

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 3, Lecture 75

Helaman 3–6

Apostasy

The Gospel and World Religions

We begin with Helaman 3:30: “And land their souls, yea, their immortal souls, at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and with Jacob, and with all our holy fathers, to go no more out.” To sit down—it uses that a number of times in the Book of Mormon. Remember, you’re invited to go into the tent and sit down—have place with us. What he’s talking about is the old Mosaic law, which was abolished after Lehi left Jerusalem and the temple was destroyed. It was never the same after that. These people were familiar with the old custom—that going in and sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is very important. That’s the *yeshiva*, which is the atonement. *Yeshiva* means “sitting down.” This is a very important part of the atonement, talking about the Day of Atonement or Yom Kippur. This is the way it’s given in Deuteronomy. The Lord parts the veil of the tent, which is the kippur, the covering, and he says he’s ready now to converse with Moses. Moses is supposed to come in. After they have conversed and [he has] passed the test, then he comes in and sits down. But the sitting down is very important. That’s the *yeshiva*, and *yashav*. *Yashav* means to settle down in a place permanently, and *yeshiva* means to take a seat by somebody.

The word atonement is only found once in the New Testament. It’s found a number of times in the Old Testament, but only once in the New Testament. And it’s not found at all in the Revised Standard Version. They don’t use atonement at all. The word doesn’t even appear in the New Testament. They use instead reconciliation, keeping it quite literal, from *reconcilio*. Reconciliation means “to return and sit down beside somebody again.” And, of course, the *yeshiva* goes along with the *teshuva*. *Yāshûv* means “to return.” So you have *yeshiva* and *teshuva*. You return and then you sit down. You sit down by the side of the Lord, and you sit down again because you’ve been there before. It’s reconciliation. It’s redemption. It’s the redeeming. This means buying back something that he had before. We weren’t just created out of nothing, you see. We are returning to his presence. We’ve been there before, and the whole thing is a sense of returning to his presence. That’s what reconciliation is, which is the equivalent of atonement, and you can see where that comes from. You know this, of course. This is at-one. It is not a Latin word. It’s not a Greek or Hebrew word. Atonement a good old English word, a theological word. At-one-ment, being at-one with the family, to go out no more, as he says, “with all our holy fathers, to go no more out.”

There’s your solid security. You’re home at last. You’re back where you started from, and we hope that you’re back with some added credentials, etc. The only passage [where atonement is found] is in Romans 5:11 in the New Testament. There in the King James [translation] you’ll find the word is atonement, but now in the Bible they use only reconciliation, which is a good word. We’re reconciled. To be reconciled with someone is [to return to] someone from whom you’ve been separated before. They say separated by

the Fall. But this is return to what? Separated from what? It isn't a return to Eden, you see. It's a return to the tent. You have the tent of covenant, and that's what the *kippur* is. Well, we won't go into that too far.

We talked about continually rejoicing. Then something happens in the fifty-first year. It didn't take long, did it? The cloven hoof appears again in verse 33 when things go bad. “. . . the pride which began to enter into the church—not into the church of God, but into the hearts of people who professed to belong to the church of God.” Ah ha, there are two churches. There are the people who profess it, and the people who really are. They all profess to belong to the church of God, but how do you distinguish? Well, as Paul says, our security rests in this. God knows his own. Only he knows the ones who are true Latter-day Saints and those who aren't. We have no means of knowing. You'd be surprised what rascals there are among us and what good people there are among us too. But you never suspect.

Patriarch Hoagland from southern California was an inspired patriarch my mother knew very well. He went with one of the brethren to a conference in southern Utah to excommunicate a member who had acquired the disfavor of the community. He smoked and he drank and he swore some, so they didn't want him in their society. They were going to excommunicate him. The night before the conference Brother Hoagland had a vision. It wasn't a dream. He said he found himself in a timeless world. He found himself in a conference in the other world, and there was great excitement. There was a great throng of people there, and he noticed presidents of the Church in the throng and former apostles. There was an air of great expectancy, and he [wondered] what are the people so excited about? They said, well, the Savior is going to drop in on us today. The Lord is going to be here. And wow, he was so excited! Under great tension they all stood up, and there were two chairs on the stand. The Lord came in, and with him who should come to sit on the other chair except the bum they were going to cut off from the Church? He was the one who sat down by the Savior, side by side. Well, that was a lesson to him. He immediately started to look into things. It seems that this man who had broken the Word of Wisdom had always been kind to the poor; he shared everything he had with them. If there was a widow who needed help, he would do everything to help her, etc. But he was doing it quietly, and he was always helping. If they needed extra work on the farm, he'd go out and work for them. That's the sort of man he was, but he swore. People have been known to swear in Dixie. And he smoked. People have been known to smoke in Dixie too. But that wasn't what counted.

