

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

HUGH NIBLEY

Semester 1, Lecture 13
1 Nephi 12–14
Nephi's Vision

The last thing we mentioned was that Castle of Ghumdan. The point is that the people were very vain and wicked at that time. The prophet warned them, and they paid no attention. Then the earthquake came, and the proud house fell with all the people in it. Incidentally, I showed you an ancient city that is a ghost town—the one on top of the mound with the ruins. That was Sheba. That's where the Queen of Sheba came from, who came to visit Solomon, outwitted him on many points, and taught him a lesson. That was Queen Balkis, so that takes these buildings way back before the time of Lehi; moreover, they are in the very area where he went, southwestern Arabia. You also find these structures in Babylonia, and we also have Egyptian models from the Old Kingdom showing houses of that type. In the Ancient World they were not uncommon, and even today.

We were noting that chapter ten of 1 Nephi deals with the Jews. Chapter eleven does something else. Chapter twelve deals with the New World version—Israel in the New World, the Book of Mormon people. Chapter thirteen deals with the Gentiles and the whole world; it takes the world view. But that eleventh chapter, as we noticed, is a sort of other dimension. It removes the veil and gives us a brief glimpse of another universe of discourse, some place where everything is very different.

It occurred to me this morning that every speech in the Book of Mormon, and there are many, is passionate. It's passionate speech; there's nothing that isn't. The Book of Mormon is trying all out to get through to us, you see. After all, it was hand-delivered by an angel. "Well," you say, "that's a hard one to take." All right, look into the book and then decide something or other. What does this reflect? This isn't just a faded negative or something like that. This is a series of brilliant little vignettes in which we can look right through, like into an Easter peep show. We can look through and see a world of long ago, but it's a very well-documented world. It's unmatched for contemporary literature now, so we can check on this when Joseph gives us these pictures of things that were going on. There is something extra here when the Book of Mormon passion wants to get through to us. It keeps saying, "This is for you, and you had better pay attention. You haven't got much time."

So we come to 1 Nephi 12, the New World version. Verse 1: "And I looked and beheld the land of promise." Of course, now you expect the happy land; it's the land of promise. Remember, Lehi said, "I have obtained a land of promise," just after he left Jerusalem. But what picture do we see? The next verse immediately throws cold water on all our hopes for the rosy land of promise. "And it came to pass that I beheld multitudes gathered together to battle, one against the other; and I beheld wars, and rumors of wars, and great slaughters with the sword among my people." Is this the promised land? Is this the place of security? It goes right on: "I beheld many generations pass away [do they settle down to a blissful existence alawato? Oh, no] after the manner of wars and contentions in the land; and I beheld many cities, yea, even that I did not number them." I recently saw a list of

75 cities in the United States with more than half a million people in them. There are more cities than that larger than Salt Lake City. They are numerous. Too many cities; that's the trouble today.

Then it goes on, and we get a mist of darkness. Could this be pollution or nuclear winter or something like that? This is a depressing picture; notice the next verse. It's a mist of darkness. Of course, this is the great destruction that took place at the time of the Crucifixion. There were earthquakes and mountains tumbling and cities sunk and burned with fire, and many that tumbled to earth. That's described in another part of the Book of Mormon, if we ever get to that. But it is a very accurate description of an earthquake that registers eight on the Richter scale, all the details and things that happened. We won't go into that now, but this is what he saw. This was the picture at that time. Then he saw a "vapor of darkness, that it passed from off the face of the earth."

Then he saw multitudes. After the mist of darkness, we get this vapor of darkness. What's a vapor? It's a mixture of dust, maybe nuclear particles, cloud mist, rain, etc., if it is nuclear winter. Whatever it is, it's a vapor of darkness that passed from the face of the earth. Then he saw multitudes. When the cloud cleared, everybody was just lying there fallen because of the terrible judgments of the Lord. That may be a later episode than verse 4 which describes the great earthquakes at the time of Christ. "And it came to pass after I saw these things [then he sees another such occasion] I saw the vapor of darkness." When that passed away, he saw everybody pretty sick. Then the heavens opened and the Lamb of God descended. "The Holy Ghost fell upon twelve others," and then the disciples of the Lamb. Then he talks about the Twelve Apostles, so this is the time of the Nephites that he is discussing here. The Jews had the Twelve Apostles. They are never called apostles in the Book of Mormon. He explains that here. Notice in verse 10 he calls them "twelve ministers" because the apostles, we are told, shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Do they duplicate them over here? No, they are never called apostles here; they are called disciples. You saw in the Dead Sea Scrolls that they had to have a council of twelve and a presidency of three. The Jews already had that. This was part of the ancient order of things because they had twelve tribes and each tribe was represented in the temple. Now the new *Temple Scroll* makes it very clear that everything is done in terms of twelve tribes and the presidency. Moses had Aaron and Hur supporting his hands on either side [Exodus 17:12], and so it happens.

