

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 1, Lecture 22
2 Nephi 29–31
Scripture and Canon

We are on 2 Nephi 29. He [the Lord] is talking about when he sets his hand again in these last days the second time to recover his people. “I would remember your seed [too],” he says. There are no “God’s privileged people,” as we read in 1 Nephi 17:35. He loves one as much as the other. He starts bringing his words again in verse 3: “And because my words shall hiss forth” (a very interesting word). “*Has mippenāyw kōl hā-āretz*. Let all the earth be silent in his presence.” There’s *hiss* and *hush*. Of course, it means “go forth in a quiet, unassuming way.” It won’t be like a trumpet on a mountaintop. Notice how the Book of Mormon was introduced. It wasn’t highly publicized. It wasn’t in all the papers; they didn’t announce a great book coming forth, etc. All the advertising was done by the enemy for quite a long time. As soon as Joseph got the plates, it started a scandal. The *Painesville Telegraph* and some other newspapers started talking about it and started publicizing it all over the place long before he had ever produced it. How you would panic if you had promised to produce a book. It [the newspaper] said “gold plates” and told that story, and people were waiting for it to come out: “All right, wise guy, where’s the book?” He had to produce it. He produced it on the line, and it was all there. Then they said, “Oh, well, it’s nothing.” They wouldn’t even read the book. It got publicity all right, but it hissed forth out of the dust. It’s a good word, isn’t it? The word is whispered around; it just gets around that way. The Lord doesn’t trumpet it forth, and the angel doesn’t come to the whole human race. Because of that, when they start finding out about it, “many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible. [Notice in verse 6] Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews?”

You see the name of R. H. Charles a lot. He is the most eminent editor of ancient Christian and Jewish texts. It was in the early part of the century—1911–15, around there—that R. H. Charles [published] his two great volumes that are indispensable, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*. They are vast works, and everybody has them on reserve. He says this about it after reviewing all the church Fathers, especially those of the fourth century. He says this was the position all of them took: “God had, according to the official teachers of the church, spoken His last and final word,” and the policy of the doctors, “so far as lay in their power, made the revival of such prophecy impossible.”¹ So, you see, God has spoken his last and final word, and the revival of such prophecy was absolutely out of the question. That is the official position of the churches from the third century on.

This is [paraphrased] from someone else: The theory of complete, finished, and absolute scriptures was simply a door banged in the face of future prophets by the doctors. In a recent, important study by the Dutch scholar Van Unnik, he shows that until the third century the Christians had no objection whatever to the idea that someone might still add revelations to the writings of the Gospel. There was originally no moral objection or mystic principle barring the production of more scriptures wherever God would see fit to

reveal them. God can reveal them if he wants to. Remember, the curse on the end of John is just referring to that book of Revelation itself. If any *man* shall add to it, he shall be accursed, of course. Men have no right to add to the scriptures, but God has. Men have done all the adding. We have many, many volumes over there in the library which men have added. They have added interpretations, and we are changing things all the time.

Now we are quoting R. H. Charles again: It was only when “the church believed that the time of Revelation and therefore also the time of bringing forth new holy scriptures had come to an end with the Apostolic Age,” that the expectation of more holy writings was discouraged and condemned. After that it was to the interest of scholars to cry out in alarm anytime anybody suggested an addition. This was the great blasphemy of the Book of Mormon because it was more scripture. We have the scripture. Blasphemy! How can you add to the Bible? [they said]. It’s a terrible thing [if] God has spoken his last words. There are three sources of revelation in the Roman Catholic Church: scripture, tradition, and reason. Reason is philosophy and interpretation; you are adding to the scripture when you start that. You have your books of legends. They accepted fourteen books of the Apocrypha that the Protestants didn’t accept. The Protestants go even further: “We believe . . . that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with all teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments alone.”

This is from H. Denzinger. The *Enchiridion Symbolorum* is the official Roman Catholic statement on the subject here. It quotes the Council of Trent in 1546, etc. “No other source of [public] revelation exists except canonical books and the apostolic tradition.” The Protestants go even further; now we are quoting the Protestant source, Chandler. So an eminent Protestant divine declares today: “I boldly assert, therefore, that God does not speak today because of the supreme character of His revelation of Himself made once for all in His Christ. . . . We must . . . recognize His voice in his *final written word*.” So he boldly asserts that Christ does not speak today; it is his written word. You can imagine the catch to that. Just as science says that evidence speaks for itself. Well, how do you interpret it? That’s the whole thing.