Now here again there were lots of people who professed to belong to the Church. We all profess it, but who really belongs? How big does the Church have to be to satisfy me? I would feel great if there were 100,000 members in the Church. I would think, boy, we have it made. Really. But it's grown pretty big now, and in distant parts people that haven't entered into the Wasatch community may be living the gospel as far as we know, and not be full of vanity. This pride begins to enter into the Church.

I was home teaching with a person who had been a bishop up in Salt Lake, and last year into one of the wards on the East Bench—this is typical; we all know stories like this—there came a rather distinguished man. He was going to teach history at the [University of Utah]—Latin American history and jurisprudence, things like that. But he was a Mexican, and his first day in the ward up there, although he was a member of the Church, a group came in and invited him to go to another ward. “We think it's better if you go to one of the wards in the lower part of town. We don't take people of your kind here.” Now that

goes on up there all the time. It goes on down here, too. Well, you know the vast snobbery of high school kids. I had three kids at Timpview High. I had three at Provo High too. They were distributed all over the place. But the snobbery and the class consciousness was perfectly natural. It happens among animals. We divide into groups and cliques, and you have to feel superior some way or other. This can easily become pride, and it follows up here and tells us what the source of this is for those who profess.

Verse 34: “And they were lifted up in pride, even to the persecution of many of their brethren.” But would they go so far as to persecute? What do you call persecution? Cutting off? Ignoring? If they start swearing at you and giving you a bad time, they’re at least paying attention to you. But when they make a studied attempt to ignore you, as if you didn’t exist, that hurts worst of all, doesn’t it? There are various ways of persecuting, as far as that goes, “even to the persecution of many of their brethren . . . which did cause the more humble part of the people to suffer great persecutions . . .” because they put up with it. You can’t be a true member unless you’re a member of my group or believe in my political party and things like that. That’s a very strong feeling in the Church now. But why did they persecute? You know what it is. We’ve gone into those things before. We’ve compared men with dogs before, and that was a very important thing. Dogs aren’t bad at all, but they behave that way. And people aren’t bad at all, but they behave that way. But what pushes you over? There’s a point at which it becomes really nasty, and that’s where Satan is really there. He really works there, and it makes a difference. We’d get along all right if it weren’t for him, I think, but he does spoil things, we shall see here. Notice the effect here. It’s just like the war. The length of the war made many people hard-hearted, but the length of the war had made many other people soft-hearted. So don’t blame the war. And here [it’s] the same thing.

Verse 35: “Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility . . .” That’s good, you see. Notice the end of the next verse: “. . . because of their exceedingly great riches and their prosperity in the land; and it did grow upon them from day to day.” So both sides became stronger and stronger, whether it was in their perversion or in their salvation here. “They did fast and pray oft and wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ [so this pressure was doing them good—it strengthened them, as a matter of fact, just like the war] . . . even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts [well, we have to be brought down pretty low, don’t we?], which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.”

And here’s the effect that prosperity has on the others: “And it came to pass that the fifty and second year ended in great peace also, save it were the exceedingly great pride which had gotten into the hearts of the people [This is in general. Why? Because of their riches. Every time it will take us back to that, won’t it?]; and it was because of their exceedingly great riches and their prosperity in the land [those to whom money was all in all—the economy is everything, you see]; and it did grow upon them from day to day.” It is as if this were a plague of some sort. Well, what do the Book of Mormon and Bible both call it? Wealth, they say, cankers the soul. It’s a cancer, and it will grow.

And so Helaman died, and his eldest son Nephi began to reign in his place. Now, the fourth chapter is the turning point, until the coming of Christ, of course. Here’s the turning and the breaking. The Lord has to come; that’s the only thing that can stop it. An angel comes or the Lord comes. It has to be the end of a cycle, the end of a dispensation. The only thing that can stop this now is the coming of the Lord himself. We’ll see that’s

going to happen.

Helaman 4:1: “. . . there were many dissensions in the church, and there was also a contention among the people,” also. Notice this: the church is not the people. It’s no longer a sacral society. There’s a distinction between the church, in which there were dissensions, and also contention among the people. That was something else. Everybody didn’t belong to the church. And alas, much bloodshed. “And the rebellious part were slain and driven out of the land, and they did go unto the king of the Lamanites.” So it was a showdown, and they went out, and they went over and stirred up the Lamanites, their usual thing. They’ve done this before. But the Lamanites didn’t want to have any of that, you see. They didn’t want to get into this squabble. Notice verse 3. “The Lamanites were exceedingly afraid, insomuch that they would not hearken to the words of those dissenters.” Remember, Zarahemla at this time was brilliant. It was strong. It was the center of everything. But the dissenters succeeded finally in stirring them up and brought the [Lamanites] to battle.