There's a very interesting, many-volume work [*Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*] by Erwin Goodenough on ancient Jewish symbols. It has come out that a very common feature of the earliest Jewish symbols is that whenever the Lord comes, he is always accompanied by two others. In Genesis 18 when the Lord appears, Abraham sees three men waiting in front of his tent. He knew that one was the Lord, and he said, "My Lord, I'm not worthy to have you here as my guest." The Lord comes as three. But here are the Twelve Apostles; in other words, we have a pattern here that is being followed, not just once. Verse 9: "And he said unto me: Thou rememberest the twelve apostles of the Lamb? Behold they are they who shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel; wherefore, the twelve ministers of thy seed shall be judged of them; for ye are of the house of Israel. [See, the Twelve Apostles shall judge the twelve ministers or disciples of the Nephites; they are down on the list there too.] And these twelve ministers whom thou beholdest shall judge thy seed. . . . And I looked, and beheld three generations pass away in righteousness; . . . these are made white in the blood of the Lamb, because of their faith in him."

But the fourth generation went bad, as we know. In four or five thousand years of history here—including the Jaredites, which are much older, I believe, than that—there were only three or four generations of righteousness when the people were living as they should. This is an amazing thing. How can it possibly be that out of all the inhabitants of the earth only one little handful are righteous? In all that period of time only a few generations were fit. This is the oddest thing. I'm supposed to be getting [preparing] something now on the Atonement, and nobody knows anything about the Atonement. It's very interesting. How is it possible? Well, you ask a simple question: How is it possible for everybody in the world to go around in complete ignorance of the fact that the earth is a sphere? How can everybody in the world not know that we are in a galaxy which is part of a system of innumerable galaxies? Nobody knew that when I was a kid. I mean there are vitally important things that nobody in the world knows. Apparently, nobody misses them. The Lord doesn't seem to make them known. But don't be surprised if the Gospel has very few takers, if it is "only one of city and two of a tribe," as the Lord told his apostles. That's all you'll get. All the Lord does here is establish a cadre. That's what we have in the temple—people that do the work for all the rest of them. After all, the work of baptism that was revealed to John the Baptist was primarily for the dead because the unbaptized dead outnumber the living a thousand to one. The work has to be done for them. That's why the angel said to Zacharias when he was to become the father of John the Baptist, "He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children." The fathers were already dead, and the work of John the Baptist was to baptize them. Then he said, "Those who sit in darkness shall see a great light." That's the work that is going to deliver them—the preaching to the spirits in prison.

So we have here the Twelve and the three generations that pass in righteousness. But it's a weary and sad story. Nobody seems to catch on here. The Book of Mormon is sad. It begins on a sad note and ends on a sad note, and we are in the middle. And yet it is the most joyful of documents. All the verses balance each other. As we noticed before, the "apocalypse of bliss" balances the "apocalypse of woe" throughout. If it's bad, it's also good. We'll get more of the good part; we should one of these times. I guess it's the rainy weather that makes one feel gloomy, isn't it? Note in verse 15 that they are equally wicked: "I looked and beheld the people of my seed gathered together in multitudes against the seed of my brethren; and they were gathered together in battle." If you read something like the ninth chapter of Moroni, you will see they are absolutely equal. He says that one is just as bad as the other, unless perhaps the Nephites are a little worse because they should be better. Mormon says the same thing, "Behold, among all the wickedness of the Lamanites it is not so great as among thy brethren." But remember what the Lord told Enoch. He said, "Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made. . . . [this is a real shocker], and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren" (Moses 7:36). So in worlds without number this is number one, the worst. Well, this means we are in a real test. If we can pass this one, we shoot right ahead to the top. That's really the impression that's given. We have been building up to this final test so that so much depends on it. It's win all or lose all on this one thing: Will you be able to behave yourself if you are given great authority and not start acting like Genghis Khan because you are the head of a committee or something like that? Can you be trusted? We will all be saved, but who will be safe? Who can be trusted? That's what the Lord is going to find out here, and very few can be. In Doctrine and Covenants 121:39 we are told, "We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion." It is in the nature of almost all men that as soon as they

get a little authority, as they think, they begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. That's in our nature. I was thinking about a Greek play; there's a lot about that subject.

So they were gathered together to battle. Then [in verse 16] there's the fountain of filthy water. He said it represented "the depths of hell. And the mists of darkness are the temptations of the devil." And the broad roads on which they are lost. Of course, there is the fear of everyone in the desert of getting lost because it's a terrible place to get lost, and there's no way to find yourself. It's a horrible place. That's the one thing that everybody feared because it was utterly waterless. Remember, it tells us where they turned east, and Joseph Smith said it was the nineteenth parallel—almost south-southeast there, taking them to the Empty Quarter. The whole trip took eight years because of the long stops. For example, they must have spent about a year at the Waters of Laman in the Valley of Lemuel. Notice verse 18: "And the large and spacious building [that's a Ghumdan, you see] . . . is vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men"—with their partying and their importance, etc. It's interesting that this is allegory, but it has a physical embodiment. It isn't all just allegory, just a symbol of something to be taken as an abstract and to be understood spiritually.

