Russians. That was our big idea the whole time along; we won't get into that. But see what it has cost us now; it was so foolish.

Verse 8: "And behold it is the hand of the Lord which hath done it"—let that be an assurance to you. The hand of the Lord has done it. What's going to happen we're going to see; and when it happens to us, it will be so. But did this settle the Lamanite problem after all? "And behold also, the Lamanites are at war with one another, and the whole face of the land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war." How long did it go on? For centuries and never settled down at all. There were tribal wars from then on. Well, this is the condition of the world. Moroni's going to launch into the story of the Jaredites next, which is even more tragic and horrendous, but in a different setting and a totally different culture. It takes us way out of things.

There's nothing left but Lamanites and robbers. You'll notice the robbers are important here, the looters and outlaws. The place is swarming with them. When things break up like that, you're not going to stay around to be drafted for anything. The pickings are rich. Look at Central America now. There have been these wandering bands of terrorists. Who's a hero and who isn't? It gets hopelessly mixed up in every one of those republics. You don't settle it by going in and blasting people that way. We have produced much the same result in parts of the world which we mean to settle by force. It won't work.

Notice again that here we have that little group, the disciples of Jesus. They've always been there discreet from the rest. He says they weren't involved. Verse 10: "And there are none that do know the true God save it be the disciples of Jesus, who did tarry in the land until the wickedness of the people was so great [notice he uses the present tense here; he doesn't know whether they're gone or not] that the Lord would not suffer them to remain with the people; and whether they be upon the face of the land no man knoweth." I don't know, he says. That refers to the Three Nephites, of course. They belong to that same group, but they were of another nature from ours. They talk about that; we're going to have more talk about the Three Nephites. He doesn't know what they are, what condition they're in, or anything else. But here he's talking about some of those disciples. But Zion is fled—you have to grant that. The Lord wouldn't suffer them to remain here. The prophets mourned and withdrew, we're told. That eloquent term is in the book of the Sethians. The principle is as it starts out in the Book of Mormon—he leadeth the righteous away into precious lands. If they can't get along and there's no hope for reforming the rest of the world, you just take them out. Hence went forth the saying, "Zion has fled" and is taken away. The man who walked with God and was not, for God took him, etc. This is why the world today knows so little about Zion. Every time Zion gets really built up, it's taken away and is not there anymore.

Then he asks us to receive this record with an open mind, and that's what people don't do. They condemn it. All they have to do is hear the words *angel* and *gold plates*, and the issue is settled. There's no further discussion necessary. So nobody reads the Book of Mormon, including those who criticize it, because you don't have to go any further. It would be a waste of time talking about angels and things like that [they feel]—even the great Eduard Meyer, who was absolutely electrified by the [message] and couldn't leave Joseph Smith alone. He decided it was the greatest thing ever but would not read the Book of Mormon. He thought of various excuses—it was written in crude English and all this sort of thing. Once he said, the minute it says the word *angel*, that's hallucination and that settles it, forgetting that the Book of Mormon is not a hallucination. Well, we come to that in a minute.

[Moroni says,] “And I am the same who hideth up this record.” I'm making an end of speaking concerning this people. So much for the Nephites then. Now I'm going to talk to you, he says, and that is why I'm doing it [hiding the record]. That's why we've been spared. And [regarding] the plates, “no one shall have them to get gain.” If we only had the plates, it would cause a terrible lot of mischief—all the argument about translating them. The best thing is not to have them; we have something far better. We have the inspired translation, and this can be tested.

Now [we have] these marvelous passages about how the Book of Mormon will come forth again and under what conditions. He traces it right down to our time with the wondrous, haunting refrain, “it shall come in a day.” Then these are old Hermetic themes: “For it shall be brought out of darkness unto light, according to the word of God . . . [to] shine forth out of darkness. . . . And if there be faults they be the faults of a man. But behold, we know no fault; nevertheless God knoweth all things” (Mormon 8:16).

This is the final lesson of the Book of Mormon: Verse 19: “For behold, the same that judgeth rashly shall be judged rashly again.” He's talking about the people to come. Don't judge this book. But, of course, this is a nice commentary on his own people who have just been destroyed. “For according to his works shall his wages be; therefore, he that smiteth shall be smitten again, of the Lord [if there is any lesson in the Book of Mormon to us, this is it]. Behold the scripture say—man shall not smite, neither shall he judge.” We tell other people what to do, we lay down our moral rights. We go out and police them and back it up with physical force. Is anything more futile than that? Yes, brother?

“I have a Moslem friend, and when I mentioned to her that we believe the Book of Mormon has imperfections in it, she was very concerned about that.”

Well, of course, there's all the trouble this raises with the Bible. What are you going to do? Different translations of the Bible keep coming out now that all read differently. This is supposed to be a perfect book—every word in the book is absolutely perfect. We have to admit that [some people claim], because if we say there are imperfections in the Bible, how do we know which verses are imperfect and which aren't? How do we know whether we're on the right track? It means we can't use the Bible itself as an absolute guide if we acknowledge mistakes in it. That's fatal, so the Christian world can't afford to admit that. But we can afford to admit that. Of course, there are mistakes in the Bible. They admit it, too. The latest Revised Standard Translation has come out by the Protestants. What are they doing revising this perfect word of God? This is a new standard translation, and there will be more in another ten years or so. We have to admit the faults of men in there—that's necessary, and we admit it freely. All sorts of things are explained that way. If you don't do that, you're absolutely stuck with this one document.

“What kinds of errors did Moroni admit to?”

Oh, all kinds of errors could come in. Remember when he's talking about the chronology, Mormon says we think this is correct because the man who gave us the chronology was an honest



man, but anybody can make mistakes. So he says you just have to accept it that way. We're not perfect in what we report here. So don't judge this, but "man shall not smite, neither shall he judge"—the two things we are best at. And, of course, this is Roman law at the end of Vergil's ode. We're the people who make the laws and who impose the laws. We crack down on them—the people of the toga who've laid down the laws to the world.

But "the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on" anyway, whatever happens here. And "those saints who have gone before me . . . shall cry, yea, even from the dust will they cry unto the Lord. . . . He will remember the covenant which he hath made with them." See, we all have the same community. The thing to remember all the way through this that keeps coming back all the time is that Moroni really came. He talked to Joseph Smith. He came to him many times. They conversed with each other. [An angel] did the same thing with Zacharias. If that's so, that changes the whole picture; that's what we're talking about. These people are all still there, all still alive, and still very much concerned with us, etc. We're still in the same community. We're going to have to join together with them to live together for a long time a little later on. That doesn't sound too fantastic. We'll see more of that in the Book of Mormon now.

These things they could do. They could, in his name, remove mountains; they could cause the earth to shake, etc. As I have said before, miracles are always a matter of timing. The Lord will tell you when it's going to shake and then it shakes. But the point is [that it's] in his name and at his word. He would give them the signal, and the miracle would take place.

Verse 25: "And behold their prayers were also in behalf of him that the Lord should suffer to bring these things forth," referring to the Prophet Joseph Smith and, unknown to them at this time, what he would have to go through. It wasn't going to be easy. These are the conditions in the time of Joseph Smith, and they follow right down to the present and terminate here in verse 26. Well, here we go, "Out of the earth shall they come, by the hand of the Lord, . . . and it shall come in a day [here's this awesome refrain] when it shall be said that miracles are done away." Of course, that's why they rejected the Book of Mormon—such things can't happen. We cite angels and gold plates, and that's utter absurdity. So it's rejected first on the grounds that miracles don't happen—that is things with which we're not familiar. See, a *miraculum* is a little thing that makes you wonder because you don't understand it—that's all. They say they "are done away; and it shall come even as if one should speak from the dead." It is a voice from the dust; it does speak from the dead.

Verse 27: "And it shall come in a day when the blood of saints shall cry unto the Lord, because of secret combinations and the works of darkness." The things that have been done here are all secret. I talked for quite a long time last night with a man who had been very successful in business. He's in California now. He says it's all secret. The secret is to pull surprises on everybody. You can do it; don't let them know what you're doing. Well, that's exactly what Aristotle Onassis said, who was the richest man of his time. They said, what is the secret of getting rich. He said, that's it. Secrecy. Don't let people know what you're doing—secret combinations. That's the essence of stock trading and things like that, you see. There was another case I heard of yesterday. He told me a case of one man who made a lot of money in a hurry because of insider trading. It was an eminent member of the Church. But these sort of things happen all the time. ". . . secret combinations, and the works of darkness. Yea, it shall come in a day when the power of God shall be denied, and the churches become defiled and be lifted up in the pride of their hearts, yea, even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers shall rise in the pride of their hearts, even to the envying of them who belong to their churches."

Now, what is *envying*? Is that a subjective participle or an objective participle? The envying of the people. Are they envying him, or he envying them? They envy him. He doesn't envy them. They envy him, his success and wealth probably. That's what it may be. In Arabic they're always arguing whether a participle like this is subjective or objective.

What are we onto here now? What's wrong with vapors of smoke? They can't hurt anybody, a little smoke in the air. This means something different today, doesn't it? Verse 29: "Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be heard of fires, and tempests, and vapors of smoke in foreign lands." It tells us elsewhere in the Book of Mormon a vapor of smoke shall cover the earth. That could only be the outfall from something or other, couldn't it? Verse 30: "And there shall also be heard of wars, rumors of wars [there are 47 wars raging at present on the earth], and earthquakes in diverse places." We're now going into a period of increased earthquake activity recorded in places where it hasn't happened for a long time. And they're expecting the big one, of course, on the Wasatch Front.

They're insensitive, unperturbed. All sense of fair play is forgotten in this "me" generation. Notice verse 31: "Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth." Well, that's the number one problem today, pollution. It's not just pollution like impurities and things like that, but pollutions on the face of the earth. The earth itself is being defiled, the face of the earth, not just in the Church or something like that. These are the pollutions we're dealing with today on the face of the earth. And needless to say, "there shall be murders, and robbing, and lying, and deceivings, and whoredoms, and all manner of abominations [and there] shall be many who will say [again, our lowering of standards, our very permissive society here; we accept our lower standards], Do this, or do that, and it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day. But wo unto such, for they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." They're going to say it's all right, you see, because you'll be justified.

Verse 32: "Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say: Come unto me, and for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins." Just the other night I heard an evangelist say, give money, give money, give money, and Jesus will accept you. He will accept you if you give money, and that's exactly what it says here. "Come unto me, and for your money you'll be forgiven of your sins." But who are you giving the money to? To him, the person who says come unto me. It doesn't say come unto Jesus. That's what they call it, of course. You come to Jesus, but you send the money to me.

Verse 33: "O ye wicked and perverse and stiffnecked people, why have ye built up churches unto yourselves to get gain? [and adjust the scriptures to allow for that sort of thing, you'll notice]. Why have ye transfigured the holy word of God, that ye might bring damnation upon your souls?" The misreading of the scriptures is deliberately transfiguring. "The scriptures are before you," the Book of Mormon says. You arrest them at your peril. So we transfigure "the holy word of God, that ye might bring damnation upon your souls. Behold, look ye unto the revelations of God; for behold, the time cometh at that day when all these things must be fulfilled"—at the time the Book of Mormon comes forth.

Notice it says here [verse 34]: "Behold, the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come, at that day [they will soon follow the coming forth of the Book of Mormon] when these things shall come forth among you." Yes, it's not very long, dating it by sequence now. We follow certain sequences here. "Behold, I speak unto you [now here is a ringing verse] as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts; unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying [competitiveness—I think that talk that Mr. Fallows gave yesterday was very pertinent to what we're reading here], and strifes, and malice, and persecution [it's a highly competitive society], and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts. [And then it comes down to this payoff sentence here:] For behold, ye do love money, and your substance [which is the same], and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches [these are

not pagans; in chapter 9 he talks to the unbeliever; he is talking to the people who profess to believe in Christ] more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.” That’s an understatement, you see.

I’ve promised and threatened at times—I never have used Roman satire, but here it’s worth it. I think we should mention it. We’ll use just one satire of Juvenal describing Roman society. Juvenal lived in the middle of the first century after Christ when the empire was at its height, and yet it had a line of corrupt emperors beginning with Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. They were all pigs. Vitellius was a huge, enormous, fat man who was fabulously rich. He bought the empire, but Galba and Otho came before him. Then came the family of Vespasian who was pretty good—Vespasian and his son Titus. Then it went to Domitian, a terrible emperor with rich and lavish ways of life. But at the very time the empire reached its peak, it was already on its way out. The peak of the Roman Empire was when it reached its greatest extent, and it was already finished. He [Juvenal] knew it already. It was later in life, only after he was 50 years old that he was willing to write this way, and he said you might as well enjoy it.

The great civilization of Rome produced only one genre of literature, but it’s a great one—it’s satire. Persius, Juvenal, Horace, and Martial [wrote it]. The best of all I think is Petronius. I’m going to give you some Juvenal. His first satire says, what can you do but write satire when you see the things that are going on today? It’s just too ridiculous for words. It makes no sense at all, but we go right on with it. That’s one thing we sorely miss. We’re very sensitive and touchy on the subject of satire today. If people get too satirical, it makes us nervous. There is plenty to satirize in our society, as you know. Oh boy, is there! But we’re being very careful not to rock the boat too much. We’re going to take one satire here. They all talk about the same thing. “On Education for Avarice” it’s called. I’m going to use this translation here. It would slow me up too much if I gave you my own rendition, so I left my Juvenal at home.

“Does Rutilus teach us how to show a merciful disposition, charity toward his slight faults, having made his immense fortune”? We just mentioned this: You love your substance more than you do the poor, the needy, and the sick and the afflicted “He thinks other people don’t even have souls at all,” he says. “Does he think that body and spirit are made of the selfsame stuff in the case of slaves and freedmen? Or does he teach us to rejoice as he does in the cruel sound of the whip, music more sweet to him than the Sirens. Efficiency, it gets things done. A tyrant of giant size he is to his trembling household, happy only at times when he summons the torture. [This is a terrible way to run a household, but I know some big ranchers who run their establishments in about this manner.] Torture, branding some poor slaves with a hot iron for snitching a couple of towels. What is a young man taught by a sire who delights in the clanking of iron chains and branding slaves and dungeons? [He goes on:] Are you greenhorn enough to suppose that the daughter of Larga won’t grow up to be promiscuous when it took her thirty deep breaths as a child to get through the list of lovers known to sleep with her mother? Even when she was a virgin, mama would tell her all, and now at mama’s dictation she fills little wax tablets and sends them off to her lovers [this is the morality of the times, when everybody was sleeping with everybody else]. Such is the order of nature. Evil examples at home corrupt us all the more quickly, since they subvert our minds with the sanction of loftier warrant [more important people do it]. And so for the rest, they are led in the evil paths of their fathers, dragged in the wheel ruts of guilt, shown them over and over.” The same thing is done.

There are some other ones here. “Cretonius likes to build new houses [he’s property mad], now on the bay of Gaeta [remember the nine or so estates and castles that the late Malcolm Forbes had?]. Now on Tivoli’s heights, now on Praeneste, his mansions rise with marble brought from Greece or lands beyond the ocean [I think of William Randolph Hearst] overtopping the shrines of Fortune or Hercules, even more than Posides the eunuch surpassed our capitol [here’s a eunuch who with a little swindling had gotten himself very rich and built a house more magnificent than the capitol]. While Cretonius lived in houses like these, he diminished much of his fortune. He

spent his wealth but ended up with a portion not by any means small. But his son, a madman, destroyed it, rearing still newer houses [they do that sort of thing, but they're stingy at the same time]. Young men ought not to be taught to imitate most of the vices. We admire the frugality of these very rich men. Only avarice seems to oppose their natural instinct. Here is a vice for once, the shape and shade of a virtue. Gloomy of mien, dour in dress and expression [a very important man, you see], the miserly man is praised, of course, as if he were frugal, a saving soul to be sure, craftier keeper of fortunes than dungeons of Pontus or the Hesperidian Gardens [where wealth is safer, you see]. Add the fact that the people think of the man whom I mentioned as an artist in gain [they admire him; we named some of those people]. Estates increase with such forge men. As they increase in every way, they become bigger and bigger. The anvil is never still, and the furnace is forever blazing.”

Remember what Fallow said yesterday—we have just one measure by which we measure success, progress, and what is desirable under our version of capitalism (he was comparing us with the Japanese). What was it? More. If it makes more, that's the only test. More of this, more of that. That's what it has to be. Is that the wisest, always to ask more? And Juvenal asks that here, of course. “So when a father thinks that the avaricious are happy, that the very rich are fortunate, and he looks open-mouthed at wealth [gaping with admiration, you see], and figures no poor man is blessed, he is urging young men to follow along that highway to study the same school he did [to get his MBA—he says it here]. There are the ABCs of vices. These he indoctrinates first, compelling his pupils to master the meanest, pettiest things, but before long, too, he instructs them in the insatiable hopes and passions for acquisition.” Whatever you do, get rich. I can testify to this, because some of my kids have worked for them. LDS employers are notoriously stingy and demeaning to their help. You may have found that out.

“He cramps the guts of his slaves with the shortest, most meager of rations, while he is starving himself, for he cannot possibly manage to eat up the pieces of bread and the moldy blue-colored remnants. But why accumulate riches through such tortures as these when it seems the most obvious madness [living the life of a tramp to be a rich man on your deathbed]. Meanwhile, the moneybag swells, grows fat, and in just that proportion the love of money bloats up, and he who has only a little covets it least. As for you, a single house in the country does not suffice at all [you'll have to purchase another; this is the developer he's talking about now]. You have to extend your acres, because the neighbor's cornfield seems both bigger and better, so you buy it up. And the woodland, also the slope of the hill thick with the green-grey olive. But what if you can't get it? [this is developer's tactics he's talking about here]. If the owner declines to sell under any conditions, you can send over by night lean oxen, famished cattle, into the green fields. Tired though they are, they will never find their way home until they've stored the whole crop in their ravenous bellies [they've eaten up everything on the land, so the guy has to sell it now] so that you might well believe it was mown by close-crop sickles. You could hardly say how many are bewailing wrongs like these, how many fields are sold by such tactics.”

There are various ways of moving in and taking over attractive land a person doesn't want to sell. There are ways of making it valueless, etc. Well, these are tricks. Remember, this is 2,000 years ago. They went through all this, and how long did it take them to collapse? Well, it was almost overnight when it came. “Hence comes the cause of crime. There is no greater incentive toward the compounding of poison [and we'll see what's behind crimes as if you didn't know from our prime-time TV] or thickening blows with the dagger than the desire of wealth beyond all moderate means—to get rich, to get rich quick. But how can a desperate miser, hustling for all he's worth, ever expect to develop fear or respect for law or a decent sense of proportion? Live content, my sons, with your hills and your little cabins [he says here—and the costly apparel]. The man who is not ashamed to wear hip boots when it's icy, turning away the cold with reversible furs—you will never find him wanting to do actions he knows are forbidden. [Here's an honest man dressed in practical clothes, but he says,] It's the purple garb; the costly, fashionable foreign

styles; the raiment peculiar and foreign—whatever it may be that leads to wicked behavior.” See, the Book of Mormon always ties up costly apparel with this sort of thing.

Now, you’ve got to get an education to get rich. You can’t get rich unless you do, so he says, “At autumn’s end [when school begins again], a father at midnight awakens his son who’s asleep on his back and yells at him, ‘Wake up. Get going. Pick up your tablets and write. Read upon your cases. Study the red letter laws of the past [business and law are the only things they were studying at this time. I have a long article I threatened I would read, but I won’t, on this subject in the ancient world] or seek a centurion’s office. Try to find something to sell for profit, say at 50 percent. Don’t turn up your nose at business that has to be banished [to the far side of the Tiber because it’s indecent—all sorts of things]. And don’t make any distinction between the odors of hides and the attar of roses. A profit is a profit, and it always smells good, no matter what possible source it may come from. Here is a slogan for you, a maxim worthy of poets. Even if Jove himself turned bard, this would be the supreme teaching of all time [this is put in italics]. ‘No one asks where you get it, but money is what you must have.’”

Don’t worry where you get it. Now you hear this all time. They’re the same words used by Horace, “Get money, honestly if you can. But honestly or dishonestly, get money.” You have to. Well, we’re told that—become independent and all this sort of thing.

[Continuing with Juvenal:] “These are the lessons for toddlers, taught them before they can walk by dried up haggard old nursemaids. This the girls all learn before their alpha and beta. If a father insists on imparting such admonitions, I would speak to him thus. ‘Tell me, you silly old codger. Who is giving the orders to hurry so fast? I would bet you the pupil will master the teacher. Give up, go away, take it easy [he’s going to buy you out is the point he’s making here]. You will be beaten as surely as Telamon was by his Ajax. When he begins to submit at length his beard to the razor [when he grows old enough to shave] then he’ll practice and get rich the way you do. He’ll be a false witness; he’ll be a perjured peddler; he’ll be a cheap one; he’ll be a salesman who tries any trick on earth. Things you think should accrue by land and sea will come by a shorter road than that [not the hard way]. A great crime is no trouble [of course, this is the theme of the crime shows we have all the time]. I never taught him those ways. I never gave him such precepts [you say]. Maybe not in words, but you are the source and the fountain of evil intent, for the father who teaches love of great wealth and inspires greed in his sons by the warnings given in sinister ways, who shows him how he can double his patrimony by fraud, gives him a license, free reign, absolute control. If you call him back, you won’t stop him. Once he’s under way he’ll laugh at you in derision as he rushes headlong to the point of [no] return far behind [that’s *atē* that follows]. No one believes it’s enough to be a partial delinquent [make it all the way]. So far, no farther—there’s no such teaching.”

So far, no farther—oh no, They give themselves license much greater, and that’s the main theme that Mr. Fallows made yesterday—more, more, more, no matter how much [you have acquired] you have to get more or you’re not being really successful. “So when you tell a young man he’s a fool to give a friend presents, to give anything away, to help the relation in trouble to lighten his poverty’s burden, you teach him to rob and to swindle, to use any criminal method that will get him rich. Your own devotion to money is as great as the Decii for their country”—their notorious patriotism.

Here he talks about the theatre and the shows. This is the theme of the shows. We have it. See, *theatromania* became the big thing, spectator sports. Everything had spectators. Everybody went to the shows all the time. Five and six days a week everybody was at the shows and the games. They were divided among shows, games, athletics—all sorts of spectacles. They mixed them together. “If you will only watch at what peril to life possession of men’s fortunes increases in the

drama [he says], or the treasure grows in the strong box [it's as a great danger there]. More and more the coins are banked in the temple of Castor.”

The banks were temples so the money would be sacred. That's the only place where it was sacred. You'll notice our banks are made like temples. They're made with marble and bronze and in columns, like the stock market in New York, built after the designs of ancient temples because they're sacred. There is a reverential hush in there, and everybody moves with awe because there's money and there's the big vault back there. The vault represents the shrine where the god is, and only a high priest can go in there. It's a sacred place, and that's where you keep your treasure. If your treasure is there, nobody will lay a finger on it. No, our banks are designed on that pattern very consciously; architects are quite aware of that.

“And so, ever since the day when Mars the avenger was robbed of his helmet, unable to guard his own goods, it will do no harm to abandon the stage effects and the shows of Sibyl, Flora, and Ceres. Humans' comings and goings are really much more amusing. One madness pursues all men. We think of Orestes in Electra's arms facing the fire of the Furies.”

He talks about the extent to which people will go and the risks they will take to make money. “He loads his ships to the gunwales.” This reminds you of the Valdez. He talks about a man who has a super freighter. He's built these huge freighters, but they weren't very sound. You can see why. They were cheaper to build—they saved money that way. Then he says, “There's one plank between him and the deep, and the cause of his hardship, the reason for his risk, is silver cut into cartwheels [little ones] stamped with minute mottos, miniature portraits [coins, money]. Clouds and lightning come up. ‘Cast off,’ cries the owner. ‘Don't pay any attention to that. We have to make this shipment.’ Pepper and wheat fill the holds. There's nothing really to the color of the sky, that bundle of black—forget it. Summer lightning and thunder are nothing at all [but what happens when the ship is hit?] But this very night the poor fellow [again I think of the Valdez Exxon here] runs a good chance to be flung overboard as the timbers are broken, overwhelmed by the wave. But hanging onto his wallet with his teeth or his left hand, yesterday not all the gold of Tagus along with the red-colored sands of Pactolus [famous gold regions] would have sated his need. But today he's lucky in having rags to cover him and a crust of bread. He's a beggar painting pictures of a storm and a shipwrecked pleader for pennies. Property won by such ills is kept with fear and with trouble. Even greater still is the wretched to guard the huge fortune. Plutocrat that he is, Licinus has to order a cohort of his slave boys to stand on guard all night with fire buckets ready at hand. He fears for his amber, his statues, his marble brought from Phrygian shores, his ivory, tortoise shell badges, etc.

“If anyone asks me how much is sufficient, I'll tell him [exactly as Paul does in his first letter to Timothy, 6:8, ‘And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.’ Anybody who wants more gets into real trouble [he uses the word *rapids*]. He gets caught in the rapids, into many foolish investments [and he'll lose everything anyway], many foolish and hurtful lusts [*epithumia* means desire for more than you have], which has spoiled the faith of many and driven many out of the church,” he says.

Well, there's a familiar pattern, you see. Here we have it. “If anyone asks me how much is sufficient, I'll tell him. As much as hunger and thirst and cold are demanding [that's as much as you need], as much as sufficed Epicurus, content with his little garden; as much as the household gods of Socrates had in the old days. Nature never dictates one thing and wisdom another. Do I seem to be hemming you in with narrow precedents? Well then, copy our customs a bit. Take the sun with the emperor Otho.”

The emperor Otho he particularly disliked. There were those three in a row. Each one bought the empire because he offered more money to the army than his predecessor. The army then killed the predecessor and elected him. This went on this way until it finally got to the Flavians who

were honest men. The emperor Otho passed a law reserving the first fourteen rows in the games just for people who made 600,000 sesterces. You had to have that much money to sit in those rows. Wealth was the whole thing [Juvenal] talks about.

Well, that's the way it was long ago, and it hasn't changed too much, has it? So he's talking about this, and it strikes home. Mormon 8:39: "Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?" You don't afflict them. You don't go out of your way to hurt them or anything. You just don't notice them. That's the worst of all. Of course, we think of the pearls, the jewelry, the ermine, and the rest of the things at a fashionable party. There are people sleeping in the streets right outside a fashionable party in Washington or somewhere like that. Why do they do it? They don't persecute them; they don't even snub them. This is the worst thing, to be ignored. That's the bottom line. So we can't be accused of cruelty here, but this is worse. There are those who do not want to end poverty or war. Well, that's another story. There are some interesting things on that. Do we have anything sage to say on this particular subject? Respect for things rather than respect for life is what we're talking about here.