One of the standard canons of the New Testament is the *Vincentian Canon*. Vincent of Lerinum is the author of it, and he says, “Although the canon of the Scripture is complete . . .” Our word *cane* comes from *canon*. A *cane* is a *rule*, a yardstick by which you measure a thing. It’s a Semitic word. There’s the cane that grows by the brook, the canebrakes, etc. From that you cut one off and make a cane, and use a cane to walk with. That’s the measuring stick. *Canon* is a universal word; it’s actually Semitic. The *canon* is the measurement of the scriptures. See, a yardstick only goes this far and no farther. This will measure the scriptures. You’re not supposed to add anything at either end; it’s absolutely out of the question. If you discover something much earlier, forget it. If subsequent revelations have been given, forget them. They don’t come in. Just within the canon of the scriptures is what we accept and nothing else. Nothing earlier, although we may discover some wonderful things. And nothing later, although there may be some wonderful revelations. We have a set canon, and you can see why it’s absolutely necessary because if we don’t have a canon, something might be missing. Anytime we want to interpret a scripture, we’ll say, “Well, we’re not sure of that. There may have been something else, or there may yet be something else to come.” This made the Doctors of the church very uncertain. They couldn’t come to any conclusions in the councils of the church. In a meeting they might say, “Well, is any verse of the Bible absolutely final? If it

is not final, how can we hold people to it? We may find that it has to be changed.” That’s a main issue of the councils.

So Vincent of Lerinum says, “Although the canon of the scriptures is complete ‘and of itself is sufficient and more than sufficient for all things,’ yet tradition is needed for a proper *understanding* of the Scripture.” Tradition is adding something to them if the scriptures can’t speak for themselves. He said they speak for themselves, but they have to have tradition to explain them. Already we are questioning the vaunted self-sufficiency of the holy page to convey its own message; yet, as I just said, the churchmen dare not change their position lest they lower the bars to revelation. But how can they presume to add their comments and explanations to the Bible, supplying that information without which, they assure us, the holy writ cannot be understood, and at the same time insist that they are adding nothing, but simply letting the book speak for itself? Like the scientists they are not letting the evidence alone at all; they are officiously helping it to say what they think it should say. But how, short of revelation, will we ever know the real word of God?

Now, that’s a question that greatly exercised St. Hilary in the fourth century; he is very important on this subject. “We are quite aware,” he says, “that most people think the mere sound of the words or the letters are enough,” but, of course, that won’t do: *Scripturae enim non sunt in legendo, sed in intelligendo*—The scriptures don’t consist of what you read, but what you understand. If they’re not intelligent, it doesn’t mean a thing just reading the sounds. But how can our weak intellects, our *humana imbecillitas*—helpless humanity, ever be sure of understanding aright what we are reading? Only by revelation, is Hilary’s sensible conclusion. Yet they have all ruled revelation out, you see. Now the fat’s in the fire. How is he going to get out of that? Well, he deftly snatches the fat out of the fire by defining revelation as the reading of the scripture “not as men interpret it, but as it is” [oh, that’s all right then; you can do it], with no private human opinions allowed to color or distort it, and “no human interpretation stepping an inch beyond the bounds of what is divinely constituted.”

First he says that merely reading it won’t tell us what it says; you’ve got to understand it. But how do you understand it by sticking exactly to what it says when you read it? This is exactly the same thing with the Baconian canon in science. Bacon said, “All you have to do is observe and nature will tell you the story.” Have no opinions of your own; keep an open mind. Observe and you will find out absolutely what is going on. But, as Darwin says, “How odd it is that anyone should ever think he can get anywhere in science without being for or against something.” You have to take an adversarial position. You come up with a hypothesis, and you have to have good representatives on both sides. Otherwise, you can’t test it. You’ll never know whether your hypothesis will hold up or not unless it is challenged and challenged vigorously. You have to hear both sides. The adversarial thing works that way. But he said, our fatal weakness lies in our inability to interpret the word of God. So Hilary would just do away with all interpretations and “read the word of God as it is.” Well, how would he interpret it? He was good enough to tell us that too: our “revelation” should be founded on right reason, good historical knowledge, and a sense of correct doctrine. Now, anybody can cultivate that, you see. That has nothing to do with revelation. He said this is what revelation consists of: right reason, good historical knowledge, and a sense of correct doctrine. Well, that’s all right, but they’ve never been able to solve that problem of how to enjoy inspired guidance while renouncing all claim to revelation (I have some good articles on that). “The Word of God,” writes E. C. Blackman, “is in the words of the Bible, but it is not to be identified with them . . . but

interpreted out of them. . . . The Bible is not itself a revelation but is the record of revelation.”