Well, they were pulling the old Coriantumr ploy again. And this time it worked. Well, it worked with Coriantumr too, until he got himself trapped. But here they began the work of death again, and “they succeeded in obtaining possession of the land of Zarahemla.” How was that possible? Right up to the land Bountiful, which was the last stronghold, as we’ve seen. Now this is beginning to be the decline and fall. The armies of Moronihah were driven right up to the land of Bountiful. And then here we have some more geography, and we know that it’s on the isthmus. It’s down there pretty far south. The decline and fall is neatly summed up in these pages right here. They fortified against the Lamanites. They were going to make fortification and a stand there, “a day’s journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country.” This would hold pretty well on both sides.

The last hold of the Utes in this valley was in Rock Canyon over here. And they had a fortification at the beginning. They had a wall up there, and they held out there. They could come in from the back over the Squaw Peak trail, and bring supplies over that way. And they held out for a while there before they fell back. Then they were moved way up to the eastern part of the state where [others] are trying to take it away from them now. But they held out in the same way. And you can still find stuff up there. I have found arrowheads and things like that. They’re getting rather rare now. It’s pretty close to Provo.

Anyway, the dissenters of the Nephites helped the Lamanites to obtain possession of the Nephites’ [territory] which was in the land southward. The Nephites and Lamanites are all mixed up here. Notice dissenters of the Nephites are working along with the Lamanites because they want a share of it too. They want to go back to the old homestead; now it belongs to me, and I can take what I want now—this sort of thing. But there was no particular strength or survival value in that sort of thing, so Moronihah was able to take some of it back, many parts of the land. These are border wars now, back and forth. They have been all along. The seasonal wars that last hundreds and hundreds of years and never stop are nearly all border wars. The standard wars between Germany and France have been going on for ages, and the border wars of the Scots and the English. (The border ballads, Percy’s *Reliques*, are great epics.) That went on for hundreds and hundreds of years and it wasn’t settled until the eighteenth century. Now there’s a Scottish movement of dissent to become a separate nation. So we have these things going on. These are border wars, and they shift back and forth.

He [Moronihah] got half of it all back. And none of this would have happened [except for wickedness]. Now here is the cause again. Here it's analyzed. How could the Lamanites succeed so? It would never have happened, he said, "had it not been for their wickedness, and their abomination which was among them; yea, and it was among those also who professed to belong to the church of God." They were the ones who made this possible. They could always claim they were the good guys because they were members of the church, and blame the Lamanites because they weren't—they didn't even have the gospel. You can't take that position at all. They professed to be the church of God, and it was their wickedness and their abominations that brought this all on. And why? What was the nature of their abomination? It was the pride of their hearts. And why the pride of their hearts? Because of their exceeding riches. Here we go again. Verse 12: ". . . yea, it was because of their oppression to the poor, withholding their food from the hungry [now we go down the list here—these things all go together; this is a single package here], withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting their humble brethren upon the cheek, making a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and revelation, murdering, plundering, lying, stealing, committing adultery, rising up in great contentions, and deserting away into the land of Nephi, among the Lamanites."

They were drifting off too. All this was going on because people had too much money. Well, does that happen? Well, it happens to the Church here—those professing to be real saints, you know. But the fact is they weren't saints. They were left to their own strength, we're told, and when you're left to your own strength [you have problems]. Remember Prospero at the end of *The Tempest*?

Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
And what strength I have 's mine own,—
Which is most faint . . .

He had had this great strength, but it was gone now. And so they were left to their own strength and driven before the Lamanites. Did you ever know a person of strength, position, power and success who hadn't depended on someone else? He had to have a sponsor. You have to have someone to get through, someone you can bank on. This always has to happen. You have to have someone highly placed in the legislature, someone who will put legislation up or through for you. You have to know the boss's daughter, or something like that. It's all these connections. But is there anyone who possesses such greatness that he's above all that? He can get to the top just on his own. You'll find some interesting success stories [which claim that] people have actually done that. No, you always have to have a sponsor somewhere. And people do it. Politicians get a free ride on the Church—both sides, and things like that. They shouldn't, but these things go on. But don't think we have any strength of our own. Do we have any great men any more? No, we don't. Or do we? If there are, you don't know who they are, you see. This is the point. As the Hindus say, the king goes around but his crown is concealed in his hair. It's done over it. Well, angels unaware come upon us. There must be some good people around. There must be someone who has some strength around, but where do we find it? The Lord is teaching us lessons today.