Incidentally, which is more specific—what is scientific or what is spiritual? You think of spirits as not being more actual, more real. We say science is, but that's not so. A scientific test is physical and tangible, but it's second hand. You can only interpret it second hand. It depends on your interpretation. With an atom chamber or a cyclotron, when the particle is cracked, little trails go off in all directions. But they don't mean anything until somebody interprets them. The first-hand information means nothing. It's second hand. You interpret it, and then you argue about what it means. But it's so in all the effects of gravity, whatever it is. But a spiritual experience is something that you feel in yourself. You experience it in yourself, so it is direct. You can't deny that. That's why you can't get away with denying the Holy Ghost. When we say "spiritual," it's a thing we never define at all. We never bother to define it. We use it a lot and kick it around a lot. We get away with murder because we say, "Well, this is a spiritual thing; we just observe it spiritually." You know what is spiritual: the spiritual is a direct experience. These things that the Book of Mormon talks about are the direct experience. As I said, all the speeches are passionate. They are trying to get in contact with you. That's why the Book of Mormon feels so intimate, and it converts people. They don't know why they are being reached because every man who talks in there is not only speaking from the heart but he is trying to reach somebody. He knows this is being directed to people in another time and another place, and he is going all out trying to reach them. So it reaches out, and there is this feeling of warm intimacy in every passage in the Book of Mormon. It's not cold and abstract. It not like history, even of the Old Testament. You feel the urgency and the personal concern. Everybody who writes in the Book of Mormon is passionate because he has a personal concern for the person he is writing to—and that's you. If it comes into your hands, you have been blessed with that.

He talks about the large and spacious building and "the pride of the children of men. And a great and terrible gulf divideth them." There it is again. It is a figure of speech, an image. Nothing could better describe it; there is a great and terrible gulf between two different ways of living. There is nothing in common between them at all. You can't breach it; there's this great gulf between them. If you are on the one side, there are very few people. The whole world is on one side now. I wonder if we can see anybody over on the other side calling to us? Clement of Rome was the first writer after the New Testament. He wrote about A.D. 85–95, in the first century. In the epistle called 1 Clement, he compares

himself to a man who is standing on a headland all alone. He sees a swimmer swimming out to sea and says, “You fool, come back before it’s too late [he’s talking about the Church]. The time will come when it will be too late to repent, when you can’t do it. Come back now.” Of course, all seven Apostolic Fathers have no hope at all. They all ring down the curtain on the ancient Church, but at a very early time. That’s a very important point that we are going to come to very soon here—that the curtain was rung down on the early Church already in the second century. The second century, instead of being the “age of faith” is known as the “age of heresy” because there were a hundred heresies. Everybody had his own church. Immediately it broke up when the Apostles went away. Well, we may get to that in a minute, but let’s go on and see what is happening here.

So there’s this great and terrible gulf. Verse 19: “And while the angel spake these words, I beheld and saw that the seed of my brethren did contend against my seed . . . and because of the pride of my seed.” That’s the promise. In 1 Nephi 2:23 he says, Remember, you have nothing to fear from the Lamanites at all as long as you behave yourself. They are there to stir you up unto remembrance. I want them breathing down your neck. You will never solve your questions by fighting them [paraphrased]. “Because of the pride of my seed”—they were the ones that brought it on themselves every time. Verse 20: “And it came to pass that I beheld, and saw the people of the seed of my brethren that they had overcome my seed.” Our side loses here. They are proud of their pride, incidentally. Then they [the Lamanites] gathered in multitudes and there were “wars and rumors of wars among them; and . . . I saw many generations pass away.” See, the Lamanites and the mixture of people that were left went right on fighting, as we are told in the Book of Mormon. In Moroni’s last words he said, They are still fighting; I have no idea when the war will end. It is going on indefinitely. They are fighting each other now [paraphrased]. Verse 22: “Behold these shall dwindle in unbelief.” And, of course, they did. Would God allow this in the promised land? I ask myself. “They became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.” Notice, they became that way. It wasn’t a miraculous change overnight. It is never referred to in that sense. It’s a cultural thing. We will get much more on that, incidentally.

Now in 1 Nephi 13 of the Book of Mormon the panorama unfolds here. This is the worldwide view of it, the modern world. He beheld many nations and kingdoms. Verse 3: “These are the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles. . . . I saw among the nations of the Gentiles the formation of a great church.” Now, what is this church? I just said that the great apostasy came in the second century; the scriptures were completely corrupted by then. This is long before the Roman [Catholic] church became the leading church. The Roman church was “small potatoes” at that time. It wasn’t until the fourth century that they took over. You must not identify this just with the Roman Catholic Church. People do because that’s a simplistic answer. But there [was] a lot going on in the world that we don’t know anything about. That’s what this chapter tells us, all the way through. Don’t oversimplify. Don’t try to figure it out, as far as that goes. If you could see behind the scenes in World War II the things that happened—if you were in a position to sneak around and take sly peeks at this and at that—you would see there was so much more going on than you would expect. It wasn’t at all the way I thought it would be. That wasn’t what it was. You would be amazed at what was going on.