Interpreted, but how? Well might the Catholics challenge the Protestants with this argument. This is a Catholic cardinal: “The Bible is a difficult book; it is full of dark places and apparent inconsistencies. How do you Protestants think you can manage without the authoritative guidance of the Church [they are going to use authority as the answer] when you come to interpret it and to build doctrine upon it?”

To which the proper answer is, “How do you Catholics think you have solved the difficult problem of interpretation simply by agreeing (after centuries of hot debate) on *who* is to do the interpreting, without the vaguest idea of how he is to do it, apart from the normal fallible processes of human intelligence?” For Catholic theologians often repeat St. Augustine’s lament that “men of the most outstanding piety and wisdom very often disagree in their interpretation of the Scriptures.”

So how can you have a definite thing to follow, unless you have revelation? It goes on and on here: Thomas Aquinas insisted that the Bible is “the only sure and binding authority. But one uses the authority of canonical scripture properly and in arguing from necessity. . . . For our faith rests upon the revelation given to the apostles and prophets who wrote the canonical books, but *not* upon revelation, if such there were, given to other teachers.” That’s Thomas Aquinas, and you could say he is the last word here. Notice, it rests upon revelation given to the apostles and prophets, but nobody else. Nobody else receives revelation except the ancient apostles and prophets. It goes on and on here, but you see what the idea is. They do say, “A Bible! a Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible.” They get quite worked up about it.

Of course, this leads directly to the Jews. He says, you have your Bible from the Jews, both the Old and the New Testament. (Remember what Viola says when she takes her hat off in *Twelfth Night*, “Shall I remove the mask? Is it well done? Ghastly.” It’s a big hat though.) We have the Bible from the Jews. He says in verse 4: You have it “from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them? . . . Do they remember the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews [He puts in a marvelous plug for the Jews because he is a Jew. He says, ‘I’m a Jew myself.’ But he is of Manasseh which is a very different thing; he’s not of the tribe of Judah], and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?”

Notice this: At all times the Jews have a saying, which is a very true saying, I think. You will find the best people and the worst people in the world among the Jews and the Latter-day Saints. It’s true, of course. You will find the greatest geniuses, the most self-sacrificing, the most noble spirits among them—and also the most vicious, the most depraved, the ones who produce the greatest mischief in the world. That would be a long story if we went into it. You find them both, so you can’t make a sweeping statement and say that all Jews are good or bad, or all Mormons or Gentiles or anybody else are good or bad. That’s a thing you absolutely can’t do. The Jews have always had this genius. When they go into something, they really go into it. I once spent eight months in a camp consisting entirely of Berlin and Viennese Jews, and they hated each others’ guts. Oh, it was awful—the rivalry, the jealousy, the ferocity! And oh boy, the way they would work at it! Every one was a genius, and it was really something. It was at Camp Ritchie where Camp David is today, a very secret camp all under the ground with all these passages, etc. It was a military compound, a very secret thing with hundreds of Viennese and Berlin

Jews. They were there, of course, because they were not only anti-Nazi but they spoke German. And they [the Jews] are the most wonderful people you ever met in your life. You can have the most fun with them; there's never a dull moment. We used to give parties where we would have the whole symphony orchestra. My mother used to throw these parties; she was really out for culture. We would have all these Jewish musicians there, and it was more fun than a picnic. Of course, my dad is half Jewish. All the clowning that goes on. It's the same thing in Hollywood, as you know. You have these wonderful characters, these great ones, and then you have these lousy, slimy, awful Jews that make Hollywood what it is. Marvelous people, the Jews! You have to hand it to them because they go all the way. Whatever they do, they do all the way.

It's like what Eduard Meyer says of Omar, the uncle of Muhammad. He compares him with Brigham Young. He says, "When he hit he hit, and when he laughed he laughed, and what he did he did with vigor and power." He said that Brigham Young was the one man in the New World [that could be compared to him]. This was Edward Meyer writing about the origins of Islam and Mormonism. He gives a wonderful comparison of them. He said Brigham Young was a man who didn't do things by halves. He didn't dawdle around. It disgusted him when people did do things by half. Any sloppy work bothered him. His daughter, Emma Lucy, was at dinner one night at Apostle Bowen's house, and she told a story about Brigham Young [that happened] when she was nine years old. There was a stable out behind the Lion House. One day Brigham went out to inspect things, and one of the saddles had fallen off the peg and had been trampled in the manure and the dirt on the floor of the stable. He was furious. He called all the help together and gave them such a dressing down as you have never heard. Then he stomped into the house, went into his office, and banged the door. Little Emma Lucy went and listened at the door at what was going on inside. She heard him yelling, "Down on your knees, Brigham. Get down on your knees." He had to apologize because he had lost his temper with the help in the stable. He went all the way, you see. He lost his temper with the help, and he shouldn't have done that. So he rebuked himself. He went into his room to pray, "Get down on your knees, Brigham." It's a wonderful story. That's the kind of man he was.