Then this is where the wealth comes from and what the ultimate effect is. "Why do you build up your secret combinations to get gain?" A combination is a corporation building agreements that are secret. They get together and they'll pay off, as L. L. White says. It's a good statement, but I won't read it. He says they conceal the fact from us that these corporations are operating a cooperative more controlled and more against free enterprise than the most rigid socialistic plan you could imagine. You have to sing the company hymns and do things like that. Well, L. L. White's book caused quite a sensation a few years ago, called *The Organization Man*. Maybe you haven't read that. We should assign things like this.

What is the result? War, of course. What happens? What causes widows and orphans to mourn before the Lord? Of course, the killing of their husbands and their [fathers]. "And also orphans to mourn before the Lord, and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground, for vengeance upon your heads?" This is the end result of war, of course. Families are not only broken up in this tragedy, and it's a direct result of this verse. The secret combinations to get gain have led to it. Now here I could a story unfold. I spent months cruising around Europe in my own jeep and accidentally finding out much too much that I should never have known about what went on during the war and what was behind the whole thing. I tell you it was orchestrated and planned to an amazing extent. Well, we won't go into that.

Let's go on. This is for us, and if we're guilty of these things, what's going to happen? What is our condition? The last verse, says what this is all pointing to. "Behold, the sword of vengeance hangeth over you; and the time soon cometh that he avengeth the blood of the saints upon you, for he will not suffer their cries any longer." So soon it's going to be the same thing that happened to the Nephites and the others—the sword of vengeance. There's something up there that's going to fall down. It's going to come on us.

In the next chapter are those that don't believe. These are the unbelievers. Do we have anything particularly sharp to say about this? What percent of the world does not believe in God? With many of them it doesn't make any difference. Everywhere so far the theme has been addressed to the Christian nation. You notice here in the next verse this hint of a period of extermination. We're living on the frail edge of an ecosystem right now that, as we know, is collapsing, and here it goes. Verse 2: "The earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Well, there is a quietus. There is a real extermination period, and there have been such. This reads just like the description in that issue of the *National Geographic* that I showed you here on the subject of extermination. It was the fervent heat of a comet. Well, you'd call it a comet, but it was a meteor. A meteorite doesn't hit the earth, but a meteor does, and there have been some beauties wallop the earth from time to time. Well, not necessarily that this is it, but

“the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat [well, there’s nothing much you can do about conservation when you reach that stage], yea, in that great day when ye shall be brought to stand before the Lamb of God.”

This is not fear of death. No one can survive this sort of thing. This is what comes after. We recognize here that there is more to come. This is what we have to look forward to in the end. This is to make us behave, and I hope we do. When that curtain comes down, then you’ll see the real stage. Then the whole thing will open out to us and we’ll see what it is. Will you deny then that Christ is real, “or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye supposed that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt?” This is what we’re going to do—to shift to this other world here. It’s all working up to this.

Well, it can’t be because you wouldn’t receive it, you see. You rejected it frantically. Notice he says here, “a consciousness of your guilt.” You’ll know then that the only reason you weren’t able to enjoy what you had a right to is that you wouldn’t have it. Notice: “ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being,” but not “when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt.” You throw yourself out of it. It doesn’t have to be a particular hell. When a book is opened and they say particular crimes you’ve committed, you’ll know perfectly well what the crimes were. It’s your guilt that will accuse you. If you have ever abused his laws, you’ll know that. No accuser will be necessary.

Verse 4: “Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God.” He’s going to give you the best you want. You’re getting let off as easy as [possible]. You’d prefer hell a thousand times so that you won’t have to [be in his presence], so that’s what you get, if you want it. You know the kind of people you like and you want to be with. Everyone’s going to get the easiest possible sentence here. You’ll be far “more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God,” so they’re not going to make you. You’ll say thank heaven for that. God, you’re being very kind, not making me dwell here. It’s like not being forced to take a certain class that’s so far beyond you you’d be utterly miserable. You wouldn’t know what was going on there. It’s the same thing. We’re adjusted to what we’re willing to take and what we’re able to take. There’s justice and mercy all the way here. Notice he says we would much prefer “to dwell with the damned souls in hell [they’re you’re people]. For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God.” You can imagine that embarrassment. You’d want anything to happen—the mountains to cover you, the rocks to fall on you, etc. So this is a very good reason, he says. “O then ye unbelieving, turn ye unto the Lord.” The whole trouble is people just don’t believe this. There’s not going to be any heaven. There’s not going to be anything like that hereafter [they say]. This is a point that we come to now—“. . . that perhaps ye may be found spotless, pure, fair, and white, having been cleansed.” It’s still not too late. You’re not clean now, but you can still do it, “having been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, at that great and last day. And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God.”

Now this idea of gifts. We deny the gifts; we prefer office to gifts. Brigham Young said prophecy is not an office—it’s a gift. There are certain gifts, but we deny them. Yet they’re the only things that are real. The office is temporary and artificial. A breath can make them and a breath hath made. Remember Burns talking about the same thing. Anyone can be appointed to any office; offices are of that nature. Men make them, we appoint them, and they’re temporary. They’re for a purpose. We say office is everything. It was St. Augustine who decided that since we cannot control the spiritual gifts, we cannot control the Spirit. We cannot control revelation except by living righteously, and his generation didn’t expect to live righteously. Remember his famous prayer: “God give me chastity and continence, but not yet.” Well, that’s the way they expected to live. He said under these conditions we’re not going to get revelations, and the worst thing about them is they can’t be controlled. He was a Roman and thought everything had to be controlled. We have to crack down on everything. Ah, but office. That’s different. Ceremony and office—they will take the place of revelations and gifts. So they did; everything then became



ceremony and office. You can invent and control ceremonies. You can stage them on a certain date, and in the same way you can control the power of office. You can administer here and there. You can set up committees and the like and have everything in control. You can't do that with the spiritual gifts and the Spirit. So that took the place, and we are prone today to respect office simply for itself and nothing else. So they deny the revelations and the gifts. And here are the great gifts. You'll notice what they're done with—revelations, prophecies, healing, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues. Those are the greatest gifts.

Verse 8: "He that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures." Joseph Smith said everything you teach must square with the scriptures. We have them. And so [verse 11], "I will show you a God of miracles." Then he talks and sums up the atonement here: "Because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man. . . . They are brought back into the presence of the Lord [that's what *atonement* means—brought back into the presence of God]; yea, this is wherein all men are redeemed, because the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection, which bringeth to pass a redemption from an endless sleep."

Notice, the Book of Mormon recognizes—and this is recognized earlier by Nephi—that entropy is a real thing. It would be an endless sleep if there wasn't somebody who knew more about it. Nature is impersonal and lets you do anything you want. The expression that Alma uses is that we would die to rot and disappear and rise no more in the normal order of things. That's what nature would have us do, and that's true. They frankly admit it, and he admits it here—"a redemption from an endless sleep."

I think of Cattullus's famous ode here, "One perpetual night of endless sleep is all that awaits anybody here." But that's not so, because there's somebody who's able to control that, somebody who knows more. I mean if nature is dumb and blind and has no particular preferences for this, that, or the other, why can't the power of mind control it? It's not going to make any objection as long as you follow whatever laws or principles are built into the structure of these things. The point is that there's someone who's there who is able to overcome it. This is a very real thing which we see all around us—the power of entropy is reduced all the time. This is what Buckminster Fuller wrote about. He called it syntropy. The Russians are especially intrigued by this, especially one called Cuzera. He says, look, this is silly to say [there's no God], because everywhere you look you see things are being formed, put together. Somebody's doing something, he says. And you don't know anything about it.

Well, we've got to get on to the Jaredites. Incidentally, here are these things. This is Brother Kimball's talk. They're 20 cents apiece. Too much, but that's the world we live in. We've just been talking about that.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

## Semester 4, Lecture 108 Mormon 9 The Book of Mormon and the Ruins

With Moroni's comment in Mormon 9:26 we've got to wind that up. "Who will rise up against the almighty power of the Lord? . . . Who will despise the works of the Lord? Who will despise the children of Christ? Behold, all ye who are despisers of the works of the Lord, for ye shall wonder and perish."

Why that word *despise*? What does *despise* mean? *Despicio*, which means look down upon, hold as inferior, hold yourself as above that sort of childish nonsense. That's what despise means, and that's the only way you can reject the word of the Lord. You can't be neutral. You can't laugh it off exactly, and you can't argue with it and get angry. No, just despise it. We don't even consider that stuff. That's for children; that's guff [you might say]. And as I say, the only way you can reject it is to despise it, so that's why he's talking this way. Then "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him." This is the great issue, the fearsome decisions we have to make here. Notice how personal it is.

Verse 28: "Be wise [the opposite of despising] in the days of your probation [and then he says an interesting thing]; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God." That's an important statement there. What does it mean by "consume it on your lusts"? Yield to the natural man. What limit is there to justifying behavior as natural? Cannibalism is natural behavior, your might say, and orgies certainly are—delighting in the shedding of blood, rape, and all sorts of things that excite people. They get great interest in shows, games, etc. Those things are perfectly natural. Can you justify them because they're natural? You actually have to resist them—they're such a strong natural drive. So he says "ask not, that ye may consume it"—that is, consume your desires, fulfill your life and your wishes on whatever you want to do if it feels good. That's your lust. If it feels good, go right ahead [the world says].

Don't do that, he says, even though it is a natural temptation. But ask [for help]. You have to ask. You must have support in resisting it. Your nature isn't going to be enough to get through with it. You must have support there. "Ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God." You don't mitigate daily vices by visits to the confessional or the chapel or the temple or anything like that. In verse 29 he says, "See that ye do all things in worthiness," your whole life. There was a lot of talk about that in the conference yesterday and the day before. This very thing—do all things in worthiness.

Verse 30: "Behold, I speak unto you as though I spake from the dead; for I know that ye shall have my words. Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, . . . but rather give thanks to God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been."

Notice why the Book of Mormon is also taken up with crime and folly and war. It's an account of follies and calamities. It's for our benefit, that you may be wiser. There's a way of avoiding these things he's been talking about. First you don't despise; you take these things seriously. Then you're naturally tempted—everybody is. He says resist that; ask for the Lord to assist you in that, and that will go. Then you can learn from our imperfections. For heaven's sake don't do the silly

things we did—our follies and calamities. Of course, we are doing them. Then he ends up saying it's in reformed Egyptian, a language which has changed completely. Verse 34: "None other people knoweth our language."

There are a lot of problems in the Book of Mormon that should be touched on, but we don't have time for them. So I have gathered some sources and comments here, and I've got another photocopy to inflict on you. This is eight pages long, and it will cost you 25 cents for this. You should have this; it will help you. I'm going to pass them around right now, and you can keep it if you want. If you want to keep it, you can pay 25 cents. There are some important notes here. This is a spiel I had to give down at Mérida in Yucatan ten years ago. In the process I gathered a lot of interesting notes which you might find useful. Here are some more I had from another class. While we're handing those out, we can talk about Brother Kimball's speech. You notice that Brother Kimball made three points here. We should all note how he starts out. He talks about the marvelous earth we find ourselves on and the dark and threatening clouds. The Lord gave us a choice world, but he expects us to be righteous and obedient to his commandments. That's what we've just been talking about. "But when I review the performance of this people in comparison to what is expected, I am appalled and frightened."

He starts out that way, and then he talks about three things. The first one is the deteriorating environment. We've noticed that's become much more serious since. The second is the quest for affluence. That's the next subject he talks about. And the third is our trust in deadly weapons, in military power and military solutions. All these, of course, are fundamental in the Book of Mormon. Look how far ahead of its time the Book of Mormon was in talking about ecology—the destruction of forests making it necessary for people to use cement, etc. These things are talked about on this thing that's being handed out now. Do you all have one of these called "The Book of Mormon and the Ruins"? They're cruising around and certainly taking their time. I should have distributed them in smaller bundles, shouldn't I? Efficiency is not our strong point in this life. But read and notice the Book of Mormon quotations, when he quotes Mormon, etc., in Brother Kimball's speech. It may give you some ideas for the paper we're going to ask for.

Now this one. There are not enough? That's odd. I had a huge pile of them. This is strange. Well, then, pay attention. Do you have one, Sister de Castillo? How many don't have them? Oh, that's not bad—you won't miss much. These references are very useful, though. First of all we have the ruins. This was the thing that challenged Joseph Smith. We'll go through this fast. Mexico is the one place where a student need not apologize for being ignorant and being a tourist. From the first beginning to the present, all who have examined the ruins in the New World (that includes our own Brother Ray Matheny who wrote a cover-page article in the *National Geographic* a short time ago [September 1987] on the excavations he is doing down there) have been nothing but tourists. They view, they wonder, and they guess. We'll see why. One asks, can anybody account for the ruins here? So there are certain questions you must ask yourself, as Peter Thompkins says in his work on the Mexican pyramids. The first one: what about accounting for these ruins? This was a new book at the time, *Mexico antes de los Aztecas* by Anguiano. "The discussions concerning the settlement of America are very far from over," he wrote. He noticed that "countless theories . . . are circulating about the origins of the Olmecs. The physical appearance of the Olmecs is unknown. The great carved heads remain a mystery."

You've seen them down in La Venta—these huge heads with the headbands on them. They're a complete mystery, he says. "La Venta is disconcerting . . . by the mystery of the mental processes of these strange monuments." What are they doing there? The same holds all the way to the Old Kingdom of Egypt. No one to this day has [the answer]. There are all the arguments and theories about the pyramids, but nobody has a real answer to that. So here we are talking about a mysterious world very far removed from our own. That great monument called the King's Stela: "Who was it? What is it trying to say? The necessary information is missing for venturing even the most minimal speculation!"

In other words, we don't know a darn thing about the monuments, the most impressive ones. He says, "No one knows what became of the Olmecs." From the 14,000 years of Pre-Classical occupation "not a single item of clothing has been found." Now that's interesting, because in Egypt out of Seila, where BYU is excavating, you can walk for miles kicking up the sand, and you'll kick up bones and pottery—and big pieces of cloth, two, three, and four thousand years old, in good condition. On the second level of the Cairo Museum, there are whole garments of cloth from the predynastic times made out of the most beautiful linen, gorgeous—as good as any linen they could make today. How did those prehistoric people ever find out that you could take a blue flower and make a fine, tough white cloth out of it? But they knew, and it's as good as ours. But in the New World we don't find any [cloth], and of course it's because of the moisture. Out there in the Libyan desert, you dig into a grave or a passage (they're all over the place), and among other things that get in your way are pieces of cloth—some of it rough, some of it fine. And those we found in the pre-Christian graves were magnificently dressed in cloth that is still brilliant. Some people were wearing four and five different complete costumes at the same time. That would keep them warm. But what an amazing contrast. We have no cloth here at all, and cloth is one of the big things over there.

[Quoting again from Anguiano:] "Why were wheels never used [they had wheels] for transporting people and merchandise in a very active trade and commerce?" We know from their toys that they had toy animals and wagons that moved around on wheels, but they never used them in active trade. Why would that be? Well, you can account for that. The Arabs will never use the wheel. They were acquainted with the wheel for thousands of years, but they say, "Satan is in the wheel. He makes it go." It's a great mystery to them how a wheel can work. I had a very good Druze friend, a very learned man, a thirty-second-degree Mason. He was very suspicious about riding in a wheeled vehicle. He walked everywhere; he didn't like it. Well, why do people do it? Why don't we ride buffalo and oxen? You never see one of us riding a cape buffalo or a water buffalo. They are dangerous things that would kill one of us, but we see little skinny kids in Southeast Asia riding them all over the place. See, we have these customs, and they stick with us. So you can't argue about these on the evidence of what's missing in Book of Mormon archaeology—if you can call it that. He says, "Why were wheels never used for transporting people and merchandise and a very active trade and commerce? There is no explanation for these things," says Mr. Anguiano.

"It is a mystery how they were able to perforate hard stone using the stone tools of the time." Well, the hardest and the best and the most perfect stonework in Egypt is found at a time when [scientists] say they didn't have metals. How did they do it then? They had these marvelous polished surfaces and cut great blocks out of the Tura quarry there. I mean it's on a scale you can't conceive of. I'm not talking about the pyramids. I'm talking about thousands of other buildings far under the ground and superb structures. Doing all this in this hard, hard rock without any tools at all? Something is missing here, you see. It's the same thing here [in Mesoamerica]. "How and to whom did the idea occur of erecting these prodigious structures?" He's talking about more pyramids, the pyramids of Teotihuacan. "Nobody has the least idea," he says, and the same thing applies to Egypt. What a world we live in. "Nor has anyone an idea what the stone mosaic faces were for. . . . How they were able to erect an idol so huge that Europeans were unable to tear it down is a mystery."

That's a thing where the Egyptians fool us all the time. Our engineers are completely baffled. A couple of Egyptians will get to something with sticks and a little sand and do a thing that we could never do. It's a marvelous thing. They wanted to raise this gigantic statue of Ramses II up to the second floor of the Cairo Museum and didn't know how to do it. They brought in engineers from Manchester and all sorts of tools and machinery, and they couldn't do it. Then they got about half a dozen skinny little Egyptians with a big box. They put some boards around it, filled it with sand, and started ramming with sticks. The thing started to move, and in a couple

of days they had it up on the second floor. All it took was a few sticks and a little sand, and our engineers couldn't do it without tearing down the building. Well, these things are quite surprising. The solution always turns out to be something absurdly simple, but we miss it. Just like the gospel there.

“Neither the Aztecs of the 16th century nor their predecessors, the Toltecs, knew anything at all about the people of Teotihuacan. They knew only the ruins of a fabulous city.” We get that in the Book of Mormon—because of the former inhabitants upon the land. He was not referring to the Jaredites; they knew about the Jaredites. There was complete deforestation of central Mexico, or whatever it was, because of the former inhabitants upon the land. We'll get a reference to that here. And referring to various practices of building one expensive structure over another, “the reason for this practice is unknown.” They would build a whole new building over the other one at particular times. And the ubiquitous geometrical designs—you find them everywhere. “Nobody knows for what purpose they were worked out.” The “yoke” and the ax stones: “the purpose of these objects is not known. . . . Up to the present time the cause for abandoning Monte Alban [the most impressive ruin of them all, next to Teotihuacan—and many other places] has not been determined.”

Why would they abandon it? The big thing is why it fell, why they disappeared all of a sudden. They didn't leave anything behind. This is a characteristic of the Book of Mormon—swept from the face of the land with no record of them at all. They just go. “So far Zapotec writing has not been deciphered. . . . [Regarding Mayan origins] there are theories for every taste. [The three Mayan codices—that's all we have, just three books, and he says they] are still a long way from being completely deciphered.”

That sounds rather discouraging, doesn't it. Then we have recurring patterns which come throughout the Book of Mormon. When I gave this speech, Culbert had just written this book, *The Classic Mayan Collapse*, to explain why the Mayans and various people suddenly collapsed. It was edited at the University of New Mexico, and a number of contributors wrote for it. Culbert says, “We will probably never really and fully identify the relative significance of the various historical forces, their causes and consequences, to everyone's satisfaction. . . . Since we are in fact frequently unable to resolve these questions with respect to literate civilizations of the recent past [where we actually have written records] archaeology cannot expect to succeed in endeavors fraught with even greater problems [much more ancient and no writing]. Succeeding fashion will necessarily favor other causes and types of explanation; the chief result will be to provide endless occupation for intellectuals so concerned.” They'll go on arguing this 'til the end of time. Egyptology has been busy for 200 years now, and they still haven't agreed on a single thing. There's not one single word, the pronunciation of which we actually know. As to the great southern collapse [in Mesoamerica], “no solution acceptable to the majority of students has yet appeared.”

Here's Madame Sejourne's work, *In the Universe of Quetzalcoatl*: “Every changing attempt to know the home of the progenitor of Nahuatl culture [that's the Quetzalcoatl people] is irredeemably doomed to failure.” We'll never know where these people came from, she said.

Michael Coe, who is the man at Yale and the big wheel in this field, says in *The Mayan Scribe and His World*, “Unhappily, our knowledge of Mesoamerican ethnoastronomy is abysmal. For this . . . the major fault lies with ethnologists and social anthropologists more involved with lightweight ‘problems’ such as acculturation [the things that anthropologists like to do—oh they fiddle around] while major segments of Mesoamerican mental life perish under their very noses.”

Well, for four years at Claremont I shared an office with Morris Opler, who was president of the American Anthropology Association, and that's what he did. Every Thursday night Hoyer would come in from UCLA and we'd have big discussions about things, and they never got any deeper

than the most superficial study of a tribal dance or something like that. Remember what Warren Wheeler says about science really applies all the way. Science does not explain; science only describes. You describe a thing in science; you never explain it. We've gone through that before. Gravity's never been explained. You just describe its workings.

Now there is argument of origins that they use so much in trying to attack the Book of Mormon. Where did these people come from? The answer is, "Nobody knows." Krickenberg, who's done a lot on Mexican culture, says, "Present evidence is totally inadequate to explain how these advanced cultures arose. [Did they arise on the ground? Where did they come from?] Apparently without roots," he says. You can't say, well they evolved in this evolution of thousands of years. No, the primitives are one thing, and these people are something else. The one does not evolve into the other. There's no stage of transition visible at all. "Apparently without roots, without any preparation the earliest American civilizations appear ready on the scene: in Mesoamerica, the Olmec; in the Andean lands, the Chavas. These remarkable phenomena can perhaps only be explained satisfactorily by assuming one or more drives influencing ancient America from the outside. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how primitive conditions, which varied little during 15,000 to 20,000 years of persistence, could suddenly experience a violent surge of progress, passing through the whole scale of advancing culture to a full-blown civilization. Such a thing is utterly out of the question." Of course, they were migrants. We know there was much more migrating in the ancient world than we ever believed before, but the Book of Mormon tells us that. Of course, the book of Ether, which we come to next, is a prime example of how such a thing can be brought. "Such a thing is utterly out of the question in the case of the two oldest American civilizations. All of a sudden they are simply there," he says.

Well, how do you account for that? Ten guesses. Somebody must have brought it—the most obvious thing in the world. "Until the present time, the Archaic and Olmec antiquities are the oldest remains of the former inhabitants of central and southern Mexico." Where do we trace them up? Where do we look for them? In Utah, of all places. "Excavations in Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico reveal two higher cultures: the Anasazi [we all know them] and the Hohokam on the Gila and Salt rivers. They were the basketmakers without the bow or the tomahawk or pottery [well, what did they have?]. Predecessors of the Pueblos, they also occupied northern Mexico from A.D. 100 to 500 [but] it is, of course, completely unthinkable that these civilizations suddenly emerge, so to speak, out of nothing, which is what it amounts to if one takes the primitive culture forms of the Cochise and the Basketmaker levels as the 'nothing' in question [they were the ones]. There are Paleolithic [he calls them] findings in Oaxaca, Yucatan, and Guatemala." The trouble with the most primitive stone forms of all is that they're the latest—they come last. It's the same thing in Egypt, too. You get Achellean, Chellean, Abbevillian, and points, and all sorts of cu de prain lying around on the ground. They were the last things to be made. They come at the top of the strata, not at the bottom where they should. Yes?

"Were there any records of a mass extinction, such as all the bones of the Nephites?"

In one place? That's interesting. You don't find them at all anywhere, unless they've been preserved—even in Asia. We'll mention that next time when we get to Ether. But what about these Paleolithic findings in Oaxaca, Yucatan, Guatemala? They are very late and belong to a time when the great Classical and Post-Classical cultures of [Mesoamerica] had long passed away. They don't fit in. It's funny. The oldest, most primitive forms of artifact are usually found in the very latest strata, after all the rest had gone. Well, we have that, too. Now it's very well known that the people anthropologists visit as primitives are just people who had declined from former civilizations. They've gone out hiding in the woods.

[Quoting from Krickenberg:] "Not only are we completely ignorant of where the Olmecs got their highly developed technique of working jade, their astonishing skill as sculptors handling

enormous stone blocks, and their high art of portraiture, . . . but the greater riddle still remains to be answered: where does their sophisticated system of writing and calendar-reckoning come from— . . . the oldest known in Mesoamerica?”

So we have a problem here. Then Anguiano says, “The Aztecs and Toltecs knew nothing about the people who had occupied the land before them.” Remember, Aztecs and Toltecs came later. They came after the time of Christ, eighth and ninth centuries. So this is not going to answer the problem. It doesn’t answer the question at all.

Were there people before the Nephites? (the third item in the speech). Well, there certainly were, according to the Book of Mormon. Latter-day Saints are disturbed when we read that remains much older than the Book of Mormon are found on the continent. Well, of course, they are. We assume that everything that’s found is either Nephite or Jaredite. But read Helaman 3:4–5 where he says, “And they did travel to an exceeding great distance, insomuch that they came to large bodies of water and many rivers. Yea, and even they did spread into all parts of the land, into whatever parts had not been rendered desolate and without timber, because of the many inhabitants who had before inherited the land.” A very interesting thing. There were lots of people there before them. They’d wiped out all the timber, and when they wipe it out, it stays that way.

We’ll read the rest of that [from Nibley’s speech]: Here we learn how the Nephites pushing up from the south “an exceeding great distance [if they were from Guatemala and went to the valley of Mexico, it’s more than 1,200 air miles from Guatemala to Mexico City. That’s a long way to push, you see—if it was that, of course] in a major infiltration settled a clearly defined territory. As the Book of Mormon describes it, there was a sea to the north [we should put a map up here, I suppose—there’s a map in here, so you can see that] and south as well as the east and west can. This can only be found in one region in the Western Hemisphere—that’s Mesoamerica and Central Mexico. You see, the Isthmus of Panama curls back on itself so that the eastern mouth of the canal is in the Pacific and the western mouth of the canal is in the Atlantic. It reverses itself and for 120 miles it goes east and west. So there’s a sea north of it, a sea south of it, a sea east of it, and sea west of it. This will only pertain to that particular part. That may be a clue. We’re not going to argue Book of Mormon geography, but that’s certainly so. The expressions referring to the seas were ancient, east and west, etc. In the Codex Ramirez, which is published in Mexico City, we are told how the first Montezuma conquered almost from sea to sea and he ruled to the sea southward, and in another direction to the limits of the great sea, 300 leagues to the south. So he ruled almost from sea to sea. There was the sea on all sides there. The Central Highland of Mexico is described in all early accounts as a land of many waters. (That’s what is in the back there. I don’t know how it got in, but it might be useful.) There are many waters and streams here, and, of course, there was much more water at that time. As you all know, Mexico City was built over the water. Edward Seler wrote the old four-volume classic on early Mexico; he collected more data than anybody else. It was in the early part of the century, but he did a great work. Seler maintains that the name usually translated as “Highlands,” Anauac, really meant “land of many waters.”

