

Oldest OT scripture: Job (older than Pentateuch)

Three OT books universally regarded as "wisdom Literature:

Job

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Seven OT books have been regarded as "wisdom literature"

Job

Psalms

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Solomon

In the Septuagint the Book of Wisdom and Sirach

*Perhaps Zeno was
elder.*

Wisdom is about mature faith: Where disappointments and difficulties are accepted, and anger against God for life's setbacks is exposed as foolishness. Wisdom literature teaches about enduring, patient, determined and resilient faith.

Job's friends mistook suffering with Divine disfavor.

One of the major themes is faithfulness through adversity and trials.

The first verse of the Book of Mormon echoes with Wisdom. It contains a profound lesson learned over a lifetime. Nephi explained, "having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days[.]" NC 1 Ne. 1:1

How can one suffer "many afflictions" and be "highly favored of the Lord"?

Are they perhaps related to one another?

Do those who are "highly favored" need to encounter "afflictions" to understand God's grace and favor toward them?

THIS IS A WISDOM THEME!

when we say life should be easier we are foolish - not wise

In his final blessing to his son Helaman, Alma says something similar: "I do know that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions[" NC Alma 17:1.

Trusting God does not remove life's "trials"

Trusting God will not keep "afflictions" from you

Trusting God will not prevent "troubles" in life

The Book of Mormon explains a mature form of faith in God: resilient in the face of difficulty, enduring in the day of trouble, comforting in the moment of affliction.

The faith of the Book of Mormon writers is not superficial, conditional and weak. It bears up under trial. It is proven in troubles. It accompanies during afflictions.

The Book of Mormon, among other things, is a Wisdom text.

What if trials, afflictions and troubles are not negative?

What if they are gifts provided as opportunities to "prove us therewith," so we and God may show what is in our heart?

Job asks: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (OC Job 2:3)

Christ taught: "In this world there are difficult trials to be faced by my followers, but those who remain devoted will, like me, finish the path and experience the fullness of joy." (T&C 171: Test. St. John 10:29)

Each person experiences religion uniquely.

No two persons have read exactly the same library of materials, which is why study of scriptures becomes a valuable common basis for understanding.

Reading scripture calls forth from each person all their background, education and experience as they study.

If a Christian reaches deeply into the New Testament canon, they will eventually be led to study of New Testament Greek. They will discover:

New Testament Greek is commonly believed to have been Koine, a dead form of language about which today we must make assumptions.

There is also a theory that the New Testament was translated into Koine from Aramaic, and that theory is called as Peshitta Primacy, also known as "Aramaic primacy."

If the original was Aramaic, and the Koine version a translation, then there are unresolvable questions about the quality of that translation.

Assumptions make hard-line Christians insecure, and therefore they insist nothing or very little has been lost in understanding Koine Greek.

We do not know for certain the correct pronunciations for some Koine words.

We also do not know the full definitions or meanings for many of the words.

If we are humble about the challenges, we would admit we cannot fully know what the writers intended by what they wrote in the New Testament texts.

We think we can get close, but we should be humble enough to acknowledge the imperfection we confront.

Scholars who dive deeply into the Old Testament find another challenge:

The Old Testament was written in a form of ancient Hebrew that is a dead language. Although Hebrew has been revived, the Old Testament is written in a dead form.

We do not know how many Old Testament words would be correctly pronounced.

We do not know all the definitions for Old Testament language.

"Koin"
Koiny

If we are humble about the challenges, we would admit we can never fully know what the writers intended by what they wrote in the Old Testament texts.

We think we can get close, but we should be humble enough to acknowledge the imperfection we confront.

The majority of Christians feel no need to read their scriptures in the Original Koine Greek or Ancient Hebrew.

Whether they are right about that or not, the more deeply you venture into textual scholarship the more humble you should become about what you actually are able to understand.

In contrast, if you accept the Book of Mormon as scripture, it presents none of these challenges:

It was translated "by the gift and power of God" into English.

The English spoken in 1830 is fully known and understood today, and dictionaries published in 1830 are still available today. Any slight shift in meaning between 1830 and 2019 can be fully determined.

