

Perspective

Just to start off, since updating scriptural language to a more modern vernacular is on everyone's mind these days, I thought you might find this recent news article interesting. I'll read part of it:

Newly discovered scrolls have led Biblical scholars to announce that Jesus seems to have pulled a "super dope, totally sweet" scroll drop after preaching from the Book of Isaiah in the synagogue.

The recently uncovered texts, which are written in Koine Greek, seem to be a commentary on the Gospel of Luke, chapters 4-5. While scholars are not yet certain whether or not Christ followed up His scroll drop with a smokin' hot moonwalk and a few ritzy dance moves, most agree that Jesus definitely wowed his crowd.

The recently translated commentary reads, and I quote:

"And once he had rolled up the scroll, he performed a sick scroll drop and began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing, And all marveled at his hypeness, saying to one another, 'He is rizzing,' and 'He is rizzing indeed.' And the scribes and Pharisees rose up, seeking to lay hands on him, for the crowds were saying that 'Jesus hits different.' But they were unable, for yeeting through their midst with exceptional drip, he went away.'"¹

Ok ... that was, in reality, a satirical piece from the Babylon Bee... but enlightening nonetheless. **Was it not?** Some of you older folks in the audience will have to look up a few words. But just so you're not totally lost, the word *rizz* or *rizzing* is a derivative of *charisma*²... something Jesus definitely was given without limit.

I'll admit, my intention here wasn't just to start off with humor. I want to get you thinking about language and communication and context. I want you to start thinking about what influences in your life color and affect how you think. Why do you think the way you think? ... What's your story, your context, your bias? ... Anyway ... Depending on who you are, and your perspective including the environment you were brought up in, and what kind of media you consume, that "*super dope*" telling of Jesus teaching from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue might convey the right idea of what really happened there.

1 <https://babylonbee.com/news/scholars-now-believe-jesus-executed-sick-scroll-drop-after-rolling-up-book-of-isaiah/>

2 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/χάρις>

Because I've been privy to perspective that is relevant but less common, I've revised this talk several times, trying to zero in on the most important ideas and how to convey them. I've only got 45 minutes, which really seems like a long time, but context ... you know, all the details and history surrounding an idea or text or whatever ... context matters to this conversation. Therefore, if you feel so inclined, you may want to go back again and review this material because I don't have time to fully develop the concepts in this talk ... Maybe I'll publish an expanded transcript with footnotes. ... But what I hope to do is awaken or re-awaken in at least some listener the feeling of awe and excitement that is our birthright—we who have inherited Mormonism.

It is fairly apparent to me that there's a serious feeling of malaise in our society at large and especially among groups like this. In several places, the book of Helaman describes periods of change, like what we're experiencing right now, saying that "in the space of not many years"³ something big changed. Mainly it was that great iniquity came upon the Nephites. It feels like we're going through that kind of a period right now.

Although these periods of change are dangerous and difficult, they are still important because it wakes people out of their slumber. Nephi explains this towards the end of Second Nephi after finishing quoting Isaiah. He says that "the kingdom of the devil must shake, and they which belong to it must needs be stirred up unto repentance, or the devil will grasp them with his everlasting chains, and they be stirred up to anger, and perish."⁴

And so naturally we are all tuned in and turned up. And I think that in these difficult times most people in this audience have consciously recognized God working with them personally and have found greater light by looking beyond the confines of the orthodoxy and thus you're here. Otherwise you wouldn't be here considering what I have to say. But for many of us this has been going on for a while. We're beginning to see it as a marathon, not a sprint. And as I've discussed this with friends, there seems to be a feeling that this group is kind of in a holding pattern, waiting for things like a temple or the apocalypse ... or for the other shoe to drop so to speak.⁵ I know there's excitement about this new translation of the Book of Mormon, but isn't it fair to say that there's a lot of waiting and watching going on? Meanwhile life grinds on and the situation in society seems to be getting worse.

Again, it's natural to feel this. But my main objective in this talk is to remind people what Mormonism is all about and hopefully catalyze the inclination to seek out new perspective, especially on things that we think we might already understand, like the ongoing apocalypse or Zion or the temple or "the servant" or servants etc. Again ... I ask, why do we think the way we think about these subjects? Because it will matter to how we proceed.

3 Helaman 4:25, 6:32, 7:6, 11:26, LDS

4 2 Nephi 28:19, LDS

5 <https://www.thehistoryofenglish.com/waiting-for-the-other-shoe-to-drop> i.e. waiting attentively for something you expect, some sort of finality...

True Mormonism is exciting. It is invigorating. Do you still feel that? When describing Mormonism, Joseph Smith said we were to “receive truth, let it come from whence it may.”⁶

He said,

“Mormonism IS truth; and every man who embraces it feels himself at liberty to embrace every truth: consequently the shackles of superstition, bigotry, ignorance, and priestcraft, fall at once from his neck; and his eyes are opened to see the truth, and truth greatly prevails over priestcraft...”⁷

Most have probably already heard that. But I want that to sink in. ... This is our inheritance as Mormons. Truth ... light ... knowledge. I know there’s a lot of worry about temporal things right now. The nation is literally tearing itself apart. There is massive corruption at the highest levels and its fairly obvious at this point. “Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness [covers] the minds of the people, and ALL flesh has become corrupt before” the face of the Lord.⁸ It is the corruption of the minds of the people that has brought us to the **dark** point we are at.

You can feel it and so can I, but I don’t want to talk about the darkness so much. I want to talk about the bright horizons ahead of us if we will repent. Because that’s what we need to be excited about. No matter who we are, there is a huge opportunity to gain greater light and knowledge if we will take up the quest. And that’s exciting.⁹

This excitement I’m focusing on is characterized by hope and discovery and by potential. I hope you’ve had that feeling in your life. And it’s not limited to the Mormons. It’s a humanity thing. But Mormonism should engender it. My parents taught me about what Joseph Smith (likely) called *eternal progression*.¹⁰ And as I learned the basics of this, as a child I had this feeling of excitement and discovery. I felt it prior to my mission... then I experienced the cold reality of a mission in a wealthy European country... at least it wasn’t Japan. I had a friend go there ... But anyway ... as a young man looking to the future ... or like when I was dating my wife ... I had that feeling. I think the words, hope, discovery and potential frame Mormonism really well.

