

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 1, Lecture 29
Mosiah 3–5
King Benjamin’s Speech

The time is short. “The time has fully come,” in the words of Elijah. Let’s not waste any time because we don’t have much. Let’s put something on the board first. How many points did we list? We will make this point number six. I knew I had forgotten something; that was an important one—something to be afraid of.

When I got home after the last class, this current *National Geographic* was waiting for me. The entire issue was devoted to trying to save the world while there is a little time left, and they are not kidding. There is the statistical [evidence], but we are not going to linger on it. We have to get to Mosiah’s speech which is on the same subject. The point is this, for example: “At the current rate of destruction, our tropical forests will be gone within 25 years.” Most of you are not anywhere near my age. [By the time you are,] they will be gone and “with them at least a million species, probably many more, of which only a relative handful have been tested for possible use by man.”

Here’s a very interesting statistic for today with regard to our book of Mosiah when he [King Benjamin] talks about if a person puts up his petition and you refuse to give him something to eat. What happens to you? You have grave need of repentance when you say, “Well, I’ve earned mine, etc.” Never in the Book of Mormon is there such a thing as the “worthy needy.” If a person is in need, he is in need and that’s that. Whether he’s worthy or not has absolutely nothing to do with it. It says here: “A quarter of the earth’s people control eighty percent of its resources . . . and unbelievably [this is unbelievable] in this golden age of science, forty thousand young children die of hunger and related diseases [diseases related to hunger] every day.” That’s what hit me. I thought it would be perhaps every year or something like that, but every day. You’d think that would take care of the population problem, but it wouldn’t. It goes on; I’m going to harrow your souls up with these statistics, etc.

This is the way they do it, too. “This year fourteen unarmed members of the Takana tribe were massacred by killers and the higher timber dealers so they could take over their lands [this happens everywhere]. There are organizations to kill Indians and get their lands. Whole villages have been wiped out or pushed around and killed by thugs from the town of Pegamara in order to consolidate the land for one big rancher.” This is the imbalance that Mosiah has a great deal to say about, and how relevant it is today. Well, we can’t go into this. Get hold of this last *National Geographic*, and it will scare the daylights out of you. So there is room for fear and trembling with your generation. I’ll be out of it by then. No, I won’t! You would be surprised how many connections we’ve got with the others. If I live as long as any of my grandparents, I will be around still—an old pest. This is the way the book of Moses closes; this is what happened to the world then. “And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah: The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence, and behold I will destroy all flesh from off the earth” (Moses 8:29–30). And the Old Testament says, “And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come

before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth” (Genesis 6:13).

This is another important thing mentioned here. This is a thing that we bring out in the Pearl of Great Price class from the book of Moses—the five great periods called the periods of mass extermination. There have been five times in history—explained by meteorites and this sort of thing—when almost all species were wiped out and new species arose all of a sudden. We won’t go into that; that’s a long story. But they were in another one of those times, and the man tells us here that in the last days of Eden . . . It’s a doom’s day book we have here, you see. This is Professor Wilson of Harvard who says: “Virtually all students of extinction process agree that the biological diversities in the midst of the sixth great crisis were this time precipitated entirely by man.” There have been these crises of mass extermination. This one is going to be as thorough as any, and we are to blame for it. So the scriptures are not talking about something that is fantastic and beyond, although we used to think so. When I was younger this sounded so far out we didn’t take it very seriously.

We are on [Benjamin’s] great speech, and the speech has three parts. Notice in the first part they are celebrating. He is telling them that the good times they have been having are just a prelude to great things to follow and to eternal life when they can have joy and salvation forever if they do the right thing. The second part is saying don’t let it go to your head. Notice how he cuts them down in that second part—you are nothing, you are the dust, you poor miserable creatures, etc. What a way to be talking to the people at a great national celebration. Then the third part is devoted entirely to economics—what do you mean if it goes to your heads? Then you will get this idea of inequality resulting in greed. He says it will destroy you here and it will damn you forever.

Again, I call your attention to a current publication. Have you seen the new *Time*? Spread on the cover of the new issue of *Time* is just one word, *GREED*, and that’s describing our American civilization. Don’t think Mosiah is not relevant to the times we live in and don’t think it’s not a prophetic book. I doubt that Joseph Smith would have been able, at the age of 23—being just a poor, uneducated farmer—to have figured this all out.

We are on Mosiah 3:9: “And lo he cometh unto his own.” Now, this is how it happens. He cometh unto his own, and he tells us, for example, in verse 13 who his own are. “And the Lord hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men [his own will carry on the work for him when he isn’t there. He comes to his own with that purpose that salvation, through them, might come to the children of men who have faith on his name. They will carry abroad the name and the doctrine. They will perpetuate and spread the name because, of course, he is not there anymore. You have his name to call upon. He comes to his chosen people, and he trusts them to carry on the name to the rest of the human race—Alma 7 is marvelous on that—“that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name.” But he will be turned down cold. Remember the beginning of John: “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:5). He came to his own and his own received him not. They wouldn’t receive him, but there’s that very important addition—just a few did. But to as many as did receive him “to them he gave power to become the sons of God.” What a prize! It is worth it going through all that. But he is going to be refused by the world and by his own people, as we all know from the New Testament, of course. Verse 9: “They shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him.” But his blood atones for the sins of those who aren’t guilty and have never heard the gospel.

