

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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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.¹ 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.² (*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.