The complete deforestation of the land doesn’t suit the vast forests of the north, but was a very serious problem in ancient Mesoamerica, as it is today in Mesoamerica. Those are the jungles that are coming down, and we refer to these statements in Helaman with [reference to] the condition of the valley of Oaxaca in the fifth to ninth centuries. We’re told that in the valley of Oaxaca over-population “created a growing shortage of timber for construction and firewood and for cooking, apparently reaching such an alarming extent that the hills were completely stripped of forest.” Now in the Book of Mormon they made a rule, remember, that they were not to cut down a single tree. It was so strict. They had denuded the whole thing. Nobody worried about deforestation in Joseph Smith’s day. They thought the woods were endless—inexhaustible, they

used to say when I was a kid, chopping down all the trees in Oregon. Inexhaustible. Well, they weren't, but they still act as if they were.

So the hills were completely stripped of forest. According to W. T. Sanders, among the major causes contributing to the rapid decline and collapse both in the highlands of Mexico and the Mayan country was the necessity of bringing more land under cultivation with "a corresponding decline in forest products." So they had to build with cement, it tells us in the Book of Mormon. It's very interesting. Peter Thompkins quotes Katherwood about the mortar that was used at Labna, where that beautiful gate is and quite a bit of highway. These ancient highways are way up in Yucatan, not down in South America. Labna has a beautiful ceremonial gate and a highway leading to it. But there is lots of concrete used, and it was analyzed. Katherwood found that it was the very same mortar that was used in Puzawoelana by the Romans with such effect in building with concrete. But there's a more recent study in the August 1980 *National Geographic* (page 216), quoting S. J. K. Wilkerson. He says, "In the use of poured concrete, says my engineer colleague David Hyman, El Tajín's builders excelled at a technique remarkably similar to today's." So it wasn't just mortar between bricks or stones; it was poured concrete. When they say it was cement, it was real cement—which comes as a surprise. It was a Roman-type cement.

[Quoting from Culbert:] "In addition, the expansion of land clearance . . . might have reduced availability of forest resources, . . . accelerated in high population areas where potential fodder was gathered for fuel . . . as the expansion of Maya agriculture in the Late Classic became more costly and less reliable."

Instead of reporting spectacular ruins, the new settlers in the land in the Book of Mormon find only depleted resources with timber all used up for housing and fuel. Since such forests never return, the damage could have been exceedingly ancient. (Do you know that Provo Canyon used to be heavily timbered? Then there was a great forest fire in 1915. It never grew back again, so those things are remarkably permanent.) The inhabitants had disappeared though the entire land which had once been occupied by a vast population. For the Nephites, they were simply "the former inhabitants of the land." The noncommittal term and the failure to mention Jaredites, even by way of speculation, make it clear the new pioneers had no idea who those people might have been, only that they had been there a long time—long enough to clean out the forest—and also that they had filled the land. They were very numerous. They were not Lamanites, for Lamanites were contemporary savages, not a lost civilization. So the moral is, [you can answer] this stumbling block by saying, oh yes there were people here a millennium before. Well, you're going to have a book of Ether for that.

Then this question about the racial issue. Were the Lamanites a single racial stock? Well, we've mentioned that enough to show how mixed up these people were, but here are some interesting quotes anyway. The racial issue is confusing because through the years [we have given] this simplistic explanation that you either had to be a Lamanite or a Nephite, and the Jaredites were completely extinct. That was it. Well, we've always been so simplistic. On the other hand is the equally naive doctrine that everything that ever came to the Western Hemisphere entered by way of the Bering Strait. That was [one man's idea], and they still cling to it. That was the famous anthropologist Hrdlička, who came to Harvard and started working on this. He devoted his whole life to proving a passage along the Alaska land bridge, the Bering Strait. It's shallow there, and when the ocean goes down you can cross—people have. Well, there's no objection to their coming in that way at all. The Hopis call that "coming in by the back door." They were aware of that tradition. Those people came down. See, the Athabascans were different people. So we have here this business of [how they came in].

This theory of the Mongolian extraction and passing over the Alaska land bridge is in Josiah Priest's *American Antiquities*. I have an original first edition of this, incidentally. Everybody in



Joseph Smith's day said that's the way. All you have to do is look at the map, and you can see they came over the Bering Strait. That's what they'll tell you in the *National Geographic*, or anywhere you go to read it. It's so neat, but it's simplistic. It's as if nobody else came, and this is why. Anguiano says, "There are among the Indians Mongoloids, . . . Negroids. . . [There certainly are] Southern European types [many of them], . . . giants [Semitic types, Mediterranean types], pygmies [Venezuela and Brazil]. Many anthropologists consider it impossible that all these types should be traced to a single Bering Strait route from Asia. South American skulls and dialects both have strong Oceanian resemblances and indicate a Pacific crossing."

This is what the famous Edward Seler says: The two main native traditions have the ancestors coming from the east by sea and from the west by sea. They all agree that their ancestors came in boats. Well, if they keep saying that, shouldn't we pay some attention to their traditions? No, no, they crossed the land bridge across Alaska there [people claim].

Then those favoring the single shot explanation (the land bridge) of everything have been significantly silent on the subject of blood types. G. A. Matson is a member of the Church, and he is the director of the National Blood Bank in St. Louis. So all the types, all the data, passes through his hands. He administers it, and he's aware of all these things. He's kept careful check on this. We do have a national blood bank there, and that's where Brother Matson is. They find at the blood bank that the dominant type among the American Indians is type O, though some tribes like the Blackfeet are 100 percent type A, as are the Hawaiians. Now Mongolians, on the other hand (people tell us that Indians are all Mongolians) are almost exclusively type B. You won't find type B among the Indians—it's very rare. And if there's anything that's conservative, it's duck lice and blood types. Those things never change through millions of years, they tell us. So, this question of race should be pretty well settled, if the issue hadn't been carefully avoided. They never mention that blood type business, but you almost never find a blood type B [among Indians], though there were Mongols who came from the north. There's a mixture there, but the dominant is A, which is the same, incidentally, as the Arabs and Jews. I mean the dominant type of the Indians is type O. The same combination of O and A is found in the same proportions among the Arabs and Jews as is found among the Indians. We're talking about rough proportions here. But the one thing that's missing is the Mongol type, which is exceedingly rare, the type B.

Now related to the problem of race is that of migration. There the experts have recently been bold to speculate, and it's been crippled by the doctrine that the first people to come were the only comers. Why can't people come after that? The only condition the Book of Mormon lays down to people coming to this continent is that they come with the knowledge and approval of the Lord. That's it. They could have come before Lehi or after Lehi. "The Ten Tribes theory is demonstrably false," Anguiano says, but nothing would keep people from coming over. We have nothing against Egyptian or Phoenician or Viking landings. There's no trace of surviving racial types. In each case, how can we be sure? Many have noted that the great ceremonial centers of Mesoamerica . . . Now this is interesting. When you see them, what are you reminded of? You're reminded of Southeast Asia—that heavy ornate decoration, the towers, the great detail, the overdressing, and all the rest of it are "reminiscent of Angkor Wat [the great temples in Burma and Siam] and the Khmer civilization of Southeast Asia," as Donald Coe says. Robert Heine-Geldern, an Austrian who has spent many years on this particular subject, calls attention to the often stunning resemblances between the exotic remains of Cambodia, India, Mexico, and Guatemala (they all look just alike in their way); the impressive number of Chinese elements in Olmec—the tiger cult, the bronzes, the jade carving, etc. You'd think you were in China there. Contacts must have been by sea, not directly across the Pacific, however, but using the Kuroshyo-Drift, which follows along the coast. Remember the shortest distance between Japan and California—the channel islands off Santa Barbara—is a great circle in sight of land all the way. It's the shortest distance, and many junks have drifted there. The introductory chapters of Clellan's history of California recount junks, Chinese coins, fans, and other things that have been found.

Bronze handles and the like have been found in the channel islands along the California coast because junks have drifted there.

Richard Halliburton, the sensation writer and sensation seeker of the thirties and forties decided to imitate that. He started out in a junk, but his junk was badly built. He was never seen again. He was going to follow that drift to California. The people were all waiting, but the ship never came in. "Oh lang, lang may the ladies stand, wi' their fans into their hand, Or e'er they see Sir Patrick Spens come sailing to the land." Well, not him.

There is something seriously wrong here, for the whole Southeast Asia complex doesn't arise until the ninth and tenth centuries after Christ. Well, we're way off on our schedule here. It's supposed to come from them, and yet they're much much later than these. So how do we account for that? They could not have inspired American cult centers built a thousand years earlier. The only explanation, he says, is to look for a common source. And where do you find it? In the Near East. They both got their ideas from the Near East at a much earlier time. It is there, according to Heine-Geldern, that we must find the originals, of both the American and the East Asiatic forms. That's why they look alike. They had common origins. That happens to be where the Book of Mormon people came from.

But if the people came from Asia, there's a puzzling lack of cultivated plants and domestic animals of the Old World in the New World. We don't find in the New World the plow, the potter's wheel, the bellows, glass, iron, stringed instruments, and the true arts. We don't find any of those, as well as certain cultivated plants. Well, Heine-Geldern said that accounts for the nature of the migration that was made. It was a small group of people seeking religious asylum, apparently, which is what Lehi's group was. It wasn't people bringing a whole culture with them in a mass migration. This is more than out-balanced by the more important cultural items such as political patterns, which you can bring with you in your baggage, even if it's just one family. Cosmology, art, religion, symbolism, ceremonial architecture, etc., are far too much alike in the two hemispheres to be explained by the recent far-fetched theory of conversion. Now the point is here, we don't have certain things at all. Yet these other things are even more fundamental, because they're mental and intellectual property. They're full blown here. The solution is the type of migration indicated. The people who crossed the sea were not artisans or technicians but cultivated folk of religious, intellectual and priestly persuasion. Well, that's Lehi's family, and the people who went with him. What is indicated, according to Heine-Geldern, is "carefully planned and prepared undertakings primarily with missionary goals." Well, look at Alma and Nephi. He thinks of himself and leaves his pious community. That's what they're doing. They're spreading the gospel—not to natives in the land, but among themselves. They go out into the desert just like the people at Qumran in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They go out to live a proper religious life and expect the coming of the Messiah—to live the plan of salvation as the Lord laid it down for us. That's what they're doing here—not necessarily missionary goals but religious goals. They set up their own community of saints.

Then why no trace of Southeast Asiatic religious teachings in America? Why no Hinduism and Buddhism? The answer again is to look to the Near East, where the Spanish priests and Puritan divines instantly detected so many resemblances between the rites and teachings of the Old World and the New. Things were very different when they first came here. Things had a different appearance. Judging today, you'd never guess it, but everyone was enormously impressed by these people living just like the Jews. They even thought they spoke Hebrew. And these parallels—of course, they were conditioned to see that. Nevertheless, if you read a book like Boudinot's *Star in the West*, written in 1820, and you'll see how much these resemblances were [evident]. People like Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin were absolutely convinced that the Indians were of Hebrew descent. Joseph Smith could have got it from them, eh? Then the problem would be to write it up.

Well, we give some examples here from the Mississippi Valley. Holmes collected extensive parallels from the Mississippi Valley to Mexico and Mesoamerica. He showed that at the time of the Conquistadores there was a massive movement of tribes from the north to the southeastern United States. They were moving again, just as in the Book of Mormon there is that massive movement toward the north and east. The Cherokee came from Lake Erie, for example. The platform mounds of the Mississippi Valley are right out of Mexico. Well, I guess the best town to see it in would be Hotevilla, where you have five kivas that are built just on the model of Mexican temples with towers.

We have to hurry on here. [Then there's the question of] whether they were migrating too far. (There's this map given here.) He tells us here: "A superficial concept of distances . . . reinforced by a false perception of present-day boundaries of the Americas is one of those things, perhaps the most popular, . . . which absolutely refuses to admit cultural contacts and derivations."

What he's showing is the distance from one end of the Inca Empire [to the other], which runs all through the Andes and through which the Incas made a daily milk run with goods and military inspections every day. They wouldn't take more than a day, but the length of that Inca Empire is greater by far than the distance from Mexico City to New York. It's by far greater, and it was a regular run, you see. But here he takes it as far as from Columbia to New York. It goes through Yucatan and all these others. Of course, that's a longer way around, but it's the same air distance. It's even shorter as to the question that they couldn't negotiate those great distances; they couldn't go that far.

Well, the moral teaching is the most important here. Now this is what happened. People often ask, "Where are the great heaps of evidence that would confirm the Book of Mormon." As Bullard says here in Culbert's book, "The old Classic culture with its social controls was completely sundered and swept away [that's a favorite expression in the Book of Mormon: they shall be swept away as soon as they're ripe in iniquity—they shall be swept from the face of the land]. The Post-Classic is a new chapter, if not indeed a new book. . . . The fabulous cities of the Puuc were totally and finally abandoned." [L. Sejourne:] "Not only the Maya country but the Atlantic Coast, Oaxaca, and the Central Highlands of Mexico were all deserted at once."

This is an astounding thing to tell us. Ether 2:8-10 says, "Whoso should possess this land of promise . . . should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them. . . . And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land that they are swept off."

How do the horrendous excesses indicated [happen]? Some of the paintings and carvings match with the Book of Mormon. Well, the fulness of iniquity describes them. This takes us to the dark side of early American civilization. A sixteenth-century Spanish description of rites and ceremonies employed by the Indians of New Spain is quite terrifying. Moroni 9:19: "And they have become strong in their perversion and they are alike brutal, sparing none." The Book of Mormon says they had perverted the right ways of the Lord. They had the religion and the ceremonies, but they perverted them to an extreme extent. We mentioned this before.

Here we have Quetzlcoatl, the great prophet and savior, departing with a promise to return. The other was the cult traced to the time of King Uemac, "at which time the people turned to war and human sacrifice." We've seen that. The evil has two aspects in the Book of Mormon: (1) General corruption and licentiousness, with frequent mention of "delight in the shedding of blood." (2) The domination of secret societies with their oaths, signs, insignia, etc. These last were very much in evidence in Post-Classical art. This is what did it, you see. For example, the vast display of overwhelming symbolism, especially the lion or jaguar, the eagle and snake motifs. They are society members and various clans which subject everybody to terror, and these still exist among certain Indians. In the Book of Mormon the ubiquitous eagle, lion, and snake motifs are only

hinted at, but in the correct context. Nephi tells people how “upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceeding high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them” (2 Nephi 4:25). It was not permissible. He comes as near as permissible to hinting at the sort of thing that was perverted.

There’s a parallel here beginning on page 7. After all, the purpose of his study was to say why did this all collapse? “Oversuccessful, overstrained, and probably overbearing, Tikal would have been at the mercy of ecological, social, and political catastrophes” [Culbert].

“You have obtained many riches. . . . Ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts. . . . God . . . condemneth you, and if ye persist, . . . his judgments must speedily come upon you (Jacob 2:13–21). See, there’s the Book of Mormon speaking the same language.

“As civilization becomes more complex, it becomes more vulnerable—as we are discovering to our increasing horror in recent years. . . . The problems of maintenance and unity increase geometrically” [E. W. Andrews].

[Other factors are] the rise of population density, militarism, and a shift from egalitarian to ranked and stratified society [W. T. Sanders]. On the Book of Mormon side, there were many merchants, many lawyers, and many officers, and the people were distinguished by ranks. The people became as numerous as the sands of the sea, and there began to be a war between the Nephites and Lamanites. Notice [Sanders mentions] militarism and a shift from an egalitarian to a ranked and stratified society. Well, the Book of Mormon says there were many officers, people began to be distinguished by ranks, and thus “there began to be great inequality . . . insomuch that the church began to be broken up.” And so it goes. All of these are matched here.

There was “an increasing distance between the peasant and noble” [according to Sanders], and Alma says, “And thus we see how great the inequality of man is because of sin and transgression. . . . Will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another?”

Then there was “migration, stimulated by peasant dissatisfaction and permitted by the breakdown of the political system” [Sanders]. They got more than they could take, and they would simply migrate. And Alma says, “We who are despised . . . shall not be trodden down. . . . I shall stir up insurrection. . . . I do not fear your power nor your authority.”

These parallels go on. You may check them and find them very instructive. Rivalry over trade and commercial war [were important]. They had free intercourse to buy and sell, but to get gain they began to commit secret murders and to rob and plunder.

Then a general summary includes a sharp differentiation, a class of bureaucrats, craft specialists, [civilization] integrated at the elite level, signs of regionalism, fighting among cities and inner cities.

Helaman says, “There were wars throughout all the land among all the people of Nephi.” There were great swellings, envyings, strife, malice, persecution, and murder. As they sum it up, this is what accounts for the disappearance of these people, and it’s exactly what the Book of Mormon says happened, right down the line at every point. Well, we don’t have time to analyze this.



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 109

Ether 1–2

The Epic Literature of the Book of Ether

I'm going to tell you the subject [for the final]. I've got to formulate a question so it can pin you down. At the end of the hour it may be clearer what the question will be. All the stuff we have would help you in this particular problem or paper. This is definitely on the subject, and all that we've read so far from 3 Nephi, 4 Nephi, Mormon [would apply]; now it's Ether and then it will be Moroni—those five books. There's a central theme that runs all through them. Yesterday I had a long conversation with Brother Oaks. He gave that excellent talk during conference on war and peace, but I say he underplayed the Book of Mormon. That is the greatest thesis on war and peace, the greatest epic on the subject that we have. That's the whole theme, so that's what the subject will be for the paper we're going to write for the final. Now, what would be a good way to formulate it? Let's think at the end of the class how we could make a specific question.

Let's turn to Ether now. The word Ether, *athira*, means “the one who left a trace, the one who left his mark or left a record.” In all Semitic languages it's the same, and it means “to leave a track, to trail somebody.” He left his tracks in the sand, but it was the brother of Jared that left most of them.

This takes us to a new setting, as we said. Imagine having finished 1 Nephi of how they trek through the desert. In that marvelous account of how they go through the desert, everything is very accurate. I've had large classes of nothing but Arab students at this school in the early days. When we had Point Four and President Harris was in charge, half the Near East came to BYU. They were required to take Book of Mormon, so the class had all these Arabs, and boy, did they eat it up. Nephi was their boy. I mean, they knew everything. It was all familiar, and it was all correct.

But having done that, having made that epic story, what about changing the whole thing entirely, as we say here? Now imagine any man insane enough to try after such colossal exertions to write another such story of equal length and detail (the book of Ether is about the same as 1 Nephi, you see), but this time about a totally different race of people living in an age far removed from any other and in a wholly different geographical setting. Everything is different in the book of Ether, except the plot. The plot's the same, and it works out the same. So what's going on? Why is it the same? Because it's always been the same—we'll see that. Not even Joseph Smith ever called attention to this prodigious feat that he's done here—the man who wrote the Book of Mormon. Yes, but who wrote the book of Ether? Well, he couldn't have gotten any help from those sources.

Now every century sees its wars, its treaties, and the troubles and the affairs of men—“yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward” [Job 5:7]—the same types of trouble, the same types of jealousy, the same types of passion. As Ecclesiastes says, nothing changes. It's always the same baloney. This world is always that way, but always in a different setting. This is the point. The setting does make a difference, and we're going into a different setting ourselves. That's why the book of Ether is important, because everything shifts into a climatic change and everything else. So the test of a historical document isn't that it tells you of wars and alarms and rumors of wars, but the setting it puts it in. I mean those casual details that could only be noted by one who was on the scene. It couldn't have been invented by anyone; only an eyewitness could have them. The story of Jared is a marvelous example of that.

There's nothing original in that story of Lehi leaving Jerusalem and wandering through the desert. We've seen that with the Jaredites, but it was also the same in the case of Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and the Church in the Wilderness, and the Latter-day Saints coming west, etc. It's the same epic of *Das Wandernde Gottesvolk*. In fact, Käsemann wrote a famous book on that subject, *God's Wandering People*. They're always chased out into the desert. This is the same sort of thing. But what strange institutions and practices we find in the book of Ether. It's all very different.

How can we ever be able to check up on such stuff? Well, we can do it. First there is the driving force of the whole thing. In 1966 I wrote an article for a journal. I have been writing quite a bit on the Asiatic background of very early history, and this talks about the migrations that have occurred from time to time. In the present century, the 1930s, H. Munro Chadwick (Chadwick's an important name here if you're going to study the book of Ether) and his wife, who worked with him on these things, pointed out what should have been obvious to everybody all along. All the great civilizations begin with an epic literature, a type of literature known as epic. It's quite different from all the others, and he pointed out that it couldn't possibly be faked. There are fake epics. *The Aeneid*, *The Luciad*, and *Ossian* are good examples. People try to fake epics, but you can't fake them. It sticks out all over the place, this heroic poetry.

Chadwick pointed out what should have been obvious to everyone, namely epic literature—a large and important segment of human history. Why does he [Mormon] bother to bring this in anyway? Just a different setting. Because this is an enormous chunk of history. This represents at least half of what's been going on in the past, and you can't neglect it. It's the same thing with the book of Moses. This takes us back and fits us into the cosmic setting. If this is the gospel, this is the eternal word of God and his dealings with men here. You've got to have more than the Wasatch church and provincial Christianity the way we do. The Christian world is very small compared with the others. You've got to take account of all the others. So we have this, and, as I say, it gives us a very large chunk of history, and it also concerns us. It's [similar to] a time we're coming into today, because, as you know, we're living in one world today. We know much more about Asia today; we're right next door to them. My kids go over to China and central Asia all the time. My son-in-law's down in Budapest, and one son is in Guam. They move around all over the world. It's a bigger world we're living in now, and the book of Ether opens it up in its archaic setting, and it lays down the basic principles of Asiatic "nonsense."

This literature that's left us by these various peoples is not the product of an unrestrained poetic fancy—they used to think it was. Since this was written in 1966, a lot has been done on this. It shows that the beginnings of civilization everywhere do not slowly emerge from a primitive background, as my Professor Wilson used to say at Chicago in Egyptology—indefinitely, gradually, and painfully they worked themselves up. For all these species to adapt themselves to their peculiar ways of life, it must have taken millions of generations because it had to be just hit or miss. It had to be natural selection, so it went on so slowly [they claimed]. But the fact is the thing has been interrupted—bang—again and again. Remember we started out mentioning extermination. There have been great extermination periods, and periods very near extermination again and again. Well, this was a thing first pointed out in the sixties by Schindewolf, which he called *neocatastrophism*. He showed how again and again nearly all of the predominant life forms suddenly disappeared, and in their place different ones suddenly emerged. Well, that has to do maybe with meteorites striking the earth or great changes—the iridium layer and all that. We won't go into that now. The thing is that these were real years of terror and gloom through which the entire race had been forced to pass from time to time. We now have good reason to believe that after many years of controversy and discussion, scientific and otherwise, that the violence of the elements forms the somber background of the epic milieu. The book of Ether is an epic milieu. That's the surrounding setting that produces this type of literature.

When I wrote this, I had no idea of the Book of Mormon in mind. Ether never occurred to me until after a doubletake. After the waters of the flood had subsided, there came the great wind floods. There are the three great floods. The flood of water, the flood of wind, and the last will be the flood of fire. This was the great wind flood which converted large areas all over the world into sandy deserts. Haldar considers the Sumerian version of the wind flood to be an excellent example of a text describing historical events in terms of religious language. We get that in the book of Ether, too. These things are not only recorded, but they are recorded geologically. Historical reality is attested by wind-blown deposits being studied everywhere—especially by the Dutch, because all Holland was one of those deposits—can be broadly correlated in some of the major migrations of people. Well here I have a very long footnote with all sorts of references. When the ice thawed in the last Ice Age, great winds blasted out from that, carrying this fine glacial dust that was deposited as loess in China, and on the eastern side in the Hungarian Basin and in eastern Europe and in western China. There were these great deposits of loess from the dust being blown. But the thing is that we get a lot of this in [other places]—we certainly get it in Egypt.

Samuel Noah Kramer is a Sumerologist who went into the earliest Sumerian records that you can find. He said, “Ah, here we have a typical epic milieu. He said this fact was primarily responsible for the more characteristic features of the Greek, Indian, and Teutonic [people]. See, you have this literature of the wandering people. You find it among the Greeks’ epic literature. You find it in the Vedic literature in India, and you find it in the German literature in the epics and the sagas. They’ve neglected it because nobody goes into Celtic very much, and the records aren’t so full. There are lots of old Norse and Icelandic records, as you know. They all tell the same story, although they’re at different times thousands of years apart.

“They were the same characteristic features at work in the ancient Near East as a whole in the earliest recorded times. These factors are always accompanied and aggravated, if not caused, by violent and prolonged atmospheric disturbances,” he said. “Wherever we turn, the earliest records of the race offer a surprisingly uniform portrait of the wandering, storm-driven hero.”

Of course we would naturally include Jared and the brother of Jared. There’s Horus, Enlil, Marduk, Mazda, Zeus, Teshub, the Celtic Mercury, and the Norse Odin, to name but a few. He is mounted on his thunder wagon, leading his toiling hosts across the windy steppes while the earth trembles and the sky gives forth with appalling electrical displays. There are lots and lots of references here; if you want me to read them I will. No point to that. But you’re getting a standard situation here, and somehow this is going to concern us. What is it that drives them? This hostile planet we’re living on. Well, we say the wind, etc. Here we get it very clearly stated in the book of Ether.

The burans of Asia are terrible at all times. Ancient and modern travelers tell almost unbelievable but uniform tales of those appalling winds that almost daily shift vast masses of sand, dust, and even gravel from one part of the continent to the other. Of course, nobody goes out at 4:00 P.M. in the summertime in Egypt because of the violent winds. The *khamzin* is going to begin now, the fifty-day wind that blows the sand and the gravel. That’s why there’s [only] heavy sand left. You walk on a crust of very coarse sand because all the fine stuff has been blown for thousands of years. And it has exposed all the stuff lying around. The great loess deposits on the eastern and western fringes of the vast area bear witness to even more dreadful dust storms (just after the Flood) that accompanied the drying up of the land after the glacial epic. But it is when the world’s weather gets out of hand, as it has a number of times in the course of history, that the blowing sands of Asia bring mighty empires to ruin, bury great cities almost overnight, and scatter the tribes in all directions to overrun and submerge the more favored civilizations of the east and west.



