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THE BROTHER OF JARED AT THE VEIL

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The temple is the narrow channel through which one must pass to reenter the Lord's presence. A mighty power pulls us through that channel, and it is the sealing power of the at-one-ment of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Savior's *at-one-ment* is another word for the sealing power. By the power of the at-one-ment, the Lord draws and seals his children to himself in the holy temples.

In scripture we can study how the ancient great ones were drawn through that narrow channel to find their heart's desire: we find, for example, Adam, cast out, bereft of his Lord's presence, searching relentlessly in the lonely world until he finds the keys to that passage to the Lord. Abraham searches for his priesthood privileges (see Abraham 1:1) and after a diligent quest exclaims, "Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee" (Abraham 2:12). Moses on Horeb, Lehi at the tree, Nephi on the mountain top—all these men conducted that search which is outlined and empowered in the temple endowment, gradually increasing the hold, the seal, between themselves and their Lord.

This was the very search for which they were put on earth: to rend the veil of unbelief, to yield to the pull of the Savior's sealing power, to stand in the Lord's presence,

encircled about in the arms of his love (see D&C 6:20; 2 Nephi 1:15). This then is the temple endowment: having been cast out, to search diligently according to the revealed path, and at last to be clasped in the arms of Jesus (see Mormon 5:11).

In particular, I wish to focus briefly on some of the temple elements in the experience of the brother of Jared: (1) the tower of Babel, (2) his period of probation, (3) his experience at the cloud-veil, and (4) some observations on faith and knowledge as revealed in the brother of Jared's search for the heavenly gift. One can see that these four elements follow a temple pattern: a false religion is offered; a period of probation or trial of faith is provided; and upon obedience, light and knowledge are granted.

Part 1: The Tower of Babel

The brother of Jared's rejection of the spiritual chaos at the tower of Babel was a critical part of his ultimate endowment. By ancient tradition the tower of Babel was inspired by Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, who sought to dethrone God by bringing men into constant dependence on his, Nimrod's, power. A multitude followed Nimrod, persuaded that it was cowardice to submit to God. The people began to build the tower, apparently some type of temple, as their objective was to reach heaven by means of the tower.¹ God's response was to break up their evil combination by scrambling their languages, thus depriving them of the powerful Adamic language.² The name *babel* means, in Akkadian, "gate of God" and is a play on the Hebrew *balal*, meaning "to mix or confound." It is apparent then that the tower of Babel was a counterfeit gate of God, or temple, that Ham's priesthood-deprived descendants built in rebellion against God.

Part 2: Probation

Jared and his family and friends rejected this temple and were spared the Lord's punishments. The Jaredite community enjoyed both the spirit of at-one-ment and the Adamic language and wanted to enlarge their privileges of righteousness, not diminish them. Thus they set out on the quest that is initiated by a period of stringent testing and training (gathering of animals and plants, trekking through wilderness, building two sets of barges, and enduring strong chastening). As their obedience and sacrifice increased, so did their privileges with the Lord, for "the Lord did go before them, and did talk with them as he stood in a cloud, and gave directions whither they should travel" (Ether 2:5). Successful navigation of their tests brought the brother of Jared to the need for more light and thus to the mount Shelem.

Part 3: The Brother of Jared at the Cloud-Veil

The word *shelem* has three main Hebrew consonants forming a root word that spans a wide spectrum of meanings: peace, tranquility, contentment, safety, completeness, being sound, finished, full, or perfect. *Shelem* (and *shalom*) signify peace with God, especially in the covenant relationship. It also connotes submission to God, which we see in the Arabic words *muslim* and *islam*. In particular, *shelem* has reference to the peace offering of the law of sacrifice, which corresponds to the seeking of fellowship with God,³ and thereby has a relationship to the meanings of the at-one-ment; that is, *shelem*, fellowship, sealing, and at-one-ment have an obvious relationship. When the brother of Jared carried the stones in his hands to the top of the mount, whether or not a temple peace offering is implied, he sought a closer fellowship or at-one-ment with the Lord.

Therefore, the mount is called *shelem* because of its exceeding height (see Ether 3:1), not because *shelem* means great height, but rather that it suggests a place that is suitably high for temple activity.