Just a minute ago I was asking you to think about why you think the way you think and then I switched focus to the excitement of the Mormon quest—to hope and discovery and potential. These two ideas need to be woven together. So it’s important to reiterate ... I think most

6 Willard Richards Diary – July 9, 1843

7 Letter from Joseph Smith to Isaac Galland – March 22, 1839

8 D&C 112:23

9 John 8:31-32 KJV

10 Although the phrase “eternal progression” is not officially sourced to Joseph Smith, it’s clear that he taught his students the concept. E.g. “I am going on in my progress for eternal life.” TPJS (King Follett Discourse), 1976 Deseret Book, p. 263, also “God ... because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself.” *ibid* p. 254; also D&C 130:18, D&C 93:12-13, etc.

everyone here, if not everyone, has had some supernatural experience or gained some sort of life-changing perspective that's caused them to be right here, right now.¹¹ Think of the opportunity cost.¹² That's the cost of doing what you're doing right now... The sky is the limit. You could be doing anything rather than doing what you're doing right now. And you are listening to this or reading this with a perspective that is based on your story, your life's experiences, your context and your bias. Yes everyone has a bias. And I want you to think about yours. Why do you think the way you think? ... It colors how you hope, what you discover and how you view what is to come, the potential.

There's a great symbol in popular literature that illustrates what I'm talking about exceptionally well. That's the Mirror of Erised in the hermetic¹³ masterpiece, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's*¹⁴ Stone by J.K. Rowling. I run very little risk here that someone in the audience has not heard of or likely read the Americanized version of this book. You all know the book—it's book one (or maybe the movie)—as *The Sorcerer's Stone*.

Do you remember when Harry discovers the Mirror of Erised?¹⁵ I hope you do. If not, go read the books. Our hero, the young Harry Potter, an orphan, raised by muggles, a boy who previously had no knowledge of the wizarding world or of his heritage, has been swept up into the wizarding school Hogwarts as a young 11 year old to learn to become what he was always destined to be... not just a great wizard, but the one who defeats the Dark Lord, the Lord of Death, Lord Voldemort himself. It's a very obvious Christ versus Satan allegory. In this

11 Just for kicks: <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/jesusjones/righthererightnow.html>

12 "The cost of an opportunity forgone (and the loss of the benefits that could be received from that opportunity); the most valuable forgone alternative." https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/opportunity_cost

13 Hugh Nibley – Temple and Cosmos, One Eternal Round, The Hermetic Version, 1992, p.389 — "Hermetism or Hermeticism is the label for a body of knowledge resembling that of the gospel which has been circulated among mankind for a very long time. How does it relate to the gospel? That is the question I shall now attempt to answer. It was always claimed by those who accepted the Hermetic message as true that it was knowledge revealed in the beginning to one Hermes Trismegistus (fig. 51). He was a man who became deified only after his death. He was always identified with Thoth, the Egyptian god who presided over all branches of knowledge and the dispensing of such. He was also identified by the learned Egyptians with the famous Imhotep, the great vizier of Djoser, the founder of the Third Dynasty, and one of the great creative geniuses of all time. Imhotep was beyond dispute a real person, and whether he was the thrice-greatest Hermes or not is beside the point, which is that there actually were men living in far distant times of the caliber of the fabulous Trismegistus and the equal of any who have lived since."; The Egyptian Thoth is syncretous (see syncretism) with the Greek Hermes, the Roman Mercury and the Hebrew Enoch. He is the messenger god. He is a temple builder, a bringer of knowledge to mankind.

14 Greek *philosophia*—literally meaning "love of wisdom" <https://www.etymonline.com/word/philosophy>, <https://lsj.gr/wiki/φιλοσοφία>

15 The name *Erised* has hidden meaning. It is the word *desire* spelled backwards. The inscription carved in its frame: "Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi." (Rowling, *ibidem* next footnote, p. 207) is simply the phrase "I show not your face but your heart's desire." backwards. This is relevant because the hermetic body of knowledge is thought to have been transmitted via hidden messages, layers, symbols, ciphers and allegory, etc. The reason for this can be attributed to the fact that most often throughout human history, truth (especially cosmic truth) has been anathema to the ruling class. One of the most important functions of the rulers is the right to teach, or in other words, the right to say what is truth or what is the true narrative. This issue—who has the right to teach or declare the narrative—is central to power struggle described in the Book of Mormon and applies throughout human history; "The truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV

archetypal hero's tale, Harry becomes privy to a plot where forces of darkness are attempting to return the Dark Lord to power by stealing the fabled philosopher's stone, which allows a wizard to brew a potion called the Elixir of Life ... and it also happens to allow one to turn any base metal into gold. In his quest to uncover what is really happening, Harry runs across this mirror, the Mirror of Erised, hidden away in the school.

When Harry looks into the mirror, he doesn't just see himself but he sees himself with his parents, who he never knew. They are happy and excited, reunited and full of love. He is so excited that he goes and gets his best friend Ron and brings him to the mirror, which is huge by the way, "high as the ceiling." He makes him look into it hoping Ron will see his parents too, but what Ron sees is himself a little older now, with the head boy badge on his chest. He is the Quidditch Captain and is holding the Quidditch Cup. Ron of course is the youngest brother in his family and has always aspired to be like his older brothers who achieved just such things as Ron sees himself achieving in the mirror. Ron wonders aloud, "Do you think this mirror shows the future?" But Harry retorts, "How can it? All my family are dead."¹⁶

When the headmaster, Albus Dumbledore, catches them looking in the mirror he warns them that they must stop. "It shows us nothing more or less than the deepest, most *desperate* desire¹⁷ of our hearts," he says. So we learn from that statement that the desires reflected in the mirror are influenced by our fears also. Of course those fears and desires were shaped by the context and experience of the boys lives, by everything they experienced and learned growing up. Dumbledore warns them he is moving the mirror and to not go looking for the mirror again. He says "this mirror will give us neither knowledge or truth. Men have wasted away before it, entranced by what they have seen, or been driven mad, not knowing if what it shows is real or even possible." He further explains: "The happiest man on earth would be able to use the Mirror of Erised like a normal mirror, that is, he would look into it and see himself exactly as he is."¹⁸

16 J.K. Rowling – Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, 1997 Scholastic Press, p. 211

17 Yes, our environment influences us. But, who are we really? The mirror exposes us. Consider this: Hugh Nibley – Old Testament and Related Studies, Treasures in the Heavens, 1986, p. 176, "A neglected leitmotif of the New Testament is the continuation on earth of the personal feud between the Lord and the adversary begun at the foundation of the world: from the first each recognizes the other as his old opponent and rival;40 they are matched at every point—each claims identical gifts, ordinances, signs, and wonders; each has his doctrine and his glory and his plan for the future of the race.41 Above all, each claims to possess the treasure, the Lord promising treasures in the heavens while the adversary offers a clever, glittering earthly imitation: it is the choice between these treasures (for no man can have both) that is a man's real test here upon the earth, determining his place hereafter.42 It is the "poor" who recognize and seek the true treasures, since they who are "rich as to the things of this world" have deliberately chosen the fraudulent imitation.43"; See also p. 179 "The archetype whom all must follow in the ordinances is Adam, whose true home is the 'Treasury of Light,' and who belongs with all his children 'to the Father who existed from the beginning.'59 The preexistent Adam, 'the Adam of Light,' having descended to earth fell into a deep sleep, from which he awoke with his mind erased like that of a little child.60 He was thus in a state to undergo impartial testing, but in his new helplessness he needed instruction."; It wouldn't hurt to review Nibley's footnotes which are included in the above quote.