It's a very interesting thing. All the diggings and works that have been piled up in previous years by BYU couldn't be found anymore. They're completely covered under the sand, so these things just pass away. The weather of Asia is the central driving mechanism of world history. Huntington did a famous study on climate and civilization that came out in the thirties and was quite sensational. Professor Huntington's study showed that the driving clock of history is the climate. There are certain things you can't do when the weather misbehaves.

It is only in recent years that men have begun to correlate the great migrations of history, with their attendant wars and revolutions, with those major weather crises such as the great wind and drought of 2300–2200 B.C., the terrible droughts of 1700 B.C., the world floods of 1300 B.C., the great drought of 1000 B.C., the *Fimbulwinter* of 850 B.C., or the terrible winter of 1600 at the time of Elizabeth I, when the Thames seems to have frozen right to the bottom. (I was reading Virginia Woolf's book on it.) Students of society have become hypnotized by the ease and directness of Victorian evolution as a slow, gradual thing. But you have to realize if this is violently interrupted from time to time, how can you have that long, steady, undisturbed growth taking place? Only in the jungles where conditions, we're told, haven't changed for millions of years—but have they? I mean a particular frog can only live in the water deposited on a large leaf. How many dry years would it take to make him extinct? Something's going on here anyway.

We have two massive works here by Sir Aurel Stein on *Innermost Asia*. He was the first to enter Lou-Lan and the Lop Nor Basin. He described the deserted houses and streets of that city standing exactly as they did fourteen centuries ago when their inhabitants were driven forth by droughts so sudden and severe that neither the wood of the fruit trees nor the most delicate fabrics have rotted since then. (That also applies to Egypt—if you dig deep enough, everything is just the way it was.) The mighty city of Etsina was suddenly deserted 600 years ago and not found until 1909. He said, “All natural life died. The trees of the forest threw themselves to the ground, . . . and storms arose which soon buried the country in sand.” To this day the trees remain undecayed, “like sun-dried mummies, dead, naked and grey. . . . Over a vast area, once shady forest, they lay in thousands. . . . We passed other ruins of deserted strong-holds, and with strange sensations dug up objects that no human being had touched for more than six hundred years.”

Well, there are times when you can walk across the surface and find where a camel has passed 1400 years before. There was one case in Lop Nor where a bag of gold had broken, and the coins were deposited all along. The driver was not aware of it, and they were covered up by the wind. They've been uncovered now, and there they are in a nice bright line for a mile or two—all these bright gold coins. All you have to do is pick them up. Quoting from Stein again:

Once we came upon an abandoned Sart village, where newly thrown-up dams and uncompleted excavations bore witness to the departed populations' desperate struggle to retain the vanishing water. . . . But a day had come when there was no more water to be had. [It's been suggested quite seriously now that we turn the large parts of the Middle West back to grasslands.] The animals stood by the watering places and sought in vain for moisture, the women wept in the houses, and the men gathered at the mosque to pray to Allah for the miracle that alone would save their homes. But no miracle happened; the village got no water, and in the last extremity of famine, the people had thrown their most indispensable possessions on the remaining horses and donkeys and hastily left their homes and the lands of their fathers to follow their *aksakal* [that's their village elder, the brother of Jared, you see] out into the parched country around in a desperate search for water.

Well, they still do that. In Africa, large numbers of the population have simply piled up, left their villages in Ethiopia forever, and gone on to those assembly centers (it's made worse by war), where they might get something to eat. That's all—just to stay alive at all. Hundreds of thousands

of Ethiopians have had to do that in our own time. He [Stein] gives various examples. The Etruscans did the same thing. There's the great epic of the *Bani Hilāl* I have a copy of it here. Remember Abraham; the famine waxed sore throughout all Abraham's land. There was corn in Egypt. That was the only place where there was corn, so everybody went to Egypt. Just as suddenly, calamity struck and overtook an Asian village in 1927, we're told. "When the storm laid itself to rest, the flying sand solidified again and the terrified nomads found the whole face of nature changed into new shapes." And, of course, Babylon or Babel, the city of the tower, has left behind the richest deposits of legend and tradition. I give various examples here. In the Sybilline books, in Eusebius's *Chronicon*, [we read:] "When all men were of one tongue, some of them built a high tower so as to mount to heaven, but God destroyed the tower by mighty winds."

[Quoting from Theophilus of Antioch:] "But when the threats of the great God were fulfilled, of which he had warned mortal men at the time, they built a tower in the Assyrian land. They all at once spoke the same language and wanted to mount up to the starry heavens. But forthwith the Immortal One laid great stress upon the blasts, so that the wind overthrew the mighty tower, and drove mortals to strive with one another. And when the tower had fallen, the languages of men were divided up into many dialects, so that the earth became filled with different kingdoms of men." You form dialects when people come together and when people separate. Both those effects are what change language, of course. You get new language when people come together. You get new language when people separate. Both happened at the tower.

And from the Book of Jubilees: "The Lord sent a mighty wind against the tower and overthrew it upon the earth, and behold, it was between Asshur and Babylon in the land of Shinar, and they called its name 'Overthrow.'"

My favorite source, the zealous learned Persian Thaḥlabī, records that the people were scattered from the tower by an awful drought accompanied by winds of such velocity as actually blew down the tower. Bar Hebraeus, who was the great collector of Central Asiatic lore from the Middle Ages, said that forty years after the tower had been finished God sent a wind, the tower was overturned, and Nimrod died in it. There's no reason for doubting that a great city called Babel once long ago suffered the same fate as the people of Ḷād, and Thamūd, of Lou Lan, Etsingol, or the Nasamonians and others.

So we have in the history of the Jaredites a very freakish state of things. The Lord commanded Nephi to build a ship, you know, but it was an ordinary ship. Lehi's people had to cross water at least twice as much—probably three or four times as much—as the Jaredites. They took the short North Pacific route. But the Jaredite ships were altogether unusual vessels. The Lord gave the builder special instructions for every detail. They had to be submersible yet ride very lightly on the surface of the waves. They were small, and they were light upon the water, we're told, yet built to stand terrific pressure—exceedingly tight, tight like unto a dish, with special sealed vent holes that could not be opened when the water pressure on the outside was greater than the air pressure within. The Lord explained that it would be necessary to build such peculiar vessels because he was about to loose winds of incredible violence that would make the crossing a frightful ordeal at best. Any windows, he warned, would be dashed to pieces. Fire would be out of the question. Ether 2:24–25: "Ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea; for the mountain waves shall dash upon you. . . . Ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea, and the winds which have gone forth, and the floods which shall come. Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you that ye may have light when ye are swallowed up in the depths of the sea?"

See, the book of Ether enters right into the scene. This is exactly the situation we find, this violence etc., and the Lord talking. You say, well how could they endure? Ether 6:8 says, "The wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters." That's 344 days of these violent winds. Verses 5–6: "And it came to pass that the Lord God caused that

there should be a furious wind blow upon the face of the waters, . . . and they were many times buried in the depths of the sea, because of the mountain waves which broke upon them, and also the great and terrible tempests which were caused by the fierceness of the wind.”

Well, you see the violence of the elements at the end of the last Ice Age. That’s one of the remarkable discoveries about the Ice Age, as you know. Not only the number of them but how quickly they ended—almost overnight they were over, but with great violence. And this is what you have here. There were [world] windstorms in 2200 and 1000 B.C., as I said, the great *Fimbulwinter* [in 850 B.C.], etc. We have Qazwini’s account of the great dome of Bagdad. Now this is an interesting thing, the great dome of Bagdad. This was in the Middle Ages, and it was, he says, “the symbol (*‘ālam*) of Baghdad and the crown of the country, and the principle achievement of the sons of Abbas,” the Abbasids, and yet it collapsed during a great windstorm. The interesting thing is that from that tower, that dome (that was the green dome) people wanted to reach heaven. They wanted to fly to heaven. All through the Middle Ages if you wanted to go to heaven and be blessed, you took off from the top of the green dome. Well, see, that’s why they wanted the Tower of Babel—to get to heaven. Thousands of years later in the Middle Ages they were doing the same thing, and it was blown down by the wind in spite of its massive build, etc.

Well, this is a significant thing, this setting we’re going to get here [in Ether]. This gives us what we call the Heroic Age. What type of world was the Heroic Age? What is the evidence for heroic ages and what characterizes them? Kramer says it’s contained in the fragments of nine epic poems from the Sumerians and shows that in their early histories as the Sumerians pass through a cultural stage now commonly known as the Heroic Age. You’ll notice everything about the book of Ether is the Heroic Age. It starts out with a superhero, the brother of Jared. The hero is never the leader; he always is the brother of the leader. It’s a very interesting thing that they follow into this pattern. The secondary hero is a relative and does glorious things, but he’s not the king or the leader. He’s a rather colorless character. Who was Jared? What did he do? Ah, but the brother Jared—we know all about him.

Well, he says, “Once the existence of a Sumerian Heroic Age had been determined, it was possible to adduce its cultural pattern and historical background on analogy with such long-known heroic ages as those of Greek, Indian, and Teutonic peoples.” He says he feels “that the reality of the epic milieu actually permitted a reinterpretation of the earliest history of Mesopotamia, which may prove closer to the truth than those suggested hitherto.” And with Egypt even more so. They’re all the followers of Horus. They come in the way of Horus from the northeast, and the civilization emerges overnight. There’s no primitive background to Egyptian civilization.

What are the characteristics? We can go through and list some of the stock characters of heroic ages. (This is from Chadwick.) First of all, “The Heroic Age coincided with a period of upheaval.” Well, that should be clear by now, and certainly clear from the book of Ether. They have to leave—they don’t want to leave. Then we get this violent weather: “a period of upheaval generally known as the age [a bad translation, but we can’t do any better] of the national migrations.”

The “swarming time” it’s called. There are times when all the people in the world are in motion—this has happened. You should have stood at crossroads in central Europe, as I did, to check people who were passing after the war. You’d find everybody passing. All the people had been uprooted and taken into Nazi Germany—Russian girls to work there, Poles—everybody was scattered. Everybody was going home—pushing baby buggies, carrying things on their back, hauling wagons, etc., and speaking every language you can imagine. We had lots of people, such as Azerbaijanians, because the coastal troops of the Germans were people from Central Asia who had been actually chained into their positions. Most of them didn’t know where they were. Some of them thought they were in America, and some thought they were in Africa. The world was all mixed up, and it could certainly happen again, couldn’t it, the way things are?

The background that produces the epic milieu is the Heroic Age, and that's what we're dealing with here, because it has heroic dimensions. It's tragic, it's gloomy, and people live terrible lives. It's an awful time. Remember what Goethe says about the *Iliad* and Homer? He says, "The *Iliad* proves to us that life on this earth is a hell." And it is—there's nothing happy about the Heroic Age, believe me.

Then Kramer says "The factors primarily responsible for the more characteristic features of the Heroic Age are two: in the first place, heroic ages coincide with a period of national migrations, a wandering of the people. Secondly, and this is by far more significant, these people have come in contact with civilized power in the process of disintegration." World civilization is collapsing, and that's why they have to move. Everybody has to move. "The reports come from all sides on this."

We have the epic literature of the Heroic Age which is described from two sides. We have a very large literature by the heroes themselves describing the heroic deeds of their leaders, etc. Their traditions are handed down by bards and sung for thousands of years. The other [description] is from the victims, and that's the great lamentation literature. We have a very rich literature of this. The earliest literature we have from Sumeria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt is the lamentation literature—the man's conversation with his soul, the one that Brother Gardner edited, and others. So, the reports come from both sides. "The victims describe in chronicles of woe how the barbarians move in on them, while the invaders glorify the same exploits in epic song. Real epic poetry always describes conditions prevailing in times of world upheaval and mass migration." That's Chadwick's first point. The second point with Chadwick is "feeling for nationality is of no account in heroic poetry or sagas." Everything centers around a great heroic figure, as it does throughout the book of Ether, you know. You draw people off to your side; we'll see about that. "Love of home and duty of defending it are, of course, recognized, but interest is always concentrated on the doings or experiences of individuals."

And this is the way Samuel Noah Kramer describes the situation:

Now the most characteristic feature of all four of our heroic ages is this: they represent a rather barbarous cultural stage in the life of people which has come far indeed from primitive but has not yet attained the maturity and stability of a civilized people. Its dominant element is rather a numerous military class [of course, all they do throughout the book of Ether is fight] to whom the underlying bulk of the population counts for very little. These are kingly aristocrats who have freed themselves from tribal obligations and ideas which govern the more primitive people. At the same time they have developed no true national organization and are inspired by little if any national feeling [they're led by the hero, you see]. Their success and failure depend on personal prowess and their leaders and kings whom they follow, but from whom they are ready to drift away if these tend to turn too peaceful or become ungenerous in their rewards.

Or especially if they get beaten. Then you belong to the other person, as it's set forth very clearly in the book of Ether. Well, in every case something forced them to move, whenever these people are on the move. It certainly did the Jaredites. If they come to the stage rather shabbily equipped, it's not because they began life that way but because something happened that made them pull up stakes in a hurry and clear out with just enough stuff for a forced march. You have to leave behind what you had. That's too bad—you have to junk it. We see that's going to happen. Remember, these people are not habitual nomads. They are moving because they have to. Remember the brother of Jared? Please, ask the Lord not to make us move if we don't have to. If we have to, then he says, give us a promised land and see to it that we will not be confounded. When people are confounded, that's when the language is confounded. He says the people are

confounded here, and that's what makes it happen. In every case they're looking for lands to settle.

Yesterday from Switzerland they had an international council of nations going on, a very important sort of thing. They had a desk where translators were translating the language being spoken in the meeting into 19 different languages. They were speaking 19 different languages at this meeting. These people now are having to work together for the first time, all of them, much more closely. The language has developed only because they lived in isolation and were closely knit culturally among themselves. Lithuanian is the oldest language in the world. It is the primal, original Indo-European language. as near as you can get to it— that's in theory. But see, if you work back to all the stems and forms, etc., Lithuanian is older than Sanskrit or Greek and older than any language we have. This shows what a long time they've maintained their integrity as people. It's an astonishing thing. Now it's just like the tower of Babel, isn't it. We've got to have some common language, but now we have some gadgets to do those things. It's going to be like some of these space thrillers on the TV where everybody knows English. No matter where you go in the universe, they all speak the same language.

So these people are not habitual nomads; they are forced [to leave] because they have to. In every case they're looking for lands to settle, and they're always looking for the promised land. There are the marvelous poems of the first Greeks. Hesiod and Alcman talk about that—we didn't come here of our choice. He says we came to windy Arenos because we were driven to do so. And Hesiod, who was a contemporary of Homer, wrote about it. He said, we came to this land because we were driven, because we had to. We didn't take it seeking riches at all, but because we lost everything we had, and we had to come. "So we came to Ischia where we live now," he said, "a bad place in winter, a vile place in summer, a good time never." They had to settle. They had no choice, he said, and their life had been very hard since. That's why he wrote a poem called *Works and Days* to his brother, who had gone off and made a lot of money in the market. He says there's no character and there's no stability in that. He says the only thing is to work. It's the catalog of the work of the farmer, the farmer's almanac, that he wrote telling his brother how he should work. Well, that's a typical example. They were forced to move, and they settled where they could. Alcman tells the same story—how they came down to Sparta the same way from windy Arenos. It mentions the wind.

"Now it is granted that these people, wherever they go, find civilization in the process of disintegration." Everything is disintegrating wherever they go, so it's easy to overrun—or is it? It's a time of world calamity. What reason have we, therefore, to doubt that it was the disintegration of their own less stable civilization that forced them to move in the first place? If they move in on a world in collapse, you can be perfectly sure they left one behind as well. Otherwise they would never have migrated.

And the evidence? Well, the mere fact that our heroes do not enjoy what they are doing. They want to get the business over and settle down as soon as possible. I have some examples here. E. V. Gordon wrote the classic work on the Norse sagas. The word *Norway* means by the north way. They came to the Baltic by the north way. These people [the Norse] who came and settled were the people that came via the north way, and they came from Central Asia back there. Their home is still Norway. E. V. Gordon says, "A good resistance against overpowering odds was made the characteristic situation of heroic literature. The gods themselves knew that they would in the end be overwhelmed by evil powers [this is a gloomy note], but they were prepared to resist to the last. Every religious-minded man of the heathen age believed that he existed for the sake of that hopeless cause." It's not a very cheery sort of thing.

The third point that Chadwick makes is, "Epic is concerned not only with individuals, but primarily with individuals who are princes. The cast of characters consists almost wholly of princes and their military followers [as the book of *Ether* does]. Among these there is usually one

character whose adventures form the chief subject of interest [another score, you see]. He's always a mortal and human, and he always occupies a position of subordination [that's an interesting thing because that's exactly what the brother of Jared does—he's not the leader, but he's the only one we hear about] taking orders from a relatively colorless king or commander." Remember, it's Jared who says to his brother, go and ask the Lord whether we'll have to move or not. It's the brother of Jared who asks him, but his brother commands him to. Well, why is it called the book of Ether instead of Mahonri Moriancumr, or whatever it was. Well, because he was the first in the patriarchal line; he was the oldest. That's why the book's named after him, and the people are the people of Ether, but it's the other one who is the hero.

He "takes orders from a relatively colorless king or commander. He is almost superhuman but never supernatural [again, his strength] and yet from time to time he receives supernatural aid—altogether a strange and impressive figure."

It's rather remarkable that the only really heroic figures in the Book of Mormon are found in Ether. Lehi, Nephi, King Benjamin, King Noah are certainly great men, but they're not out-sized the way the heroes are in the book of Ether. Now this is an interesting thing, too, that's characteristic of the book of Ether. We're quoting from Chadwick: "Even though the most ferocious and even depraved characters occupy the stage of epic, there is no character who appears uniformly in an unfavorable light." They're all human beings, and their weaknesses are all recognized, but nobody is completely vicious as we like to imagine our enemies, totally depraved. We're the totally good; they are the totally bad. There is none of that in it because, after all, they have a common experience.

Remember another famous one who was driven out was Queen Dido and her sister Melyssa. They left Phoenicia around 800 B.C. and settled Carthage. When Aeneas comes to visit them in Carthage, she says we've had our hard times, and we know how to be good to wandering people because we know what you've suffered. She says we're all in the sort of thing together, so we have to be more or less charitable with each other. That's why the Arabs, who are so ferocious and bloodthirsty at the drop of a hat, nevertheless have the strictest laws of hospitality—because they know what it is to be lost in the desert. They know what it is to depend for your life on somebody else's hospitality. So the first of all of Abraham's virtues was hospitality. He was the friend of man, which made him the friend of God, we're told. These people know how to get along with each other because they're all in the "swim" together. They're all moving around together. There are times when you don't feel superior because you're taking an awful beating yourself.

We find it also true of the Jaredite monsters. Well, there's a touch of admiration—even sympathy—for Shiz and Coriantumr, these heroes in the Book of Mormon. The licentious tyrants like Noah and Riplakish are not only real patrons of the arts, they have a touch of real magnificence. Chadwick rings a bell here. He says, "The behavior of the heroes often strikes the reader as childish or brutal. But in their dealings with one another a dignified and fastidious tone prevails, even between bitter rivals." All throughout the book of Ether, you challenge a person to a duel. He doesn't have to have the duel, but the story of Ether is one continual series of duels, as you know, but they're on this chivalric level. Actually chivalry—people wandering around with their horses. So they put up with each other.

Chadwick says, "Warfare is an essential rather than an accessory of heroic life." That leads to our next point, that "the scene of action in epics is confined exclusively to the battlefield, the court, the hunt, or some place of adventure, usually a wilderness." Of course, when you say *wilderness*, that puts you in mind of Ether, and that's fair game, too.

"But in this rough society, the cardinal virtues of the hero are courage, loyalty, and generosity. The courage is strictly physical—bravery in the field. Loyalty is purely personal [as long as the person can hold it]. It involves duty or vengeance as well as protection. As to generosity, it's

always a matter of policy—the generosity of a chief to his followers, a princely bribe with admitted intent to buy and support supporters by gifts.” Remember how *Beowulf* begins: “Oft Scyld Scefing he gave out his gold rings to his faithful followers.” And it says, “That was a good king.” That’s why you’re running your raids—to get the junk to pay the people.

Well, let’s give some modern examples here. There’s a very good one. Well, I’ll quote this one from Chadwick because it’s so close to our Ether book. “Plunder is a necessity for the hero who wishes to maintain an active force of armed followers. Plundering raids appear to be a characteristic feature of the Heroic Age everywhere. Indeed, we may say an essential feature. The booty derived therefrom enabled active and ambitious princes to attract to themselves and maintain large bodies of followers without which they were at the mercy of their neighbors.”

Before I go on with this other stuff, why does this apply to us? Well, look at our book of Ether here now. He starts out with that negative tone. Notice the first verse. (You better have your Book of Mormon because we’re on Ether now. We have a very convenient handbook to go by.) Moroni is giving the “account of those ancient inhabitants who were destroyed . . . upon the face of this north country” [Ether 1:1]. See, they make the north crossing. They belong in the north country. He took them from the 24 plates of the book of Ether. The first part of the record he’s leaving out—that’s biblical. Verse 5: “I give not the full account, but a part of the account I give, from the tower down until they were destroyed.” Then he gives this long genealogy, but notice occasionally he says, as in verse 16, “And Aaron was a descendant of Heth, who was the son of Hearthom.” Descendants—you could introduce 20 generations between if you wanted to. Then you come down to verse 23: “And Morianton was a descendant of Riplakish.” *Riplakish*—there’s a good archaic name, “lord of Lakish.” There are at least five ancient cities named that. In fact the oldest city in Mesopotamia is supposed to have been called Lakish. This is Riplakish, which means “lord of Lakish.” He was a descendant of Riplakish. Let’s not worry about chronology here. It goes way back; I can tell you that. The Lord “swore in his wrath [now we’re getting this grim, heroic situation] that they should be scattered upon all the face of the earth.” It sounds like the *Nibelungenlied*, doesn’t it.

Verse 34: “And the brother of Jared being a large and mighty man [notice, this is the brother of Jared who is going to be the hero now] highly favored of the Lord, Jared, his brother said unto him: Cry unto the Lord.” See, he has to ask his brother to do it, but it’s by way of command. He’s the one who gives orders here. He said, “Cry unto the Lord, that he will not confound us.” Our words will only be confounded if we’re confounded. *Confound* means “to mix up together.” If we get mixed together with other people (of course they’re speaking different dialects and languages), we’ll have an awful time trying to understand each other. It’s very much like the ward in Cairo where we have a dozen African languages there, and some of them speak nothing else. We have services in Arabic, and we’re confounded and mixed up. We have an awful time understanding each other. That’s what they’re talking about here—what happened at the tower when people were forced to move. “Cry again unto the Lord.” Notice, this is going to be a large migration, and he is going to get a company. He’s not like Lehi, a family job. This is something else.

Verse 37: “And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon their friends and their families also, that they were not confounded [it’s going to be a large group that moves out]. . . . Go and inquire of the Lord whether he will drive us out of the land, and if he will drive us out of the land, cry unto him whither we shall go [if he does]. And who knoweth but the Lord will carry us forth into a land which is choice above all the earth?” When they looked for a promised land, they didn’t very often find it. That’s when they wandered. Remember, he visits the queen in Carthage, and he says, “Through various violent experiences, through rough clashes and wars, struggles against nations, so many showdowns and fights, we are looking for a place where we can find a quiet place to settle [which is to become glorious Rome], whose empire will terminate only with the bounds of the ocean and whose glory

shall reach beyond the stars.” This is the promised land theme. They all have this promised land theme, because if you were wandering, you were cast out, you’d want to go to a better land. You’d want a good one and would say, for heaven’s sake, when can we settle? When will we be in Zion? When will we reach there? So this happens again. They’re doing it all the time. Will it be a land choice above all the others? Verse 40: “And it came to pass that the Lord did hear the brother of Jared [and this is what he says]: . . . Go to and gather together thy flocks.” Notice they move on a vast front.

We have from the thirteenth century B.C. marvelous accounts of the coming of the people of the sea along the north coast of Africa and along the coast of Europe. They came from the West, because the climate drove them, and we have pictures of them. Their ships followed along by sea, and they followed along by land. They went clear up into Palestine. They were beaten by Merneptah in a battle at the delta, so they couldn’t settle in Egypt. But they came by the thousands with these huge ox carts loaded, along with their families and all the goods they owned. They lumbered along the coast while their ships accompanied them. That’s the way the Vikings used to do, too. Thousands of years later our own ancestors did the same thing. They [the people of the sea] settled clear down in Italy, and they got to Palestine. It’s funny these things that go on. You say, this is where I came in. This is the same old story again. Well, this is a part of history we can’t afford to ignore.

So he goes on in this first chapter, “Gather together thy flocks, both male and female, of every kind; and also of the seed of the earth of every kind; and thy families; and also Jared thy brother and his family [get everybody together you can—see, this is going to be a big crowd]. . . . Thou shalt go at the head of them down into the valley which is northward.” Then it says “where there never had man been.” I’m leaving out all sorts of things here. Verses 42–43: “And there will I meet thee . . . and raise up unto me . . . a great nation. And there shall be none greater.” This is what they wanted.

Ether 2:1: So they “went down into the valley which was northward,” which was the valley of Nimrod. It’s very interesting that in the north end of Mesopotamia all the places bear the name *Nimrod*. There’s Bir Nimrod and dozens of Nimrod names up north in Mesopotamia where you go through. Then you go east and what do you do? You cross many waters. “And they did also lay snares and catch fowls of the air; and they did also prepare a vessel, in which they did carry with them the fish of the waters [we give examples of these things]. And they did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee.” We mentioned the fact that *deseret* is the mystic, secret name given to the honey bee by the Egyptians, too. The Egyptians were moving in the same direction. They moved with the honey bee. He was their leader when they moved in the other direction. They moved toward the southwest, and these people moved toward the northeast in opposite directions. Remember, it was the descendant of Noah, Egyptus, who led her people into Egypt. They settled there in the opposite direction at this time, and deseret was their beacon, their sign.

You can see the family about ready to depart; they’ve packed all the baggage and everything for all these people. Somebody is running around among the wagons saying, “What happened to little deseret?” Deseret always gets lost when they’re going to go. It means “hives of bees,” and they do take hives of bees with them. It’s a very interesting thing. You remember there were no bees in the New World. There were no bees in Mesopotamia until quite late. Bees were first found in Palestine and Egypt. They’re not spread around universally, as you might think. In the *Chilam Balam* you’ll find them in the New World when they were brought here. It’s very interesting, the distribution of bees. There’s been a good deal written about that.