Verse 13: ". . . driven before the Lamanites, until they had lost possession of almost all their lands" in this seesaw war. And Moronihah got busy now, and he preached because of their iniquities, and Nephi and Lehi. He preached unpopular subjects concerning their iniquities and what would happen to them if they didn't repent. And surprise, surprise, in verse 15 they did repent. Sudden repentance is a human phenomenon. It does happen. I

mean, at a banquet you can be having a riotous time, and some event happens. Well it's like *Death in Venice* and things like that. The death mask, the mummy at the banquet and the like. The *Totentanz* is a good example, you see, where they're rioting in the palace. Well, here you have the great and spacious building with the finely dressed people that are carousing and having fun and pointing their fingers in contempt at the poor. Then all of a sudden what happened? Well, the great and spacious building fell down. That's what happened, and that took them by surprise. But all of a sudden if something happens at a party, a serious altercation or something, the spirit of the whole thing changes. Suddenly everybody changes their mind very quickly, and it becomes a totally different experience for everyone. We may have seen that happen. This is what happens, and they did repent.

Verse 16: "For when Moronihah saw that they did repent he did venture to lead them forth." Then they could try to get back something, and they regained one-half of their property. They had lost it, and he gained back half. Then they lost it again and gained it back again, one-half of their property. As I said, this is the turning point here with verse 16. That was as much as they could do. Verses 18–19: "And it came to pass in the sixty and second year of the reign of the judges, that Moronihah could obtain no more possessions over the Lamanites. Therefore they did abandon their design to obtain the remainder of their lands [they're not going to retain it, but to contain it—that's all they can do now], for so numerous were the Lamanites that it became impossible for the Nephites to obtain more power over them; therefore, Moronihah [he had to settle on that] did employ all his armies in maintaining those parts which he had taken." So it's a policy of containment from now on. They're not going to gain any more. From now on it's going to be downhill. They're on the defensive.

Because of the greatness of the number of the Lamanites, the Nephites were in this constant state of fear, this loss of confidence. They began to remember the prophecies of Alma, and they had altered and trampled the laws of Mosiah under their feet. It was a moral decline. And how do you alter and corrupt the laws? Notice, the laws had become corrupt. How? Well, they can become twisted very easily. We have good laws; for example, homestead acts and water distribution acts for farmers. But they're twisted by skillful lawyers to [go to] enormous farms. All these funds that were set aside for the farmers now go to a few big corporate farms, and they can be owned by Japanese or Germans or anybody else. Just little tricks in the law can do all sorts of things. This is what they call "corrupting the law." The laws become corrupt—the same laws, as I said, they're good laws. The timberland is handed over. You have a perfect right to homestead. You homestead it and then a lumber company buys you out. That's what my grandfather did for many years. He bought them out. It's your land, and they go in with tricks of the law. They promise you a job in return, and very quickly they get 5,000 or 6,000 acres of timber just like that, pretending that these are homesteads for people who took out claims to 160 acres each. This is the way they did it. That's what you call twisting the laws. The laws become corrupted, and we do it all the time. As I said, that's what lawyers are for. (Nice things we say in this class.) I remember Governor J. Bracken Lee used to say a law degree is a license to lie, nothing else. And then you take it as that.

So the church began to dwindle, and they began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy. They were becoming disinterested. The spirit of prophecy faded out, and the spirit of revelation, "and the judgments of God did stare them in the face [verse 23]. And they saw that they had become weak, like unto their brethren, the Lamanites, and that the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them [that's all the difference in the world] . . . Therefore the Lord did cease to preserve them [the lights go out now] . . . for they had fallen into a

state of unbelief and awful wickedness [there's a hopeless imbalance now] . . . they must unavoidably perish [they didn't have a chance]. For behold, they saw that the strength of the Lamanites was as great as their strength, even man for man [now it was that, you see]. And thus had they fallen into this great transgression, yea, thus had they become weak, because of their transgression, in the space of not many years.

The Book of Mormon likes to emphasize that, how quickly these shifts take place. You say that's too fast. No, it isn't too fast. You can follow it in our own society just the same way. American history is only 200 years old. Take it decade by decade and the picture just changes like that—a totally different picture in the space of not many years, this sad refrain. But it still has this paralyzing effect, you see, because in our subconscious we know we are guilty, and it paralyzes us to action. We even try to camouflage it by cruelty, taking that as strength, etc. Nevertheless, it's sin that will hold you back and keep you from doing things and sap all your courage away actually. Consult Mr. Freud on that subject.

And Nephi delivered up the judgment-seat. This is what happens. Now we talk about the governments of the East, etc. We're praising up the value of democratic government everywhere now, but that is not enough to assure righteousness, not by any means, as it tells us in Helaman 5:2: "For their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good . . ." Even though it was the voice of the people, they didn't always choose good. The principles were set down by Mosiah that the people usually choose good. It's rarely that the people choose evil in preference to good, and therefore he said do all things by the voice of the people. Then if they choose evil, it's their responsibility. They're to blame. They can't blame anyone else; they're not innocent. Remember, he was talking about his sons and said, if you have a king his unrighteousness can bring calamity on many, and it's his blame, but not if the people have their own voice. Then they're to blame for what they bring on themselves. And this is what happened here. The voice of the people chose evil, so "they were ripening for destruction, for the laws had become corrupted." Unfair practices. Inequitable. This is acceleration.