18 J.K. Rowling – Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, 1997 Scholastic Press, p. 213

So the Mirror of Erised is a great symbol because it illustrates how our desires and life's experience influence what we perceive, ... what we hope to have for our current reality or to have come to pass. The mirror is dependent upon who is looking into it. We must realize that when we contemplate ideas like the apocalypse, Zion and the covenant, etc.—or when we assume that we collectively *are* God's people—that we are in fact looking in the Mirror of Erised. The one with pure desires and a clear mind, unencumbered by the erroneous ideas from their past experience, has the potential to see the actual reality. If we do not identify specifically what influences our understanding we will allow baggage from our past and our desires to shape our perceived reality.

Think on that for a minute.

So now I'm going to do you the courtesy of telling you a little more about my bias before hitting you with anything too weighty. Now ... here's the thing. I thought I had it all figured out and pretty much lost my way. As a young man, my focus had shifted to the more temporal and institutional. I allowed Church programs to guide my thinking. As a young twenty-something, I had lost the sense of discovery and of new horizons. You see... I was a very good student. I knew it all ... what is being taught at least. The institution had answered all the questions. And I had checked, for the most part, all the boxes. All that was left was to rise higher in society, and to get rich to support myself, my family and the machine, and to endure to the end.

As a young adult I kind of went through a dark period. I questioned my belief in God. And thankfully about 16 years ago I began to go through an awakening. I began to see parallels in the Book of Mormon with the corruption at the highest levels and throughout American society. I began to read it with new eyes, realizing that its warnings were directed at me, the reader, not those who had never seen it or entirely disregarded it. I began to ponder the miraculous and to regain the feeling of wonder and awe and potential again. I was learning new things. Changing my perspective. I began to study in great earnest, not just the gospel, but our current society and our history. It was an organic thing for me, but most definitely it included,

Things both in heaven and in the earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of the nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms.¹⁹

I studied Greek and Latin for the purposes of understanding holy writings and the foundations and context of the western world and of the New Testament. I learned of the deuteronomist rebellion against the older Hebrew religion. I studied Egyptian religion and how the lines blur between it and the older Hebrew religion. And I learned a great deal about ancient world religions and how the thread of temple theology and what can only be described as Joseph

19 D&C 88:79

Smithian thought runs through them in both obvious and hidden ways. All of this was underwritten by a desire to understand the holy writings from the perspective of those who wrote them... anciently.

As I've taken this journey, I realized after a great deal of effort, that I never really did understand Mormonism, and it would have been helpful if someone had told me that I didn't really get it 12 years ago. Let me be plain. Even though I read *The Second Comforter* very early in my awakening and happily embraced the idea that God is working directly with me and everyone else, I never realized I was lacking extensive context and perspective to see the larger picture of what Mormonism really is.

We learn by study and by experience. The study side of this is very important because it sets us up for experiences and enables us to understand those experiences. If we want answers to the terrible questions like, is this really all there is?²⁰ Who am I really? Where did I come from? And where am I going? ... and naturally, but not often mentioned in this list... how do I get to where I want to go? ... then we must start with study. Joseph Smith did.

Knowledge saves a man; and in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge. ... A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if he does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God.²¹

As concerns revelation, we receive no witness until after the trial of our faith, so how do we get that faith? Faith is the Greek *pistis*. *Pistis* just simply means “belief,”²² but in the book of Hebrews chapter 11, as Paul elaborated on THE better Covenant they were offered through Jesus Christ, he found himself describing the ancient sons of God and how it was something more than simple belief that made it possible for them to obtain saving knowledge. He said, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”²³ The original word translated as substance is *hypostasis*. It means “reality.”²⁴ So this is why calling faith “correct belief” is so appropriate. Faith IS the actual reality... and then the original word translated as evidence is *elengchos*. This is more of a proof or a test as opposed to evidence ... it's an evidentiary process.²⁵ So better said, “Faith is hope for the unseen reality and the means of finding out those unseen things.” That's the type of belief that leads to the knowledge that will save and exalt us.

20 Hugh Nibley – Temple and Cosmos, One Eternal Round, The Terrible Questions, 1992, p.339

21 Joseph Smith – TPJS, 1976 Deseret Book, p. 256

22 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/πίστις>

23 Hebrews 11:1 KJV

24 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/ὑπόστασις>

25 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/ἔλεγχος>

This is the gist of Lecture 2 of Lectures on Faith. Without those who have previously had the experience of the beyond and who are tasked with delivering the correct understanding—Nibley calls them sent ones—without them sharing some details, we don't know what we're looking for. But those details are nuanced and influenced by the messengers who supplied them, even if they speak our native language. Those messengers provide us a master mental map²⁶ if you will. And it can be applied to the body of important works, like the scriptures, the great myths, non-canonical scripture like the *Nag Hammadi*,²⁷ *Pseudepigrapha*,²⁸ *Books of*

26 “I wish to go back to the beginning -- to the morn of creation. There is the starting point for us to look to, in order to understand and be fully acquainted with the mind, purposes and decrees of the Great Elohim, who sits in yonder heavens as he did at the creation of this world. It is necessary for us to have an understanding of God himself in the beginning. **If we start right, it is easy to go right all the time; but if we start wrong, we may go wrong, and it be a hard matter to get right.**” TPJS, 1976 Deseret Book, p. 248; Finding solid ground to use as a basis, i.e. a correct master mental map, is of great importance. Due to the errors and gaps in scripture and non-canonical works, having a correct paradigm to start with (and being guided by the Holy Spirit, see D&C 91) helps the student recover truths from these various sources.

27 “The Nag Hammadi Library, a collection of thirteen ancient books (called ‘codices’) containing over fifty texts, was discovered in upper Egypt in 1945. This immensely important discovery includes a large number of primary ‘Gnostic Gospels’ – texts once thought to have been entirely destroyed during the early Christian struggle to define ‘orthodoxy’ – scriptures such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Truth. The discovery and translation of the Nag Hammadi library, initially completed in the 1970's, has provided impetus to a major re-evaluation of early Christian history and the nature of Gnosticism.”
<http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl.html>

28 *Pseudepigrapha* literally means “with false title” and by the 1600s came to mean “books or writings of false authorship.” <https://www.etymonline.com/word/pseudepigrapha> At this point in history, the orthodoxy of the church was well established. Heterodox opinions had not been tolerated for centuries. *Pseudepigrapha* is a term that may mean different things to different groups. It is not an established list of books and can include texts written before and after the time of Christ. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudepigrapha>

Enoch,²⁹ and *Apocrypha*³⁰ and all other great works left by the “sent-ones” throughout human history. ... *And* this master mental map can also be applied to the temple.