Here’s what goes on; it tells us here. Verse 6: “I beheld this great and abominable church.” Revelation 8 [18] says that the abominable church is Babylon. He describes in chapter 18 the people who set their hearts on these things. Verse 8: “Behold the gold, and the silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen.” In the Book of Revelation John describes

this [see Revelation 18:12]. Remember, he [Lehi] says the book he saw was John. John is the only New Testament character [writer] mentioned in the Book of Mormon. But he describes these things in terms of a great department store. He goes down the departments—the linens, the fine things, and the slaves. Everything is for sale. It's quite a brilliant display, and these are the things that make Babylon. This is the “great and abominable.” Of course, there was no Roman church in the time of John when he wrote those things. But all the high church people want these things, whether it's Greek, Armenian, Russian Orthodox—or the Bakkers, or people like Bob Schuller who build their crystal palaces and things like that. Then it mentions the many harlots. Well, they are all up to that, it would seem. He is talking about this sort of thing—the vanity of the world. What we have here, you see, is a complex. It's an ecumenical thing, and it certainly is here.

We have Columbus here. This is Columbus Day, so we can't pass him by, can we? Verse 11: “Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren.” And what was that? Columbus. When the Europeans discovered America, that was the wrath of God. That was catching up with them. From then on the Indians go down and down and down until they reach absolute nadir. Then something happens to the Gentiles, he says. “And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles.” He doesn't say a Gentile; he says “a man among the Gentiles.” Years ago I happened to be back East. The old *Improvement Era* wanted an article on Columbus and Columbus Day. Through a friend of mine, Lucien Goldschmidt, I got to meet Madariaga, the great Spanish authority on Columbus. Then at Harvard there was Samuel Eliot Morison who wrote the great book, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*. He is a yachtsman, and he gives a very careful nautical study of every aspect, everything that is available, on Columbus. So on October 12, Columbus Day, at 2:00 in the morning of a very bright, clear night with a brilliant moon, and the sea high with a good following wind (a glorious picture), a sailor in the mast sighted either St. Kitt or San Salvador, the outmost island (they call it various names) in the Caribbean. America was discovered, and this was the stroke of doom, “the wrath of God upon the seed of thy brethren.”

I had lunch with him [Madariaga], and he has always believed that Columbus was a Jew for various reasons. He kept a journal, and he knew all the mysteries of the *Cabbala*. He always dated things by “the second house.” Only Jews speak of the temple as the *bayit*, “the house of God.” The second house would be the temple that stood at the time of Christ. Only a Jew would call it “the second house” or date things by the fall of the temple. His passion was to rebuild Jerusalem. The reason he wanted the money from the Indies was to rebuild the temple. That was his project; that's why he wanted the gold. What's more, he postponed the date of his sailing down the Tigris there until his three ships headed the armada of Jews fleeing from Spain. See, in 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella banished the Jews from Spain. No Jews were to be left there. The biggest thing was one big armada. They fled to various places in Europe, mostly the Netherlands, Russia, Sephardi, Ashkenazi, etc. Columbus postponed his going so that his ships could lead the parade of Jews back to the Holy Land. He wanted to lead them back to the temple. It's a very interesting thing we have here.

And, what's more, his trip was a miracle of navigation and speed. His friend de Castro, who is the best source for his life, said that he was as sure of finding what he was after as if he had it in his pocket; he never had the slightest doubt for a moment. Moreover, he crossed the ocean faster than I did twice, once in a Liberty ship and once in an old German freighter when it took me over thirty days to cross the Atlantic. He did better

than that. He moved with amazing skill at navigation. This is what Morison tells us. The speed of the ships was as good as a slow old freighter today. He went right along and hit it right on the button, just as if he had it in his pocket. So it was as if it had all been planned and had to do with the redemption of Israel. But no, they were to wait. Israel was not to be redeemed; the temple was not to be rebuilt at this time. They had to wait a long time. This was something else.

Verse 13: “I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters.” Now here’s another argument. He’s talking, apparently, about the Pilgrim fathers that went out of captivity. The captivity was religious; they wanted religious freedom. But they weren’t escaping from the Roman Catholic Church. They were escaping from other groups, from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England and Calvinist stringency. On a mission, I worked among Roman Catholic villages, Lutheran villages, and Calvinistic villages. The Calvinistic villages were in the Rhine Plain. Mostly Catholics were in the Black Forest in the Odenwald, and the Lutherans were mixed in between. The best converts were from the Catholic villages, and the Lutheran were good, but the Calvinists were fiends. Still, after all those years, they were harder to talk to than anyone else. So you don’t talk about any one church here. There will be other indications here of what we are talking about; it talks a lot about that here. It dwells on that, this type of church.