The small stones themselves suggest meanings beyond their practical use in the barges. Note that he did *molten* the stones, or extract them from the rock of the mount itself and shape them by fire: white, clear, and glasslike, they evoke the Urim and Thummim (Hebrew, "lights and perfections"). What is the relationship between these sixteen small stones and the two Urim and Thummim stones that the Lord gives the brother of Jared later on? It seems that the brother of Jared was led to fashion that which would give his community not only practical light, but spiritual light as well; indeed, they were the very instrument of his calling as prophet, seer, and revelator. The small stones evoke the white stone mentioned in Revelation 2:17 and explained in Doctrine and Covenants 130:10–11, which stone becomes a Urim and Thummim to those who come into the celestial kingdom, "whereon is a new name written, which no man knoweth save he that receiveth it. The new name is the key word."

At the top of the mount, the brother of Jared seems to be operating under the influence of forces of which he is not fully conscious, but which his spirit seems to understand. He says that he is there for light, but his words reveal that his greatest concern is his unredeemed nature. He even appears to be afraid of the Lord's anger here and is so overcome with his inadequacy that he seems to be fighting the temptation to withdraw. It is with deliberate courage that he presses on past this fear, taking heart in the knowledge that the Lord has commanded him to ask and receive what he needs in spite of his fallen nature.

The fear he manifests suggests similar scenes in at least two other places in scripture when people have a close encounter with the Lord: the first example is King Benjamin's people who fall to the earth "for the *fear* of the Lord had come upon them. And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state. . . . And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ" (Mosiah 4:1-2; italics added). They experience pain and fear at their spiritually induced awareness of their fallenness in contrast to God's perfection. They plead for and receive a cleansing response from the Lord.

The second example comes from Isaiah's vision of the Lord. "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5). The Lord responds by cleansing him in his presence.

As the unredeemed soul, even a guiltless one, closes the gap between himself and his Maker, he perceives the contrast as so overwhelmingly great that he is sorely tempted to shrink back, to give up the quest. Those who will not be redeemed do shrink, overcome by fear of this encounter (e.g., the Israelites in Exodus 20:18-21); but those who are determined to be redeemed press boldly on, and, exercising mighty faith, penetrate the veil, and receive the transformation they so desire.

Standing now before this cloud-veil, having asked for light, the brother of Jared is stunned to see a finger appearing through the cloud-veil. He falls to the ground, struck with fear, because he *knows* what he sees. What he had held for so long in his "eye of faith" has just been visually con-

firmed. He has, to use Moroni's language, "ren[t] that veil of unbelief" (Ether 4:15) with his persistent believing-as-though-he-were-seeing, and has in some marvelous way operated the law that quickens and focuses his spiritual eyes. He had asked for the finger to touch the stones, and that is what he saw—what he asked for and believed. As Elder Packer observes, the world says, "seeing is believing; show me!" "When," he says, "will we learn that in spiritual things . . . *believing is seeing?* Spiritual belief precedes spiritual knowledge."⁴

The Lord says to the brother of Jared: "Because of thy *faith* thou hast seen . . . for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger. Sawest thou more than this?" (Ether 3:9; italics added). It must have been with pounding heart that the brother of Jared said: "Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me" (3:10). A further dialogue takes place at the cloud-veil, the Lord testing the brother of Jared's desire and preparation, after which he says, "Ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you" (3:13). The brother of Jared receives the heavenly gift, described by Moroni in Ether 12: "For it was by faith that Christ showed himself unto our fathers . . . and prepared a way that thereby others might be partakers of the heavenly gift. . . . Wherefore, ye may also have hope, and be partakers of the gift, if ye will but have faith. Behold it was by faith that they of old were called after the *holy order* of God. . . . Wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith" (vv. 7–12; italics added). President Ezra Taft Benson explained the holy order of God: "To enter into the order of the Son of God is the equivalent today of entering into the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is only received in the house of the Lord."⁵

Part 4: Faith and Knowledge

The brother of Jared's experience dramatizes the difference between *faith* and *knowledge*. We can see that the brother of Jared did not have a perfect knowledge before he went through the veil because he expressed fear and surprise at what he saw and learned. The Lord says that it was not the brother of Jared's perfect knowledge that dissolved the veil; rather, it was his exceeding faith (see Ether 3:6–9). It seems that Moroni means to say that once the brother of Jared had seen the Lord, he *then* had perfect knowledge of the Lord, and the Lord could not then withhold anything from him. Moroni says: "And after the brother of Jared had beheld the finger of the Lord, because of the promise which the brother of Jared had obtained by faith, the Lord could not withhold anything from his sight; wherefore he showed him all things, for he could no longer be kept without the veil" (Ether 12:21).