It's the same thing with the Jews; they go all the way. That's why it's talking about them here. He describes their weaknesses beautifully here. Remember, when they are too smart for their britches and always looking beyond the mark. They want to make an intellectual problem of everything. No, that's Jacob who tells about that. We're soon going to get to it because he was Nephi's brother. Verse 4: "... the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?" You might say, "Well, they didn't do it willingly; that wasn't their objective." Yes, it was. There were great and righteous men among them. There have always been holy men among the Jews, as there always have been in the world. All churches have had very good, holy, righteous people, but not very many. But the Jews have made special effort because they had to. Remember, George Albert Smith, Sr., used to say, "We came out here of our own free will because they made us." It's the same thing with the Jews. They did all these wonderful things because they were forced to do them.

Verse 5: "O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? Nay; but ye have cursed them, and have hated them, and have not sought to recover them. But behold, I will return all these things upon your own heads; for I the Lord have not forgotten my people. Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews?" It's interesting that not only the New Testament was all written by Jews, but the Old Testament too was

what gave them the Bible. Remember Jerome? The Latin Bible is Jerome's Bible. Reuchlin with the Reformation was the first one to really get into the Hebrew Bible. It was the Hebrew and Jerome's and Luther's Bible [that influenced the King James]. Jerome lived fifteen years in Bethlehem. He worked among the Jews all that time. He gave us the Latin Vulgate, the standard Roman Catholic Bible. He lived right among the Jews when he wrote it, all those many years in Bethlehem. Reuchlin and Luther were busily studying Hebrew. It's from them we get our King James Bible more than anyone else. The King James Bible translators relied quite heavily on Luther's Bible. They depended a lot on Luther. In order to do this, of course, Reuchlin and the others became ardent Hebraists. They worked with the Jews, etc.

Verse 7: "Know ye not that there are more nations than one? [That's an important thing.] Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men [now it's going to get universal; there's no reason for being snooty about it and because you're Jews start pushing people off the sidewalk], and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea." You've never seen such arrogance in the world. The way they are behaving toward the Palestinians now isn't very nice. After all, there are complaints. The Lord told them, "Remember that you were a stranger in Egypt." You were roughed up and you didn't like it, so remember other people the same way. This is another important thing in verse 8: "Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word?" Some of these apocryphal writings, these writings that were discovered later, belong to the Bible. There are works in the Bible that shouldn't be there, and some writings that are not in there should be there. That's a big problem today. It was at the Council of Dordrecht in 1670 in which the Protestants all got together and ruled that they would not have anything to do with these apocryphal writings. There was just the Bible, just that particular text, and nothing else. Well, who determined the canon of the Bible and set the limits to it? This was all done by committees that claimed no revelation whatever, no inspiration whatever. There are many books and many writings they left out. Who gave them authority to leave them out? Who gave them authority to say what should be left in and what shouldn't? They didn't claim it. As wise men they would argue about it on literary and philosophical grounds, etc. But the Synod of Dordrecht in the Netherlands decided that they would reject entirely what they called "the miserable Apocrypha." Of course, the miserable Apocrypha has some very important writings in it. The *Book of Enoch* is there. These things are very highly respected now. The two most respected of all are the book of Abraham and the *Book of Enoch*. Of course, these are the very two that Joseph Smith gave us. He gave us the book of Abraham, and in chapters 6–8 of the book of Moses he gave us the *Book of Enoch*. They are of great importance now. With the Dead Sea Scrolls you have the *Genesis Apocryphon*, Abraham's activity in Egypt, etc. These things line up very well, not only with Jewish tradition but with the Bible itself. And they are older versions.

Verse 8: "Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? [He does.] Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another [now, this is interesting—the gospel will be given as far as they will take it; we are going to see how it goes]. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also." Of course, this is the test, as the Indians say. This is the same one that the Arabs use, too. I can remember telling John Wilson, the Egyptologist, about this. He was quite surprised because the Egyptians have the same idea of running side by side. It means the same thing, and there's a hieroglyph for it. I'll think of it in a second. When two run side by side, they go this way, so they say, "Mormons and Hopis like this."