There are many in the audience anxiously anticipating a temple. Why? Is it because it is seen as a huge milestone towards Zion? --One more box checked on the way to the promised land, peace and prosperity? I very much appreciated that in Matt’s talk about the temple over the summer in Idaho, he pointed out that the temple is a template and also a university.³¹ It is THE template and it is THE university. At this point, I think those are the facets of it that should be most important to us. One does not simply walk into the university. One must prepare for the university.

There is so much to say here because this is not simply an academic endeavor. Think back to before the modern world when the pilgrim had to prepare long and took a lengthy journey to the holy place. Here’s another angle on it, to borrow from one of my favorite songs “No life can escape being blown about by the winds of change and chance, and though you never know all the steps, you must learn to join the dance. You must learn to join the dance.”³²

29 There exist three main books attributed to Enoch: 1 Enoch (the First Book of Enoch), 2 Enoch (Second Enoch aka Slavonic Enoch or Secrets of Enoch), and 3 Enoch (Third Book of Enoch aka Greek Enoch). There also exists fragmentary evidence of a fourth book, Hebrew-Aramaic Enoch. Regarding not only First Enoch but his writings in general: “Early Christian writers knew all about the book of Enoch: indeed, nearly all the writers of the New Testament were familiar with it, and were more or less influenced by it in thought and diction, according to R. H. Charles, who notes that it is quoted as a genuine production of Enoch by St. Jude, and as Scripture by St. Barnabas. With the earlier Fathers and Apologists it had all the weight of a canonical book. Its influence is apparent in no less than 128 places in the New Testament, and Charles can declare that The influence of I Enoch on the New Testament has been greater than that of all the other apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books taken together. He further lists some thirty passages in early orthodox Jewish and Christian writings in which the book of Enoch is mentioned specifically, plus numerous citations from the book that are found in the important Jewish apocalyptic writings of Jubilees, the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, the Assumption of Moses, 2 Baruch, and 4 Ezra, and quotations from Enoch found in more than thirty Christian Patristic writers.” Hugh Nibley – Enoch the Prophet, A Strange Thing in the Land, p. 95; “Of all the books quoted, paraphrased or referred to in the Bible, the Book of Enoch has influenced the writers of the Bible as few others have. Even more extensively than in the Old Testament, the writers of the New Testament were frequently influenced by other writings, including the Book of Enoch.” Joseph B. Lumpkin – The Encyclopedia of Lost and Rejected Scriptures, 2010 Fifth Estate Publishers, p. 56; R.H. Charles translation of 1 Enoch can be found online here: <https://sacred-texts.com/bib/boe/>

30 *Apocrypha* means “hard to understand” or “secret.” <https://www.etymonline.com/word/apocrypha> In the last half millennium the term has taken on the “popular meaning of ‘false,’ ‘spurious,’ ‘bad,’ or ‘heretical.’” The term doesn’t necessarily need to apply to a specific list of books. However as relates to English language biblical studies, the term would apply to a specific list of books. “The English-language King James Version (KJV) of 1611 followed the lead of the Luther Bible in using an inter-testamental section labeled ‘Books called Apocrypha,’ or just ‘Apocrypha’ at the running page header.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_apocrypha These books are sometimes called deuterocanonical or inter-testamental. These books are likely what section 91 (LDS) of the D&C is referring to. The books of the Apocrypha are generally not considered canon in Protestant Christianity, however many of the books are considered canon by the Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. See also: <https://sacred-texts.com/chr/apo/index.htm>

31 https://restorationarchives.net/general_conferences/2024.06.27-30_Sawtooths/The%20Coming%20Temple_Top%20of%20the%20Mountains%20Conference_June%202024%20Handout.pdf – slides 23-24, https://www.youtube.com/live/JRmE3-o_Lww

32 Brian Stokes Mitchell – Through Heaven’s Eyes, Track 7, The Prince of Egypt Motion Picture Soundtrack, 1998

There *is* a universal overarching narrative of what is going on. *You* and *I* are part of that story. That story has been taught by the great sent-ones in human history. And there exists simultaneously an overarching counter narrative, an inverted story, that has also been taught using the same archetypal imagery. And, of course, there is plenty of the in-between stuff. So we need to develop that master mental map if we're to recover truth from wherever... that is to say from "whence it may come."³³ But communication between the sent-ones and men—really between any people—can only go so far. God reveals the truth. ... I want to emphasize that: God reveals "The Truth." God reveals the truth to those who love Him and purify themselves before Him.³⁴ Hence we must purify ourselves. And as relates to saving knowledge, the process of purifying our heart/mind requires faith. It requires a lot of study and unloading a lot of baggage. ... Why do we think what we think?

Here are the narrative points I feel are most important to emphasize today. ... of course all this will be affected by your view into the Mirror of Erised.

First off, considering the darkness and difficulty that is really ramping up in the world right now and what is coming, it will be important to realize that in the beginning, in that great council in heaven, God did not set up a plan to put you through hell just to see if you can progress. This is a question that students of religion and philosophy call theodicy, which means "the justice of God." ... Why would a loving God put *me* into entropy and put me through all this suffering, even if it's for my own good? Satan wants us to blame the great Gods of Light for all this suffering here. He wants us to curse God and die.³⁵

There have been many heavenly councils and many worlds, worlds without end. This one is different. It's fallen. John 1:1 reads "En archē en ho Logos." *Archē* means "first in time and premier in rank."³⁶ In the first and highest council the Gods *cosmeo'd* the *cosmos*. The verb *cosmeo* means "to order or to organize,"³⁷ and the noun *cosmos* is "the thing that was

33 Joseph Smith – Willard Richards Diary, July 9, 1843

34 D&C 76:116; 1 Nephi 10:17-19 LDS

35 Theodicy: "justice of God," Often this question is referred to as "the problem of evil." The dilemma has also been labeled the Epicurean Paradox. "God, he says, either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able, or He is both willing and able. If He is willing and is unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if He is able and unwilling, He is envious, which is equally at variance with God; if He is neither willing nor able, He is both envious and feeble, and therefore not God; if He is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? Or why does He not remove them?" Lactantius - De Ira Dei, 13, 20-21; For many monotheists, and Epicureans for that matter, the attempt to reconcile *theodicy* resulted in the conclusion that God simply does not exist. Correlated Mormon doctrine, nonetheless, differs significantly from traditional Christian beliefs. And Mormons pride themselves on having the answers to these types of questions. The Mormon canon has far more to say about *theodicy* and the fall of Adam than the Bible alone. Hence the teachings we've extrapolated from the scriptures and then standardized have become far more detailed than traditional Christian material on the subject. In the case of *theodicy* though, our correlated doctrine is flatly wrong. We simply attribute our desperate situation first to the Father God, then to Eve and by extension to ourselves, having been agreeable to His "plan" in the first place.