They won't be damned forever because that has been taken care of. "But wo, wo unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God! [That's a different story entirely, but the door is open to him, too.] For salvation cometh to none except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ." That's why he keeps hammering away at repentance here.

Here are his own: "And the Lord God hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men, to declare these to every kindred, nation, and tongue [believe that and this is the first step; this is what they must do in verse 13 here] that thereby whosoever should believe that Christ should come, the same might receive remission of their sins, and rejoice with exceeding great joy, even as though he had already come among them." Don't worry what dispensation you live in. You are going to have the same trials and you are going to have just the same privileges that any other dispensation has. The strongest test in the Book of Mormon as to whether people will have faith on the mission of Jesus Christ is what? Well, he hadn't come yet. There were people like Sherem and Korihor and the rest who said, "He hasn't come yet. We don't believe there is such a thing. We are supposed to look forward to something we haven't seen. He won't even come here." Then after he had come, what happened? Well, in the 1940s and since then in the theology of all the Christian churches—led by such people as Rudolf Bultmann, the great Lutheran pastor, and Albert Schweitzer—the big thing was to demythologize and de-eschatologize Jesus. Anything that is supernatural to his story, the story about his being the Son of God, that's a myth, so you demythologize it. You move that out of the New Testament, and then you have the real story of Jesus, the good teacher, the kind man. That was it; that's as far as you have.

So, he is just as hard to accept after his coming, though he did come and we have the record, a very good record, especially John's record. Remember, John is the only New Testament figure mentioned in the Book of Mormon. They take the record and they demythologize it; they take the whole message out. But the hardest time of all was when he was actually there. That was the hardest time to believe him. They wouldn't believe him then because they could see he was just a man. They said, Abraham we know and Moses we know. He is our prophet. But who is this guy? [paraphrased]. And they wouldn't accept him at all. It is an equal trial for any dispensation. If he hasn't come yet, are you going to believe? If he has already gone long ago, two thousand years ago, who can believe that old mythology? That's a test, too. When he was actually there, that was the hardest of all. They said, "Look, you can see he's a man; that's all there is to it." So he was crucified and the rest.

Verse 14. "Yet the Lord God saw that his people were a stiffnecked people [he knew that they would refuse him] and he appointed unto them a law, even the law of Moses." That was for their weakness. It catered to their weakness, of course—as much of the law as they could take. But they didn't understand "that the law of Moses availeth nothing except it were through the atonement of his blood." It has to be completed; you have to have the original. They thought that just by keeping the law they would be saved.

Now he talks a lot about the little children. Why the emphasis on little children? Because the little children are the only segment of society that offer no resistance to the message. They qualify and they offer no resistance because they are not guilt-ridden. Because they don't feel guilty, they are not afraid to accept. As little children they are naive, etc. But the reason we shy off and don't want to go for all of this is that we have a subconscious burden of guilt. We have been doing wrong things and are not up to it. That's why whenever an angel appears everybody is scared stiff, and the angel must say, "Don't be

afraid; I have a good message.” It’s that culture shock. We don’t want to be exposed to another world—to what we might be, etc. It’s too much to take. It’s terrifying, utterly terrifying. You would sooner go crazy, and people do, rather than that.

Verse 16: “And even if it were possible that little children could sin they could not be saved; but I say unto you they are blessed; for behold, as in Adam, or by nature, they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins. . . . There is no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men [can you think of any other way? We follow this pattern because it was the pattern that was laid down in the eternities in the Council in Heaven], only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent. For behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just [men are not], . . . but men drink damnation to their own souls.” Don’t try to do it yourself; it’s like do-it-yourself brain surgery, or something like that, trying to save yourself. The reason is this. We might atone for our sins in this life in the things we do. We might make up for them, etc. But we are talking about eternal life and going on forever. There is nothing you can do to equip yourself for that—to qualify yourself for that by removing all your sins, etc. We are going to talk about men being carnal, sensual and devilish. We have to get along here, anyway.

It [salvation] is only “through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent. For the natural man [here it is] is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, [you shy off, you won’t have anything to do with it] . . . unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit.” The thing is this. See, you have blown it now. There is only one thing you can do—put yourself entirely into my [the Savior’s] hands, and it will all be taken care of. But you have to do something. By putting yourselves into my hands, the Lord says, that doesn’t mean you just lie down and don’t do anything, which is by grace you are saved. We have heard that a million times—*nur Gnade*, only grace. There is nothing you can do about it; you are reborn and that is all there is to it, etc. No, it’s as if you had taken off in a small plane at the airport. You have never flown in your life. You turn on the key and you are suddenly in the air. What do you do? The tower says, “All right, put yourself in my hands. Do exactly as I tell you, and I can get you there. But don’t try to do anything on your own or fix it yourself. Do as I tell you to do.”