Verse 9: “And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another [the expanding gospel]; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever.” Can’t God go on doing his own work and adding if he wants to, saying what he wants? The Gospel of John ends that way. Remember, he says, “I think if all the deeds of Christ were written the whole world wouldn’t contain the books.” Well, he must have done an awful lot of things, but all the words of Jesus Christ can be read in half an hour now, as we have them in the New Testament. I’m sure he spoke marvelous things more than that. Of course, now when you find a very early document, it will almost always have the title “The Words of Jesus Christ Spoken to the Apostles in Secret after the Resurrection.” These are the really important teachings of the forty-day ministry.

Now we have a really interesting picture of what is going forth here. Verse 11: “For I command all men, both in the east, and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them.” In other words God has not neglected the world just because we have these little people, the Jews. They didn’t accept it; they were a stiff-necked people, always looking beyond the mark, etc. As I said, there are always righteous people here and there. It’s interesting. We are going to have real trouble now, aren’t we, if this really happens? “For out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written.” There is yet a great deal more to discover, but you have a sort of cat’s cradle, as Teilhard de Chardin, the great Jesuit paleontologist, says. One connects with the other. This one connects with that one, and before you know you just have a mass of interconnections between these various documents if they are all saying the same thing. Well, we have a library here. It wouldn’t take you so long as you might think to read through the nearly four million books in our library. They are there but nobody reads them, as you know. A few of them we read, but you don’t need to read [all of] them. A few books comprise everything all the others have to say. In science it’s very easy. If you are reading the latest book on planetary astronomy, for example, you don’t have to go back and read books written in the 1920s and 1930s on the subject. It supersedes all of them; it includes all of them right there. I was just reading a very interesting work by Joseph Needham last night on this subject. That takes care of that.

Literary works are different. They don’t stand on each other’s shoulders. You have to read through them all, but they are all talking about the same thing. One of the great works covers an awful lot of ground, as you know. But now we have a nice conclusion to that. If all these books do come out and if we are finding out all these things—all these records that people left and their teachings, etc.—how can we possibly handle it? Well, I’m absolutely amazed at what the computer can do; there [seems to be] nothing it can’t do. Just as the Lord brought forth things like radio and telegraph for spreading the word—rapid transit and the like, and missionaries buzzing all over in a matter of hours in jet planes. All these things are to the advantage of spreading the gospel. I’m sure there’s no reason why we can’t have computer techniques that would handle all these masses of material and show how they do all share common doctrine—how they run together in one and are united in one without confusion. He says every man will be “judged according to that which is written.”

Verse 12: “For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.” Well, that’s every nation, not just

civilized nations. We have records taken by visitors to all the tribes of the Indians. There's a lot that gets lost there, but they all write their record. They all leave their record in various forms, whether it's in account books, or in law books, or in journals, or whatever it is. You know President Kimball was so great on this idea of journals, etc. It turns out that they really are important; it's a funny thing. I mean even though your journal doesn't say anything and it's terribly boring, there's a purpose for keeping it, if only to keep you on your toes. We have the Greek contribution here, the *Septuagint*. The oldest and best version of the Old Testament that we have is by the Greeks; they handed it down to us. And there are the Hermetic writings, although we never search them anymore. Well, anyway they have each other's words. Verse 13: "The Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews [this mesh is interwoven here]. And it shall come to pass that my people, which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions."

You notice this is working toward one particular objective, this getting together. I can remember when there were large parts of Africa that were undiscovered; it was "darkest Africa." It wasn't until 1917 that Nicholas Rarisch made the first trips into Central Asia. That was followed in the 1920s by Steindorff. Nicholas Rarisch came and drew pictures, etc. of trails to innermost Asia. Nobody had been there before. Central Asia was a blank on the map, and Central Africa was a blank on the map. And Perry didn't get to the North Pole after all. Scott reached the South Pole, and then for a long time nobody did. And the islands of the sea were practically unexplored. I mean that was the end of the world. You had to take long trips to get to them, and very few people went to them. They were exotic. Well, there is nothing exotic anymore. It's all being brought together into one—into one tight community as a matter of fact. It's altogether too snug for comfort when we get all the overpopulation. He [Nephi] is talking about this gathering process. First they connect with each other. Then they "shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions [notice it's plural]; and my word also shall be gathered in one."