Did we mention the four stages here? It's important that we get them. In their plays Sophocles, Euripides, and Aeschylus used them. They all use the four stages. I talked about four societies. Well, this is four stages that we're all familiar with. The first stage, of course, is prosperity, which they call *olbos*. That's the Greek word for prosperity, *olbos*. When you prosper and get rich, that's *olbos*. Things are flourishing and looking up. We're smiling and we prosper. Next after that comes *koros*—when you have enough, when you're full. *Koros* is full, and you don't want to eat any more. If you eat any more, you get sick. That's *koros*, completion, repletion. After that comes the word we all know, which is *hybris*. Then it goes to your head and you think you're really somebody, and you start pushing people around. That's what happened here. See this is *hybris*. Because of their riches they turned to their cruelty and their arrogance and their pride. *Hybris* is pride. It's usually just translated as pride. And then comes this chapter we're at now, which is *at*□.

At□ is that point at which there's nothing you can do except make things worse, so it's time you got off the stage. It's used in all the plays. So the person deliberately does everything as if he were hypnotized, as if he were under a spell. He does everything that will deliberately get him off the stage as quickly as possible. There's no more use for him. There's no more hope for him; therefore, he cooperates in the gods' or in nature's operation to remove him. He's just so much excess baggage. So *at*□ is the point at which

there is no return. You're on the way out after *at*.

So they reach the point of *at*. This is a good description of it here. In the space of not many years they were ripening for destruction and became corrupted. And how do you deal with it? Nephi had become fed up; he was exhausted. It was too much because of their iniquity. He gave up the judgment-seat and "took it upon him to preach the word of God all the remainder of his days, and his brother Lehi also, all the remainder of his days." Both Nephi and Lehi had had enough. Alma did the same thing [Alma 4:18]. Remember, Alma had all these high offices. He was chief judge, he was head of the church, and he was also the commander of the armies. What more do you want? But he gave them all up because that won't work.

Notice Alma 45:16: ". . . Thus saith the Lord God—Cursed shall be the land, yea, this land, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, unto destruction, which do wickedly, when they are fully ripe [he waits til that point, though]; and as I have said so shall it be; for this is the cursing and the blessing of God upon the land [this is the promised land, you see, but with the blessing goes the curse], for the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. . . . And when Alma had done this he departed out of the land [he blessed those in the church] of Zarahemla, as if to go into the land of Melek. And it came to pass that he was never heard of more." There were legends that sprung up around him. He said we don't know if they're true or not. "The saying went abroad in the church." We supposed that the Lord took him, as he took Moses, but that's just a legend, he says. We don't know whether it's true or not. But he says at the end [of verse 18], "therefore, for this cause we know nothing concerning his death and burial." Now this is another test of the Book of Mormon, you see. What a chance to make up a nice story here. But he says they realize that pious legends are not necessarily the gospel. People made up stories about Alma, and he says it may be true and it may not, but we just don't know. This is not the way a person writes a forgery, to put it that way.

So we're back here [in Helaman 5], and Nephi and Lehi do the same thing. They go out by themselves. We notice that the names in the Book of Mormon are significant. It tells us here [in Helaman 5:6]) that their father said to them: "I have given unto you the names of our first parents," and when you hear those names you think of certain qualities and you remember those names, that "ye may remember them." Like the last emperor of Rome was called Romulus Augustulus (476 A.D.) trying to revive the glory of Rome that was lost forever, and he was the last. As the Romans say, "Your name is the omen. It tells your story."

Verse 6: ". . . when you remember your names, you remember them; and when ye remember them, ye may remember their works." And remember that their works were good. Now this is not a platitude here. Be good; don't be bad. What did the minister say about sin? He was against it. Well, that's obvious enough. We're talking about something much deeper here. ". . . I would that ye should do that which is good, that it may be said of you, and also written, even as it has been said and written of them. . . . lay up for yourselves [this is where it counts] a treasure in heaven, yea, which is eternal, and which fadeth not away."

Now what is the opposite of that? Well, of course it's success. It's the career. See how that spoils, how that sours, how that embitters and leads to all sorts of violence and unscrupulous action. The success, the career, the good life, gracious living, all the things

that go with it. The four things, remember, that the two Nephis both mentioned, namely power, gain, popularity, and the lusts of the flesh. These are the four things. They're one package; they come together. You get them on TV any night you want. You see these things. You see the money, the power, the crime, and the lusts of the flesh—plenty of that too.