In addition to varying forms of:

-ignorance and study,

-diligence and sloth,

-interest and indifference,

that separate each of us in our religious beliefs, there are also "False Spirits" that mislead and confuse.

The term "False Spirits" is not limited to the idea of a devil, imp or mischievous personage, but includes the much broader attitude, outlook or cultural assumptions that people superimpose atop religion.

False Spirits in the form of ignorant, incomplete or incorrect ideas are easily conveyed from one person to another.

People convey False Spirits every time they teach a false idea and the student accepts the idea.

False Spirits infect every religious tradition on earth. This is not limited to eastern religions that deny Christ, but also include Christianity and Mormonism. So long as there is anything false, or any error, a False Spirit prevails.

Different religious structures lend themselves to be overtaken by False Spirits through different means:

Hierarchy: Only the top need be taken

Diffused: Theological seminaries only need be taken

Individual: Every individual must be overcome

In the new scriptures there is a section in which Joseph Smith discusses at length the topic of False Spirits. It is an editorial he published in the *Times and Seasons* on April 1, 1842. This new Section 147 in the Teachings and Commandments is worth careful study.

Keep in mind the meaning of several words:

“Priesthood”: is a fellowship: men, men and angels, man and Christ, man and The Father.

In Section 147 Joseph ties discerning of false spirits to Priesthood, and therefore when a person has an association with Heavenly angels, they are not apt to be misled by fallen, false spirits.

“Keys”: Joseph Smith also used the term “keys” to mean understanding, the greatest “key” being the ability to ask God and receive an answer. (See, T&C 10:1 “I have given him the keys of the mysteries of the revelations which are sealed[.]” 141:32: “Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive[.]” 141:33: “Let my servant William (Law) also receive the keys by which he may ask and receive blessings.”)

“Keys of the kingdom”: When a person can ask and receive an answer, they hold the “keys of the kingdom” because the kingdom belongs to God and God must direct its affairs for it to be His.

Here are some excerpts from Joseph’s editorial (Section 147):

“One great evil is that men are ignorant of the nature of spirits: their power, laws, government, intelligence, etc., and imagine that when there is anything like power, revelation, or vision manifested, that **it must be of God.**”

After criticizing the experiences of Methodists, Presbyterians and others, Joseph inquired about manifestations of False Spirits:

“they consider it to be the power of God and a glorious manifestation from God — a manifestation of what? **Is there any intelligence communicated?** Are the curtains of Heaven withdrawn or the **purposes of God developed?** Have they seen and conversed with an angel — or **have the glories of futurity burst upon their view?** No!”

“nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God.”

“The Turks, the Hindus, the Jews, the Christians, the Indian in fact all nations have been deceived, imposed upon, and injured through the mischievous effects of false spirits.”

“And we shall at last have to come to this conclusion, whatever we may think of revelation, that without it we can neither know nor understand anything of God, or the Devil[.]”

“it is equally as plain that **without a divine communication** they must remain in ignorance. The world always mistook false prophets for true ones, and those that were sent of God they considered to be false prophets and hence they killed, stoned, punished, and imprisoned the true prophets, and these had to hide themselves ‘in deserts, and dens, and caves of the earth,’ and though the most honorable men of the earth, they banished them from their society as vagabonds, whilst they cherished, honored, and supported knaves, vagabonds, hypocrites, impostors, and the basest of men.”

Read that section. False Spirits are actively involved whenever God begins a work. And there are many False Spirits vying for your acceptance now at work among us.

That having been said:

It is time to stop dividing and begin uniting. There are enough divisions in Christianity and in Mormonism. This does not need to continue. The Restoration is intended to bring unity, not division. Division needs to end.

“I found that there was a great clash in religious sentiment: if I went to one society they referred me to one plan, and another to another, each one pointing to his own particular creed as the *summum bonum* of perfection. Considering that **all could not be right and that God could not be the author of so much confusion**, I determined to investigate the subject more fully, believing that **if God had a church it would not be split up into factions**, and that if he taught one society to worship one way and administer in one set of ordinances, he would not

teach another principles which were diametrically opposed." (T&C 146:4)

The vineyard was cumbered with all sorts of strange fruit (NC Jacob 3:16)

"this is **the last time** that I shall nourish my vineyard, for the end is nigh at hand and the season speedily cometh. And if ye labor with your mights with me, ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come.