36 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/ἀρχή>

37 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/κόσμος>

organized.”³⁸ So what I’m saying is that the first thing the Gods did was to order or organize something other than just a terrestrial world.

God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits.³⁹

The thing that was ordered or organized first was this system. Call it the cosmos. ... And therefore, a positive translation of John 1:1 that this audience has accepted is very apropos.

In the Highest Council of Heaven there was One who spoke out. And the One who spoke out was among the Gods, and He was a God. He was in the Council of the Gods, and the creation of the cosmos was organized through Him. And without Him does not exist one thing that has come into existence in the cosmos. In Him was the power of life and this power was conveyed into the cosmos as the Light in men and every thing. The Light shone in the chaos and those in darkness have not been able to grasp it.⁴⁰

The system of progression is very often described in allegory. For example, the Genesis account describing the six creative periods is ancient cosmology. It is an allegory symbolically using elements of the natural world to show progression through the creation narrative. The earth is put in order. Seeds planted. Plants grow. Beasts thrive, and towards the end, man finally appears.⁴¹ “[Genesis] does not attempt to describe cosmology in modern [scientific] terms or address modern questions...”⁴²

The system of progression cycled on for eons before this world was created. It allowed Lucifer and Jesus to rise to the highest levels of the harmonious heavens.⁴³ Let that sink in, progression

38 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/κοσμέω>

39 TPJS, Section Six 1843-44, p.354

40 T&C 171:1:1

41 Simultaneously, the Genesis account comments on the fall, on Satan, and on the state of the fallen world. But it conspicuously fails to give us any real understanding of the *theomachy*, i.e., the war between the Gods that led to our fallen state. All ancient cultures have narratives describing this *theomachy*.

42 John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis 1*, 2009, pp. 14-15

43 “I said, ‘Lord, before Satan fell, in what splendor did he attend the Father?’ He said: ‘Among the virtues of heaven and at the throne of the Father invisible; he was regulator of all things and sat with my Father. He [Satan] it was who presided over the virtues of the heavens and those who attended on the Father. His power descended from the heavens even unto hell, and arose even unto the throne of the Father invisible. He had wardship of those splendors which were above all the heavens.’” Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans translators: *Interrogatio Iohannis, Heresies of the High Middle Ages*, 1991 Columbia Univ. Press, 1991, p. 458ff.; “How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn!” Isaiah 14:12 NIV; “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.” Revelation 22:16 NIV

—at far higher levels than we are experiencing now—was already occurring before the foundation of this world. You personally were involved in something ... somewhere... worlds without end. Lucifer created disharmony in this otherwise harmonious system. Most desperately he sought and still seeks to gain the loyalty of the offspring of the Gods.⁴⁴

Therefore another council, the council for this world was held. Abraham chapter 3 gives us some of the narrative. After God showed Abraham all the intelligences that were before the world was and how they all varied in glory. He saw the rulers, Nibley's Sent Ones, and among them was Adam, the one like unto God ... that's one of characteristics of Adam, he's made in the image of God,⁴⁵ he's like God,⁴⁶ ... He proposed this particular creation. He said, "We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell. And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them."⁴⁷ This is evidence of a loyalty test. It's not a sin test. Like hey... What did you score on the sin test? 87%? ahh... Terrestrial kingdom for you. Oh 93% great ... you get the Celestial kingdom... No it's a test of a person's loyalty. Will you follow Satan or will you follow Christ? Do you choose liberty and eternal life or captivity and death.⁴⁸ That's it.

After this, the narrative in Abraham tells us that Adam was given dominion.

And the Lord said: Whom shall I send? And one answered like unto the Son of Man⁴⁹
[This is most definitely Adam. He was given dominion for this world by the Lord God
Jesus Christ. He said,]: Here am I, send me. And another answered and said: Here am I,

44 The Cathar text The Interrogatio Iohannis also called The Secret Supper or The Book of John the Evangelist describes Satan's rebellious activities in the heavens which resulted in the conception of the creation of our world. Various translations can be found online here: http://www.gnosis.org/library/Interrogatio_Johannis.html

45 Genesis 1:27

46 "He ... made Adam according to our image and likeness ... And the man lived straightway, and became a living soul, according to the image and likeness of God. When Adam had risen up he cast himself down before [My] father, saying, 'My Lord and my God! Thou hast made me to come into being [from a state in which] I did not exist.' [More likely this should read, "Thou has given me zóé (the spark of life)..." i.e., God gave him this self-existence or made him "come alive" in that sense.] Thereupon My Father set him upon a great throne, and He placed on his head a crown of glory, and He put a royal sceptre [in his hand], and My Father made every order [of angels] in the heavens to come and worship him, whether angel or archangel. And all the hosts of heaven worshipped God first of all, and then they worshipped Adam, saying, 'Hail, thou image and likeness of God!' And He intended that the order of the angels who were fashioned [before Adam] should worship him, and My Father said unto him [Lucifer] (i. e. their chief), 'Come, thou thyself shalt worship my image and likeness.'" ... NS Timothy of Alexandria, Discourse on Abbatôn from Coptic Martyrdoms, Etc., Translated by E.A. Wallis Budge, 1914, https://www.academia.edu/6544702/Discourse_on_Abbatôn_by_Timothy_Archbishop_of_Alexandria_ca_380_385_CE

47 Abraham 3:22-28

48 2 Nephi 2:27 LDS

49 "Son of Man" is a title held by Christ and other sent-ones. It is given to a heavenly/angelic emissary who is able to pronounce judgment. Judgment relates not only to blessings and progression in the afterlife but also destruction if one is deserving of it.

send me. And the Lord said: I will send the first. And the second was angry, and kept not his first estate; and, at that day, many followed after him. (vs. 27-28)

Nibley wrote a lot about the feud between Adam and Satan. You can find it in the essay entitled, *The Expanding Gospel*.⁵⁰ Anyway, that was an incredibly succinct overview there in the book of Abraham. It's so short it can't contain all the details. So what comes next can be misunderstood. You see, many creation narratives tell of how Lucifer had something to do with creation. The idea shows up often in the early Christian Gnostic works.⁵¹ Relatedly, Nibley brings our attention to an exciting early Christian metaphor of a fantastic sailing ship hauling the greatest of treasures. The story is found in *The Manichaean Psalms of Thomas*.⁵² The ship, "laden with the wealth of the living ones," was hijacked or we might infer that there was a mutiny. That is what happened to this world. It was taken over by the evil ones and therefore it fell from its place in the harmonious cosmic system of the Gods of light and was cut off from the living world. It wasn't Adam and Eve's fault.⁵³

And therefore, scripturally speaking, we are captive. You know, Carolyn gave a great talk yesterday.⁵⁴ I recommend checking it out in the context of what I'm talking about. She reminded us about how we've forgotten everything. We've lost our identities. We are low, at the bottom of the cosmos, caught in the valley of sorrow, or the valley of the shadow of death so to speak. God is free from this captivity. He inhabits the living world. He is often depicted at the top of the mountain. He has the highest view. His perspective is reality. All things are visible before Him. That is truth. That is the actual reality.