You notice all this gathering in one. That's the meaning which we noted before of *atonement*, *at-one-ment*. There are various levels at which things can be joined and brought together at one. Of course, the *Atonement* is in the world to come when we become one with the Father and the Son, as we read in those chapters of John where it is so marvelously set forth. This is a cultural phenomenon. Heaven itself is a culture. It's an ambience, an environment. All "the house of Israel shall be gathered home to the lands of their possessions [plural]; and my word also shall be gathered in one." There's all this gathering in one. They are mixed blood already; it doesn't mean one race or anything like that. But a culture is a unit, after all. What is the perfect mirror of a culture? It's a language. This is proven in the case of language because you have words for things you see and use and talk about. You don't have words for things you don't [have experience with], so the language will reflect a particular way of life in all its details, food and everything else. But customs, habits, ways of thought are expressed in language. We have these distinctive cultures, and you gather a culture together in one. I'm sure that Zion is a culture. Remember the way the city of Zion is described—totally different, totally alien to the type of world we have today. But it's described very vividly in the book of Moses. They were of one heart and one mind, and they had to be taken away. It tells us in Genesis that Zion was taken away and it's going to come down again. But it's another ambience, another world entirely. We are supposed to have it here; that's what we are supposed to build up here, you know—"for the building up of Zion."

I think Plato is right; there is such a thing as an ideal culture. He said he had it in his mind. You know what it is, and when it is right you recognize it. When something is wrong you recognize it. He used the *kalos k'agathos*, "the good, true, and beautiful." You recognize what should be, but we don't have it. How do you know that? And we all agree on it too. That's *anamnesis*; remember it in the back of our minds from another life. We know what is right. When we see a properly constructed object, it pleases us immediately. We don't have to analyze it because we have a dim memory of it. It's an act of recognition. When you see anything good, true, or beautiful, you embrace it eagerly because that's what you have been looking for. It's an act of recognition when you see it. Here we are suffering from nostalgia; we are far from home here. There's a poem by Zinzendorf that I like to quote on that, "When I think of it, there comes such a yearning from all the mountaintops that I just have to break down and cry." I'm away from home, and we feel that. "So what is it we are missing?" Plato asked. There must be something behind it. I suppose you all know Wordsworth's ode "Intimations of Immortality." It's not "The World Is Too Much with Us." That's another Wordsworth poem, but that's a good one anyway. [Brother Nibley tried to quote it from memory.]

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

To remember these things, you have to rewrite them practically and think, "What would I say if I were saying that?" This describes it. We have to suppress these memories [of a previous life] because they are the strongest, most vivid experiences we have had. We're not satisfied with the situation here, but we have to put up with it. So we say, "Let's forget about it; let's settle down to the light of common day which is common-sense, everyday life." But this is not the real world; this is a false world. This is as phony as it can be, everything about it. But we're not willing to accept the other; yet we would be if we only knew, if we put it together. We do feel as aliens here: "I'm a stranger, I'm a pilgrim," etc. There's a great deal of that in literature. As I said, Plato was the one that really developed it.

We are going to have this Zion where they will be gathered together unto the lands of their possessions. When Zion and all this comes it's going to be a different culture. There is such a thing as a culture, which means all our ways of life—our food, our tastes, our

thoughts, our beliefs, our humor, and everything else—fit together in one particular whole which is expressed in language. Some cultures are greater than others. Notice what the Greeks were able to do because of Plato's idealism. They were able to get the first prize in everything. There's not a field of human endeavor in which they didn't come first and were the best. It's just astounding because they had that conviction that this wasn't the real world. This obsession of Plato is *anamnesis*, which means "remembering again, thinking back again." They were always looking for the *kalos k'agathos*, "the good, the true, the beautiful." That is it.

He [Nephi] has been talking about the wonderful things [promised] to the Jews, Israel etc. But don't let Israel get the big head, he tells us in the first verse of the next chapter. "For I, Nephi, would not suffer that ye should suppose that ye are more righteous than the Gentiles shall be. For behold, except ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall all likewise perish [what is more]; and because of the words which have been spoken ye need not suppose that the Gentiles are utterly destroyed. For behold, I say unto you that as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord." All they have to do is repent, and that's it. Ezekiel makes that perfectly clear. Chapter 18 of Ezekiel is a wonderful treatment on this. You're righteous if you repent. No matter how bad you have been, you are righteous. You are the chosen people. And if you don't repent, now matter how good you may have been until now, then you are the lost. So if the Gentiles repent, they are the covenant people. "And as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off [the opposite of *atonement* is to be cast off]; for the Lord covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent [that is the basic principle of covenant] and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel."

Now here is the work of the Gentiles. Verse 3: "For after the book of which I have spoken shall come forth, and be written unto the Gentiles, and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed [he is talking about the Bible here]. . . . And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. . . . And then shall they rejoice [he is talking about his people]; . . . and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes [Is he talking about real scales? No, of course he isn't. I say this because of the rest of the sentence]; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white [*white* has been changed to *pure* in recent editions] and a delightsome people." Does that mean literally [white] any more than the scales fall? *White* means delightsome if you consider the various meanings of *white*. Next he says that the Jews "shall also become a delightsome people." Were the Jews black? This is using *white* and *delightsome* in the broadest sense, as against the *dark and uncivilized*.