You say, “Why should I do that? I don’t know anything about that.” You refuse to do it, but that’s the only thing you can do. In that condition, we must follow instructions implicitly. When he says, “Put yourself in my hands,” you say, “I will just lie down and let him land me.” Oh no, we don’t have automatic pilot. You have to land it, but you do what He tells you to do. That’s the position we are in. We have to do something. Either we help ourselves and do it all or somebody else does it all—that is what the Christian world believes. At Christmas the idea is that all the human race was lost and Christ came; we sing a song and everybody is saved and that’s that. They are saved from their sins. He has taken away the sins of the world, so we have nothing to worry about. [According to the Christian world] that was the glad news. Well, it wasn’t the glad news. The glad news was that the Lord has shown you a way out. That’s what it is here and, of course, that’s what we have there.

So that’s the enticing—the Holy Spirit wants to help you. He is enticing and doing everything he can to bring you into his orbit. He wants you to cooperate and do something for yourself, and he will tell you what to do. But you have to put off the natural man. As I said, you have to be able to put yourself entirely into his hands (don’t try to do the thing yourself) and become as a child. Why the emphasis on children? As I

said, children will accept the gospel. They will accept the plan and obey and will offer no resistance. Verse 20: And the gospel “shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.” Again, the universality of the Book of Mormon. When all have had the chance, “And behold, when that time cometh, none shall be found blameless before God, except it be little children, [the others can save themselves] only through repentance and faith on the name of [Jesus Christ] the Lord God Omnipotent.” Why the name? Because he is all we have. The account of him is the story—the name that we refer to. You have no identity without your name. You have to know who you are talking about, you see. If you say, “Let’s worship So-and-So,” I would say, “Well, give me his name. I don’t know who to worship unless you tell me who I am worshipping.”

Verse 24: “And thus saith the Lord: They shall stand as a bright testimony against this people, at the judgment day; whereof they shall be judged, every man according to his works.” That’s good, according to his works. It’s not whether you believe or not, but what you do, or your intentions. People were burned at the stake for believing the wrong things, not for anything they did that was bad, but for believing—that was the standard thing. And it’s [man is] in the singular, you notice, every man according to his works. You won’t be judged with the society. You are not judged by your associates or anything like that, but what you do is what you will be judged by no matter what society you are in. Solzhenitsyn wrote the great book *The Gulag Archipelago*. We used to read it, but we don’t read it anymore. It’s too big and too hard to read, I suppose. But the point is this. In this prison, the worse possible prison where nobody had any freedom at all, everybody was just as free as air because they could do and think what they wanted to, regardless. Nobody could stop you from doing that. The idea is that you will be judged by your works and your words, as he is going to tell us later on. But then what will happen? As I said, if you see the angel, what do you do? You “shrink from the presence of the Lord into a state of misery [anything is better than that; you draw back deliberately into a state of misery, which is safer] and endless torment, from whence they can no more return; therefore, they have drunk damnation to their own souls.”

Is that bad? What is the alternative? As we mentioned last time, you will never be able to cure yourselves of it. The serious mistake or regret is permanent, you see. For example, you make a mistake in solving an equation or problem. If you go on with the problem, the further you go you don’t wipe that out. It gets worse and worse and does more mischief the farther you go. You can never get away from it, and you can never get away from this. You can cover it over, but this eternal misery is the torment of mind that you are in—the more we see the folly and loss of what we did back in time. If you regret you did something, it’s not wiped out with time. You say, “If I only hadn’t done that then it would have been all right.” It’s these mistakes we have made, etc. And then “mercy could have claim on them no more forever.” That’s pretty bad because they have waited until the cup of his wrath is full.

Now, the fourth chapter. This is the reaction of his people, the *proskynōsis*. They all fall to earth. In [the account of] Nathan the Babylonian they do. It’s to show that you are overwhelmed. Of course, the Moslems still do that five times a day. You fall down right flat on your face, and that’s *proskynōsis*. They fell to earth, and they viewed themselves—not as fiends in flames and burning coals and things like that. Verse 2: “And they viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth [now he cuts them down—boy, is he going to work on that]. And they all cried out with one voice [now, how could they cry out this long thing with one voice? I told you about the

hazzān, the *praecentor*. He leads and throughout the ancient world in Greek and Roman times, he was called the *stasiarch*. Someone would hand him a piece of paper, the emperor would tell him, or someone else would tell him what he wanted the people to chant. He would say, “Now all together” and he would read a line and wave the flag, and they would all chant together. That was these formal chants, and this was the way it was done in the circus. You would sit in your cheering section. You had your color—either red, white, blue or green. The factions would fight each other, but they had cheerleaders and cheer sections. This went way back to the early days of the Year Festival when the prophet or the leader or the *môreh* would tell them what to believe. In Nathan the Babylonian’s account, the whole thing is directed by the man on the tower. The old man, the *praecentor*, comes down, they ask the questions, the king interprets the law to them, and they all answer together. So that’s what they are doing here. It isn’t as if they all spontaneously recited this whole thing in one voice. It says it was in one voice, but that’s the way it was done. It was perfectly normal.