But, our view is obstructed. By what? I'll borrow a quote from the 1999 movie, *The Matrix*. What we are blinded by "is all around us, even now in this very [TENT]. You can see it when you look out your window or when you turn on your television. You can feel it when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth."⁵⁵ All of what you see, hear, smell, taste or touch may possibly be deceptive. We inhabit a counterfeit system. It has been tampered with by the adversary. It may be used to try to shift your loyalty from the Father God to the fallen one. Will

50 Hugh Nibley – Temple and Cosmos, *The Expanding Gospel* 1992, p. 177

51 See, for example, the story of the Gnostic Demiurge (Greek: Etymology unclear: the "little creator" or the "people's creator") Samael (Hebrew: meaning "blind god" or "god of the blind" as per the text) and Yaldabaoth (Aramaic: likely meaning "son of chaos") in the *Hypostasis of the Archons (Nature of the Rulers)* and *On the Origin of the World in the Nag Hammadi Scriptures*, Edited by Mavin Meyer, 2007 Harper Collins, p. 177ff and p. 199ff respectively

52 *The Manichaean Psalms of Thomas, A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Edited by C. R. C. Allberry, 1938 Stuttgart, W. Kohlhammer, <http://www.gnosis.org/library/manithomas.htm>

53 The First Book of Enoch lays the evil in this world squarely at the feet of the fallen watching angels who followed Lucifer in rebellion. These are the sons of Perdition. They debased themselves. They corrupted the creation. They gave the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve knowledge out of order and season.

54 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtW6Dm4rKck>

55 *The Matrix*, 1999, Morpheus

we return to our true king and be what we were meant to be? To be or not to be? That is the question. Do we fear the undiscovered country Hamlet spoke of?⁵⁶

And so, here in the fallen world, we are caught in a war. It is the battle for our continued eternal existence. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”⁵⁷ Our experience here is very consequential.

Being at the bottom of the system, the furthest from God, the telestial... I don't know where Joseph got that term but it's so appropriate. It's from the Greek ... telos⁵⁸ ... telephone, telephoto, television ... it means the utmost end ... it's inferno in Latin⁵⁹ ... being the furthest away we must be lifted up to be saved. That is the resurrection. The Latin *resurgere*, meaning “to be re-stood up.”⁶⁰ It's the Greek *anastasis*. “To be lifted up or stood back up.”⁶¹ If you stack the three kingdoms of glory on top of each other like is always done in the correlated lessons (celestial, terrestrial, telestial) ... and again recognize we are in the lowest kingdom, the telestial, the furthest down, the furthest away from God ... then we should add a big black line below terrestrial and above telestial. It's the boundary between them, the chasm, it's the line where we're cut off from the living world. *Anastasis* or in other words, *resurrection*, is to be lifted back up above it. This should be the hope and expectation of those who are the offspring of the Gods.

Our scriptures are truncated and contain errors. They don't necessarily tell the whole story. This problem obscures our vision. It influences what we see in the Mirror of Erised. Our lives' contexts color how we view these important ideas.

The biggest focus of this conference is probably the vote being held tomorrow morning about the modern English translation of the Book of Mormon. I honestly don't think anyone should be unsure of the outcome of the vote. But remember, I've been trying to get you to think about why you think the way you think. Not everyone is on the same page, so please don't take offense. But think about it. Does voting on scriptures and accepting them as canon make them true? Does it make what we've voted on more important than other truth, “let it come from whence it may?”⁶² Will supporting this by vote save us from what is coming?

So I'm reminded of a quote from the movie *Enders Game* because I'm pretty sure the majority of this body will accept the new translation of the Book of Mormon. And it has definitely put other things to a vote in the past, but not without controversy. Back to the movie quote: After

56 Shakespeare *Hamlet* Act 3 Scene 1

57 Ephesians 6:12 KJV

58 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/τέλος>

59 See Dante's *Divina Comedia*

60 <https://www.etymonline.com/word/resurrection>

61 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/ἀνάστασις>

62 Willard Richards Diary – July 9, 1843

destroying the enemy force, the war-leader, Ender Wiggin, is incredibly distraught and I don't want to spoil the story so I won't say why, but those of you who have seen this will understand even more. Ender is beside himself with grief and his commanding officer, Colonel Graff, catches him by the shoulders and shakes him and says, "Ender, we won! That's all that matters." And Ender shouts back at him, "No! The WAY we win matters!"⁶³ ... The way we win matters. The manner in which canon is accepted matters. The mindset of the people towards it matters. God is not creating an orthodoxy here. He's gathering His family so that they can be lifted up into the living world.

This audience desires to be called The Covenant People, the Congregation of Christ or the Children of God. It would be a shame if those name titles were adopted and used without being actually descriptive of the body. Names, in the modern world, are an interesting phenomenon. I think some people pay attention to name meaning but I think they're usually chosen for aesthetic. In the ancient world, names were descriptive. For example, my name, Dan-i-el, is a Hebrew name. It means "God is Judge" or "God is my Judge."⁶⁴ ... So if my family's native language were Hebrew, then every time my mother were to call me for dinner she would shout, "God is Judge, it's time for dinner." This idea of functional description is important in scripture. Take for example, John 15 (traditional chapter verse) where the Lord tells his students I'm no longer going to call you servants, but rather I'll call you friends. I would transmit it this way, and the Greek certainly bears this out... He says starting in verse 11,

I've told you all these cosmically oriented things (this last supper discourse that he's giving them) so that you'll have a sense of the expansive gladness for God's life-engendering gift that I have and so that you will have it also. I give this instruction so that you will love and care for each other as I love you. No one has greater love than this kind of love which is enough to cause one to lay down their life for those they love.⁶⁵

"Those they love" is how I'm transmitting the word *philoí*⁶⁶ which was translated as friends in KJV. The Lord goes on and says, "And if you do what I instruct, you are beloved of me." In King James it was "... Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."⁶⁷

So he's contrasting the state of being *douloi*⁶⁸ and *philoí* here—servants placed in juxtaposition with friends. Those bound to his household compared to those he loves. ... It is significant that the name David in Hebrew, like *philos*, also means "beloved."⁶⁹ Jesus might as well have named

63 Ender's Game, 2013

64 <https://www.behindthename.com/name/daniel>

65 See John 15:11-17 (traditional chapter / verse) for reference in this section.

66 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/φίλος>

67 John 15:14 KJV

68 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/δοῦλος> (servant, bound one)

69 <https://www.behindthename.com/name/david>

them all David there. As for the rest of us, it will only be known after the fact who the beloved people are who actually do what the Lord instructs.