"And it came to pass that the servants did go and labor with their mights, and **the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them**. And they did **obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard in all things**. And there began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard. And the natural branches began to grow and thrive exceedingly, and the **wild branches began to be plucked off and to be cast away**; and they did keep the root and the top thereof equal, according to the strength thereof. And thus **they labored with all diligence, according to the commandments of the Lord** of the vineyard, even **until the bad had been cast away** out of the vineyard and the Lord had preserved unto himself, that the trees had become again the natural fruit. And they became like unto one body, and **the fruit were equal**." (NC Jacob 3:26-27)

Book of Mormon: Libraries are filled with debates between Polemics v. Apologetics

All literature debates pro and con
I spent decades studying the back and forth of polemicists and
apologists.

Hugh Nibley: Apologetics

Alma: Experiment on word: Plant? How

NC Alma 16:

But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your
faculties, even to an **experiment** upon my
words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea,
even if ye can no more than **desire to believe**,
let this desire work in you, even until ye
believe in a manner that ye can **give place for
a portion of my words**. [How do you do that?]
Now we will compare the word unto a seed.
Now, if ye give place that a seed may be
planted in your heart, behold, if it be a true
seed, or a good seed — if ye **do not cast it out
by your unbelief**, that ye will resist the spirit
of the Lord — behold, it will begin to swell
within your breasts. And when you feel these
swelling motions, ye will begin to say within
yourselves, It must needs be that this is a good
seed, or that the word is good, for it beginneth
to **enlarge my soul**; yea, it beginneth to
enlighten my understanding; yea, and it
beginneth to be **delicious to me**. Now behold,
would not this increase your faith? I say unto
you, yea. Nevertheless, it hath not grown up to
a perfect knowledge. But behold, as the seed
swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to
grow, then ye must needs say that the seed is

good, for behold, it swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow. And now behold, will not this strengthen your faith? Yea, it will strengthen your faith, for ye will say, I know that this is a good seed, for behold, it sprouteth and beginneth to grow. And now behold, are ye sure that this is a good seed? I say unto you, yea; for every seed bringeth forth unto its own likeness. Therefore, if a seed groweth, it is good; but if it groweth not, behold, it is not good, therefore it is cast away. And now behold, because ye have tried the experiment and planted the seed, and it swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, ye must needs know that the seed is good.

And now behold, is your knowledge perfect? Yea, your knowledge is perfect in that thing, and your faith is dormant, and this because you know. For ye know that the word hath swelled your souls, and ye also know that it hath sprouted up, that your **understanding doth begin to be enlightened** and your **mind doth begin to expand**. O then, is not this real? I say unto you, yea, because **it is light**; and whatsoever is **light is good**, because it is discernible; therefore, ye must know that it is good.

And now behold, after ye have tasted this light, is your knowledge perfect? Behold, I say unto you, nay; neither must ye lay aside your faith, for ye have only exercised your faith to plant the seed, that ye might try the experiment to know if the seed was good. And behold, as the tree beginneth to grow, ye will say, Let us

nourish it with great care, that it may get root, that it may grow up and bring forth fruit unto us. And now behold, if ye **nourish it with much care**, it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit. But if ye neglect the tree and take no thought for its nourishment, behold, it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root, it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out. Now this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable, but it is because your ground is barren and ye will not nourish the tree; therefore, ye cannot have the fruit thereof. And thus it is: if ye will not nourish the word, looking forward with an eye of faith to the fruit thereof, ye can never pluck of the fruit of the tree of life. But if ye will nourish the word, yea, nourish the tree as it beginneth to grow, by your faith, with great **diligence**, and with **patience**, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold, it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life. And because of your **diligence**, and your faith, and your **patience** with the word, in nourishing it that it may take root in you, behold, by and by, ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure. And ye shall feast upon this fruit, even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst. Then, my brethren, ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your

diligence, and patience, and long-suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you.