Verse 9: “O remember, remember, my sons, the words which king Benjamin spake unto his people.” Notice, they always refer to Benjamin and Mosiah. They do it again here, because that is the standard. Here it is in Helaman 4:22: “And they had altered and trampled under their feet the laws of Mosiah.” See, they were still observing the laws of Mosiah. So if you want to know what the constitution was they were living under, what version of the law of Moses, the laws of Mosiah were just the laws of Moses. And they were the ones laid down by Benjamin in his farewell address. So if you want to know what they were living under, what they were obliged to follow, that was the basic law. Like our Bill of Rights was the speech of Benjamin. He says here, remember the words of King Benjamin.

Verse 9: “. . . yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ [here you have it again], who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world.” Now why do we have to have him? Well, it's obvious why we have to have him. We cannot save ourselves. Now that is the moral of all the literature that's ever been written, and science teaches us the same thing, that you're going into annihilation and nowhere else. We usually have a lot of nice things we like to quote on this particular subject, eloquent poets and Greek tragedians, the chorus, and all this sort of thing. We're going nowhere here. Man has no hope at all for himself. We're finished, and the scientists believe it even more. I read that one before about the scientists at Cambridge in the 1930s. They all knew that they were going into annihilation, and it chilled them. They were successful, glorious, while they were among the crowd, and they reveled in their science. It was a marvelous study, but they knew that they were destined for annihilation.

Also, only the gospel has this. It talks about Jesus Christ and repentance. Other religions don't have it, comparative religions. The best thing that Hinduism can give you, for example, is the desire to become a drop of water in the ocean. That's what you'll return to. Zen and Buddhism will tell you, don't expect anything and you won't be disappointed. The main thing is don't expect anything. Deny the flesh. Get rid of your ego, your self, your identity and everything else. Well, the Book of Mormon is exactly in the opposite direction. It's the intensification of your identity. You're going to live forever. The Egyptians would never settle for being a drop of water in the oceans. No, every individual had to keep it for himself. And how do we do that?

Here's a good example here. Other religions do not have this. Verse 11: “And he hath power given unto him from the Father to redeem them from their sins because of repentance; therefore he hath sent his angels to declare the tidings of the conditions of repentance, which bringeth unto the power of the Redeemer, unto the salvation of their souls.” This is not self-evident. Other religions do not have it. A person by the name of [he couldn't think of it at the moment] made a surprising discovery. In all classical literature and in all ancient literature there's not a single instance of anybody seeing an angel. They talk about gods and goddesses, and Vergil thought he saw something. He said he thought he saw a light in the room. He stopped still and stared, and every hair stood on end. His voice caught in his throat, and he couldn't say anything.

The first angel that Mohammed saw was the angel Gabriel. He didn't know what he was seeing. He rushed home and had his wife Khadija cover him with blankets so he'd have a sweat and sweat it out. Then he had Khadija's cousin come whose name was Waraqa, and who had been a Christian and knew the teachings of the Jews and the Christians. And Mohammed asked him, is this a real vision I had, or was I misled? He needed reassurance, and Waraqa reassured him and said, this is a real vision because you shall be the prophet to this people. And Mohammed was the prophet. He was a real prophet, but to those people. But he wasn't sure of what he'd seen. He said he thought it was a bow shot away. Sometimes he filled the whole sky. Sometimes he was like a man, and then suddenly he was behind him. But it was all around. What was he seeing? He thought he was off his head. He said, am I crazy? Have I lost my mind? Well, Joseph Smith never asked that. He was always absolutely sure and stood up against the most tremendous [pressure] when he was just a little kid. He stood against all sorts of criticism, because he said I knew I talked to those people, the Father and the Son. I knew I had seen an angel, and nobody would ever make me deny it.

So it's a different thing here. It's not that in world religions you'll find something just like the gospel. They all have something. Sure they do. They have the moral teachings, and they observe them more strictly than we do, some of them. And they have other teachings. Then we have a whole roomful of fathers of the church up in the library, and for two thousand years they have discussed these things, argued about them, analyzed them, etc. But it's all a matter of debate and discussion. Nobody actually said, "I have seen" until Joseph Smith came along.