But let’s go on. Verse 15: “And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance. . . . They were white, and exceedingly fair.” And they humbled themselves. “And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them.” Why would the righteous mother Gentiles want to battle against them? We are not talking about righteousness here. We are not talking about just the English settlers either. Remember, there were the French and the Spanish—the French and Indian War and the Spanish wars. All the wars of succession in Europe had their reflections on this continent. Remember, George Washington had to fight both the French and the British. “The wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle.” They were delivered by the power of God, and they did prosper in the land.

A book was carried forth among them. This was the Bible. They had already had that. Notice verse 23: “Behold it proceedeth out of the mouth of a Jew. And I, Nephi, beheld it.” It had the covenants of the Lord. This is the New Testament, but they had the Old Testament too. This is the new one from the mouth of a Jew. How do you best describe the New Testament? Well, as the words of the Savior, of course. But there’s more than that. We have the epistles and the acts of the Apostles, and we have the revelations. They were all Jews. It comes forth from a Jewish source, the whole thing. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written by those men, and they say that they are the authors. They claim to be. “This is the writing of Mark.” “I, John,” etc. Verse 23: “The book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord, . . . and it also containeth many of the prophecies of the holy prophets; and it is a record like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass.” In other words, it’s the Bible. Their Old Testament isn’t the same as Lehi’s Old Testament because of the many changes. But it says that it’s much like it.

Verse 24: “When it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record.” It was plain then, but as soon as it went forth it didn’t take very long for it to be changed. Verse 26: “And after

they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church. . . . They have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.” Those were taken away long before the Roman Catholic Church took over in the fourth century. When were they taken away? In the terrible squabbles of the second and third century. They just fought it out; there was blood and everything else. It culminated in the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 when the emperor had to call a council because everybody was killing everybody else. Well, we’ve written a lot about that. We don’t need to follow up on that here, but that is what was happening. It started in Alexandria with Philo; the professors started fighting. They preempted the gospels in the Bible. They took it to themselves. Remember, in Lehi’s day nobody had the book, but now everybody has it. They are all fighting about it, and they corrupt it. Of course, they do. Everybody interprets it his own way, but especially beginning with Philo at the time of Christ, they interpreted everything allegorically. None of this is to be taken literally; it is all spiritual, [according to them]. It’s all in an allegorical and philosophical sense. They fought about that, and this is the corruption we are talking about. They lost the main treasures of the book here.

So we have an ecumenical composite; all have the same teachings and practices. This is interesting. When you say, “There are but two churches,” you are right. There are just two doctrines; two organizations, organized accordingly; two sets of ordinances and the like. All the other churches have the same practices. They all preach that God is a mystery and unknowable—the mystery of the Trinity. They all do not accept the literal Resurrection. They believe that the Jews are out, that the temple will never be built. They have devised their own ordinances and their own ceremonies because they can’t get them out of the Bible anywhere. They have been borrowed from various sources—mostly from the old Imperial Cult of the Romans, but there are other sources. The latest standard work on that subject is Eisenhofer and Lechner, two Roman Catholic Germans who have written a big work on the source of Catholic ceremony, etc. It has three sources: The first is the Imperial Cult of Rome; the second is the rites of the Germanic tribes and nations in Europe, especially Aix-la-Chapelle at Aachen (most of the ceremonies actually came from the Court of Aachen); the third is from the tabernacle of the Jews—not from the temple, from the synagogue. This is where they got them, and they have built up a new body of ritual ordinance. They have a new body of doctrines, but they all share them. They invent ceremonies, and they all deny revelation. They are sneaking up on it now and beginning to claim it, but they all deny revelation. So this is just one world church, you might say. The ecumenical movement certainly would show that. It may be a good thing, as far as that goes.

Where are we now? Verse 29: “An exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them [because of the changes]. Nevertheless, thou beholdest that the Gentiles . . . have been lifted by the power of God above all other nations.” Here’s the promise in verse 30 here. (Remember, in 1830 the Indians were still the most numerous people on the continent; they were still a big handful.) “The Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed which are among thy brethren [so Nephi’s seed are mixed with the seed of his brethren, and the Gentiles cannot destroy them; there is no such thing as a pure Lamanite; we see that all through the Book of Mormon]. Neither will he suffer that the Gentiles shall destroy the seed of thy brethren” (the Lamanites, or his seed mixed with them—the Nephites and others). In verse 32 we see that the Gentiles are in an “awful state of blindness.” They don’t get the point; they do not have it made in the promised land. How far does their

blindness go here? They have been “kept back by that abominable church, whose formation thou hast seen. Wherefore, saith the Lamb of God: I will be merciful unto the Gentiles, unto the visiting of the remnant of the house of Israel in great judgment.” One is the scourge of the other here. In verse 34 Lehi’s people are smitten by the hand of the Gentiles. Then after the Gentiles have taken over the land, they “stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb—I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb.”