Verse 2: “And they all cried out with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ [notice, *atonement* is mentioned quite a number of times in this chapter] that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, . . . for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men. . . . And the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy [it was a joyful celebration, a great time, you see; they could all hardly stand it, they were so joyful here] . . . because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come.” This is a marvelously happy event, you see. He is ready to bring us back into the great eternal order of things. But how is he to do it? You see, this is what they are talking about here. Even if we could make up for our sins here, it is that other life that they are thinking of. Now they have had a glimpse of it, they are filled with joy. They are filled with the spirit. These times come because of exceeding faith. We think of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. That’s the sort of thing that happened when the marvelous manifestations were received and everybody had revelation, or the day of Pentecost, those days. Under normal conditions they would be normal, but the earth is a bad place.

Then King Benjamin replies to them. Notice, it’s a conversation. It’s an antiphonal between the king and the people. The singing is always antiphonal, but we can’t go into that. It’s divided into groups, one group answering the other as they discuss this. Verse 5: “For behold, if the knowledge of the goodness of God at this time has awakened you [see, they are just full of this knowledge of goodness] to a sense of your nothingness, and your worthless and fallen state.” Now here, when they are in the height of their glory, he starts reminding them of their worthlessness and their nothingness in their worthless and fallen state. I don’t think that would offend them at all. If you were in the presence of celestial glory, you would certainly feel that way and you wouldn’t feel at all insulted. They don’t feel like crawling under rocks though. They feel pretty good about it. He says, You have come to a knowledge of the goodness of God; you see how good he can be now. This is the grace of God. And then he says, This is the atonement prepared from the foundation of the earth, going back to the premortal existence when they discussed the creation [paraphrased]. This is a biblical expression, too—“the atonement prepared from the foundation of the world”—although Christians ignore that. What was going on then if they prepared a plan at that early time? Verse 6: “. . . that thereby salvation might come to him that he should come and put his trust in the Lord, and should be diligent in keeping his commandments, and continue in the faith even unto the end of his life.” The plan was

prepared from the foundation of the world. You come here, you have faith, you put your trust in him, and then you do something—keeping his commandments. It is faith that keeps you on the track here. We go along with these things.

Verse 8: “And this is the means whereby salvation cometh. And there is none other salvation save this which hath been spoken of.” This is the only way. Why this peculiar way? As I said, can you think of any other? After all, our condition is desperate. We have to trust him, put our trust in the Lord. Trust him and you will be safe; then you will do something and feel better about it. He says there are no other conditions given to you. These are what they are in verse 9: “Believe in God, . . . believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.” Now this justifies you in believing in God. St. Augustine is baffled at the beginning of the *Confessions*. Why should I believe in God? If I believe in God, I am not playing fair. I am cheating because I believe in him already, and I haven’t seen him or anything like that. I have to let him make the first move [paraphrased]. So he argues around and around about that. “You have made us in such a way that our hearts are restless until we have been joined to you somehow.” Well, he is right there, but what do we do about it? The point is this. “Believe that man doth not comprehend all.” There are all sorts of things you don’t know, so it’s quite possible that God can exist. That’s among other things. “Believe in God, . . . believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend.” Of course, that’s the greatest stumbling block of science, as Karl Popper says. Then the next step: “And again believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.” Notice that the verse ends that way. First you believe in him. Then you repent and humble yourselves before God, realizing that you are nothing, “and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.” It all comes down to action here. That’s the first premise, to become aware of your nothingness and your fallen state.

“And again I say unto you as I have said before [this marvelous verse 11 reviews the things you must keep in mind; he says he is going to give them a reminder; he is hammering it home, you see] that if ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love.” He catches them at this high point in this euphoria. This is the time to get to work on them without offending them and get through to them. Their minds are open and they realize that anything is possible now] and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls [notice, he keeps repeating *joy* in this chapter] even so I would that you should remember [along with your joy], and always retain in remembrance [always keep this in mind] the greatness of God, and your own nothingness [if you put the two together, you have nothing to worry about because you won’t be disturbed by your own personal ambitions and disappointments or anything like that; nothing will bother you that way if you realize your own nothingness], and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures [he is certainly flattering the people here!], and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily [this is what you are supposed to do now after this], and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come [which you have just received]. Behold, I say unto you [now here is the guarantee—it’s worth it; it’s a darn good investment, he says, in verse 12] that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice.” So, if you want to be happy, this is the way you do it. I certainly believe that.