But anyway, the Lord talked with the brother of Jared, and they went “forth into the wilderness, yea, into that quarter where there never had man been.” Well, you get the idea that there’s quite a world population at this time, but they went into virgin territory where there’d never been



anyone. As they traveled in the wilderness, they built shallow barges. A very recent *National Geographic*, which I wish I'd brought along, shows the shrinking of the great Aral Sea in Central Asia. It's just east of the Caspian, which is practically shrinking to nothing. That's a huge sea. There were these huge shallow seas. Then you go further west, and there are many seas. All of western Asia was drying out at this time. In 1906 Raphael Pompelli—we have his vast work published by the Smithsonian here—made an exploration of those central Asiatic regions, and it was all shallow water. It was all under water. Well, they still tell you in documentaries about a wandering lake in central Asia. Because of the winds the lake actually wanders around. It's so shallow. It was full of shallow water, and at the time of the Jaredites, just after the flood, they seemed to be much deeper, but they built these barges of shallow draft because they had to cross a lot of water on their passing. Then when they got to the ocean they had to build a different type of boat entirely. But all these things that he's talking about are geographically correct. You get Pompelli's book. I might put it out.

Oh, I was going to tell you what subject we're going to write about. These things are really quite remarkable that Joseph has given us here, you know. The Lord talked to him, and they built their many barges. But you'll notice (verse 7), he "would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness." They had to cross the Caspian, which was a vast sea at that time, twice as large, at least 2,000 miles long. It was huge, and after they'd crossed it, he said they had to keep going. They hadn't arrived yet. So that's the picture we get.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 110

Ether 7–14

Struggle for Power

[The first few minutes of this lecture were not recorded.]

Everybody was moving around. Before the children of Lot took it over, the Emims dwelt there [in Palestine], and they were a people as tall as the Anakims (Deuteronomy 2:10). Now what does Homer call the leaders of the hosts? The *anax*, leader of the men. *Anax* is the prince. They were tall, long haired and blond, like the Vikings of the North, the Anakim. Here they are Anakim because it is the Hebrew ending, you see.

And the Phoenicians settled there. I talked about those people of the sea coming along with their wagons and all the rest. They settled in Palestine. That's why they're called the Philistines, the people of Philistia. There were people among them who came from all the islands in all the western Mediterranean. They dwelt there and were also accounted giants, as the Anakims, but the Moabites called them Emims. Notice, people were moving around receiving different names and designations.

“The Horims also dwelt in Seir beforetime; but the children of Esau succeeded them [pushed them out], when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead; as Israel did unto the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them” (Deuteronomy 2:12). Everybody was grabbing what they could, looking for the promised land. That's the expression they all used, “looking for the promised land—something better than we have now.”

“And get you over the brook Zered. . . . And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years.” Now notice what happens. Interesting things happen. They couldn't go into Palestine until this sort of nonsense had stopped, namely, until all the warlords had been exterminated. We find them mentioned here. They waited thirty-eight years “until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord sware unto them. For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were consumed. So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, that the Lord spake unto me, saying, Thou art to pass over through Ar, the coast of Moab, this day” (Deuteronomy 2:14–17). But they had to get rid of all the warlords first, and they exterminated each other. That's the way they got rid of each other. This is the theme of epic literature, as you know.

There's this great mixing we have in the next chapter. Og, the king of Bashan, came out to battle against them. He was the last of them hanging onto it. “So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also, the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him until none was left to him remaining. And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. . . . And we utterly destroyed them [this happens in the book of Ether, too, you'll notice], as we did unto Sihon, king of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. [This is the same thing you have in Mormon. Well, you say, where are the women and children after Cumorah? They were in it, too.] But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourselves” (Deuteronomy 3:3–7). You notice what the Chadwicks and Kramer say about the Heroic Age. It was a cattle culture. They drove cattle, because you can move them along with

you. You can still be mobile and raise cattle, so all their wealth was in the form of cattle. It keeps repeating that.

Then here's a typical example. Then they came to Mount Hermon, "which Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion." Sidon, the most common city name in the Book of Mormon, was on the coast. *Sidon* simply means "fishing rock." It was an old fishing rock that was settled by Canaanites. You find these people up there in the Ras Shamra fragments. Ras Shamra is up there. They've left us a big library of what they were doing up there. "The Sidonians call it Sirion; and the Ammorites call it Shenir;" and we call it *Hermon*. See, everybody was moving around and gave their own names to these places, pushing each other out.

Then the Lord distributes them all. He gave the west desert to the half tribe of Manasseh, and they're the Book of Mormon ones. Remember, Lehi's people come from east of the Jordan, from beyond Jordan. This is the way things go here. They practice the usual *Schrecklichkeit* to terrify them. Remember in the Book of Mormon the people are terrified of Shiz—he sweepeth the earth before him. They develop this because it's very effective, of course. They have their designs and they wear masks. That's why they wear the horns and the wings and all that nonsense. It makes them very impressive, you see, and they sweep the earth before them. We'll see that in a minute. I notice here in Deuteronomy 2:25 that it says, "This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee."

The terror of *Schrecklichkeit* was a deliberate policy of the German general staff. We must inspire terror and paralyze the enemy before we even hit him with our overwhelming terror and might [they claimed]. That's a thing that always begets heavy opposition and unity among the opponents. Then again he says here, "And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city, we left none to remain: Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took" (Deuteronomy 2:34–35). That's the system we find here already. Israel was born in that system. This is the pressure cooker in which Israel came into existence.

So we have Jaredite society, and this is what it is. Just to save us some trouble here, we'll read some passages. You read your book of Ether and you'll find the whole history is a tale of fierce and unrelenting struggle for power. It's dark with intrigue and violence, particularly of the Asiatic brand. When the rival for the kingdom is bested, he goes off by himself in the wilderness, bides his time, and gathers an army of outcasts. This is done by drawing off men to himself, by bestowing lavish gifts and bribes. There's a nice summary of the whole thing here.<sup>1</sup> I might read it to show you what utter nonsense is going on and how completely authentic it is. You may say you can't believe this, but just wait a minute. This is the normal course of history, I assure you. It's absolutely outlandish, but it's the thing we're coming into today. We're the only people who are in for it, but we're determined to do it. We get into this rat race.

A grand cycle running from unity of the nation to division, and conflict, and hence to paralysis or extinction is repeated at least a dozen times. The sorry round begins when one Corihor, the great-grandson of the original Jared, rebelled against his father the king, moved out of the land, and "drew away many people after him" (Ether 7:4), until he had an army that was able to beat the king and take him captive. The king was a captive, and this army of Corihor took over. Corihor was now what he wanted to be—Number One—until his brother Shule beat him and restored the kingdom to the father, again Number One. Then Corihor does a surprising thing—he repents—and Shule gives him a share of the kingdoms; that is the first time around. Each cycle ends with repentance.

Later Corihor's sons rebelled "and drew away Cohor his brother, and also his brethren and many of the people" (Ether 7:15), whereupon he captured Shule and became Number One again until the sons of Shule conspired and murdered him, and Shule became Number One for the third time. (At least we've got rid of Corihor now. How many times has he been back and forth?) Under Shule's rule there came prophets telling the people to repent or be destroyed. The people did repent—and prospered.

Years later one Jared "did flatter many people . . . until he had gained half of the kingdom" (Ether 8:2) from his father Omer, whose other sons beat Jared, though, and reinstated Omer as Number One. To get back the kingdom, though, Jared formed secret combinations bound by oaths. The oaths . . . were given by them of old who also sought power to gain power. See, this is the archaic system. When the Jaredites came over here, they already represented an ancient civilization. (Don't try to fool around with chronology here.) The oaths were given by them of old who also sought power . . . to help such as sought power to gain power" (Ether 8:15–16). Notice that is the thing everybody's after here. I like this power business.

Then Jared was killed by his son-in-law Akish; then Akish, wary of his own son, starved him to death, whereupon another son left the country and joined the deposed king Omer and his followers. Akish was a hard man to beat because he had "won the hearts of the people" by knowing just what they wanted. "The people of Akish were desirous for gain, even Akish was desirous for power" (Ether 9:11), a fair exchange. But his sons could also play the game, and with money "they drew away the more part of the people after them" (Ether 9:11). The war that ensued encompassed "the destruction of nearly all the people of the kingdom (Ether 9:12). When it was fairly well restored, then we come to Heth who "began to embrace again the secret plans of old, to destroy his father" (Ether 9:26). "He slew him with his own sword, and he did reign in his stead" (Ether 9:27). And the prophets enter again and say the "people should be destroyed if they didn't repent" (Ether 9:28). There was a terrible drought and famine that brought repentance until one "Morianton . . . gathered together an army of outcasts" (Ether 10:9). This is the thing to notice, this is the standard Asiatic procedure. After the long war "he did gain power over all the land, and did establish himself king over all the land" (Ether 10:9).

Morianton was a very good king, surprisingly; his son and successor Kim was captured by his brother, who became Number One, but Kim's son Levi made war against him and thus became Number One. Levi was also a good king—surprise, surprise. Then Com, whose father had lost the kingdom and had been imprisoned for twenty-four years, "drew away half the kingdom, and after forty years challenged the king of the other half, Amgid, to a duel. Following a long war, Com "obtained power over the remainder of the kingdom" (Ether 10:32). His son Shiblom (which means young lion) slew the prophets, who had again stated the preposition that the people must repent or be utterly destroyed (Ether 11:5). So there you are.

Well, this is not through yet. We're in Ether 11:13 now. From that time on, it was all downhill. A mighty man led a revolt against the king and kept half the kingdom for many years until the king overcame him and became Number One again. Then another mighty man took *him* captive. Again many prophets came and said they would be destroyed. Then the thing became a free-for-all, with "many who rose up, who were mighty men" (Ether 13:15), all zeroing in on King Coriantumr. But he was a great survivor—he knew how to handle things like that. "And the war ceased not" (Ether 13:22). Shared put Coriantumr in captivity. Coriantumr is the king, but he's now in captivity, clever as he is. Shared becomes Number One until Coriantumr's son freed and restored Coriantumr to that glorious position. By then there was a complete breakdown of all government, with "every man with his band fighting for that which he desired" (Ether 13:25).

Coriantumr and Shared became obsessed with the necessity of ridding the world of each other. When Shared defeated one of Coriantumr's armies, he raced to the capital and put himself on the man's throne. But the process of polarization then began in earnest. Coriantumr gathered "great

strength to his army” (Ether 14:7) for the space of two years, while Gilead, the brother and successor of Shared, was doing the same, assisted by secret combinations. The were dangerous associates, however, for they soon murdered Gilead and then liquidated his murderer, while a giant by the name of Lib (you still have the giants there) became king. He was killed fighting Coriantumr, but his brother continued the feud—he was the famous Shiz. So it’s now Shiz versus Coriantumr. The ‘people began to flock together in armies throughout all the face of the land. And they were divided; and a part of them fled to the army of Shiz, and a part of them fled to the army of Coriantumr” (Ether 14:18–20). Always this steady, progressive process of polarization goes on.

Then, suggesting the formal set battles of epic literature and the Middle Ages, like a chess game, Shiz retreated. He swept off the inhabitants before him, all them who would not join him. That’s the way you do it. Meanwhile, “Coriantumr did gather his armies together upon the hill Comner, and did sound a trumpet unto the armies of Shiz to invite them forth to battle” (Ether 14:28). All this is formal, all this is exactly the way things had been done for thousands of years. After losing millions of people in battles, Coriantumr “began to repent” and wrote to Shiz, “desiring him that he would spare the people” (Ether 15:3). Shiz agreed, if Coriantumr “would give himself up, that he might slay him with his own sword” (Ether 15:5). Pharaoh does that—we have the earliest pharaohs cutting off the head of the rival prince. Well, you get the beautiful picture here.

Let’s look at the Asiatic society. I put a lot of references here to save us some trouble. The whole history, as you see, is a fierce, unrelenting struggle for power. I’d forgotten I had out in the garage a very valuable work. It’s Arab Shah’s *Life of Tamerlane* in Arabic. He was a contemporary and secretary of Tamerlane. He can really tell you about that guy. “The biography of a typical Asiatic conqueror with its dark allusions to supernatural and especially to the works of the devil, a strange and savage picture of nightmare politics.” But Timur conquered the world, as you know. That was Tamerlane.

Now we have some good sources here, but I don’t know whether I should read them. In the earliest records of the race we find the supreme god, founder of the state and cult “winning his way to the throne by battle, often by violence against family predecessors [that’s the only thing we’ve been finding—the son or brother], which generally involves horrific and obscene incidents.” That’s from Arab Shah. The abominations of the ancients, about which Ether has a good deal to say, are thus seen to have respectable antiquity.

Empires must have been formed and destroyed then as they were later on. “Such empires [we’re quoting from McGovern here] were not the result of gradual expansion or development, but rapidly became enormous empires under the leadership of a single great man [always number one—that’s the big thing] and under the reign of his successors slowly but surely declined, though in many cases they disintegrate immediately after the death of their founders.” So you find ghost towns all over central Asia settled by these people. “The fugitive who gathers forces in the wilderness by drawing off people [this is the way they do it in the book of Ether] from his rivals is a strictly conventional figure on the steppes.” That’s the way every great conqueror begins.

I suppose that we should write these down, but I have some better ones later on. Liu Fang wrote, “The leader of a small military band, half soldiers and half bandits, nearly won the whole Hunnish and Chinese empires for himself 2,000 years ago. He would have done so had not some of his own ambitious officers deserted him just as he had deserted others.”

Now, we all know this one. It was after cheating his brother of the throne that Attila “sought to subdue the foremost nations of the world, and after his death two of his descendants went out into the wilderness where they gathered about them armies of outcasts, each hoping to win back the world empire for himself.” The same process is going on, you’ll notice. You will remember that Genghis Khan lived for years as an outcast and a bandit as he gathered around him forces to

conquer all his rivals. Those forces were actually drawn off from the armies of the rivals themselves. Under the nomad system, quoting somebody else now. “Leaders of the various tribes strove to become independent by attracting subjects and followers of their own.” They have a name for that; it’s *jadaba*. The Arabs use that name [meaning] “to draw away people to yourself and build up a following.” That’s what you do in politics, too.

The great rulers of Asia have regularly passed from the risky station of bandit chief to hardly less risky one of world monarch and back again. Here’s another one I had out in the garage, a history of the Seljuk Turks. This is what he says: “. . . where every man is filled with the desire to become an independent prince, and every prince to become the lord of all.” This is ambition and power that we’re talking about here.

“The boldest of adventurers flocked eagerly to the banner of the new and successful chieftain of every race. In the beginning as in our old day, when all the youth of central Asia . . .” Now this happened in the 1920s, believe it or not, when all the youth of central Asia rallied to the standard of fifteen-year-old Manchu Ying as he calmly worked out a plan for the conquest of the whole world and nearly succeeded in conquering a large part. Remember, Mormon was 15 years old when they chose him to be leader. The bandit Palnatoki conquered all the Baltic states, the eastern plains. The terror of the North was twelve years old. What goes on here? These people are real prodigies. Well, they’ve been raised in that, of course.

Not only is the Jaredite practice to draw on one’s side the followers of a rival while building up an army in the wilderness in the best Asiatic tradition, the method of doing it is likewise accepted tradition. Thus Akish bound his followers. Now this thing about Akish is very much worth noticing. You know the story of Akish. This is the way it goes. He bound his followers around the nucleus of his family by lavish gifts, for “the people of Akish were desirous for gain, even as Akish was desirous for power; wherefore the sons of Akish did offer them money by which means he drew away the more part of the people after them” (Ether 9:11).

It was the sons of Genghis Khan who did most of his campaigning for him, the same way as Akish, and from the very beginning the secret of his power was the huge heaps of precious things that always stood near his throne and from which, after a memorial custom of the steppes, he rewarded all who joined him. In the sixth century Menander, a Roman ambassador to the court of the Grand Khan (that was 600 years before Genghis Khan), beheld 500 wagons full of gold, silver, and silken garments that accompanied the monarch on his wanderings—for the ancient law of the Khans, he said, was that none enters the presence of the ruler empty handed nor departs unrewarded. That was good *kyning*, as Beowulf said. The good king is the one who gives, but he also receives. And the pharaohs applied the same thing—you never enter the presence of his majesty without a gift, and you never depart without a gift either.

The pattern of steppe imperialism according to Vernadsky, who wrote the standard work on the primitive Russian empire, begins with accumulated wealth in the hands of some able chieftain, which enables him to expand his popularity among neighboring clans. And they all talk about the dedicated zeal with which the men of the steppes devoted themselves to two objects: power and gain. You may have heard that formula before in the Book of Mormon. They’re inseparable, of course. That quality is peculiar to Jaredite society, it appears, from the fact that the twin motives of power and gain receive far more attention in the book of Ether than anywhere else in the Book of Mormon.

Ether 8:13: “And it came to pass that Akish gathered in unto the house of Jared all his kinsfolk, and said unto them: Will ye swear unto me that ye will be faithful unto me in the thing which I shall desire of you?” All the authorities note this, too. How can you bind a person to you who’s riding a horse and is free to gallop off in any direction he wants, in the night or any other time?

You have to bind him by something, and it can't be by putting guards over him. You can't watch people. What you do is you swear them by oaths, these terrible oaths. That's why from central Asia came these most awful and frightful oaths, because that's the only way you can bind a person to you. So it says here: "Will ye swear unto me that ye will be faithful unto me in the thing which I shall desire of you? [How can he count on them?] And it came to pass that they all swore unto him, by the God of heaven, and also by the heavens [Genghis Khan calls himself 'the god of the blue heaven' and swears his oaths by the blue heaven, by the god of heaven], and also by the earth, and by their heads, that whoso should vary from the assistance which Akish desired should lose his head. . . . And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain." This is the normal course of history. Alas to say that.

Quoting Fritz Hommel: "The very oldest texts in the language of the world were incantations, having the stereotyped conclusion, 'let it be sworn by the name of heaven; let it be sworn by the name of earth.' The flood of documents that came forth in recent years teaches us the ways that men in the dawn of history bound people by oaths."

The *Enuma Elish* text is from the old Babylonian kings. It's very old, and it goes back to the founding of the world. That's the idea—it's their New Year celebration of the founding of the world. There Tiamat, aiming at the rule of the universe, draws off the gods to her side so that they conspire unceasingly day and night against the rightful ruler, and gather themselves together in a host to make battle. When he heard the news, the true king sat upon his throne grim and silent without saying a word. He smote his thigh. He bit his lip. He controlled his voice and finally gave orders to assemble his host, by which formal acclamation they all took the oath of allegiance to his leader Marduk. This story goes back to the very beginning of things, actually. It comes from the first Babylonian dynasty, but its background is Sumerian.

Well, we have the terrible oaths that are taken and broken. Here, for example, the king of the Commagenes caused the emperor of Constantinople and their people to be blooded. Each drank alternately of each other's blood. This is the kind of oaths they would make, you see. Study of the oldest annals of Asia conducts us, as does the study of the oldest language, into a world of oaths and covenants. Well, we see why this should be so.

"And Mithra rules," says the *Avesta*, "by virtue of his 10,000 spies [the *Avesta* is Iranian], which make him alone of all kings undeceivable." It's this institution of the king's eyes and the king's ears perfected by the Persians and inherited by the monarchs of many lands. The success of any conspiracy against watchful loyalty is great secrecy and surprise before all else, so the unfailing adjunct of the nemesis of the Asiatic king is the secret society and surprise. That's what Napoleon said, secrecy and surprise. Well, that's what strategy is—to spring a surprise. Don't let the enemy know what you're doing. You can win by surprise. You must always surprise them.

Huart and Delaporte have written a great deal on this subject. In their very large work they wrote, The normal constitution of the Asiatic empire is "despotism tempered by dethronement and assassination," in which the clergy play a leading role. Well, that's the way things go. I notice I have some examples. This system of drawing off we were talking about—there's an Arabic word for it, *jadaba*. "From whom shall I take away the lawful sovereignty," asked Mithra in the *Avesta*. The exchange of personal letters is important. Here's a good one: "Let Shinu come to the south and either meet the emperor in open battle or else become a subject and pay reverence to the imperial throne." That's a typical example.

In the march of the 10,000, way back in the fourth century B.C., Xenophon marched right to the center of Asia, as you know. He said, "Jealousy and ambition are the essence of Asiatic kingship," which is an intensely personal thing. He describes how Croesus and Cyrus fought it out. "In the

midst of the battle my own hand captured Kashtiliash, the Kassite king, at the point of the spear. Unto the setting of the sun I waged battle.” Of course, that vividly recalls the Book of Mormon [battle with] Shiz and Coriantumr hacking away at each other until nightfall. They’d sleep on their weapons, and then they’d go fighting away the next morning. This is the Kassites taking over Babylonia at a very early time. So we have the same thing—the personal combat between kings. He says if you’ll let me cut your head off I’ll spare your people, because they become his people.

Then there’s the challenge to each other. The king of the Scythians sent his challenge to the king of the Massagetae and also to the great Darius, whose father exchanged challenges with an earlier queen of the Massagetae, the famous queen Tomyris. The king of the Visigoths challenged the Emperor Honorius to single combat, as did Lazarus, the king of Serbia, challenge Amurath the Turk, and so on. The great Khans, when their rivals were captured in battle, would personally behead them (that was part of the ritual), as Chinese generals still do to other Chinese generals. They did when this was written. So this is all right out of the book of Ether, you see—drinking out of the skulls, etc. And the wars of extermination—I used to think that was an exaggeration, but don’t fool yourself. Remember, we’re told they “swept off the inhabitants before them, all them that would not join them” (Ether 14:27).

I think this is what Arab Shaw writes. “If the neighboring province to that which they invade will not aid them, says an eyewitness of the Tartar technique, they waste it and with the inhabitants whom they take with them they proceed to fight against other provinces.” That’s the way they sweep them and build up their armies. They place their captives in the front of the battle, and if they fight not courageously, put them to the sword. In such a way the Asiatic warlords from the beginning swept the earth before them, like Shiz. The hordes of our own day did that, forcing all that lay in their path to become part of them. “I counted them among my people,” says the Assyrian conqueror of one nation after another. This ancient formula goes back to our old friend Nimrod. We are told that Genghis Khan, like Nimrod, became a mighty hunter. He learned to steal men and to take them for prey. He ranged into other countries, taking as many captives as he could and joining them to himself to build his army. He bound them, as Nimrod had done, by awful oaths, this system of sweeping the earth, and the *Schrecklichkeit* we mentioned.

Ether 14:17–18: Coriantumr “did slay both women and children, and he did burn the cities. And there went a fear of Shiz throughout all the land; yea, a cry went forth throughout the land—Who can stand before the army of Shiz? Behold, he sweepeth the earth before him!” That’s the policy of *Schrecklichkeit*, which the Germans cultivated very deliberately. When Coriantumr gained the victory, it was his turn to be the terror of the earth, and the people began to be frightened and began to flee before the army of Coriantumr.

Then the influence of the robber bands. Remember, Mormon said, finally there is no one left in the land except Lamanites and robbers. Well, what happens? All who won’t join the great armies are put to death. But what of those who escape? You’re not going to stay and wait for that. They’re naturally outlaws and have no allegiance to any king, hence no rights or claims to protection. To survive they band themselves together, since all are deserters whose heads are forfeit. Their behavior becomes very dangerous. Asia has at all times swarmed with robber bands, exactly as did this continent under the Jaredites. From time to time these robber bands have formed coalitions strong enough to ruin states and overturn thrones. After the wars between the Mongols and the Mamluks had exhausted all their resources and brought ruin to many lands, the soldiers from both sides banded together in robber armies, gathered up the outcasts from the deserts and mountains, and came near to conquering all of western Asia. Bar Hebraeus, a merchant who made some great studies back there in the early days, wrote in Syriac. The pages of Bar Hebraeus swarm with these robber bands and a good description of how they operate. Whenever central governments became weakened by wars and corruption, bands of robbers would appear as if out of the earth, as when early in the ninth century the robber Omar became



the terror of the Near East and, joining forces with the robber of Nasir in the north, “began to destroy the world,” he said.

Just as robber bands often formed the nucleus of world-conquering armies (some Chinese emperors had whole armies composed of what they called “bad young men.”), so those world armies, once beaten, promptly broke up into robber bands again, while their leader, lately a world ruler, would find himself nothing but a bandit chief. The years during which Justinian and Chosroes were locked in deadly rivalry for the rule of the world (that was in the sixth century—565) saw the rise in western Asia of a motley array of robber gangs numbering 12,000 men, who brought complete ruin upon a large part of the civilized world. In this time of panic and insecurity “great schism fell upon the Arabs (i.e., the inhabitants) and in every quarter a man rose up who did not agree with his companion.”

Notice, there was wonderful contention. Remember, Mormon says, there were wonderful contentions. The whole face of the land was one complete revolution, everywhere. The same condition [prevailed] with the Nephites. The only thing is that the Ether story goes back earlier and covers more. It’s neat packaging; it shows the system at work in one package. The Nephites and Lamanites were more civilized, remember. They didn’t like war too much, we’re told. They were very reluctant on both sides during the long war.

This is what happened [with the Jaredites]. This typical and recurrent state of things vividly recalls the awful days of the Jaredite robbers, when every man slept on his sword to guard his property from every other man—and still had it stolen (Ether 14:1–2). See, these things are all there. In *Taras Bulba*, Gogol’s great novel, he describes the Cossack hordes—Taras Bulba was a Cossack—as going quite insane in battle, as Ether puts it. Well, there were the pathological aspects—the hideous disguises, the bloody oaths, the insane yells. “They were drunken with anger, even as a man who is drunken with wine,” says Ether 15:22. One thing is the custom of collecting scalps, which came from there. The Indians didn’t originate it. Well it was Hamilton the hair-buyer who financed it in the French and Indian Wars here, but it came from Asia. As a custom you find it everywhere.