Verse 8: "And . . . the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth." His people everywhere. He will work among them all to bring his people back. Who are they? Those who will repent. Those are his people. "And with righteousness shall the Lord God judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." What does it mean by that? Well, the poor are the ones that don't get the breaks; all the judgments pass against them. He shall judge the poor correctly and righteously with equity and fairness. He will be the advocate of the meek "and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth [He pleads in their behalf and reproves their oppressors]. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." This fierce rebuke is a deadly sentence. It's very interesting that the word for *sentence*, a sentence of

condemnation in a court, in Hebrew and in English is the very same thing as a *sentence of utterance or speech*.

There's a famous book called *What Is a Sentence?* In fact Alan Gardiner, the great Egyptologist, in his big Egyptological Grammar wrote so much on the subject "What is a sentence?" A sentence is a complete thing. A sentence in the court is one thing. That's a *mishpāt*, a judgment. Gardiner gives this example: I say the word *rain*, and that's a sentence. Does it have a subject and a verb? It does, of course. It depends entirely on how it is said. If I look out the window and say, "Rain," it means that "it's raining again—how disgusting." Or I might say, "Rain," meaning "don't tell me it's raining." You can complete the sentence depending on how you hear it. There are some interesting things in the Book of Mormon about the difference between the spoken and the written word—these subtleties. You might say, "Rain," and be incredulous; "it doesn't rain here in Egypt." You can go on and get all sorts of sentences. Just by saying the word *rain*, you have your whole sentence; you don't have to say anything more.

Verse 9: "And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." The rod of his mouth will pronounce the sentence. The mouth and the lips are the speech; that's the sentence. And he will cause a great division among the people so he can destroy the wicked by fire. Then this is the famous passage of paradise. This from verse 12 on is certainly another culture, isn't it? We see paintings of it which seem ideal. This is one of the favorite themes, of course, of early Puritanism and Protestantism. There are some quaint, primitive paintings showing the lion and the lamb lying down together. Some of the early American primitives depict this situation. "And then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them [this is another ecology entirely; now we hunt all these creatures]. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den [he is just quoting the prophet here]. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain [not hunting season]; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

It's interesting that all the presidents of the Church, some of them very fervidly, have condemned hunting. They [some people] pay absolutely no attention when it comes to things like that. President Joseph F. Smith and both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young never hunted. Here they were living in the wild west with all this game around, and they never hunted. Well, that's not human, but it wasn't right for a man of the priesthood to go out and slay the creatures unless it was for necessity. Then nature gladly contributes. There have been plenty of young couples I've known here at BYU that couldn't get through the winter without their deer. That's all right. Section 49 of the Doctrine and Covenants makes that perfectly clear: "The beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which cometh of the earth, is ordained for the use of man for food and for raiment, and that he might have in abundance. . . . And wo be unto man that sheddeth blood or that wasteth flesh and hath no need" (D&C 49:19, 21). If you need it, fine—that's what the Lord has put it there for.

Verse 15: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. . . . All things shall be made known unto the children of men." What things? Well, all things, including these. He

goes on: “There is nothing secret save it shall be revealed [it’s revealing the secrets he’s talking about here]; there is no work of darkness save it shall be made manifest in the light; and there is nothing which is sealed upon the earth save it shall be loosed.” In other words we are talking in this verse about the [fact that] through centuries and centuries people have been bound up by custom and usage—the “dead hand” laws and things like that which keep people locked into a system very close and tight. Whether it’s feudal or the legal system, the whole thing will be loosed. As he says, it will be let go. Everything that is sealed upon earth shall be loosed; all earthly seals shall be broken. All contracts don’t apply anymore after death, and they don’t apply after the Millennium anymore either because they are worldly. They are works of expedience, mostly of greed. These works of darkness and these secret things of the establishment shall be exploded and blown sky high. Why does it exist? It exists to accommodate men’s vices actually, so that won’t happen [anymore]. “Wherefore, all things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed; and Satan [notice that’s who he’s talking about] shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time.” So this is the end of Nephi’s prophesy. Nephi has been prophesying all along here. Now he is going to talk concerning the doctrine of Christ, and this becomes very important.