This is the wellspring of humor, too, you will notice. If you realize your own nothingness and the greatness of God, that's what all humor is. It's recognizing the absurdity of man's position—the pretensions, the fat lady, the pie in the face, etc. It deflates the pretensions of vain man. You think you are so important, etc. Then you slip on a banana peel and that's real comedy. That's what's funny because of the human situation. All humor has that ironic touch to it. We pretend to be so great, so important, etc., and we are such idiots. It is really very funny—the person who is nothing who thinks he is everything. “But man, proud man, dressed in a little brief authority plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep, who, had they our spleen, would all themselves laugh human.” If angels were capable of laughing, and I think they are, they would laugh themselves silly looking at the antics of man. He goes on then, “Could great men thunder as Jove thunders, we would have nothing but lightning.” Great men think they are so important, and he rubs it in. That's in *Measure for Measure* by Shakespeare.

He shows he is cutting them down. But you will always rejoice, and I think that's a fair exchange. I am perfectly willing to laugh at myself and realize what I am because it is a fair exchange. And now he gets into the economic part which is very important. This is very interesting here. If you have proper sense of balance and sense of humor (verse 12), then “ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.” Then you will have a true knowledge, a true value of things. Notice *just* and *true*. You will have the correct values, as we would say today. And in the knowledge of him, that's a real at-one-ment. And then in the next verse, the reward of that socially: “And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due.” If you realize that you are nothing and that the Lord will take care of everything—everything will be solved if you obey and do what he wants you to do—then you won't have any intention to injure one another. There won't be any rivalry, and you will find plenty of this in the Book of Mormon. Envy, jealousy, fights, murders, the desire for power and asserting your ego and the like all come from the same thing. Then you will have no mind to injure anyone. You will live peaceably and render to every man according to that which is due. That would make dull fare on prime time, wouldn't it? Verse 14: “And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked [40,000 children die of hunger and hunger-related diseases every day; something is wrong here; that's something to be afraid of]; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another [as kids do], and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers [that other one]. . . . But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.”

This is another piece of news. It was on the NBC news last night. This year, so far, 160 people have died on the sidewalks of San Francisco. Can you believe that? They starved on the sidewalks of San Francisco. What is going on here? What a society when it comes to that. So he says here: “And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer your substance unto him that standeth in need [he doesn't say to the worthy needy or unto him that deserves it; it's not a case of deserving, as he says here]; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish. Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery [I got mine and he didn't work, he is a lazy bum—that is the excuse we all make, of course]; therefore I will stay my hand, and I will not give unto him of my food or impart unto him of my substance [I work for mine] that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just—[he is not one of the deserving poor, but even if this is true] But I

say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God [in which the law of consecration is mandatory].” You have no choice but to keep it. We have accepted and promised to keep it, too. Verse 19: “For behold, are we not all beggars?” This stings a lot of people; they don’t like it at all. They try to give it an allegorical or symbolic interpretation—spiritually beggars, etc. I have heard people doing that, but of course, he says “of your substance.” I am talking about goods and substance and going hungry and that sort of thing. I am not talking about what you call spiritual things. “Behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend on the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have.” Notice, not just for our spiritual fare, but substance—food and raiment. He says, I am talking about economics; I am talking about food supply (food and raiment) and gold and silver and the luxuries you have, too [paraphrased].

Verse 21: “And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are.” He mentioned that before, remember; if you worked 24 hours a day just for the Lord you would still be an unprofitable servant. You can’t produce anything, and that’s made so very clear today more than anything because the great money makers are not producing anything. They are [behind] the takeovers. They destroy companies and take them over, by a manipulation of the computer rather than the tape anymore. By manipulation they become hundred-millionaires overnight. You know the deals, the takeovers and the junk bonds, the parachutes and all that sort of stuff. We will see what King [Benjamin] does just to drive home his point. He goes out and works in the field, and he does it quite seriously. Kings do that, you see. They were on the level here of Indian culture, actually. This is the way they keep things going and have a stable society. It has a good deal to say in this *National Geographic* about the society that is stable and the expanse of a society that has to go out and wreck anything if it is not growing at least four percent a year. But you can’t go on doing that forever. There is only a limited base on which we can operate. [This is another thing that] was in the paper this week. I am sure this is the only place in the world where you have a large and powerful society made of mining, lumber, cattle interests, etc., that call themselves the Anti-Wilderness League. Of, course they have nothing against the wilderness but they just want to take [control of it]. Since this is the state that produces kids faster than any other, you would think we would be more concerned with the rather distant future. Why destroy the resource base for the generations to come? Boy, they are out for taking everything they can to make a big profit. That’s the philosophy of the time. I don’t need to tell you that people want it all and they want it now. “And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, in faith, believing that ye shall receive [that’s a conditional offer; anything you ask for, if it is right and you ask in faith, believing, you will receive], O then, how ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have one to another.” And not at some future time when we find it easier and more convenient to observe these rules. We hear that all the time.