Incidentally, here is a very important verse I’ll refer you to: 2 Nephi 10:16 should clear something up: “Wherefore, he that fighteth against Zion, both Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female, shall perish; for they are they who are the whore of all the earth; for they who are not for me are against me [there’s your principle of two churches; you’re either for or against], saith our God.” It’s not just one church, but whoever fights against Zion, whether they are Jew, Gentile, bond, free, male or female. It makes no difference. They are they who shall perish, and they are the whore of all the earth. The Gentiles will not remain in that awful state of blindness. They have been kept back, but “I will bring forth unto them . . . much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious.” Not the fullness but much which is plain and precious is coming out. Verse 35: “After thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief . . .” How can you dwindle after you have been destroyed? *Destrew* means “to break the structure down, to strew around, to scatter in all directions.” Remember, he says, “Jerusalem has been destroyed from time to time.” Then it has been reorganized from time to time. That doesn’t mean wiped out forever with every last person. To destroy is to scatter. “. . . and also the seed of thy brethren [they will be destroyed too, along with his], behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles by the gift and power of the Lamb.” Of course, that is the Book of Mormon. Verse 37: “And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost. . . . I beheld the remnants of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren.” Well, the Gentiles will give the Bible back to the descendants of Nephi.

Verse 39: “And after it had come forth unto them I beheld other books [Ah ha, there are other books after the Book of Mormon. What do they do? They confirm it. I would include the Dead Sea Scrolls among these], . . . which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true.” The later records prove the earlier ones, not the other way around, though they confirm each other. The later books are discovered. Notice it says, “I beheld other books which came forth.” They are not proofs or demonstrations. They are revealed; they have been hidden to come forth.

Question: [The first part was not audible.] We don’t have all the records of the Twelve Apostles; we have a few of the Apostles. Answer: We don’t, of course. We have the records of the Twelve Apostles in the New Testament. But also there are these records that come forth—for example, the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Phillip. There are fourteen sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas which have been accepted and included in the

new revised version of the Bible. This wasn't discovered until 1950, and yet it is accepted as genuine sayings of Jesus that are coming forth. And, of course, one of the most important is the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles. Some very important things have come forth. This early Christian literature is coming out now. Some of it is very old, and you can check and control them against each other. With the Book of Mormon to go by, you have a pretty good rule. But there will be others come forth. As we said before, the Dead Sea Scrolls were not popular with the Jews or with the Christians, any more than the Book of Mormon is popular with anybody. Nobody goes nuts over the Book of Mormon, but they should. The texts of the New Testament are corrupt, and the manuscripts have to be restored. Verse 40: "... and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people [now it gets universal]. . . . And they [these records] must come according to the words which shall be established by the mouth of the Lamb; and the words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed [that's the Book of Mormon], as well as in the records of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; wherefore they both shall be established in one; for there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth. And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations, both unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles; and after he has manifested himself unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles, then he shall manifest himself unto the Gentiles and also unto the Jews, and the last shall be first, and the first shall be last." First he came to the Jews during his mission in New Testament times. Then he went forth to the Gentiles. Now he is going to come to the Gentiles through the Book of Mormon and then to the Jews. You can interpret this various ways.

Then chapter 14, verse 1: "If the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day . . . and harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God, they shall be numbered among the seed of thy father; yea, they shall be numbered among the house of Israel; and they shall be a blessed people upon the promised land forever." Well, that's the last thing most Gentiles want, to be numbered among them. In 1 Nephi 12:9 you see the situation. "Thou rememberest the twelve apostles of the Lamb? Behold they are they who shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel; wherefore, the twelve ministers of thy seed shall be judged of them; for ye are of the house of Israel." What we have here when we say "the house of Israel" is that we are all of the same house, but we are not in the same room. There is Israel abroad and Israel here. There are twelve different tribes, and these tribes are quite distinct. Judah is just the fourth son, and the Jews are quite distinct from other tribes like Ephraim. They are quite distinct from the Ishmaelites too, though they are very much alike. What about the other tribes? Of course, we talk about the Ten Tribes and their coming back, etc., a thing that greatly intrigued the Jews in the Middle Ages.