Keeping that in mind, let's discuss the covenant. Don't get me wrong here, the word covenant is often used as a verb meaning "to agree" to something.⁷⁰ And that's appropriate. But there's a lot of nuance when covenant is a noun. The correlated materials have hammered into us the idea that a covenant is a "two-way promise."⁷¹ We have legal covenants which are essentially contracts. Often we have covenants or ordinances that apply to what we can do with real estate.⁷² Hence, I can't help but think that on some level, many here might subconsciously view accepting large blocks of scripture as a covenant as akin to signing a lengthy contract ... let's say a mortgage contract. If you've ever signed a mortgage contract, you've probably done so sitting in the conference room of a title company aided by a mildly interested escrow officer. The other party to the mortgage could care less about you as a person so long as you make the payments.

But back to scripture as a covenant—the reason the English speaking world knows the Old and New Testaments as Testaments originates in the Greek word *diatheke*⁷³ which gets translated into the Latin Vulgate as *testamentum*.⁷⁴ This distinction between an old testament and a new testament largely stems from Paul's letter to the Hebrews. To sum up the book of Hebrews, Paul is essentially trying to get the Jews to recognize that their Mosaic tradition is incomplete and flawed and that they have a better inheritance through Jesus Christ. *Diatheke* is a conjunction of the Greek word *dia* meaning "thoroughly" and the verb *tithemi* which means "to set or put in place." So literally it is that which is thoroughly set in place.⁷⁵ This is most commonly understood to mean "a last will and testament"⁷⁶ ... obviously for the beneficiary what is received... we call an inheritance. Therefore, as relates to scripture, inheritance is the word I personally would most often choose to transmit the meaning of *diatheke* instead of *testament* or *covenant*. I think it more fully conveys the big picture of what we're dealing with.

Concerning this better *diatheke*, the Lord said, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ That language comes from the Book of Jeremiah.⁷⁹ And Paul was quoting it trying to convince the remnant of the Hebrews that this

70 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/covenant>

71 <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2014/04/covenants-two-way-promises-with-god>

72 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/covenant>

73 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/διαθήκη>

74 <https://www.etymonline.com/word/testament>

75 <https://biblehub.com/greek/1303.htm>

76 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/διαθήκη>

77 Hebrews 8:10-11 KJV

78 Jeremiah 31:31 KJV

79 Jeremiah 31 KJV Chapter 38 LXX

covenant of Christ or rather inheritance given by Christ applied to them and it was better than the apostate tradition they had inherited through their fathers.

And so what of the covenant received in 2017?⁸⁰ Has it not been there and available to the Lord's family all along? Anyone can be put on the path to that inheritance if they ask. The answer to that question will always be yes.⁸¹ Refinement must follow. And there are conditions. And the offer must be conspicuously taken up because of the fall of mankind. All of the children of Adam and Eve are invited to rejoin the Lord's family. And as for the Lord's students,⁸² He literally told them that after He left, He would not leave them orphaned, He would come to them. That's correct. The Greek *orphanous* is the word that got translated as comfortless in King James... John 14.⁸³ I will not leave you *orphanous*, as orphans or fatherless, I will come to you. It is a familial thing.

Here's a quick analogy. Imagine that your Dad's parents passed away and that the instructions in their will dictated that their home was supposed to remain in the family and that it was to be given to the children who were willing to live in it and take care of it. Imagine that your parents and siblings all live out of state and are too busy and too happy with their jobs and lives to move into your grandparents home... so it falls to you. It is a very old but majestic estate, built on a hillside, located near the canyon, overlooking the valley. The home has broad picture windows, space for a full size grand piano and more. It has large dining and entertaining areas and is set on many acres through which runs a babbling year round stream. It even has a swimming pool and gardens. It was built by expert craftsmen long ago using skills and methods that are no longer understood or passed on to apprentices. Most significantly the estate is brimming with wonderful memories. At first glance the house appears to have been well kept, but on closer inspection you find that the roof leaks. Several walls have developed mold. It's been through many remodels and additions, and the latest one wasn't particularly flattering. Among other things, the concrete around the pool is eroding and cracking. The vast redwood deck will need to be refinished. The mature trees need pruning and the marvelous undergrowth must be put back in check. And the place has termites. The property will be a monumental project. It needs to be renovated. And dare I point out... what of your inheritance on your Mother's side?

The Mormonism we have inherited, the religion we profess to believe which I'm saying is really our quest for truth... It's like the house I just described. The deuteronomists are the termites by the way... The house is awesome, but it still requires renovation. I like that word renovation. It means making it new again. To restore the house will not only require a lot of physical labor,

80 <http://denversnuffer.net/resources/Answer-Covenant-1.pdf>

81 <https://denversnuffer.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/01-Boise-Transcript-Be-of-Good-Cheer-Be-of-Good-Courage.pdf>, p. 17

82 mathetes, discipulus, student; <https://biblehub.com/greek/3101.htm>; <https://lsj.gr/wiki/μαθητής>

83 John 14:18 KJV; <https://biblehub.com/text/john/14-18.htm>; <https://lsj.gr/wiki/ὀρφανός>

but the acquisition of a great deal of knowledge in order to bring it back to its optimal and ideal state.

The covenant read in 2017 places no obligation on anyone who desired to receive it that wasn't already found in scripture as a characteristic obligation of God's family. Most significantly, this covenant is conditioned upon repentance. Repentance is the primary labor to be performed. Repentance, along with words like sin, faith, charity, heart and covenant etc. is a word whose meaning has been obscured by time. Again, maybe go back and have a listen to Carolyn's talk yesterday.⁸⁴

Repentance comes to English via the French *repentir/repentence*. The French word was derived from the Latin *repaenitentia*, which means to engage in the process of re-punishing oneself.⁸⁵ *Repaenitentia* is a complete and total mistranslation⁸⁶ of the Greek term *metanoia*, which plainly means to change or expand one's mind or thoughts.⁸⁷ Let me repeat that because this is the best sense of the idea. *Metanoia* is to change and expand one's heart and mind, one's inner self. And of course the context that comes with it is that one has a cosmic shift in understanding ... of and towards the true and hidden reality, the better world, the place at the right hand of God. Therefore repentance is necessarily catalyzed by faith. And "Faith is hope for the unseen reality and simultaneously the means of finding out those unseen things."⁸⁸ There in Hebrews 11, Paul goes on to discuss the creation of the world in a way that would take another 20 minutes to explain, but to lay it plainly in cosmological terms, we find ourselves veiled and cut off from God in the fallen and dead world. The power, beings and locales of the living cosmos are hidden from our view. Faith has something to do with that hidden reality, which we hope is our eternal reality.⁸⁹ We receive no witness until after the trial of our faith.