The insane wars led to complete annihilation on both sides, with the kings the last to go. We’ve mentioned that before. The same thing had happened earlier in the days of Akish when the population was reduced to thirty people (Ether 9:12). This all seems improbable to us, but two circumstances peculiar to Asiatic warfare explain the phenomenon which is parallel everywhere. First, every war is strictly a personal contest between kings. It must continue until one of the kings has fallen or is taken. Second, things are so arranged that the king must be the very last to fall, so in that case, there’s going to be extermination. The whole army exists for the sole purpose of defending his person—the shield wall that you read about in the *Eddas*. This is clearly seen in the game of chess, as we mentioned before. All the pieces are expendable except the king who can never be taken. Moghadam, a Hindu expert on chess, says, “The shah in chess is not killed and does not die. The game is terminated when the shah is pressed into a position from which he cannot escape [*Shāh māt* means ‘the chief is dead’]. This is in line with all good traditions of chess playing, and back of it the tradition of capturing the king in war rather than slaying him whenever this could be accomplished.”

You’ll recall the many instances in the book of Ether in which kings were kept in prison for many years but not killed. This is the code of medieval chivalry. Even so, Shiz was willing to spare all of Coriantumr’s subjects if he could only behead Coriantumr. That was chess. That was typical. In Ether 15:26, Ether says “they were large and mighty men as the strength of men” that fought around their kings to the last man. Right down to the battle of Flodden Field in 1525, Scott describes the same sort of thing happening with those highland Scots that never get civilized—fighting around the wall “ ‘round their king, a fierce but fading fire,” he says. They

represent that same institution, the sacred “shieldwall,” which our own Norse ancestors took over from Asia, and which meets us again and again in the wars of the tribes. The king actually was the last to perish.

To cite a few examples here: When Genghis Khan overcame the great Merkit nation, which was his great rival through all of central Asia, he left only one man alive—the brother of his favorite wife. The Assyrian kings, like the Romans, flooded the sites of cities they destroyed to convert them into uninhabitable wastelands. In cities of a million inhabitants, the Mongols left not a dog or a cat alive, and they converted vast provinces to complete deserts. The great island of Cyprus was uninhabited waste for seven years after the Turkomans took it. The Goths in a single battle entirely exterminated the great tribe of the Sciri, as the Huns did the Scythians and Alans, and as the Mongols did the Tartars. Then it was the Mongols’ turn next. Remember what Mormon says, after the Gentiles have taken care of the Indians, it will be their turn next. The Mongols themselves met retribution in 1732 when their own kinsmen, the Manchus, wiped out nine-tenths of the Oret Mongols in a Chinese-inspired project aimed at completely obliterating both sides. The Chinese are very clever, you see. They were threatened by the two tribes, the Manchus and the Mongols, who were cousins, so they just put them to fighting against each other. That took the pressure off China, but it was extermination. Such mutual suicides of the nations were not uncommon. The Kin and the Hsia Hsia were two Hunnish tribes and the two greatest empires of their day, as closely related in blood as were the people of Shiz and Coriantumr. They engaged in 15 years of warfare which wiped out 18 million people—a figure that makes Ether’s 2 million people (Ether 15:2) seem rather paltry. Two million were killed in the last extermination.

Incidentally, the wars of Genghis Khan cost China alone 40 million lives. These people don’t fool around. When they wipe them out, they do it in vast numbers. The Hunnish Jao Dynasty of the North and the Dsin Empire of the South almost achieved mutual quietus during a civil war in which “neither side was willing to make peace until the other was completely crushed.” In the first century B.C. the Huns divided to follow two brothers, in the good old Jaredite fashion, Jiji and Huhansie. Twenty years of war followed, and the deadlock was only broken in 43 B.C. when Jiji’s people in despair finally fled to the west in the best Jaredite manner after leaving “vast stretches of land bare and deserted” behind them.

Now about these bones littering the land. What the Jaredites left behind them was a land littered with bones, for “so swift and speedy was the war, that the whole face of the land was covered with the bodies of the dead” (Ether 14:21). And a generation later, their bones lay scattered in the land northward, we read in Omni back in the Book of Mormon earlier. A medieval traveler passing Kiev years after the great wars between the Mongols and the Russian hordes reports “When we were traveling through this country, we found an innumerable multitude of dead men’s skulls and bones lying about upon the earth.” Far away, in Commania and Cangle, the same traveler says, “we found many skulls and bones lying upon the ground like cattle dung.” All the living inhabitants, he notes, were reduced to slavery. Where burial was at all possible after the great battles, the only practical procedure was to heap up the bodies in great piles and cover them with earth (as the book of Ether says, like dung), “erecting great tumuli over them.” The entire Naiman nation, a great nation, was thus buried after its destruction. Joinville accompanied St. Louis in the seventh crusade—the catastrophic one into Egypt. He traveled the whole year [he was a secretary to Baldwin] traveled the whole year through Asia to reach the court of the cham of Tartary. He saw along the road of the Tartar conquest “large mounds of bones.” A careful comparison of the prehistoric mounds of ancient America is in order.

So this is the pretty picture we have here. Oh, I wanted to mention the daughter of Jared, the succession here. We should mention this here, too—this Salome episode, the story of Jared’s daughter. This was a later Jared who rebelled against his father and “did flatter many people, because of his cunning words, until he had gained half the kingdom, . . . and he did carry away his father into captivity [after defeating him in battle] and did make him serve in captivity” (Ether

8:2–3). This happens again and again in the book of Ether. In captivity the king raised other sons who finally turned the tables on their faithless brother and beat his forces in a night skirmish. It was a palace coup. There's a marvelous description of that in Egyptian. They spared his life with his promise to give up the kingdom, but they failed to count on Jared's daughter, an ambitious girl who had read, or at least asked her father if he had "not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep?" All this was consciously carrying on the traditions of the Old World. She said have you read in the books we have brought with us of our fathers "across the great deep," a very instructive account of those devices by which men of old got "kingdoms and great glory."

See, this was the process. "Hath he not read the record which our fathers brought across the great deep? Behold, is there not an account concerning them of old, that they by their secret plans did obtain kingdoms and great glory? [Ether 8:9. This is the law of succession they followed] And now, therefore, let my father send for Akish, the son of Kimnor; and behold, I am fair, and I will dance before him, and I will please him, that he will desire me to wife; wherefore if he shall desire of thee that ye shall give unto him me to wife."

Historically, the whole point of this story is that it's highly unoriginal. It's supposed to be. The damsel asks her father if he has read "the record" and refers to how they of old did this thing. It dealt with a pattern, and this is basic. What she tells him to do and what Akish carries out is the very essence of what they called "patternism" in Cambridge in the 1930s (that's when I grew up). This is the pattern in which the princess dances. Well, there have been some good novels written about it—Mary Renault's *The King Must Die*, for example. There are some wonderful things about it. *Patternism* is the pattern of royal succession that was followed, weird as it seems. It dealt with a pattern of action in which a princess dances before a romantic stranger, wins his heart, and induces him to behead the ruling king, marry her, and mount the throne. The sinister daughter of Jared works the plan for all it is worth. Having got her grandfather beheaded and her father on the throne, she proceeds to marry the murderer Akish. She wants him to be king now, so she gets her father murdered next. Akish, who presently having "sworn by the oath of the ancients [the old system again] . . . obtained the head of his father-in-law as he sat upon the throne" (Ether 9:5). And who put him up to the new crime? "It was the daughter of Jared who put it into his heart to search up these things of old, and Jared put it into the heart of Akish" (Ether 8:17). At first she influenced Akish through her father Jared, but after Akish became her husband, he would of course act directly under her influence to dispatch her next rival according to the ancient pattern. Ether insists this all goes back to "the ancients."

Now, what comes next? Akish, as soon as his successor became apparent, would be marked as the next victim, and he was. Surely enough, we find him so suspicious of his son that he locks him up in prison and starves him to death. But there were other sons, and so "there began to be a war." This is the Mother Goddess who is permanent there, you see. As I said, it has been written up best by Mary Renault in some of her novels. She's done a good job of it. "There began to be a war between the sons of Akish and Akish," ending in the complete ruin of the kingdom (Ether 9:12). Many years later the old evil was revived by Heth who "began to embrace the secret plans again of old to destroy his father. . . . He did dethrone his father, for he slew him with his own sword, and did reign in his stead" (Ether 9:26–27).

See, this is a great subject. I'm going to give you the subject to write on for the final now. You write an essay on this. I'm sure you'll enjoy it. It's broad enough to take care of things. This is about as broad as you can get, but this is good. The title is "Lessons for the Present in the Decline and Fall [not of Rome, but] of the Nephites and Jaredites." You can brood about that, you see—something to make you really sad. This is the best decline and fall story we have. You notice how the book of Ether starts out, ". . . an account of those ancient inhabitants who were destroyed upon the face of this north country."

Nephi starts his story with the destruction of Jerusalem. Moroni ends his, of course, with destruction. It's pretty sad. It has lessons for us here. I don't think the Book of Mormon is fooling around.

1. Cf. Hugh W. Nibley, "The Prophetic Book of Mormon," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, vol. 8 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 439–43.



# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 111

Ether 2–8

The Boats of the Jaredites

Last night at 5:00 my daughter breezed in from California and brought her little son with her. This morning my little grandson was watching cartoons, and naturally it was monsters and Superman—good guys against the bad guys. The good guys are 100 percent good, and the bad guys are 100 percent bad. The bad guys are bad because they're fighting the good guys, and the good guys are good because they're fighting the bad guys. That's the only reason that's ever given. Well, that's the story of the Jaredites, isn't it—the good guys and the bad guys fighting with no in-betweens. We'll see more of that here.

We saw that they went from sea to sea. Bear in mind that these people aren't of Israel. This is long before there was any Israel or anything else. This is blank humanity, races all mixed up. They came from the Tower where everything was mixed up. There's no race or religion here, and yet this is the most deeply religious book of the Book of Mormon. You get somebody like the brother of Jared. What's the difference between them here? There were two religions in antiquity; always wherever you go you'll always find the two attitudes. The Orphic mysteries explain them. You have your two fountains, the two springs. On the left hand you have the spring of Lethe, the spring of forgetfulness. Things pass away, and that's that. The other is Demosthenes' or *anamnesis*, as Plato calls it. It's the difference between remembering and forgetting. The one religion says the best thing you can have is forgetting—die and get it all over with; it [would be] best that we were not born, etc. This is typical of the Romans—where death is, we are not; where we are, death is not. “The sun goes down, the sun comes up again. But one time our sun has gone down, and there's nothing but one black night of nothing.” So that's what we have to look forward to. The conclusion is, therefore, let's get as much sex as we can while we can. That's about it, you see. Well, you find this everywhere, in Egypt and everywhere else.

On the other hand, there is the doctrine of Demosthenes, that memory is the greatest thing, and it's always there. You'll never be able to get rid of it. In the anthropic system, without me the universe is defective. I'm dependent on it, but it is also dependent on me—there's something definitely missing. In our civilization we are taking the position that there's too much life. Remember, the only solution to the Lamanite problem was to get rid of the Lamanites, you'll remember. We'll go up against them and cut them off from the face of the earth. That's our solution. It's the same way all through the Book of Mormon—like the citizens of Antioch [claiming] there were too many people in the world. If everybody in Antioch was killed in an earthquake, I'd be the richest man in the city. That's what he wants to happen. We “kill a gook for God,” we say. We have to get rid of as many enemies as possible. That's the god of wars, and that's what we're devoted to more or less today—keep the population down. The funny thing is, the population is not a problem at all from a certain point of view. But Christ came to say, “I came to bring them life, that they might have it more abundantly. I am the resurrection and the life,” not just the life, but the resurrection. Keep it going forever, and the idea that once it's there, it's there forever. This idea of Demosthenes is you'll never be able to forget, and you'll never be able to stop. The Book of Mormon teaches us this.

Here we're dealing with these rough, tough people, the Jaredites. They crossed the great sea, which shows they were going east over the great central plains of Asia, which were flooded at the end of the last Ice Age. Everybody agrees on that. And they dwelt in tents. Then there's the promised

land. The promised land is not a doctrine peculiar to Israel at all. When the great Yadin was here, a little group of us met one night. We asked him, “What is your religion?”

He said, “We don’t believe in miracles, but we count on them.”

We said, “Well, what do you believe in?”

“I believe in the land,” he said. “The promised land—that’s my religion.” But all these people that were driven out talk about the promised land. That’s the theme of the Greek lyric poets. As they begin the period, the wandering poets are always looking for the promised land, whether it’s in Egypt or anywhere else. They’re always looking for—not utopia—but the land that was lost, the lost Eden, the paradise, the Golden Age. Every one of them is obsessed with that idea—a golden land, and they’re going to look for it again.

The Lord gives to the brother of Jared what he calls his thoughts on this subject of the promised land, and of course the thoughts are the same as those that you find in the Book of Mormon with Israel and with the Nephites. We have it here in Ether, and it’s the usual thing. This is the land of promise, “and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity” (Ether 2:9). You’ll notice it’s when the cup is full. He uses both expressions here, fulness and ripeness. He says the same thing in verse 8, and then again in verse 10, it “shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off.”

See, in the preceding verse he called it *ripeness*. When the fruit is ripe there’s no point to letting it get riper—it will just rot. In verse 10 when the cup is full, you can’t dilute it anymore; you’ve just got to throw it out. “And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children”—so he’s going to hold out until the very end. Well, how far have we got to go? “And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles.” This is being addressed to the Gentiles. See, the story of Ether is the story of people who never heard of the gospel [apparently], but they did after all. They had it down from Noah. “O ye Gentiles . . . that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities” as you have been doing in the past.

Then it talks about freedom. Then they crossed the great sea and they dwelt in their tents. And he said [verse 15]: “My Spirit will not always strive with man. . . . These are my thoughts upon the land which I shall give you for your inheritance.”

Then comes this thing about the boats and the lighting of the boats, etc. This has caused more merriment and mockery than any other aspect of the Book of Mormon, so we’ll refer to it quickly here. According to the famous Dr. J. C. Bennett, who was once mayor of Nauvoo, and Joseph chose him for a counselor, “The story of the Jaredites was the climax of all Joseph Smith’s indiscretions in which he used his utmost endeavors to see how far he could impose upon the gullibility of mankind. It would be useless to make any further comment to prove the absurdities of this extraordinary book.” That’s the story of the Jaredites.

Then Tadler in 1857 said, “This story is nothing less than a libel on the wisdom of God.”

Another investigator said, “It seems impossible for sensible men to credit such trash. My soul is filled with disgust at this monstrous absurdity.” He’s talking about the Jaredite ships, you see.

This is the Reverend C. Fenwick Ward as he perused the pages of Ether, “I dare not trust myself to comment on it.”

“Of the incredible things in this incredible book,” says H. C. Sheldon, “there’s no item perhaps more fantastic than that which recounts the voyage of the Jaredites to America in very peculiarly constructed barges. Anyone who can believe this story ought to feel obliged to challenge the historicity of any marvelous tales of *Alice in Wonderland*.”

In 1956, as late as that, Mr. [William E.] Biederwolf finds “the fantastic story of the passage of the Jaredites to America one of the tales with which Baron Munchhausen and Alice in Wonderland are certainly put to the shade.”

Well, an important clue to the ships is that the Lord tells us in Ether 6:7 that they were built on the same pattern as Noah’s ark. To get Noah’s ark from the Bible—you never get a picture of what it was like. I gave the publishers here a beautiful old sixteenth-century engraving I had of Noah’s ark—it’s utterly fantastic. But we have the Babylonian account in the first kingdom, and then you have the Sumerian account discovered by Hilprecht. It goes way back. We have two very old accounts of the flood story, and they describe the ark. It’s a very good description, and it matches the ships that Jared made very closely. We won’t spend much time on it, but it’s an interesting thing. They were built on the same pattern. Well, that’s the clue. See, they built them like Noah’s ark. What was Noah’s ark like? Why don’t the critics laugh their heads off at the ark? We now know what it looked like. Can these nonbiblical documents really tell us? Of course they can.

In 1856 in the library of Assurbanipal at Nineveh, Laird unearthed what was then the oldest library in the world. It was a seventh and eighth century B.C. library from King Assurbanipal. It had the story of the flood in it, so everybody immediately said, well here’s the original of the Bible flood story. This is where the Jews got it from. See, that shows that the Bible is just a collection of old legends. Then the University of Pennsylvania, just before World War I, was going to spend a mint to go over and find an earlier version in the Sumerian ruins. The war broke out and they couldn’t go, so they had to search what they already had in the library. There it was, right on top of the pile. The thing they were going to spend a million bucks to find they’d had in the library all the time. See, once these things are found, the archaeologists lose interest in them. They’ve got to go and dig up something else. That’s the adventure. But there it was, and it goes back to 2100 B.C. It’s a nice story of the flood, and it gives a very good description of the ark. And again you can compare the primal version of the story with the Jaredite ships.

Well, it was called a *magur* boat. Here are the qualifications that Ether 2:16 gives. They were built “after the manner of barges which ye have hitherto built.” Except for some particulars, these boats were not newly designed, but they were built according to a familiar pattern that the people understood and knew something about. There really were such boats. And they were built according to the instructions of the Lord. And “they were exceedingly tight, even that they would hold water like unto a dish; and the bottom thereof was tight like unto a dish; and the sides thereof were tight like unto a dish [a submarine, because the waves are going dash over them many times]; and the ends thereof were peaked.” That’s a very important thing for the *magur* boat. You see the reason for that in the oldest boats. We have predynastic pictures of these from the delta of Egypt, and for very obvious reasons they are peaked. The ones that invaded Egypt from Mesopotamia were like this [refers to drawing on the blackboard]. It means they couldn’t turn turtle. These were floats here. It could go over on its side for a moment, and it would always right itself. It was as good as having a keel here.

Ether 2:17: “The top thereof was tight like unto a dish [a tight deck, in other words]; and the length thereof was the length of a tree.” There wouldn’t be too many seams in it, and there were some pretty tall trees in those days. Verse 16: “And they were small, and they were light upon the water, even like unto the lightness of a fowl upon the water.” They bounced around. Boy, this was something to get seasick in. We’re told they did get terribly seasick.



Verse 17: “The door thereof, when it was shut, was tight like unto a dish.” So, they had the hatches; when you cut them down, the water couldn’t get into the boat. But how could you breathe when you were inside? Well, this was the problem. And believe it or not, the editors—especially Brother Talmage—very officiously changed the reading of Joseph Smith’s first edition. It gives a different picture of how this thing worked. We’ll mention that a little later. Verse 24: “For behold, ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea; for the mountain waves shall dash upon you.”

Then their flocks and their herds. Oh boy, this would make it something, wouldn’t it? Ether 6:4: “. . . their flocks and herds, and whatsoever beast or animal or fowl that they should carry with them . . . got aboard of their vessels or barges. . . . And it came to pass that the Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind, . . . and thus they were tossed upon the waves of the sea before the wind [the wind did never cease to blow for 344 days]. And it came to pass that they were many times buried in the depths of the sea. . . . When they were buried in the deep there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah. [Verse 10:] And thus they were driven forth: and no monster of the sea could break them, neither whale that could mar them.” And you can be sure that the north Pacific was quite full of whales in those days. That was quite a thing.

Now let’s match each of these twelve points with the *magur* boat that Ut-napishtim [according to the Babylonian account] built to survive the flood. Not trusting our own interpretation, we’ll quote Hilprecht throughout. “This class of boats, according to the Nippur version [the oldest version, were] in use before the Deluge.” So they were familiar. In historic times the archaic craft was preserved only in ritual, the gods “in their boats . . . visiting each other in their temples during certain festivals.”<sup>1</sup>

Two: “In all three versions of the Deluge Story Ut-napishtim receives special instructions concerning the construction of a roof or a deck on the boat.” That’s why it’s called an ark or *tebet*. See, an ark is a closed box, and the Hebrew word *tēbāh* is the Egyptian word *db,t*, which means boat or deck, covered with a deck—it means a box or ark. See, the ark is described as a box. Why do they use the same word for the ark as for the ark of the covenant? Because they were both boxes. So that’s why they have such a hard time describing the ark, because it was a box. Can you imagine floating around in a box? That means it had a covered top; it was closed tight. In all three versions he received special instructions concerning the construction of the boat, and he received these instructions by speaking with the Lord through the veil. “By the wall a word will I speak to thee. . . . My pure one, my wise one, by our hand a deluge” shall be caused. The seed of mankind shall be destroyed. He [the Lord] gave him instructions through the *kikkisu*, which was a woven screen in the temple.

Three: There was “of course a solid part, strong enough to carry heavy freight and to resist the force of the waves and the storm.”

Four: “Jensen explains the MA-TU as a ‘deluge boat,’ [it couldn’t capsize] . . . adding, that when seen from the side it probably resembled the crescent moon. . . . Moreover, the representations of sea-going vessels of the Tyrians and Sidonians . . . show that a certain class of boats really had such a shape.”

The next point [five] is “The principal distinguishing feature of a *magur* boat (was) . . . the roof or deck of the boat. . . . We notice in the Biblical as in the Babylonian version great stress is laid on the preparation of a proper ‘roof’ or ‘cover.’ . . . ‘Cover it with a strong deck,’ the Nippur version says. ‘With a deck as strong as the earth,’ or ‘let its deck be strong like the vault of heaven above,’ the Second Nineveh Version says. This emphasis on the tightness and strength was very important.

Six: The lines containing “a brief statement concerning the measures of the ark” have been effaced in the Nippur version (we don’t know how big they were). The First Nineveh text says simply: “Its measures be in proportion, its width and length shall correspond.” But they only built one ark, you see.

Seven: “Furthermore in the First Nineveh Version the boat . . . has a door to be shut during the storm flood.” The various names for the boat “designate ‘a boat which can be closed by a door,’ i.e., practically a *houseboat*, expressed in the Hebrew story by an Egyptian word *Tevah*, *ark* originally meaning “box, chest, coffin,” [something that’s closed], an essential part of which is its *cover* or *lid*.”

Eight: “The boat has . . . a door to be shut during the storm flood and at least one *air-hole* or *window*.” *Nōfāshāh* means *air hole*. \*NPS̄ is a verbal root meaning “to breathe.” *Nefesh* is spirit, breath, life, or soul. So it had an air-hole. The word *nappashu* means “a breather or ventilator.” It doesn’t apply to window at all. That’s the word we use in the book of Ether, too.

Nine: “The vessel built by Ut-napishtim being such a ‘house boat’ or *magur*, this word could subsequently be rendered ideographically by MA-TU, a ‘deluge boat.’ . . . A *magur* boat, then is a ‘house boat,’ in which gods, men, and beasts live comfortably, fully protected against the waves washing overboard, the driving rain from above and against the inclemencies of wind and weather.”

The fact that the *magur* boat was built to be completely submerged gives strong support for this. [Number ten was left out.]

Eleven: In a *magur* boat “men and beasts live comfortably.” Nineveh 2: Ut-napishtim is to take “domestic animals of the field, with wild beasts of the field, as many as eat grass.” Of course, that’s the whole story of Noah and the ark. He got all the animals in. He got a lot more animals than the Jaredites got. The Nippur version mentions “the beasts of the field, the birds of heaven.”

C. S. Coon, writing of the earliest water transportation says, “Dogs howled, pigs grunted, cocks crowed on these seagoing barnyards.” The idea that the oldest sailing vessels may have been built for a specific purpose of transporting men and animals together, often for vast distances seems strange to us, but the Asiatic river boats mentioned in point one keep the whole household afloat for months with their animals and poultry—just like the idea of riding of buffalos seems utterly strange to us.

Twelve: “The storm-winds with exceeding terror, all of them together raced along with the deluge. The mighty tempest raged with them, . . . and the mighty ship over the great waters the storm-wind had tossed [thus the Sumerian version]. Jensen explains MA-TU as a ‘deluge boat.’ ” It’s driven by the wind; it’s not a sailing vessel. There are no sails ever mentioned. There don’t need to be. Though driven by the storm, it had “nothing in common with a boat in full sail (and) nowhere . . . is a sail mentioned, nor would it have been of much use in such a hurricane as described.”

It would have been rent to shreds in a minute, driven before the wind all the way, these fierce winds. Notice, they both say exactly what the book of Ether says. We don’t need to question this thing as the most absurd thing ever written anymore. Hilprecht wrote, “Besides, we observed that the pictures of the Tyrian boats referred to have no sails.” A *magur* boat was driven by the wind, but not with sails.

Thirteen: “It shall be a house-boat carrying what is saved of life,” says the Nippur version, its purpose being to preserve life and offer full protection “against the waves washing overboard.”

That thing about the air hole has been changed by some. Jensen explains here “a ‘deluge boat,’ not because it was a sailing boat driven by the wind or rather the hurricane boat, but because it possessed certain qualities which rendered its use especially effective during the deluge, when its exclusive purpose was to carry the remains of life and to protect men and beasts against the waters.”

That’s not the one I was looking for. Oh, here we are. Ether 2:20: “And the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: Behold, thou shalt make a hole in the top [thereof], and also in the bottom [thereof]; and when thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole [it doesn’t say open the window] and receive air.” That’s a very different thing from opening windows. It talks about opening windows, and this is something else. There’s a hole in the top. What is this, an air compressor? “Thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air. And if it be so that the water come in upon thee, behold, ye shall stop the hole, that ye may not perish in the flood.”

Notice “the hole thereof”; there’s the hole of the air and the hole of the water, “that ye may not perish in the flood.” An exacting editor, by removing the very significant *thereofs* [has changed the meaning]. When you suffer for air, you unstop the hole thereof and receive air. That means *air hole*, you see. But he removed the [word] *thereof*, and he said, “When thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air.” He doesn’t mention *thereof*, meaning *air hole*. He made it to appear that when Jared wanted air, he had to open the top window of the boat to admit fresh air. That’s the very time he had to keep it closed. When they didn’t have air inside, they had to keep it closed because the waves are dashing outside. That was not what the original of the Book of Mormon said. For one thing, the ships had no windows communicating with the outside. “Ye cannot have windows,” it said. Each ship had an air-tight door, we’re told, and that was all. Air was received not by opening and closing doors and windows. Only when they were quiet and riding on the surface could they open the window and replenish the air. But he says by unplugging air holes “thou shalt unstop the hole [thereof] and receive air,” this being done only when the ship was not on the surface. “When thou shalt suffer for air”—that is, when the ships were not able to open the hatches and replenish their air. Well, this can only refer to a reserve supply of air, and indeed the brother of Jared recognizes that the people cannot possibly survive on the air contained within the ship at normal pressure. Ether 2:19: “We shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them; therefore we shall perish.”

So the Lord recommended a device for compressing air with a hole in the top thereof and also in the bottom thereof—not referring to the ship but to the air chamber with the peculiar language “unstop an air hole.” When the crew found it impossible to remain on the surface, [verse 20], “And if it be so that the water come in upon thee,” they were to plug up the air chamber. “Ye shall stop the hole [thereof], that ye may not perish in the flood”—to keep the air after you’ve replenished it.