Eduard Meyer was the greatest historian of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He studied and knew more ancient history than anyone else, and he wrote that great work, *The History of Antiquity*. Well, Eduard Meyer saw that there was one thing that animated the ancient world, and that was religion. What is religion? What's behind it? All his life he studied that. Finally, he centered on Joseph Smith. He said, "Joseph Smith is the answer to this whole thing." It seemed that something really happened once in a while, that the apostles really did see angels. He said, I don't believe it. I believe they were a delusion. I believe the angel Moroni was an illusion and the Golden Plates were a hallucination. He never explained the Book of Mormon. He wouldn't read it. That's an interesting reflection, isn't it? But the Book of Mormon wasn't a hallucination. That's on top of it. We have these things that go together, and it fits in the whole thing. It's the kind of a book an angel would bring, because it's the handbook we need for these latter days, the last days. He devoted years [to study]. He came out to Utah in 1904 and lived a long time here. Then he wrote a big work on the origin of Christianity in which he said you can only explain it in terms of Mormonism. He compared Joseph Smith with Mohammed. He said all the old prophets and the founders of religions, like Luther and Calvin, had their periods of doubt and struggle. Every founder of religion has, whether it's the Buddha, Mohammed, the founder of Jainism, or whoever it is. They all have their periods of doubt. But Joseph never did. He said he saw the angel when he was a boy, and there was never any question about it. He wrote the Book of Mormon when he was 23 years old, and he never came back and said, wasn't I foolish when I was a kid back there? He was very sharp and he became very learned. He became a master of the language. But did he ever apologize for what he wrote back then? Did he ever make a change in it? Never. He said this is the truest book that we have. And so these things go together.

And what's the alternative? When angels come then big things are happening. Well then,

Satan has to counteract with big things. His big act is in the next verse. He's the one that counteracts. He hits back with the same sort of thing. Notice verse 12: ". . . ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind . . ." See, swept along in an irresistible force, like the drug plague that's sweeping the world today into all countries. It's like a whirlwind, like a *zawba^ca*, like a tornado or typhoon. ". . . his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you . . ." So the devil doesn't strike back gently at all. He hits back just as hard as the other side. When they send angels, he sends his angels, and they really get busy here. ". . . it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built . . ." Referring to the rock again, the thing they always refer to. This is throughout the Old and New Testament, the same way.

Verse 13: "And it came to pass that these were the words which Helaman taught to his sons; yea, he did teach them many things," and they went forth to preach them. They were going to try to reform the people. They went from city to city and "among all the people of Nephi who were in the land southward; and from thence into the land of Zarahemla, among the Lamanites." (Verse 17:) They confounded the dissenters from the Nephites who argued against them. It was the dissenters from the Nephites that argued against them. They came forth, repented, and were baptized. They went back home to the Nephites again and tried to repair the wrong that they had done. Well, there's hope there. But the main hope comes from the Lamanites here. And this is the interesting thing, this sudden shift of conscience. Verse 19: "Therefore they did speak unto the great astonishment of the Lamanites, to the convincing of them, insomuch that there were eight thousand of the Lamanites who were in the land of Zarahemla and round about baptized unto repentance."

Then they were taken by an army. Notice there were roving bands of Lamanites. That's the Lamanite type of warfare. And they were taken by an army of Lamanites and cast into prison. And then came the miracles. They were encircled by fire and they took courage. The interesting thing here is they're among prison rabble in the prison. ". . . in the prison were Lamanites and Nephites who were dissenters." They were criminal types, the criminal element. Verse 28: "And it came to pass that they were overshadowed with a cloud of darkness, and an awful solemn fear came upon them. And it came to pass that there came a voice as if it were above the cloud of darkness, saying: Repent ye, repent ye, and seek no more to destroy my servants whom I have sent unto you to declare good tidings . . . [there] was a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper, and it did pierce even to the very soul." The earth shook exceedingly. The voice came again, and the earth shook again. These things are all timed. It's a matter of timing. That earthquake was scheduled, but so was the voice that was talking to them there. These things are all timed. The Lord knows they're going to happen. Then the third shake was the worst one. It was not an aftershock. It was a humdinger, "as if it were about to divide asunder . . . [and they were paralyzed] they were immovable because of the fear which did come upon them."

One among them was a Nephite who had been one of the dissenters. He saw through the cloud of darkness the faces of Nephi and Lehi shining exceedingly as if they were talking to somebody, sort of matter of fact. He cried unto the multitude, hey, look. They all looked, and sure enough they saw Nephi and Lehi talking to somebody. And they said, who are those men talking to? Verse 39: "And Aminadab said unto them: They do converse with the angels of God." Well, what shall we do about this? [they said]. ". . . you

must repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ [cry unto the voice that they'd heard— they'd heard this voice three times], who was taught unto you by Alma, and Amulek, and Zeezrom.” Notice, these were traditions. These were well known. This was in the preceding generation that Alma and Amulek and Zeezrom had been among them. These traditions were remembered in the church, and of course this Nephite remembered them.

So they all began to cry, and the cloud of darkness was dispersed. They became the best missionaries. They became saints on this occasion, these same people. They had a pentecost. Did they suddenly become righteous? Well, they couldn't have been such bad people or it wouldn't have happened. They hadn't passed the point of no return, certainly. Verse 43: “. . . they were encircled about, yea every soul, by a pillar of fire. And Nephi and Lehi were in the midst of them. . . . the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire . . .” See, this is your baptism of fire. They hadn't even been baptized yet. The Holy Ghost came to numbers of people in the New Testament before the restoration of the gospel. He came to Elizabeth, to Zachariah, and to Mary. They were filled with the Holy Ghost before the Holy Ghost had been delivered after baptism. So the Holy Ghost is always operating when the Lord isn't there.