Verse 22: “And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance that he perish not and condemn him.” You judge him, you say he is not worthy. Have you worked? Do you deserve this? He puts up his petition, you see. He is desperate; he has no choice. You read Brigham Young’s account of his first mission in England in the 1850s. It was horrifying. It was a bad year, and in cities like Manchester and Leeds people literally were dropping dead in the streets everywhere. And England was never richer than at that time. The rich were just rolling in the fatness of the land, and these people were

actually dropping dead. You can see why that got through to Brigham Young and why he became such an ardent champion for the United Order, etc. But you don't judge a man. You don't hesitate and say, "I don't know whether I should or not," and condemn him. That's what you do. You say he hasn't worked as hard as you have. Maybe he has and maybe he hasn't. We have the interesting philosophy that you are either making money or you are doing nothing. That's the choice you have. You can either work for a profit—either prepare to make money or make money—and if you are not doing that, you are doing nothing. You can be considered idle in that case. That's why we have reinterpreted "the idler shall not eat the bread of laborer." Of course, for all these thousands of years it just simply meant that the idle rich shall not eat the bread of the laboring poor, which has been the rule down through the ages. We turn it right around today—I worked for mine, so you won't eat my bread. Well, we won't go into that. Stick to Mosiah. Don't look at me; I didn't say it. He says here, ". . . and condemn him, how much more just will be your condemnation for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you but to God [what he asks you to do with it is this, he says; it belongs to Him] . . . and yet ye put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which thou has done. I say unto you, wo be unto that man, for his substance shall perish with him [and, of course, you can't take it with you]; and now, I say these things unto those who are rich as pertaining to the things of this world." Frankly, he says, this is an economics discourse I am giving you here.

Verse 24. "And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, [can keep body and soul together] . . . I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give." Salt Lake City is a great place, the crossroads of the West, for panhandlers and for tramps going through—and for getting turned down. They will tell you it's the hardest town in the country as far as that goes. Every tramp knows that if you want a handout you don't go to a rich house; that's the last thing you do. You will get thrown downstairs or thrown out the back porch. You go to people who are poor and they will give you something. That is the best chance you have. It's the same way with contributions, etc. It has to be sincere. Verse 25: "And if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless." Of course, if you are rich you can't possibly say it in your heart. You must be very poor indeed. Even the poorest is going to share; you are going to see that's the way. During the bad times of the twenties when I was a little kid playing in the backyard, every afternoon there would be a grimy old tramp or maybe two. They weren't tramps—they were like the street people today. Mother's standard handout was bacon and eggs, bread and milk, and all this stuff. There was a mark on the front door. Every tramp knew it was there, and they knew it was good for a handout. Mother never turned them down (we never should) because she learned this from her father when they lived on the plains up in Alberta. They went out to Raymond and ranched out there. Whether it was an Indian or anyone else, their father (like Brigham Young) just hammered it into them, "Never, never, never turn anybody away." Many have been visited by angels unawares. They may be testing you, as far as that goes. So that has always been the policy never to turn anybody away.

That makes it very cruel when it comes to giving people rides on the highways. See what an awful position we have got ourselves in, where for your own safety you dare not. It's even against the law sometimes, and yet you can't afford to pass somebody out on the road. So I always pick them up; I haven't been bumped on the head yet. It's worth taking the risk. Sometimes it can be a pretty bad risk. Some of those characters are pretty tough, you know. But you have to do it. Usually if you start preaching to them, they will ask to get out. "Stop here and let me out." It's an interesting thing, but we won't go into that.

“If ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are condemned; and your condemnation is just for ye covet that which you have not received.” It is not yours.

Even more important is that God gives you a remission of your sins from day to day. That is great if that happens. They stay with you; nevertheless, a remission of your sins means another chance. You will be given another chance. He knows you are going to sin some more, too, but he will still give you another chance just as long as you are in the flesh. Remember that marvelous verse where Nephi said: “And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh” 2 Nephi 2:21. We live far longer than we need to, but that gives us a better chance to repent. He said that is the purpose of lengthening it beyond the age of procreation, etc.

Here is the rule, and this is a very important rule. Incidentally, this was the slogan of Louis Blanc’s commune in Paris in 1871: “From each according to his means, to each according to his needs.” That is the same slogan as we have here, but the next verse tells us how that can go wrong. Verse 26: “I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath [if you have an awful lot of reserve laid away, a couple of hundred million in the bank or something like that, you haven’t given according to that which you have, I am sure. If you have anything left at all in fact], such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants.” Their wants need to be supplied and that’s all there is to it. But this is what goes wrong. This is where we break down in the next verse. You may say, “That’s a fine theory, but I won’t have to do that.” It has to be administered in the proper way, and, as I said, that’s where the breakdown has been. Human beings haven’t had these principles of the gospel or haven’t had this vision of the eternities to inspire them and keep them on the track as the early Saints had. It says: “And see that all these things are done in wisdom and in order [that’s the trouble—it leads to disorder and squabbling. Inevitably that happens when you try, in any kind of economic order, and it’s pretty bad]; for it is not requisite that man should run faster than he has strength [that is the usual weakness—getting ahead of the program, trying to do it all overnight. You call it revolution—a sudden, quick change—trying to run faster than you have strength. You have to build up to these things, but you have to keep at it, and you have to use wisdom and order]. And again, it is expedient that you should be diligent [keep at it], that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order.”