Anyway, much more important than that is the conversation the Lord has with the brother of Jared on the subject of light when he’s told how to build [the ships]. He says in Ether 2:18: “O Lord, I have performed the work which thou hast commanded me, and I have made the barges according as thou hast directed me [but there’s something wrong]. And behold, O Lord, in them there is no light; whither shall we steer? And also we shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them [they know that, you see]; therefore we shall perish.” Then the Lord gives the instructions here, which have been changed in our book, to unstop the hole, etc. They have a compressor.

Verse 23: “Ye cannot have windows, for they will be dashed in pieces; neither shall ye take fire with you.” The Lord tells them they can’t have windows for light, and they can’t take fire. That’s

interesting. It would use up all the oxygen. That's out of the question, you see, "for ye shall not go by the light of fire. For behold, ye shall be as a whale in the midst of the sea." So what will you do? Verse 25: "For ye cannot cross this great deep save I prepare you against the waves of the sea, the winds which have gone forth, and the floods which shall come. Therefore what will ye that I should prepare for you?"

The brother of Jared says what will we do for [light], and the Lord always answers him this way, "What ideas do you have on the subject?" He must contribute—that's the whole idea. After all, the whole company could have been taken through the air across the Pacific just like that. That wasn't the idea. We all have to go through this, so he asks the brother of Jared, well, what ideas have you got on the subject? Verse 23: "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels," when you're swallowed up in the depths of the sea? Well, he had an idea.

Ether 3:1: "The brother of Jared (now the number of the vessels which had been prepared was eight) went forth unto the mount which they called the mount Shelem." *Shelem* means *high, safe, secure*. The word *shalom* is derived from that. Remember, *shalom* means you're safe. *Shalom* is a "ladder, a high place." If you're going to a high place, it is a safe place, a secure place, a *shelem*. He went to the highest mountain around. Moses did the same thing. Lehi and Nephi did the same thing. So again this is a pattern. And he melted out sixteen stones. Well, how did he know that he'd have to do that? Because the ark of Noah was lit by shining stones that the Lord had blessed. That's how he knew about it. It says it was constructed after the manner of Noah's ark, so when the Lord asked what do you want me to do—he thought, Ah, I'll get some shining stones. "And they were white and clear, even as transparent glass," but alas, they wouldn't shine. That was the trouble—they didn't shine in the dark. There was another problem, so what did he do?

This is very symbolic, too. He climbed the highest mountain around, "and he did carry them in his hands upon the top of the mount." He stood on the top of the mountain and said, Lord, this is where I get off. This is as far as I go. He held them up and said, you've got to do something now. I've done everything in my power. Then he suggested what the Lord could do—touch these and make them shine, and then everything will be all right. But the way he puts it, he's not laying commands to the Lord or anything. He is reduced to the depths of humility now. Of all the humble requests we have in all of scripture, this is the most profound. Talk about a man in humility. The need is urgent now.

So the Jaredites discover their limitations. He says [verse 2] "Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires. [Anything you want you ask the Lord for, and you have a right to do that. You've been commanded to do it.] Behold, O Lord, thou has smitten us because of our iniquity, and hast driven us forth, and for these many years we have been in the wilderness [how eloquent the man is]; nevertheless, thou hast been merciful unto us. O Lord, look upon me in pity and turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth across this raging deep in darkness; but behold these things which I have molten out of the rock." These little pretty things. They don't mean a thing. He calls them "these things" rather contemptuously.

Verse 4: "And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones . . . that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared." So the Lord stretches forth his hand and touches the stones with his finger. Verse 6: "And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord," and was knocked flat, "and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood [the Lord does not have flesh and blood, you know;

flesh is of this earth, and blood is the corruptible part of our nature]; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear.”

The Lord said why have you fallen? Verse 8: “I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood.” Now this is a crux. Just within the last week something’s come out. I don’t know where—I think it was in the *Student Review*. Somebody said there’s a flat contradiction in the Book of Mormon where he tells him no man has seen me before. He said, “Never have I shown myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed as thou has believed.” But he had already showed himself to Adam [the student said]. No he hadn’t. He hadn’t showed himself to Adam in the flesh. He showed himself to Adam before the Fall. After that he didn’t show himself to Adam. Adam before the Fall was not a body of flesh and blood. He was not perishable; he was immortal.

Verse 9: “I shall take upon me flesh and blood.” Well, the Lord did, so he could suffer, be crucified, and die. As we know, the blood is the life, the earthly life, the corruptible element, and flesh is itself of the substance of the earth. Flesh is *bāśār*, the perishable and corruptible. So he said “I shall take upon me flesh and blood,” which he was to do. And he said “Sawest thou more than this? And he answered: Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me. . . . And he answered: Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth.” And then the Lord showed himself unto him as he was and said, “Ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence.” There’s the preexistence again, you see.

Verse 14: “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.” Notice in the same verse he says, “They who shall believe on my name . . . shall become my sons and my daughters.” Well, if he has sons and daughters, of course he’s the Father. And he is the Son also. Verse 15: “And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created.” See, Adam in the Garden was eternal; he was not a mortal. The first time he showed his immortal body to a mortal man—that’s what this was. Yes?

“In the book of Moses it seems to indicate that Eve was shown Christ as well.”

[Brother Nibley thought he said Enoch.] No, he was carried in away in a vision. He was carried away to heaven. Remember when the lights go down and then he finds himself lying upon the earth in the dark. He hadn’t been talking to the Lord here. He’d been in the other world. He’d been in his presence up in the celestial kingdom, just as Lehi had. Remember at the beginning, Lehi said he thought he saw God sitting on his throne surrounded by a numerous concourse of angels, and then they all went on a conference. See, it’s the time element here. That was the great council in heaven he was seeing, when the decision was made. So he had to go there to see him. Yes, you won’t see God in the flesh and live; we’re told that very clearly in the Pearl of Great Price in the book of Moses—no man can stand in his presence and live. But this was a special case given to the brother of [Jared]. Notice, “. . . in the likeness of the same body, even as he showed himself unto the Nephites.” He showed himself to the Nephites how? After the resurrection when he was no longer flesh and blood. But there’s all the fuss about this.

The time is limited, but I wanted to talk about this polarization. We’ve been talking about that all along, but nevertheless there are some things here. Well, it mentions elephants. You notice elephants are never mentioned in connection with the Nephites, just with the Jaredites. Just in the very early days you find them on the continent, and they were used. They’re easily tamed, as you know, in India.

How did they cross the waters in the sixth chapter? How would they endure those terrible situations? Well, it says they had sing-ins. We just sang all day long and enjoyed it. I was thirty days crossing the Atlantic on one occasion, and the only way we could possibly endure was to

sing all day. Notice, “And it came to pass that the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind. And they did sing praises unto the Lord; yea, the brother of Jared did sing praises unto the Lord, and he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long; and when the night came, they did not cease to praise the Lord” (Ether 6:8–9). That’s how they lived through it; they had these super sing-ins. It can be quite invigorating, you know, to keep on [singing].

We have Moroni’s commentary here. Then the works done in prison—that’s a very interesting thing because that’s so characteristic of the Asiatic society. We were talking about this Asiatic society, this knock down and drag out—the very sort of Ninja Turtles that my little grandson was looking at this morning. It’s always good guys against bad guys. You’ll always have them, and you’ll always have equals against each other and never solve that terrible thing. I’ll give an example of how this works. In the fourth century St. Basil was writing about it. “In the confused political situation everybody wants to give orders, and nobody wants to take them. Men are willing to cooperate on anything only as the most effective means of crippling a common enemy, after which they turn against each other.”

This was in Antioch, too, remember, the city where [men wanted] everybody to be wiped out so they’d be the richest man left. The final survivor and undisputed Number One was Constantine the Great. He interrupted and made them stop fighting. But, to quote our own study on the subject, no sooner had Constantine removed his last civil and *military* opponents than the issue between the Christians and pagan subjects became acute.<sup>2</sup> He had to settle that, so he settled that. He put the pagans in their place, and then the churchmen started accusing each other of heresy in wild abandon. Then it had to be Arias against Athanasius. The whole Christian world was then split again. Then the emperor took sides, came down with one side, and removed the last heretic, and received the undying thanks from the church. The true believers were at each others’ throats as never before. So this is the way it goes.

Nowhere is this process more sharply brought into focus than with Moroni’s inserts in his father’s book on the supreme results of polarizing. This is a very important principle—that the two poles conceive an ever greater antipathy to each other the more they come to be alike. Everyone knows that like poles repel each other, and only opposite poles attract each other. Now we’re talking about right from the beginning. As soon as Trajan and Hadrian took over and took half of Asia, then the trouble began with the two worlds fighting each other. It’s very old, of course. It goes back much further than that. It goes back to the battle of Thermopylae and much older than that; it’s always been going on. The emperors of East and West were fighting each other, in this case the emperors of Rome and Asia. I had particularly Justinian and Chosroes in mind, both very powerful emperors of a revived empire. The emperors of Rome and Asia describe themselves in absolutely identical terms, while each accuses his rival of being nothing but a base forgery and depraved imitation of himself. This is not a real clash of ideologies at all, but only a rivalry of parties that are [motivated] by identical principles and have the same objectives. What they’re both after is the Book of Mormon formula, power and gain. The secret of commanding loyalty on both sides was, of course, to play up the wickedness of the other. The empire of the fourth century, when Rome collapsed, was at its very strongest with the biggest army and everything else. The empire of the fourth century was the world of displaced persons, inevitably drawn toward the big city. (Just in the last two months Cairo has gone up another million—there are now 15 million people living in Cairo.) To take the place of the old lost loyalty to hearth and homeland—the *prisca fides*, the primitive belief in fate—strong measures had to be taken. New super loyalty was needed to guarantee the permanence of the social order. Men were taught to declare allegiance to a super thing—a noble abstraction loosely designated as *Romanitas*, the binding cement which was carefully cultivated in hostility to barbarians. “We’re the Romans; they’re the barbarians.” Well, it was the same with the Babylonians and the Moslems. It was *ager pacatus* and *ager hosticus* with the Romans; *Dār al-Islām* and *Dār al-Ḥarb* with the Moslems.

You see that's being very strongly emphasized. You're never going to come to an agreement with the Iranians or the Iraqis as long as they say *Dār al-Ḥarb*. *Islam* means "to submit"; it means *peace* also. All those who have submitted are the real people. All outside are the *Dār al-Ḥarb*, and they threaten us. They were always being threatened, and that's why the emperor expanded [the empire]. They couldn't stand anyone beyond their borders threatening them. Remember the last line of the great fourth eclogue that got Vergil made a saint: "The emperor must inevitably rule over a pacified earth. All the earth must be pacified under his rule according to the virtues of our virtuous ancestors." We're the virtuous people, and we must rule the earth because we're the good guys.

Barbaria is the threatening world of the steppes of Asia. It's no more a fiction of government propaganda. There was really such a contrast. "It was the age-long struggle [this is quoting J. B. Bury] to repel, check, or annihilate a perennial enemy. The eternal question [was] the strife between Europe and Asia, between East and West, between Aryan and non-Aryan. All around the civilized periphery of Asia, the hordes of the heartland had for centuries been dealt with in the same way." I talked about geopolitics, the basic driving mechanism of history. Then remember that the weather is always the thing that gets things moving, and of course it is in the book of Ether, too—the terrible winds that destroy. These terrible winds, the *burans*, never cease to blow.

"The hordes of the heartland had for centuries been dealt with in the same way by subtle and disruptive diplomacy, by long and costly limes [those are lines or walls], by punitive deterrent expeditions, [and] when all else failed by the reluctant absorption of their barbarian conquerors." Well, this is interesting. We might as well conclude it, too. "To command loyalty became part of the public education policy. To the lessons of the schools, carefully supervised by the government, was added a more aggressive policy of deliberately widening the gulf between the two worlds [planned polarization]. For centuries barbarian and Roman east and west had been mingling on terms of the greatest intimacy, producing a borderline culture in which it was quite impossible to draw the line between one culture and the other. Priscus, who was sent back in the sixth century, remembers quite casually the presence of people from the West visiting relatives in the camps of the Asiatics. He notes the busy coming and going of merchants between the two worlds. He describes the kind hospitality shown him, a complete stranger, in the home of the Easterners. But with this he gives us the other side of the picture, the official side—the ubiquitous activity of spies and agents in Roman pay, the infusion into the very court of Attila of large sums of Roman money to corrupt and divide. The insane mounting conviction of the rulers of the two halves of the world, both barbarians, each that his was the divine calling to liberate the human race from the intolerable ambition of the other." It still is going on today.

I'm quoting from two books here. You may recognize one. "It seems melodramatic," writes the first author, a very important man, "to treat the two poles of human experience represented by the United States and the Soviet Union [this talk was given ten years ago] as the equivalent of good and evil, light and darkness, God and the devil. Yet if we allow ourselves to think of them that way, even hypothetically, it can help clarify our perspective of the world struggle." It hardly clarifies the picture. It certainly simplifies it, as he continues. "The United States represents hope, freedom, security, and peace. The Soviet Union stands for fear, tyranny, aggression, and war. If these are not poles, good and evil in human affairs, then the concepts of good and evil have no meaning. Those who cannot see the distinction have little claim to lecture on conscience."

So there you have it. There are just two poles. And strange thing—we have to do exactly what they do. We have to react every time. We don't act—we react. That's what Satan does. He has to react. All his power is to destroy. He can lie, but after a statement has been made. He does the four things that Joseph Smith said we must never do under any circumstances. We accuse. See, Satan is Diabolus; devil means *accuser*. He's the accuser of his brethren. Never accuse. You must

never aspire. Joseph said Satan aspired, and that was his undoing. He aspired to greatness. You must never contend. The first rule to the Nephites was there shall be no more contentions among you as there have been in the past, for all contention is of the devil. And you must never coerce. You must never force. That's the way the devil works. That's always reacting to something someone else has done; you never initiate your own doing, you see.

There are just two poles. We are all at one pole, and they're all at the other, like the two things in the film this morning. The good guys are good because they're fighting the bad guys. The bad guys are [bad] just because they're fighting the good guys. That would make them bad, and that's as far as you need to go.

“Strange to say, we do everything they do because they force us to. Soviet strategy is not defensive. It's designed to secure victory. The only answer for us [to] a strategy of victory on the Soviet side is a strategy of victory for the West. If they play dirty, we too can fight the twilight war in the hazardous mufti of the CIA. While we have been giving our lectures on human rights [no more of that], we now do everything they do. We must fight them because they do all those bad things. And to fight them we must do all the same bad things,” he says. “Thus, just like them, we must give up desirable social goals to attain military aims. We have no choice but to counterpoise our military strength to that of the Soviet Union's [which of course leaves them no choice but to counter ours]. This is the way to avoid defeat,” he tells us. “Finding ourselves constantly threatened, we should be as much a threat to them as they are to us, declare ourselves as free to forage on the Soviet side as they have been to forage on ours. The Soviet leaders can be utterly ruthless if they use power. We must do the same. Only if the West develops a sense of purpose equal to theirs, though different from theirs [how different is it?]. . . . And equal is, by their definition, a rival—no reconciliation, no coexistence, no avoidance of wars to be thought of, because they will not allow it.”

The thesis of Mr. Nixon's book, if not his life, is that we are constantly being threatened and that there's only one way to meet the threat, coming as it does from the source of irredeemable evil, “and that is power. To meet the challenge of our survival we must drastically increase our military power, shore up our economic power, reinvigorate our will power, strengthen the power of our presidents, and develop a strategy aimed not just at avoiding defeat but at attaining victory. Victory requires knowing when to use power.”

He quotes James and Burns then. “Presidents must have a will to power. They must constantly search for power—build it, if necessary, out of every scrap of formal authority or personal influence they can locate. They must be constantly guarding against whatever power they have achieved. They must horde power so that it will be available in the future. One man alone has the specific responsibility to ensure power [and that, of course, is the president], the effective use of power that only experience can teach.”

At this point we recall what Moses 6:15 says, “And in those days Satan had great dominion among men, and raged in their hearts; and from thenceforth came wars and bloodshed . . . because of secret works seeking for power. He says here, “The sine qua non of the conduct and exercise of power is secrecy.”

Then Moroni's statement in Ether 8:15–16: “. . . oaths which were given by them of old who also sought power. . . . And they were kept up by the power of the devil to administer these oaths unto the people, to keep them in darkness [there's the secrecy, you see], to help such as sought power to gain power.” There's the same formula, the secrecy and the power. Granted that such power-seeking is bad on their side, what else can it be for those who imitate them? Well, and so it goes on.



Now, remember what the subject is we're writing on. It's not just war you're talking about. There are various facets. We must talk about that the next time.

He says here, finally, "Napoleon is wrong when he says it's spirit that always wins. In the short run that may be so, but we're not living in that kind of a world. In the final analysis the victory goes to the side with the power. Power is the ability to make things happen, to set the course of history." Nothing could be more insane. The first law of Clausewitz, in his classic work *On War* is uncertainty. You never can tell when a war begins what's going to happen. And he [Nixon ] says we have the power, so we can set the course of history. Well, you know who that is speaking.

The other one is taught by Solzhenitsyn, and he says the same thing. Nixon says the danger is that we're so different. No, he says the danger isn't that at all. The danger is that we're so much alike. I must read this to you—these two great principles of action that dominate. We're both materialistic, and we both say the economy is everything. He insists on describing the West, he has also described the East. "At first glance there seems an ugly parallel, common traits in the thinking of a way of life today—East and West, but such is the logic of materialistic development. This is the real crisis," he says. "In the East it is destroyed by dealings and machinations of the ruling party. In the West commercial interests tend to suffocate it. This is the real crisis. The split world is less terrible than the fact that the same disease is plaguing the two main sections." And that's the case. The great empires always fight the great emperors. The great democracies always fight the great democracies, etc. It's always kings against kings, princes against princes, equals fighting equals. That's the very essence of the thing. Even in the last World War it was two great commercial empires. Buckminster Fuller said that World War I was just a fight of the sea pirates against the land pirates. The British Empire were the sea pirates; they went out and grabbed anything they wanted. And the Germans were doing the same thing by land. It was a fight between the sea pirates and the land pirates, but they were as alike as peas in a pod. As you know, they were cousins. The royal families were very close, very intimate, loving families of the kaiser and Queen Victoria.

Well, what is the real crisis then? Our book of Ether is not a waste of paper, believe me. It's nothing to be laughed at, and it's becoming very serious. I guess we'll have to talk about the final the next time, won't we.

1. He is quoting from Hermann Hilprecht, *The Earliest Version of the Babylonian Deluge Story and the Temple Library of Nippur* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1910), 52–55.
2. Cf. Hugh Nibley, "The Prophetic Book of Mormon," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, vol. 8 in *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 438.

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 4, Lecture 112  
Moroni 1–10  
Formula of Faith, Hope, and Charity  
Gifts

In Moroni 1:1, Moroni tells us that he's writing an appendix to the Book of Mormon. He hadn't intended to write any more, but he had some time on his hands. He ended it with the Jaredites. That's where it should end, back there, showing that they suffered the same things. Well, I'm going to skip to just the high points here, and then I may go back to some others. He tells us in the fourth verse anything he writes now is for the Lamanites. Of course, his people are finished. Moroni 2:2 is a note from the forty-day mission of Christ, and it's how we can enlist the power of the Holy Ghost, which is absolutely indispensable. A very elusive thing is the Holy Ghost, but that verse will tell you some very important things about the Holy Ghost.

You'll notice the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, which we're not going into now, are ordinances that you are familiar with. We have actually taken them from here. We've taken them from the Book of Mormon—the sacrament prayer, baptism, etc. Moroni, with a little time on his hands, searched for the most important, the most vital items, and that's what we have here.

St. Basil, writing in the fourth century, said, we know they baptized, but we don't have any formula. We don't have any ordinance for baptism given. The church didn't have one. They had to invent them. And he said, we know they got married, but we don't know what kind of marriage rites were celebrated in the early Christian church. Now if you want the best thumbnail sketch that could possibly be given of primitive Christianity, called the primitive Christian church, we look to Moroni 6. In the sixth chapter we have a thumbnail sketch of it. It's just like Qumran revisited, a little Dead Sea Scrolls here, the way it describes it. That is a short chapter that's taken up with a description of the working of the church in the early days, and it's a very interesting thing. This is exactly the picture of the primitive church that has emerged from the recent studies of it on the basis of newly found documents, begun in the latter part of the nineteenth century by von Harnack, Albert Schweitzer, Bultmann, and people like that. But read the sixth chapter if you want your primitive church. Yes?

"I'm sorry, you started telling us about the test before you stepped in front of the microphone, so I didn't hear it all."

Oh yes, the essay may be typewritten or handwritten, if it's clearly handwritten. The length is what it would take to unload your thoughts in three hours, and think about it. It's going to be judged purely as an essay. It's a very broad subject, as you know, and yet it's coming down to a fine point today. I'm really getting serious about the Book of Mormon now. It's just been an intellectual exercise heretofore. Not any more, kiddo—it's the real thing. And you might bring that home in [your essay] with what we have here.

Well, let's consider these chapters in Moroni. This will give you some ideas right here, you see. Chapters 7 to 9 are important chapters. What chapter 7 all boils down to, as it tells us in verse 1, is the ancient formula of faith, hope, and charity. I'll refer to that later. In chapter 7 you notice that Mormon is sick to death of violence. He wants rest and peace. He's just obsessed with it now. He said right at the beginning that since he was old enough to observe the ways of men, he had seen nothing but this restless violence. Note verses 3 and 4 in the seventh chapter: "Wherefore I would

speak unto you that are of the church, that are the peaceable followers of Christ, and that have obtained a sufficient hope by which ye can enter into the rest of the Lord, from this time henceforth until ye shall rest with him in heaven [notice his emphasis on peace and rest]. And now my brethren, I judge these things of you because of your peaceable walk with the children of men.” I want to talk of peace for a change with some peaceable people. He wants a peaceable world and he wants a rest. He’s sick and tired. Remember, he’s led the whole thing here, and he has this obsession. Peace and rest are foremost in his mind here, and it comes out throughout this chapter.

He goes on with what he’s been through. Is this cynical when he says in the sixth verse: “For behold, God hath said a man being evil cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing. For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness.” See, he’s in a fake and a phony world, and he [refers] here to our reluctant gifts, our formal prayers, etc. “Man being evil” is a present participle, active, you see. As long as he is evil, being evil, he can’t do that which is good. Everything we do is wrong here. This is a significant thing. Men are not capable of saving themselves, and it’s the inevitable question. He has no peace or rest. What’s the use? Men are just naturally evil. This is not cynical; it’s just a statement of fact. Mormon sees no point in criticizing here. He takes a wholly positive stand here. He’s not disillusioned at all because he never had any illusions. When he was fifteen years old he was preaching to the people [and it was like preaching] to a stone wall, so he has no illusions at all. He says that’s just the way people are (Mormon 1:15–16; 2:18). We’re flawed from the beginning because of the Fall. We’re naturally selfish; that colors everything we do. We’re not in a position to give a good gift he says in verses 6–10 here. Are we really servants of the devil?

Then he explains what’s going on in verses 12–13. Notice the balance here. They’re perfectly balanced against each other here, using the same expressions exactly. You’re thinking of a person suspended in space, and two planets are trying to pull him in opposite directions to opposite orbits. “For the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually.” There is no mention anywhere of God fighting against the devil. He doesn’t have to. He could dismiss him like that. There’s no issue there because the devil is phony. He can only react, but he’s always fighting against God. You’re not called upon to fight God’s battles for him, as Mormon tells us here. He has not asked you to do that at all. He has asked you to do what’s good. If you do righteously, that’s the deadly weapon—not going out and attacking him [Satan] because he’s evil. Remember, he’s going to have to live with us forever, too, in eternity. We’ve got to get on with each other eventually. He’s going to be forgiven, so there’s nothing you can do by going out and trying to eliminate him. He says here, “The devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin [that’s his method], and to do that which is evil continually.”

So it’s like a gravitational force, a continual force exerting steady pressure or attraction to pull you over into an orbit where you’ll be invited to sin and do evil continually. And with God the same thing: “That which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually.” On the other hand, you’re continually being pulled in the opposite direction. But the same way, inviting and enticing—the same test. “Wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.”

Between the two it’s up to you, and the pull is equal. It has to be. Neither one is overwhelmingly powerful—not in this world. If God exerted irresistible force—which Joseph Smith says he will not do—then you would have no choice. I mean it wouldn’t be a test at all. As Peter says in the famous *Clementine Recognitions*, if God forced us to be good, there’d be no merit in that at all. On the other hand, if the devil was absolutely overpowering and you couldn’t resist him, we wouldn’t be responsible for yielding to him. He’d be much too strong for us. So each of them has a mighty pull. The one is this direction, and the other is phony, but it’s a mirror image of the

other. There's a great early Christian literature in which the devil is an exact counterpart. He waits for God to act, and then he acts. He makes the same claims to dominion. He is the fisherman of men, too. He does all these other things. He sends out his missionaries. He has the same influence, and so it's up to you to make the choice. You're suspended in space between the two [and you decide] which direction you're going to move in here.

Remember in Ether 3:2, when he's asking the Lord [for help], he says "because of the fall our natures have become evil continually." Because of the fall we can't do any good of ourselves. But the way is free for our probation, so it's up to us to make the choice. He tells us in the next verse, in making the choice, don't you start rationalizing. He says in view of this you have your choice to be this way or that way, but "take heed . . . that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil."

Who would do that? Everybody would do that. It's the common temptation to do that thing—to rationalize, making good and bad suit your interests. The typical company spokesman will do that. His answer is never an answer. The position is predictable, the routine flat denial of any wrongdoing. We've heard it a hundred times. All we have to do is listen to all these charges against the savings and loan companies, HUD, or whatever it is. The charges that are made are always categorically denied. What we did was only good. You can very easily argue yourself into saying "what I've been doing is good," because you want to. So don't fool yourself, and don't judge that which is evil to be of God and that which is good to be evil, in making your choice here.

We're under great pressure to support the establishment, but he says in verse 15, you still cannot be fooled unless you want to be. You couldn't get out of it, you say. Oh well, but I was fooled. I didn't know all the facts, etc. Uh uh, he says here. "It is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night." You're not going to have any excuse on those grounds. In the end you know what's right and wrong—no hairsplitting about ethics and conditions.