Quoting from 2 Nephi 31:3: “For my soul delighteth in plainness.” He doesn’t want to get us confused. We are told that he speaks to all men everywhere. Well, what about the islands of the sea? Does he speak to them the same way he speaks to us? “For he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding. He gives them as much as they can take and in their own idiom. Nephi saw the mission of John the Baptist here. Then the question immediately arises, Why the need for baptizing? Verse 5: “If the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water, to fulfil all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water! And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfil all righteousness in being baptized by water? Know ye not that he was holy?” Notice that this is a very interesting thing. In every lexicon, the word *qādôsh* meaning *holy* in Hebrew is translated in this sense. What does *qādôsh* mean? It means “set apart,” “not of this race.” It means “essentially alien or different.” Of course, *holy* means that. But, of course, it’s the Greek *hagios*, the same as our word *hedge*. *Holy* is to be on the other side of a fence or hedge. *Qadosh* means “cut off or separated”—the road is cut. And a *sanctum* is a fence around a holy place. *Sanctum* means “to set apart” and “divide by a fence.” All our words for *holy* have that meaning. It always means “set apart and not belonging to the ordinary world.” That’s what it is; it belongs to another world. If it’s *sanctum*, if it’s *qādôsh*, if it’s *holy*, if it’s *hagios*, it means that it is “set apart.” That’s what we have here, see.

The story of John the Baptist is a classic example here. Robert Eisler has written massively on that particular subject. Josephus, who writes about John the Baptist, never found out his name. He didn’t know his name because when he came and taught the people, they asked him, “Who are you?” They thought he was Enoch come again. He told them, “I am Enos, I am the man.” That was the only answer he would give them, so they said, “A wild man has come among us.” Remember, John the Baptist let his hair grow long, walked about in a camel skin robe, and lived on wild locust (grasshoppers) and honey. He was a wild man, and he scared people. Remember in the book of Moses what people say about Enoch? “There is a strange thing in the land; a wild man has come among us.” When John the Baptist came among the people, they said, “It is Enoch come again.” We learn from Josephus that this spread throughout the whole area because he was a wild man, a

strange man—not belonging to their nature at all. He was a different sort of person. As I said, he was a rather frightening person. “A wild man has come among us.” You notice that means he was *holy*. Here he is talking about Christ being holy. Verse 7: “Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he showeth unto the children of men that, according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments [he did the things he did as a demonstration, especially in the baptism here]. . . . It showeth unto the children of men the straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them.” He said, “Follow me.” He is the leader, the director, the *paralemtor* that we read lots about. These things come out now in these early documents, especially the Coptic documents that weren’t there before. The *paralemtor* is the one who accompanies you through the temple and makes sure that you perform all the ordinances correctly, that you know what you are doing, that you don’t blunder and use the wrong words, etc. And Jesus is the *paralemtor* for all of us (cf. John 14:3).

Verse 10: “And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father? [so he leads us to the Father]. And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son. And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do.” He is the great example who says, “Follow me and do what I do.” The Son does only what he has seen the Father do, so he says, You do whatever you see me do; I do whatever I see the Father do [paraphrased].

There’s your atonement again. When the time comes, we will all be together and you can live in his presence. That’s what we are coming back for. Verse 13: “If ye shall follow the Son . . . witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ by baptism [that’s what you do to show that you are following the Son; that’s the example, a simple enough and easy example he set, the least we can do]—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, . . . yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.” Then you will be transformed if you want to be. You’ll cross that bridge when you get to it, but first you must do this and be baptized this way, witnessing to the Father when you go down into the water—this tangible connection we have here. “After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by the baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost,” you can speak with a new tongue. You are an alien yourself now. I said that the language was a model of the culture, a perfect mirror. So after you have gone through all this, then you will find yourself in this alien culture. Then you “can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the tongue of angels, and after this [you can’t deny me; you’ve seen it now] should deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not known me [at all].” So this takes us to a different culture, and then we must endure to the end.

Let’s go on here to the end of this chapter. Verse 18: “And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life [there’s always this image of the path; this is the way we are to follow]; yea, ye have entered in by the gate. . . . After ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? . . . Nay.” You’ve just begun to do things. You have to be born again, and then “ye must press forward with a steadfastness

in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.” Of course, that is the goal; that’s what we are after. That is the [answer] to the terrible question, Is this all there is? If you go through these things, you will find out. But if you don’t, don’t come complaining to me that there’s nothing but darkness ahead. Notice the final statement in this chapter where he says, “And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end.” That’s *at-one-ment*; that’s *atonement*. When you are at one, then you are one. This is the thing that John brings out so beautifully.

Now we come to a very interesting question in the next chapter. I see we have been going slowly here, and the time is up. But we should be able to get through Jacob this semester. And Enos is wonderful; it’s only three pages. I think we can get through the short books to Mosiah.

1. Hugh W. Nibley, *The World and the Prophets, CWHN 3* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), 278–81. Brother Nibley quotes and paraphrases several times from this book.