Now we have "that great pit, which hath been digged for them by that great and abominable church." You notice that the great and abominable church is not capitalized. It's not one particular institution. I think that may be significant that the brethren left it that way. Why this in this case? Why would you dig a pit? Well, the whole Christian world has dug a pit for the Jews and Mormons and native peoples everywhere. They produce world wars, crusades, religious wars—the Crimean War, World War II, colonialism in the name of religion. There are very few wars that don't have religion as their basis, even our Civil War because the Bible says that you shouldn't have slaves. That was the issue that everybody got wrought up about. On the other hand, the Bible says that you shouldn't rob and take another man's property from him. Slaves are property, and it's a wicked thing to take them away. But you shouldn't have slaves. There are these conflicts. But wars like the Crimean War and the Crusades are purely religious wars. And in World War II there was the Austrian Empire—the land pirates against the sea pirates. But they are fighting each other all the time. See, France was a Catholic nation. Bavaria and Austria

were Catholic nations. They fought each other. The Austrians and the Italians have always been fighting each other, and yet they are both Catholic. So everybody fights everybody else in this world, and they are all the same religion. Satan has it very well set up.

Verse 3: “Yea, that great pit which hath been digged for the destruction of men shall be filled by those who digged it, unto their utter destruction, saith the Lamb of God [does he mean this is spiritual or physical destruction? He says both]; not the destruction of the soul, save it be the casting of it into that hell which hath no end [he asked for an explanation]. For behold, this is according to the captivity of the devil, and also according to the justice of God, upon all those who will work wickedness and abomination before him.” The “great and abominable” is not a label and a doctrine; it is the wickedness of Christian nations in this case. It does refer to them. Notice, these are the people that have the scriptures that proceed forth from the mouth of the Jew—the Bible. It’s the book that has been corrupted.

The Arabs talk about the *ahl kitāb*, “the people of the book,” which are the Jews, the Christians, and the Arabs. Their book, of course, is the Koran which is based on the Bible, but it’s something very different. It’s for them. But they [the Christians] go astray because of the precious things taken from the book. Well, that doesn’t lead the Confucians astray; that doesn’t lead the Hindus astray; that doesn’t lead the people of Zimbabwe astray or anything like that. When it says “great and abominable,” you see what it is talking about because that is the expression that John uses for the corrupted Christian world.

Then he goes on in verse 5: “Thou has beheld that if the Gentiles repent it shall be well with them.” Repent of what? Belonging to the wrong church? No. If they repent of their sins, they will be forgiven, and “whoso repenteth not must perish. Therefore, woe be unto the Gentiles if it so be that they harden their hearts against the Lamb of God [which, of course, they did against Joseph Smith after the Book of Mormon came out]. For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men . . . either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts [again, the great and yawning gulf between them] and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction. . . . He said unto me: Look, and behold that great and abominable church, which is the mother of abominations [he keeps rubbing it in, doesn’t he?] whose founder is the devil. And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only,” as we said before.

Incidentally, the Roman Catholic Church has very limited cultural influence. It reached its peak, I would say, in 1215 with the Lateran Council held by Innocent III. He was the most powerful, and that was when the church reached its maximum influence. That was the same year, exactly 1215, when King John had to sign the Magna Carta. Remember, King John was the son of Henry II, and it was Henry II who defied the church. He was the one who decided to install bishops. He broke the power of the Catholic Church in England until the affair with Becket. Then in 1174 he did penance and whipped himself for a while—just as earlier in 1070, in the time of Gregory VII, it was the powerful emperor Henry IV of the Holy Roman Empire. He went to Canossa and stood in the snow barefooted while the haughty Gregory VII stood on the balcony above him and looked down. He had won his victory over the emperor; he ruled the world. That was when the church reached its maximum extent. After that, the Reformation took over and it was equally balanced. Then there was the counter attack of the Counter Reformation. But it is

a very limited cultural influence. Up until the Middle Ages by far the largest Christian church was the Nestorian Church in Asia. At this time in 1215, all of Spain was Moslem; it wasn't Catholic at all. All of southern France was Catharian, and there were various kinds. The Vaudois and sects all over the place were not dependent on Rome. It had a very limited cultural influence actually, and you see the pope is a fine old man going around trying to get some unity and some reaction. Well, he has big crowds, etc, but in the world of unbelievers we live in today that's not a drop in the bucket. Again, we don't know what is going on. This is one thing we must remember. I could a tale unfold of some of the snooping I was doing unawares and unconsciously. I found out too much. This is an important thing. The name of Christianity became completely corrupt here. They were all fighting each other. They came in for easy plans of salvation and rationalized on morality and devised ordinances, as I said. They denied the Resurrection, and they wouldn't have revelation. That's all one church. They all believed exactly the same, and that's why they can join together today. And they are all given to ceremonies because they didn't have the old ordinances. They had to fill religious people with something.