I noticed an interesting thing here. He says (verse 16), "the spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil." We know with a perfect knowledge. Well, what happens if you reject it? That is an interesting thing. Paul says in Romans 1:28, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Forget God, ignore the light of common day [they say]. Let's be practical and down to earth. We don't worry about those things. If they didn't "like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind." The Greek word he uses is *adokimos* which means "sick, wanton, perverse, self-destructive, paranoid." The whole world is a promised land. We have the story of the promised land, but after all, the whole world is a promised land where we come for our tests. It's most glorious and beautiful, as God has made it. There is a land choice above all other lands, but other lands are choice, too. This is just choice above all other lands. So the earth is a promised land, and there are certain obligations [that] come with the territory. We've seen that in the promised land [references] again and again. It goes for the whole earth. You are not free to take it or leave it, is the point. You say, "Well, here's the proposition—take it or leave it."

"No, I won't be interested in that. I won't concern myself with what God wants or anything else. That's a fine-pointed argument, and we can't concern ourselves. We have our daily work to do, and all these things fade into the light of common day when you come down to common sense things." That doesn't go at all. You go crazy if that happens, and you see what's happening in the world today. Everybody seems to have lost their balance. He gave them over to a reprobate mind because they didn't like to go on thinking of God, "retain God in their knowledge." So you can't ignore it. You're not free to take it or leave it.

Notice he develops his argument by perfectly logical conditions here. This is exactly what you'd expect, you see. First the violence he's seen—he wants peace and rest. Well, men aren't capable of saving themselves. What is it then? Well, they are being exposed to equal forces here; they have their choice. Yes, but can't you be overwhelmed? No, you can't be. You're able to judge. Well, in that case, can't we just put it aside and live our lives? No, you can't do that either. We find out that that's so.

Well, then in Moroni 7:20–21 he talks about laying hold of every good thing. Make it yours; live by it. Don't merely seek to know but to lay hold of every good thing. Notice he's arguing in a regular, logical order in verses 20 and 21. How do you “lay hold upon every good thing?” Well, he says it's by faith. Well, what gives you faith? he asks. We're inclined to avoid intense effort, he says. Ether 3:2 “Because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment.” That's why we have to go on. Our natures are evil, but we're not going to get off the hook because the Lord has commanded us “that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires.” When you make your choice between the two planets that are pulling you in opposite directions, who decides? See, every moment of your life you have two ways before you—the early Christian doctrine of the two ways. There's a right way and a wrong way, a right choice and a wrong choice. There are many choices, and you'll never know among those which is the best. But, as he tells you, it's given you to know with a perfect knowledge which is right and which is wrong. You make your choice, and you have to do that all the time. Well, this earth is a place of testing. Our whole life became just a time of probation, Nephi says. We're being proven here, so every minute you have to make a choice of what would be preferable to do. In other words, you're revealing your true nature, your true desire, what Alma calls “the desires of your heart.” That, of course, is what you'll be judged by. Nobody's very smart, nobody's very strong, nobody's very brave, but what you want—what you would really desire—that is what you will be judged by. So he says in this case we must call upon thee that we may receive according to our desires. If you want to go with the other one, you desired it. It's your idea all the way along. You'll never have to be given anything you don't want, that you don't desire.

Here's an interesting thing here. Doesn't this look like a contradiction? Notice he tells us in verse 16: “For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; . . . ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.” But then he tells us in verse 19, “Search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil.” How does that come in here? When do you make your choice? You have to instruct and inform yourself. You have to know what you're talking about. You must search diligently and acquire knowledge so you'll know the choice you're making. You're given the power to judge any proposition, but you have to know the proposition first. You have to know what the situation is. You must search diligently; then you may know good from evil and make your choice. That's up to you then.

We have so much stuff here. It's an interesting thing. In all of Mormon's teaching, there's no mention of repentance. Isn't that odd? The Book of Mormon just bristles with it—500 times the word repentance is repeated? It's because he's not talking about that side of it now. He's just talking about the positive side of it. He knows we're evil; he's said that all along. We have to repent. He wants for the time being to be entirely positive. Granted we do evil in this world, he wants to fix our attention on the other world, on the positive values, and to make that real. People underestimate that, he says. If I make that strong enough to you, you might be more enticed to go in that direction.

Now how does faith bring it about? It has to be by faith. How does faith bring about a meeting of the worlds, joining in the covenant? Notice in verse 30 and 32. Well he goes on right down here (verses 23–24): “And God also declared unto prophets, by his own mouth, that Christ should come. And behold, there were divers ways that he did manifest things unto the children of men [there's lots of evidence], which were good; and all things which are good cometh of Christ;

otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them.” Notice—it’s a choice between all and nothing here.

Verses 25–26: “Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing. . . . And after that he came men also were saved by faith in his name; and by faith, they become the sons of God. . . . Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you.”

But then he raises the question, having said this here. What about faith? How do we get it? Well, he says, it has to be brought from above. It has to be brought by angels. It has to come from outside. You don’t get it of your own accord. Notice he says here, you not only lay hold of it, but in verse 28 he says “they who have faith in him will cleave unto every good thing.” You cling to it once you’ve got it. You grab it and cling to every good thing. “He dwelleth eternally in the heavens.” Well, there must be a celestial connection there. What happens then? Well, this is the situation here. Faith brings about this meeting of the worlds, which he calls here joining in the covenant. Notice (verse 30), “. . . to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith.”

The word *covenant* is from *convenira*, come together. *Venir* is “to come.” Venue, conventical, and convention are related words. It’s a coming together of the two worlds. He has just said that the Lord dwells in heaven. Why should he bring that in? “He dwelleth eternally in the heavens.” He says, well, therefore, we have to have a connection here, and he tells us what the connection is. It’s five steps here. First of all, God commissions his angels, but they’re only to represent him and to say what he wants them to say and nothing else. That’s what Bartholomew told the mob in Rome. I’ve been sent as an emissary and ambassador, and I cannot argue your fine points of the law. I just have to deliver my message as it was given to me. So he [Mormon] says these messengers are angels. So you start out with angels. The restoration of the gospel started out with an angel, the angel Moroni—well, with the first vision. It started out with the angel, and in the New Testament, it’s the angel Gabriel who appears in the temple to Zacharias. That’s the beginning, and then he appears to Mary with the coming of angels. And here he sends angels. Without them, we wouldn’t have that connection. So this takes us outside to real things here.

Verses 29–30: “Neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command.” So they represent God, just as if God himself had come. The angels come, and the next step is they come to deliver his message in person, and they deliver it “unto them [notice it’s common gender] of strong faith and a firm mind.”

If you look at Alma 32:23, he tells us what he means by *them* when he says this: “And now, he imparteth his word by angels unto men, yea, not only men but women also. Now this is not all; little children do have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned.” When he says “given to them,” it means to women as well as men. They’re all subject to receive revelation. There’s no special privilege here. So they deliver it to what kinds of people? “unto them of strong faith and firm mind.” The words are *strong* and *firm*. These are not hysterical types. These are not ambitious types who want to have dreams and visions. They are not self-promoting. They are not empty-headed, unbalanced airheads that get all sorts of ideas and visions of this, that, and the other. That’s very important, that they be of strong faith, but also of firm mind. [They must be] perfectly sane to receive these messages, because, as you know, all sorts of hysterical people [claim] various things. People get hysterical and receive the stigmata. They fall down and froth at the mouth. A great deal of this has gone on in the past and still goes on. So, that’s a very important thing.

That's the second thing. First God sends his angels, but to them "of strong faith and a firm mind." They in turn have a special office. That means their calling, a temporary calling, something that's assigned to them. It's their assignment. They have it as the office of their ministry. They minister, but their office is to declare it (verse 31) "unto the chosen vessels of the Lord." They pass it down another stage. Now it's the chosen vessels of the Lord. They're the leaders of the Church that come down from these others. We have a few great prophets, but they in turn declare it, he says, "to the chosen vessels of the Lord." And what do they do? They bear testimony to prepare for the residue of men to receive it. There's the fifth stage. It comes from God to the angels to a few people who receive revelation, but they have to be of strong faith and a firm mind. They give it to the chosen vessels of the Lord, and they hand it on to the rest of the world, to the residue of men.

Well, is this a case of rank? No, it has nothing to do with it, because verse 32 completely wipes that out. "And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts," It isn't that the Holy Ghost gives the message to one person, and he goes and gives you a message. No, it's the Holy Ghost directly who comes to everyone singly and individually. He has as much a revelation as any of them through this handing down in this way, "that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner [this is the way he does it] bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men." A covenant, as I said, is a coming together, an agreement. This is a covenant where everybody is joined in the same atonement, at-one-ment. They're all joined together, and this is the way it happens. He says he does it in regular order here. But nobody's privileged above another. It's just the office of their ministry. As Brigham Young said, prophecy is not an office at all—it's a gift. It doesn't go with any office. Some women have the gift more often than men, as a matter of fact. One of the greatest prophets we had was Eliza R. Snow. My grandmother told us some marvelous prophecies she gave that have been fulfilled.

So this is the situation here. Well, here's *repent*, though (verse 34): "Repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me." If you have faith in Christ, then "ye shall have power," and in verse 34 we're invited at all times to put it to the test. If you take action (verse 35), God will show you that it's true, but you must take action first. Then (verse 37): Why don't we see the plan working? Well, if we don't have faith, all is vain. Now that's no secret. The Koran says, "All is vain in this world." The Greek chorus is fond of making such remarks as "how absolutely nothing I estimate the world to be." All is vain. Well, that's no secret. Everybody who's ever looked at the earth knows that it's all vain and absurd because you're going to end up with nothing at all. Everybody's admitted it, of course. If these things have ceased, that's all you have. You have nothing else, you see. It's just a void, a vacuum.

He talks now about a great and awful gulf between those who follow the plan of the gospel and the others. You say, well, that's too extreme. You can't damn everybody. Well, we've damned ourselves, and they've damned themselves, too. I mean, we're in a desperate situation. "Men at times are sober. They think by fits and starts. And when they think they fasten their hands upon their hearts." As soon as people are sober, they all realize what a terrible thing we're up against in this life. Who was it? Richard Cory "one fine summer night went home and put a bullet through his head." The most successful and admired man in town; you remember his name from *Spoon River Anthology*. There are all sorts of things like that. It is [vain] when you start thinking about it, the frustration of it. After all, what are the plays that get the Nobel Prize? The plays that end in bleak despair and show the bleakness of our lives. Strong films make us face up to reality which is that there's nothing there. Well, it's that sort of thing.

Well, he says it's true. These things have ceased, and we know why. "Awful is the state of man." We're lost in space, you see. In that case, "awful is the state of man." Well, every unbiased observer has said that. There's a saying you hear all the time among the German peasants, the

German *Bauern*, I should say. Where I spent all my mission was in the country in the Black Forest. They say, “Life is a baby’s bib, short and messy.” That’s all we get out of it.

Well, so Moroni says in verse 39 there must be something better than that. “But behold, my beloved brethren, I judge better things of you, for I judge that ye have faith in Christ,”—you must have some faith, and that fact should give us hope. So we begin with that. In verse 40 he asks, hope for what. For eternal life. Well, can’t we ask for anything less ambitious? No, we can’t stop short of that. Anything else is just a reprieve, isn’t it? Remember what Hamlet says to Claudius when he’s praying, “This physick but prolongs thy sickly days.” We just prolong our sickly days awhile. Anything short of eternal life, just “prolongs thy sickly days,” which is not very satisfactory. But that’s what it is. If you’re granted a few years more, it doesn’t make any difference. At my age, I don’t care. A year or two—that’s a bonus. That’s gravy; that’s great. I have no right to expect it at all. A reprieve is the best thing you can expect. Ah, but eternal life—that’s something else, you see. That’s the only alternative. But you’ve got to have that hope first and must receive faith. Well, what will justify it? Remember, Mormon prayed for his people without hope, and he said he led them without faith. You have to have the two together. They can both be completely out of our sphere, not even wishful thinking. That’s where the world is today.

Well, what is the insuperable obstacle? Why don’t we get these things? Why don’t we have the faith and the revelations that go with it? Verse 44 tells us that—because we’re not honest. We are not meek and lowly. That’s what being honest is, recognizing what you don’t know, not what you do. Forget degrees and everything else. “The glory of God is intelligence.” Intelligence is problem-solving ability. We know that. William James’s definition is problem-solving ability. How do you go about solving a problem? You always, step by step, find out what you don’t know. This is where I’m ignorant. This is what I don’t know, and I have to fill that gap. There are no fields anymore. There are no fields; there are only problems to solve. If you have a particular problem you have to work on and it requires a certain language, you’ve got to get the language. If it requires certain math, you’ve got to get the math. See, it’s not the field you’re in that makes it; it’s the problem you have to solve. You have to get whatever you lack. You can’t fall back on your degrees and your reputation and all this sort of thing and say well he’s an authority on the subject. There are none such. You have to be honest and smart enough to realize where the limitations are and where we’re supposed to go. But only by a systematic and progressive revelation of your own ignorance can you do that. That’s a humiliating process, and very few will face it. They must be meek and lowly.

The greatest classical philologist who ever lived, Joseph Justus Scaliger, lived back in the sixteenth century. He went to Rome and lived in the ghetto to learn Hebrew. They spoke Hebrew in those days. The little children laughed at him when he’d make mistakes, and his fellow colleagues disowned him. He wasn’t scholarly about it at all. You don’t go down and mix with vulgar people. His colleagues wore fur-lined robes and everything else, but their knowledge of Hebrew was less than elementary. That’s the difference, you see. You have to be meek and lowly if you’re going to learn anything or do what the Lord wants you to do. Realize your situation and what you really are. But who wants to be meek and lowly?

Now we come to this insistence on charity. You notice he just has a thing about charity here (verse 44 and following). Why this insistence on charity? Well, charity puts the stamp of authenticity on the whole thing. Without charity there’s always an element of ulterior motives, calculation, self-interest, and manipulation—it’s always there. In the most abstract problems, you’re liable to fool yourself. A lot has been written about that recently—how much cheating has been going on by scientists in high places, faking their data, etc., because just a little fake would do. The historians of science and people like Gregor Mendel have all fudged a little here and there. Well, that’s the way you have to do it. Charity is the love one has for children—he talks a lot about children—and you expect nothing in return. It’s completely spontaneous, and it’s irrepressible. Mormon broke his oath out of charity, you see. He had to. Charity finds the



suffering of others unbearable, you see. Mormon just couldn't leave them alone. They were his people. He knew they were wrong. He knew they were going to be destroyed and everything else, but his charity was too great. He just couldn't do it. He realized that he might alleviate the suffering and give them a bit of cheer for a while, and that's what he did.

In verses 45–47 you notice he goes into a long section from the New Testament. Aha! He's quoting the New Testament in the Book of Mormon. Well, there's an answer to this. We get to it right here, as a matter of fact. Well, Paul labored, as you know, to define [charity]. It's rather laborious. He had to go through all this, for "if ye have not charity, ye are nothing." Verse 45: "And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not." We all know this. Therefore, without charity all things must pay. Verse 47: "But charity is the pure love"—unbiased, without any calculations, just for the love of it. Why would you do science or anything else? The only motive would be pure love, even for that, you see. A true scientist or a true artist does what he does for love. It is just as much love as a sexual attraction, something like that. It's a great attraction. "But charity is the pure love of Christ, . . . and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him." So, this charity is a very important thing.

Paul gives an operational definition here, as you may notice. Charity is an intimate, subjective thing—very hard to define. Unless you have it, you don't know what it is. It's like indigestion or a gift for music or math or something like that. You have to have it. That's what charity is, very hard to define. It's impulsive, and yet it's ongoing. It can't be faked; it can't be artificial. You can't use artifice, and you can't use faking as you do in everything else, in every other act of life. In order to get along, we have to grease the rails or oil the machinery to make things go smooth. See these little lies we give to each other make life much easier. You have to write "Dear Sir" to somebody you hate, etc. We have to act as if we had affection toward others and respect of others that we really don't have. I mean in a debate in the Senate or something like that, you might just despise the person you're talking to, but [you say] the Honorable Learned Senator from so forth and so on. These things are necessary to grease the rails in any society.

A German philosopher, Hans Vaihinger, in the early part of this century wrote a famous work on the subject called *The Philosophy of "As If."* Everything we do has to have a little "as if" in it. We have to act as if we were friends. I have to act as if I were teaching you something here. There's always something fake about it, but that's necessary to make life [bearable]. There's none of that in charity—that's the point. Charity eliminates that entirely. Not even that is necessary because it's pure love, the pure love of Christ. There's no artifice in it at all, as there is in everything else. So that means it's impulsive and ongoing. It belongs to the very nature of your being and comes right out of you yourself. It's part of your character and built into you, whatever charity you have. So this is essential. That means there's going to be no cheating. You're not going to go on cheating for eternity. For a person who spends his life cheating, it gets worse and worse. He says [like Macbeth], "I am in blood stepped in so far, that, should I wade no more, returning were as tedious as go o'er." You can cheat up to a point, and then it's suicide or something. This is happening now. We see all these famous stock crashes, these junk bonds and things like that. It's very clever cheating, but it always collapses because it builds up. If we're going in for the long stretch, if we're going in for eternity, the one thing we've got to have is charity, because that means doing away with all the cheating. We won't need it at all. How we deal with each other, how we think of each other must be genuine here.

Incidentally, Paul's definition is quoted in the Book of Mormon. It's a long one. But Paul was quoting another work. He was quoting an old hermetic work on the subject. Richard Reitzenstein and some others showed that some years ago, and it's typical of the hermetic writings. In fact, yesterday I was reading an apocalyptic work I'd never read before, and it gives exactly the same analysis of charity. This was a very common theme, not only with the philosophers. We know, especially from recent research, that Paul quoted all over the place. He quoted about every classical writer you can name. Possibly half the statements in Paul are quotations from the

classics, from the orators, from the plays, etc., Paul quoted all over the place; he was a very learned man. What he's quoting here [in 1 Corinthians 13] is from an ancient writing, and it's quoted here in the Book of Mormon. Where we find it is in the hermetic writings which were taken over from the Jews at a very early time. Remember, [Moroni] was going through the records now and picking out the best things. So he picked Paul's definition. It's the best thing you can find [on charity].

In the normal run of things, all things must fail. But remember, Paul said, "Charity faileth not." Charity is the only thing that doesn't fail, in other words. All the others are contrived, they're contingent, they're contemporary. Everything else is an illusion.

Franz Grillparzer was the first modern German dramatist, and his first drama was *A Dream Is Life*. Of course, Shakespeare wrote his last play on that.

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits and  
Are melted into air, into thin air;  
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,  
The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, act IV, scene 1

Shakespeare's final word was, it's all just a play, it's all just imagination. There's going to be nothing left when it has faded after the storm. This is what we have to offer. It's a sad thing, but all else must fail. They're right about that. Then he tells us—unless there is this (verse 46). This is entropy, you see. This is the second law—all things fail. This is the heat death, the normal course of nature. 2 Nephi 9:7 is one of the most important verses in the Book of Mormon, where he tells us what happens in the normal course of things. We must refer to this, why we need a savior. "Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement." There must be unlimited power at work here in the universe—infinite atonement. He says unless that power is infinite (I'd just love to talk about infinity today) [it would fail]. "Save it should be an infinite atonement, this corruption could not put on incorruption. Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man must needs have remained to an endless duration. And if so, this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more."

That's the normal course of nature. We do die, we do rot, we do crumble to earth, and we do rise no more unless there's a power resisting it, and that must be an infinite power—it's resisting the force of the universe itself, of entropy. And this is what we have. The Russian scientist Kozyrev wrote some very fascinating things on that particular subject. He said you can't deny that things are being put together again. That's what Buckminster Fuller writes, but he calls it "syntropy." If you have *entropy* breaking things down, there's obviously *syntropy*, which is organizing things and putting them together, or we would not have been here ages ago. That process would have been completed billions of years ago, and there wouldn't have been anything left at all. Something must be building up toward something. So remember what he said, the one enticeth and inviteth in this direction; the other enticeth and inviteth in that direction. There must be a counterforce of infinite power that's working on our behalf. There are reasons for believing without faith. You won't believe it, though, but you don't have to.

Notice he [the Savior] has infinite charity. And what does he want? He wants us to become like him. "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life

of man” (Moses 1:39). Infinite charity—that’s it. And so he says here, in verse 48 they “become the sons of God; . . . we shall be like him.” This is the payoff, you see. So Mormon ends on this note of supreme hope, this greatest of promises, the greatest conceivable happiness here. Don’t talk about the Book of Mormon being downbeat. We don’t recognize it. It keeps telling us. If we’d only wake up, it’s there, but we set up the obstacles.

In the eighth chapter we ask, why this overriding concern for little children? Well, there’s more than meets the eye here; I’m sure of that. Adults on earth are responsible for overseeing the passage of over ninety percent of the human family, which has passed through the earth as little children. Ninety percent of the human race has died in childbirth and childhood. They must also be our role model, he says, because it’s pride that’s destroying us. As I said, there’s more there than meets the eye.

In the ninth and tenth chapters Mormon’s own words describe the final debacle which is a state of mind. Notice everything is anger, blood, revenge. Oh, and Moroni 9:6 is very important. The battle is on—don’t get discouraged. If you do get discouraged, there’s no excuse at all. “And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness [we’ve lost the battle, see], let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay [no matter how the battle goes], that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God” by doing righteously. So no matter how discouraged we are, no matter how badly things go, it’s our obligation. We have a work, a labor here to perform, so don’t commit suicide. That’s the wrong thing to do.

Then [we have] this state of arms and what brings it on with the mounting atrocities. The Nephite civilization had ended long before this, as soon as civilized behavior [ceased]. The army had requisitioned everything, and the people were starving. Then he tells us in verses 19–20 there is no order, no feeling, no mercy. Today everything is an all-absorbing partisanship, as it was then. We say “win, succeed, dominate,” etc. whether it’s in sports, business, careers, or family. We’re growing more and more partisan, more and more determined to win. That’s what happens. When you meet defeat, as they do back and forth, then this degenerates into that state of mind in which he says everything is anger and blood and revenge.

Then the tenth chapter. What should we do? All we can do now is help the Lamanites, he says. Remember, the bottom line is God’s loving kindness. You can count on that, he tells us in verses 3–4. So he tells us, deny not the gifts. He [the Lord] gives us these gifts, and we’re to enjoy them. They’ll see you through. He lists nine gifts here. It’s very interesting. Our ancestors in the north had the nine norns, and the Egyptians had the hathors. These were the spirits that would come at a child’s birth, and each would bestow a gift on the child. It’s a very ancient [tradition]. Well, it’s the seven hathors and then the nine. Everyone has a particular gift, but he tells us there’s no reason why one person shouldn’t have more than one gift. You’re not limited. Usually one is all you can handle. But notice what the nine gifts are here. First and most desirable (verses 9–10) are the intellectual gifts—very interesting. See, before anything means anything to you at all, your brain and intellect must be clear and active. Otherwise, you’re not going to take everything in. And this is our fatal weakness today, of course. We’re becoming brain dead. That’s the thing that’s emerging, as you see every day more and more. That’s given as the explanation now—we just don’t have it. We’re just not up with it. That’s what happened in the Roman Empire.

Then there’s the vital gift of healing, of putting things right. Then there is the gift of mighty miracles. This is a useful one. He says the gifts are for our profit. They’re not for display. He tells us in verse 8 that the gifts are for our profit. So these great miracles are for our profit. Then the gift of prophecy—who has it? Since everything is conditioned, the Book of Mormon is all the prophecy we need, actually. Prophecy is not office, as Brigham Young said; it’s one of the gifts. It’s power to see invisible visitors, the visiting of angels. Some people have it. I know some who have seen angels; many have seen them. It’s like these after-death experiences—they hesitate to

report them. When you've seen an angel or someone from another world—it's oftener than you think—but people don't talk about it. It's only a few medical doctors who recently have been putting their heads together [on this subject], beginning with Raymond Moody, who [spoke] here at BYU. He said that these things happen oftener than people realize, but [those who have them] are embarrassed to mention them. If people haven't had them, you're not going to get anywhere with them, so leave that alone.

Then there's the useful gift of speaking in living tongues, as Joseph Smith tells. That's for the spreading of the gospel among various nations, etc. Then last there's the gift of understanding the ancient records, the ancient tongues. Notice it makes a [distinction] between verses 15 and 16. One is tongues and the other is the ancient documents.

So, one person is not necessarily limited to one gift. They usually go together, but all must come from Christ. He's the only intercessor. They're all available, but we ignore them, he tells us in Moroni 9:19. This is the trouble, you see. We just have ourselves to thank for that. These gifts will never be done away with. Then he says don't ignore them. Don't deny them. He keeps imploring us not to do that. This is what he ends on. They're available, and we ignore them. Our guilt, though suppressed, paralyzes us. We're not able to receive them for this reason, you see.

Verse 22: "And if ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity." Good old Freud, you see. If you've been doing the wrong things, you may cover them up and rationalize. That goes into your subconscious, but boy will that cripple you! You'll never be able to accept the gospel or anything else. That guilt will haunt you and paralyze you; it will make you incapable of moving; it will give you ulcers and skin disease and everything else. You must despair without hope, because of iniquity. So if you have iniquity, you won't have hope. You can't entertain hope because you'll ask the mountains and the rocks to cover you. After all, you can't get rid of it, and you'll be aware of it.

So if you do not believe you have it, you won't have it, he says in verse 24. These were the Lord's words to Joseph in the grove, incidentally, here in verse 25. The first words he spoke to the Prophet were, "Behold the world at this time lieth in sin, and there is none that doeth good—no, not one. And mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth, to visit them according to this ungodliness." Notice verse 25: "And wo be unto the children of men if this be the case; for there shall be none that doeth good among you, no not one." That was the condition the earth had reached at the time the Father and the Son appeared to the Prophet Joseph in the grove. So suddenly in verse 25 we find a great yawning gulf—what a terrible thing.

Verses 27, 29: "Did I not declare my words unto you . . . like as one crying from the dead? . . . Lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing. " What is called the "filthy gift." Lucre, money, in the New Testament is the unclean thing.

Verse 32: "Come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness [notice, he ends with a desperate plea here, calling out from the other side of the gulf]. . . . If by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God." Then you're sanctified. But notice—it's up to you to deny it. You have it. It's only if you put up a positive resistance to it that you'll be able to evade it. He tells us do not deny the power of Christ. You have to deny it actively if you're going to avoid it. ". . . become holy without spot." And then in the end he says, I'll see you later. We'll talk about these things later.

Go hence to have more talk of these sad things;  
Some shall be pardoned, and some punished:  
For never was a story more of woe  
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, act V, scene 3