This inheritance we hope to claim is predicated on belief in the actual reality and upon the cosmic shift towards this reality in our hearts and minds. In the Answer for Covenant, many temporal or rather temporary things were promised like land, protection, peace, and increase.⁹⁰ And it's natural, especially in these times for us to focus on that. But the culmination of the inheritance clarified in 2017 was stated this way: "I will teach you things that have been hidden

84 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EtW6Dm4rKCK>

85 <https://www.etymonline.com/word/repent>

86 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metanoia_\(theology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metanoia_(theology))

87 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/μετάνοια>; meta "change, transform or expand", noia "the mind" "thoughts" "the inner self"

88 Hebrews 11:1

89 Briefly: "Faith is hope for the unseen reality and the means of finding out those unseen things. For in this the ancients were vouched for. We perceive that through faith the eons have been organized by God's living voice, such that the visible has not come into being from the shining things." Author's translation: Heb 11:1-3, The visible not having come into being from the shining things is evidence that Paul was privy to the idea that the creation was tampered with by the fallen ones. The visible creation, that we experience, is a counterfeit system, cut off from the living (shining) worlds.

90 <http://denversnuffer.net/resources/Answer-Covenant-1.pdf>, p. 11

from the foundation of the world and your understanding will reach unto Heaven.” Now that is exciting. That is the inheritance of Mormonism—knowledge, light and truth.

Of Zion it is said, “for this is Zion—THE PURE IN HEART.”⁹¹ Remember, in the ancient writings, like the scriptures, the heart is the center of both intuition, true feeling and intellect, but not emotion, that’s in the gut. The heart is a thinking organ.⁹² A great deal of study and introspection goes into changing one’s heart/mind or put in the context of this conference, obtaining a new heart.

Where we lack knowledge we tend to fill in the gaps. We sit, like the boys in the story of *The Philosopher’s Stone*, obsessed with looking in the Mirror of Erised. We must study and search out greater things and abandon our error because it is vain for us to fancy ourselves “to be heirs [INHERITORS] with those who have offered their all in sacrifice... and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life.”⁹³ No doubt this statement from Lectures on Faith 6 implies sacrificing the temporal, but does not the sacrifice of “all earthly things” include the counterfeit system we’ve adopted? Doesn’t it include a lot of deeply held but erroneous belief? The opportunity cost of maintaining those erroneous desires, fears, and beliefs in our hearts IS Zion.

We’re stymied. That’s a golf term. You can’t putt if the other player’s golf ball is directly between your ball and the hole.⁹⁴ Something is in the way. That’s all the erroneous bias, context and story that we won’t let go of—our false understanding of the cosmic reality, the narrative, of history and scripture and our identity in this fallen and counterfeit world.

We can prepare now. And this is always tough. I say it to myself and everyone else. Let’s stop treating people like we know everything because we don’t. Stop acting like we know what’s best for other people. Stop the secret strategizing and behind the scenes manipulation pushing

91 D&C 97:21

92 - Ancient cultures believed the heart to be the center of feeling and intellect. The details we understand about the brain today relative to intellect are largely built on the foundation of 19th century medical science. In ancient Egyptian burial preparation, the brain would have been discarded but the heart was replaced in the body because it was necessary for progression in the afterlife. The heart is associated with the inner voice or one's spirit.

In the LDS canon, a search for the word heart yields 712 Old Testament references, 159 New Testament, 394 Book of Mormon, 183 in the D&C and 25 in the Pearl of Great Price. A heart is wise, a heart is changed, or it is fixed, or hopefully one's heart is inline with the heart of God. It is very often associated with both soul and mind. Even this closed canonical context shows the heart to be something more than is commonly understood today. For the sake of comparison, a search for the word mind yields 239 results combined. Often the terms mind, minded or mindedness imply focus versus thought or intellect. A search for the term brain yields no results.

Of the two organs, the heart was and still largely is the prominent symbol in literature. Yet in modern parlance following one's heart is often viewed negatively as if one is yielding to reckless feeling. Often we view someone with a good mind as being far more useful than someone with a good heart. The two concepts have grown apart and out of balance.

93 Lectures on Faith 6:8

94 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stymie>

for what we see in the Mirror of Erised... trying to steer ourselves, our families or this body in such a way as to check all the boxes we feel are necessary for the establishment of Zion so we can survive the apocalypse and have the promised peace and prosperity. I think we've all got a Jenga tower built up relative to the end times calamities, even the word apocalypse⁹⁵ demonstrates our misunderstanding. I should have used the term eschatos⁹⁶ or eschatology⁹⁷ but then who would really get what I'm saying. Have you played Jenga? I mean we stack all these prophecies on top of each other and come to a conclusion about what we think is happening and will happen in these dark times. Pull one block out and it all falls down. Our inheritance is far greater and far higher. Remember, it's the deeds of a man, and not the prophecy that determine his destiny.

Here are more suggestions: Let's favor honest and open discussion. Patience to try to learn each other's language. Patience to resist attempting to persuade until we really have something, and then only carefully. Consider that anything we think we've learned or think we know could perhaps be lacking context, tinged with error or just wrong. Let's focus on trying to figure out what God desires. Borrowing from JFK,⁹⁸ ask not what God can do for you, but what you can do for your God and learn from your God.

As far as where to go with our studies, I recommend Nibley's Temple and Cosmos⁹⁹ among other things. If you've read it, read it again with new eyes. Same with the new Book of Mormon translation. That's what the alternative text is supposed to do—open our eyes to ideas we've missed and help us understand what we've misunderstood, besides being easier to understand for those who are new to this inheritance. The same with Gospel of John and The Testimony of St John.¹⁰⁰ It's very telling and important that these works are duplicated in the canon this body is accepting as part of its inheritance. It gives us new, higher and better perspective. That's what Mormonism is—to seek out these things. I'm starting to sound like the introduction to Star Trek... “to explore strange new worlds; to seek out new life and new civilizations; to boldly go where no man has gone before...”¹⁰¹

But in all seriousness I hope you have that same feeling of excitement about the religion you profess to believe in. Our inheritance, our mission, is to seek out these new and brighter horizons. They are only new to us because we have forgotten everything and lost our identity. They will become familiar to us as we encounter them. Ours is a legacy of hope, discovery and potential. We are some of the few Christians who believe we have a right to this knowledge. We

95 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/ἀποκάλυψις> “revelation, unveiling, uncovering”

96 <https://lsj.gr/wiki/ἔσχατος>

97 Study of the end times, the final wars, judgment etc., <https://www.etymonline.com/word/eschatology>

98 “And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country.” John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961

99 Hugh Nibley – Temple and Cosmos, 1992 FARMS / Deseret Book
100T&C Section 171

101Star Trek 1966-1969 etc.

are among the few who believe in eternal progression. I sincerely hope we will take up this torch and carry it with honor.