It has to be done, but you have to keep the pressure on and *do it*. We use that as an excuse for not doing it at all. We say, “We spent two weeks trying to install the Law of Consecration. Last week it didn’t work at all. It broke down, so we won’t try it at all.” That’s not the way things are done in order and what Brigham Young was trying so hard to do—and John Taylor, and Lorenzo Snow, and Wilford Woodruff. They were all ardent champions of it. They tried to do it. The Saints wouldn’t do it, and that was that. What kind of Saints? But notice here that you do have private property. There is such a thing, and this is very important. But let’s remember the importance of these words *property* and *private*. *Proprium* and *privatus* both mean “set aside to the individual.” The basic meaning of *proprium* is “to separate.” The root is *parare*, “to set apart.” This means a thing which is set apart. This means that it belongs to you only and is unique to you—it is *privatus*. It can’t be related to anybody else in the human race or the state. And *proprium* means *mine*. It’s mine proper and nobody else’s. It means absolute and complete possession, and it’s a thing that you need for yourself. It’s necessary. That is to say—your clothes, your shoes, your books (it could be, but you can share them around; you could lose them all,

but that's all right). It includes your house, the shelter, and the food. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." These are things that are proper to you, and they shouldn't be separated from any man. Everybody has to have his glasses if he needs them, or his toupee, or whatever it is. It's the sort of thing that by nature can't be shared by anyone else; it won't fit anybody else—his teeth or something like that. That's very private as far as that goes. That's what is really meant by *private*. It is very clear in the Jewish law. Then remember, he [King Benjamin] is going by the Law of Moses where every seven years all debts are cancelled and every servant must be freed—anyone who is in bondage. Every contract is dissolved. You go right back to where you were in the beginning because that goes back to the time when they were in the wilderness, and the Lord fed them with manna, etc. They were all equal, and you couldn't profit on the manna because it says if you kept it for 24 hours against the day when there would be a shortage, it would spoil and start to stink. It would stink and you couldn't keep it. Many people wanted to profit by it—the future's in manna—but it never worked. It says here, [verse 28] if you borrow something from a neighbor, i.e., tools and etc., you should return it. Actually, every year we have to replenish our tools in the garage because people borrow them and never return them—the ladders, spades, rakes, and everything else. Those are personal tools you have, and also your books, your notebooks, your writing utensils, your house and your children. They are *privatus*.

We used to go down and swim at the Malibu beach when I was a little kid. We would stay all night there, but we shouldn't. You would get arrested if they caught you there because the whole area belonged to an old woman who lived in Philadelphia, a crotchety old creature. She had never seen it, but you couldn't go there because her name was on a piece of paper somewhere. We call that property, but that isn't property at all. Or, as Brigham Young puts it: An old widow's cow is what she needs to live; she depends on that for a living. I have known many a Latter-day Saint who has bought a widow's cow for \$5.00 and then gone down on his knees and thanked the Lord for his great blessing [paraphrased]. He said that on more than one occasion. Many a Latter-day Saint has taken a widow's only cow for \$5.00 because she had to have the money, and then gone down on his knees and thanked the Lord for his blessings. That is what he is talking about here. And you return what you borrow; people have a right to some things that are private. Needless to say, the people that are threatened most in their privacy are those that have the least. They don't have the Doberman pinschers, the electrified fences, the flood lights, the electronic gates, the telephones, and the walkie-talkies patrolling the place. There's a fetish for this stuff. I knew a very rich Latter-day Saint in southern California, a top man who was so important he had to be accompanied by bodyguards all the time. You couldn't get anywhere near his house. You had to go through a gate, identify yourself with a card and everything else. That's the way to live, isn't it? He's a prisoner, practically, as far as that goes. Well, yes, he has to live in a compound, and he can only go out under certain conditions. It's like having to ask for permission before he can go out. He is checked coming in and going out. That's the way to live all right. Then he says, "whosoever among you borroweth of his neighbor should return the thing that he borroweth according as he doth agree, or else thou shalt commit sin." Notice, he has made an agreement with his neighbor. If you agree to give it back, that's all right. If he lets you keep it, that's fine, too. But you must keep your agreements among yourselves in your personal affairs and the things that really belong to you, "or else thou shalt commit sin; and perhaps thou shalt cause thy neighbor to commit sin also." This happens the same way.