In verse 12 notice that the numbers in the church of the Lamb were few; it never gets big. And the whore sat upon many waters. Well, you can sit on waters if you want; it's just an expression. But the [true] Church's dominions were small (let's hope so). They "did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God. . . . I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb . . . who were scattered upon all the face of the earth [so they are not all gathered in Zion, apparently]; and they were armed with righteousness [that's the only thing to be armed with; and, believe me, we are not armed with it now, are we? Far from it; we are armed with acquisitiveness and with great managerial skill, and things like that. That is not known as righteousness]. . . . I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon that great and abominable church, insomuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth." That is certainly what we are getting today. There are at least forty-seven wars going on, and rumors of wars. We get the news about all the nations and kindreds. You notice the tribal, racial, and ethnic disagreements. There are so many ethnic disagreements going on now. In the newspaper the other day, I noticed that there are at least a dozen ethnic crises now—in the Soviet Union, the Far East, and everywhere. Everybody is breaking loose; everybody is fighting everybody. It's an amazing picture now. Just within the last two weeks, all of a sudden, all those nations have decided to become independent, whether they are on the Baltic or in the Caucasus or in Turkey. Wherever they are, everybody has decided to make trouble, so we have "wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth." And among the mother of abominations, the mother of harlots.

Verse 17: "At that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel." So that isn't the culmination when that comes. That just commences to lay the foundation, commences to prepare. Then he sees the man in the white robe, one of the Twelve Apostles. Verse 23: "At the time the book proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, the things which were written were plain and pure." They were at that time, but that was only in the first century. Remember, we have over eight thousand manuscripts of the New Testament, no two of them alike. And the oldest one is from the third century. There may be a fragment of a verse or two from here or there. Naturally, if we find an old one, like the Dead Sea Scrolls, it would probably be very much like what we have now. But all of our documents are copies of copies of copies. Nearly all of them come from the eighth and

ninth centuries. The ones we treasure so are fourth-century documents, the main ones. About thirty documents go into the Cambridge edition of the New Testament. They have thirty different texts—thirty different readings for verses, etc. But when it came out, it was plain and pure. We know now from the many documents that it became corrupted very soon, as I said. So you can't blame one great and abominable church for doing it because that one didn't come along until quite a while later.

Nephi was going to write some of these plain and pure things, but he was forbidden. We are not supposed to have that now. Why not? Notice verse 25: "But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them." And the apostle's name was John, the only one that is named here. So here we get a very interesting thing. They were written and "sealed up to come forth in their purity." They were hidden, and in the seventh section of the Doctrine and Covenants the most remarkable thing happens. Notice this: "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, April 1829 [a year before the church was founded], when they inquired through the Urim and Thummim as to whether John, the beloved disciple, tarried in the flesh or had died." Now, what is this revelation? It's a translated version of a record made on parchment by John, and he hid it up by himself. Well, this is exactly what they did with the Dead Sea Scrolls; they hid them up in hundreds of caves. And John did the same thing. They are on papyrus, as you know. Most of the Dead Sea Scrolls are parchment. You notice that they are sewn together. John wrote a scroll on parchment, and he hid it up. Joseph Smith was reading it. He didn't have the scroll; he had it through the Urim and Thummim. It was revealed to him, you see. But this is how John did it, by sealing it up. Isn't it interesting that it takes the pains to point out that he wrote it on parchment. In other words, it wasn't a spiritual document. He literally wrote it down and he hid it, just as the scrolls were hidden. He buried it on purpose, as this says here. The Lord said of the apostle, "He shall write them. Thou shalt not write them, but he shall write them."

Verse 26: "And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them [notice that others have done the same]; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity." Now, the only way you can preserve a document in its purity is to bury it because as soon as you start copying, you start making mistakes. It always happens. You never have a pure document as long as it's in the hands of men. So if you are going to preserve a document over hundreds or thousands of years, you've got to bury it. That's the only way, so that nobody can lay hands on it. And this is what happens. They are buried and they are sealed, so they can't be changed and won't be dug up until the time of the Lord. Verse 28: "And behold, I, Nephi, am forbidden that I should write the remainder of the things which I saw and heard. . . . I have written but a small part of the things which I saw . . . while I was carried away in the spirit; and if all the things which I saw are not written, the things which I have written are true. And thus it is. Amen."

So he has given us a lead; he has given us a start here, and has given us some broad hints. You might say this whole fourteenth chapter is just a series of hints. But they are not to send us arguing in priesthood meeting and things like that. There's no point to that. You read them for yourself. Notice, he's cautious about it. He doesn't want to give us any more. The Lord forbade him to write any more. This is bad enough as it is, but these are things we are already perfectly aware of. So this is safe. When he wants to write more, the Lord forbids him. He is told that John will put them on parchment and seal them, and others will write them and seal them to come forth in their purity. So we can look forward to more documents, I suppose.

The time is up now, and we haven't gotten very far. Now, there are some really wonderful things. This is like walking through the sand here in verses [chapters] 13 and 14 if we attempt simplistic interpretations. If we attempt more sophisticated interpretations, we are in worse trouble than ever. Don't try it. But the Lord has put in here what we would say is "for the record." Notice that this whole thing is about recording—about John writing down, the Spirit speaking to him, and Nephi saying, "I can't write this; I would write a lot more." This all has to do with the record and the state of the record. It's a confused state of things, and it's a confused state of things today. But the Lord will clarify these things. You ask him for enlightenment; he will give it to you.