And it was a pleasant voice. Verse 45, “. . . and they could speak forth marvelous words.” [Here is instant righteousness.] “. . . a pleasant voice, as if it were a whisper, saying: Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved. . . . they saw the heavens open; and angels came down out of heaven and ministered unto them.” The word minister is used a lot in the Book of Mormon. You find out in what sense angels minister. What do they do? They converse with you. They come down and converse with people. If you find all the passages under minister, you'll find out they came and talked with the children; they came and ministered to the apostles. When an angel comes he ministers to you. I mean, he answers your questions and helps you along. He discusses things with you—ministering angels.

Verse 49: And there were about three hundred souls who saw and heard these things [boy, they had their prisons full, too]; and they were bidden to go forth and marvel not, neither should they doubt.” Well, we don't know why they were in prison. Maybe they were political prisoners in this kind of society. “And it came to pass that they did go forth, and did minister unto the people.” They do the same thing. This is what they do when they minister. They declare “throughout all the regions round about all the things which they had heard and seen [that's what ministering is; they become missionaries], insomuch that the more part of the Lamanites were convinced of them, because of the greatness of the evidences which they had received.” And this is why it happened. This is why you had this miracle. When things get as bad as this, it is time to intervene. The Lord says, we must do something, so something like this happens. But you're not going to have angels come just on any occasion. You're not going to have things like this happen every day, or even in every century.

When things reach a crisis point like this, something has to happen. Something has to crack. But it comes from the other side; the help comes from there. We can't pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. We may have committee meetings, sessions, and elections going on from here to doomsday—we're not going to save ourselves. If anything is true, it's that “man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7). “The troubles of our proud and angry dust are from eternity, and shall not fail.” (A. E.

Housman, *Last Poems*). Man cannot save himself, and everybody knows that. The ancients knew that; they say the scientists know that, and it makes us very sad.

So we come around to the sixty-second year. Now notice what happens. The tables are turned now. The other bucket is up. Helaman 6:1: “The Lamanites had become, the more part of them, a righteous people, insomuch that their righteousness did exceed that of the Nephites [it’s turned around], because of their firmness and their steadiness in the faith [see, we mustn’t be simplistic about the Book of Mormon]. For behold, there were many of the Nephites who had become hardened and impenitent [this is the others]. . . . the people of the church did have great joy because of the conversion of the Lamanites, yea, because of the church of God, which had been established among them. And they did fellowship one with another, and did rejoice one with another, and did have great joy.” They had a time of great prosperity [when they could] rejoice with great joy. The Lamanites now enjoyed the blessings of the gospel. Notice here how the tables are turned here in verse 4: “Many of the Lamanites did come down into the land of Zarahemla” to preach as missionaries, to try to convert the Nephites, to “exhort them to faith and repentance.”

Verse 6: “And it came to pass that many of the Lamanites did go into the land northward [where there had been that great pioneering movement through a whole generation—lots of people moved up there]; and also Nephi and Lehi went into the land northward, to preach unto the people [the settlers up there]. . . . [and] Nephites did go into whatsoever part of the land they would.” This is open now. They have cut down the walls now and lowered the barriers. They were free to go. You see these things happening in our own time. This is quite remarkable, the parallels we see everywhere now. You see that things are sort of ripening. This is apartheid, you see. The wall is broken down. The Nephites would go whither they wanted to go. They wouldn’t dare go before, and the other way “it came to pass that the Lamanites did also go whithersoever they would, whether it were among the Lamanites or among the Nephites; and thus they did have free intercourse one with another [this is the ideal situation for trade, culture, or anything else—they finally achieved it], to buy and to sell, and to get gain, according to their desire.”

And the result is, of course, it’s the best thing in the world for the economy, so in verse 9 they become exceedingly rich. Here it comes again. We’ve got to go through this all over again? Well, if we’re going through it today, we shouldn’t complain about this. This comes too often. It comes so fast.

Verse 9: “And it came to pass that they became exceedingly rich, both the Lamanites and the Nephites; and they did have an exceeding plenty of gold, and of silver, and of all manner of precious metals . . . Now the land south was called Lehi, and the land north was called Mulek . . . for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north [they were the Mulekites, you see], and Lehi into the land south.” See the Mulekites still kept their identity. After all, Zarahemla was a Mulekite city. The Nephites were in the south, the children of Lehi, but now they’ve gone up north where the old hangout in Bountiful [was].

Next we have a cultural chapter on the type of civilization they had. Are they going to build up Babylon here? Do you have to? Do cities always have to be Babylon? Ah, we shall see.