Verse 29: “And finally, I cannot tell you all things whereby ye may commit sin.” I could make a long list of all the ways you can sin. It’s like the probabilists of the sixteenth century. Molina was the famous Spanish probabilist and Jesuit who compiled that great list of sins and how much one sin weighs against another, using a decimal point. How many sins can you list? He said, “You can list sins forever.” This is a good point, incidentally, and I am still looking for the author of that quotation. It was some scientist, but it’s a maxim. Everybody knows it. “There are a thousand ways in which a thing can go wrong, but only one way in which a thing can go right,” he said. When you are calculating in quantum physics, etc., there are thousands of ways in which things can go wrong, but only one way in which things can go right. That’s his argument. So somebody [God] must be in charge. If you leave it up to chance—Darwinism and other theories claim it all happens by chance—everything could go wrong and stay wrong forever. But there’s only one way things can go right. Who takes care of that? Anyway, he [Benjamin] says, “I cannot number them. But this much I can tell you [this is what he has been getting at. This is his big chance to get through to them. This is his farewell address], that if you do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds [these are the three things, remember; these are the three things you produce: thoughts, words, and deeds] and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.” So we are at risk here. It’s very serious. This test is very important.

Then [in chapter 5] the king says, Will you accept that? They are going to make a covenant now. This is very important. It is the time of year that they make covenants. He desires to know if they believe. Verse 2: “And they all cried out [again, here is the *hazzān*, the *praecentor*] with one voice saying [notice, it’s in verse]: Yea, we believe all the words which thou has spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come.” He started out by saying open your ears and pay attention to a view of the mysteries of God. This is what he has been talking about. They say they “have great views.” They see marvelous prospects there. “And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will.” They are going to do it now. Remember, at the new year all contracts were made. In England, for example, the King held a festival, which is a yearly festival and had to take place at the solstice, at Christmas time. At that time all contracts were made—only at Christmas time. They couldn’t be made at any other time; I mean a contract with a servant. If you couldn’t catch hold of him for a year and a day, then he was free because the contract only lasted for a year. It had to be renewed every year when you came to the great assembly of the king and to the year rite. They are called by various names, but that was the time that contracts were made. The rule was that after a year and a day it became invalid and had to be renewed at the end of the year. That’s what they do. “And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things.”

Verse 7: “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall [he is going to give them a new name and, of course, you always get that—a new name, a new identity, a new year, a new life, a new beginning. It’s a refreshing of things; that’s what he is talking about] ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you.” Well, what is Christmas? It’s the *natalis*, it’s the

genethlia, it's the birthday. That's what it is called in French, Spanish, German and everything else. It's the great birthday. The *natalis* is the birthday of the human race and of the king. In Egypt everybody dated his own birthday from the year of the king. They dated their own lives from the king's birthday. They would say, "I am twenty years old as of the king's last coronation." That's the way they would do it. So the king's birthday was everybody's birthday. That was the renewal of the year. It's because you are born [again]—notice, "this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and daughters." Notice he says, "And this day [which is the new year of the Hebrews, the *Rosh ha-Shanah* or "the head of the year." That is almost a literal translation of the Egyptian word, which means "the time of the pre-existence, the beginning, the re-inauguration of the whole thing." Here it is, the same thing as what the Jews call it. It's the *Rosh ha-Shanah*. That's the beginning of the year, the beginning of creation, the beginning of everything. They are renewing their whole life, they have been begotten, and] ye are born of him and have become his sons and daughters. And under this head [moreover] ye are made free." It's the universal birthday and they celebrate it. As soon as this is announced, everybody yells *io saturnalia*. That means "all servants are free now—everybody is equal." In Israel it was literally so. It was the Hallelujah. It was the Jubilee Year. They celebrate the jubilee when no servant is a servant anymore. No one is subject to anybody anymore. Nobody is in debt to anybody. That's the way it was in the original. That's the way the Lord wants it to be, so they are rehearsing this just as at Christmas we pretend to live in a jolly time. It shows we are capable of living under such conditions, but we can't last more than that. You know what we have done to Christmas commercial-wise.

Verse 8: "There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives." Then he does the next thing. (I see the time is up now.) He is invited into the tent, etc. And then he talks about the right hand and the left hand of God. That's an important part of the celebration. Verse 12: "I say unto you, I would that ye should remember to retain the name written always in your hearts." Then in the next chapter he takes the census. Remember at the first he said they were so numerous that they didn't number them. But now they have entered a covenant, they have committed themselves by name, so he had the names taken of everybody who was there. Their names were all taken down, and they were enlisted as it was in Rome—the list of the *incisi*, the *incised* list. You weren't a member of the kingdom unless your name was on the list. So you had to be registered in the books—the books that were open from the foundation of the world. Remember, when the world was founded, the books were opened. They always preached that. The Book of Life was one of those books, and there were many other books. The Book of Life, as the formula goes in the New Testament, which was open at the foundation of the world, containing the names of all those who would come down to this earth in the various dispensations. That's what the Book of Life was as understood by the Jews and the Christians in the early days. So all this falls into the pattern of reality, of the real social organization. And there's the fact that it bears this amazing stamp of authenticity—that everything takes place here exactly according to the pattern of the ancient year assembly and the like. I can't go any further with it now, this being the last class. It's enough to make us take it very seriously, isn't it?