The knowledge given by the Holy Ghost, the first comforter, is not a perfect knowledge, though it prepares and draws the seeker to that perfect knowledge. Faith, produced by the revelations of the Holy Ghost, is an assurance or *pre-knowledge* that what the Lord says is true (see Alma 32:34). But faith is designed to proceed along and become perfect knowledge, which is seeing something for ourselves after we have believed in, and been obedient to, the assurances of the Holy Ghost.

Faith is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end, and that end is to be like and to be with the Lord. When we say in our testimony meetings, "I know that the Lord Jesus lives," without having actually seen him, we mean that the Holy Ghost has given that assurance to our souls. But we do not have a perfect knowledge until, after an extended period of probation, we see for ourselves as the brother of

Jared did. Joseph Smith observed, “Men at the present time testify of heaven and of hell, and have never *seen* either—and I will say that no man *knows* these things without this.”⁶ Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ leads in one direction and that is into the Lord’s presence.

Moroni teaches this principle when he says, “And he [the brother of Jared] *saw* . . . and he had faith no longer, for he *knew*, nothing doubting” (Ether 3:19; italics added). A small sampling of several pertinent scriptures will show that the Lord often uses the word *know* with the word *see* when referring to spiritual knowledge.

1 Nephi 5:4: “If I had not *seen* the things of God in a vision I should not have *known* the goodness of God.”

3 Nephi 11:15: “The multitude . . . did *see* with their eyes and did *feel* with their hands, and did *know* of a surety.” [The Prophet Joseph said, “No one can truly say he knows God until he has handled something and this can only be in the Holiest of Holies.”⁷]

Alma 36:26: “Many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have *seen* eye to eye as I have *seen*; therefore they do *know* of these things . . . as I do *know*.”

D&C 45:46: “You now *behold* me and *know* that I am.”

D&C 50:45: “And the day cometh that you shall hear my voice and *see* me, and *know* that I am.”

D&C 93:1: “Every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall *see* my face and *know* that I am.”

The *Lectures on Faith* make it clear that seeing the Lord is a pivotal point in a comment on 1 Peter 1:3–5:

[Peter] says that all things that pertain to life and

godliness were given unto them through the *knowledge* of God and our Savior Jesus Christ. And if the question is asked, how were they to obtain the knowledge of God? (for there is a great difference between believing in God and knowing him. . . . And notice, that all things that pertain to life and godliness were given through the *knowledge* of God) the answer is given—through faith they were to obtain this knowledge; and, having power by faith to obtain the knowledge of God, *they could with it obtain all other things which pertain to life and godliness.*⁸

Joseph Smith says similarly in another place: “The Lord will teach him [the receiver of the second comforter] face to face and he may have a *perfect knowledge* of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and this is the state and place the ancient saints arrived at.”⁹ And the Prophet Joseph again: “Then Knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.”¹⁰ Joseph speaks of the kind of experience that the brother of Jared had and makes a connection to temple ordinances:

God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord; for all shall know Him . . . from the least to the greatest. How is this to be done? It is to be done by this *sealing power*, and the other comforter spoken of, which will be manifest by revelation.¹¹

Moroni says that “there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared” (Ether 4:4), but he says that they will not go forth to us, the Gentiles, until the day that we repent and become clean and sanctified and exercise faith like the brother of Jared. Then he says that the Lord will manifest

unto the Gentiles the things the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding all his revelations (see Ether 4:6–7):

Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief. Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief. Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief . . . then shall ye *know* (Ether 4:13–15; italics added).

These possibilities pertain perhaps to this life, perhaps to the life to come, but the pattern of the brother of Jared points the way. Having rejected all counterfeit worship, having pushed on past all comfortable way-stations, having sacrificed to come up to the full measure of obedience to the Lord, the brother of Jared received his endowment on the top of mount Shelem, where the Savior of the world sealed him his. President Benson taught: “God bless us to receive all the blessings revealed by Elijah the prophet so that our callings and election will be made sure. I testify with all my soul to the truth of this message and pray that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will bless modern Israel with the compelling desire to seek all the blessings of the fathers in the House of our Heavenly Father.”¹²

Notes

1. See Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.4.
2. See Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1935), 69.
3. See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, *The New Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1907), 1022–24; also LDS Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Sacrifices,” 767.
4. Boyd K. Packer, “What Is Faith?” in *Faith* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1983), 43; italics added.

5. Ezra Taft Benson, "What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple," *Ensign* 15 (August 1985): 6.
6. *WJS*, 10.
7. *Ibid.*, 120.
8. *Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 7:18; italics added.
9. *WJS*, 5; italics added.
10. *Ibid.*, 201.
11. *TPJS*, 149.
12. Ezra Taft Benson, "What I Hope," 10.