MY SPIRITUAL BREAKTHROUGH:

Took Book of Mormon seriously. No doubts and no apologetics, just acceptance and trying to understand it.

Glints: Hints

Breathed spirit of the writers

Beheld more than the text yields to the cautious and wary reader

Book of Mormon has a Spirit also: Christ

It was a better text than any other in conveying the Spirit of Christ. It is the most correct book. A man can get closer to God by abiding its precepts than any other book.

In the language of the New Testament, the statement by Christ:

“Think not that I have come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to **fulfill**; for truly I say unto you, heaven and Earth must pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall by no means pass from the law **until** (Joseph Smith added this word) all shall be fulfilled. Whoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so to do, he shall by no means be saved in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever shall do and teach these commandments of the law until it shall be fulfilled, the same shall be called great and shall

be saved in the kingdom of Heaven. For I say unto you, except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven. (NC Matt. 3:17)

The English word "fulfilled" was translated from the Greek word pleroo. Pleroo can be interpreted to mean to make fully known, proclaim fully. In that sense a scholar might conclude from the Greek that Christ's statement has nothing to do with ending or completing.

Any ambiguity about what Christ intended is removed when His declaration to the Nephites is added:

"And it came to pass that when Jesus had said these words, he perceived that there were some among them who marveled, and **wondered what he would concerning the law of Moses, for they understood not the saying that old things had passed away** and that all things had become new. And he said unto them, Marvel not that I said unto you that old things had passed away and that all things had become new. Behold, I say unto you that **the law is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel. Therefore, the law in me is fulfilled, for I have come to fulfill the law; therefore, it hath an end.** ... the covenant which I have made with my people is not all fulfilled, **but the law which was given unto Moses hath an end in me.**" (NC 3 Ne. 7:2)

Those who teach the Law of Moses has not come to an end are led by a False Spirit.

That having been said, just because someone has been misled by a False Spirit that does not make them evil. It makes them only misled.

Recall Christ rebuking Peter and calling him "satan"

There are many people who are only kept from the truth because they do not know where to find it. The obligation of those who can teach truth is to teach it. Overcoming most False Spirits is to be done by:

Gentleness, meekness, pure knowledge and persuasion. Not by rebuking, condemning and dismissing the honest seeker for truth. At some point every one of us has emerged from a cloud of falsehoods into acceptance of truth. We are no better than others who remain under that cloud. But we have an obligation to invite them to join in receiving light and truth.

Nevertheless, the prophets are not all fulfilled, and there will yet be many other things returned and restored. This will include Holy Days, when we have a Holy Place to observe in proper order the things practiced between the time of Adam until the time of Abraham.

NC Matt: 4:13: "And when Jesus departed from there, **two blind men** followed him, crying and saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said unto them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith, be it unto you. And their eyes were opened. **And sternly he charged them, saying, Keep my commandments and see you tell no man in this place, that no man know it.**"

NC Mark 4:14: "And again, departing from the borders of Tyre and Sidon he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the middle of the region of Decapolis. And they brought unto him one that was **deaf, and had an impediment in**

his speech. And they petitioned him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude and put his finger into his ears, and he spit and touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven he sighed and said unto him, Ephphatha (that is, Be opened). And immediately his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was untied and he spoke plain. And **he charged them that they should tell no man.** But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published him, and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.”

Returning from the Mount of Transfiguration: NC Mark 5:6 “And as they came down from the mountain, **he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen** until the Son of man was risen from the dead.”

NC Luke 6:12 (after raising a man’s dead daughter) “And he put them all out, and he took her by the hand and he called saying, Maid arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway, and he commanded to give her food. And **her parents were astonished, but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.**”

NC Luke 4:10 (after healing a leper) “Lord, if you will you can make me clean. And he put forth his hand and touched him saying, I will. Be clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And **he charged him to tell no man,** but said unto him, Go and show yourself to the

priests, and offer for your cleansing according as Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.”

Christ said to “tell no one” because it would attract the wrong kind of follower: sign seekers.

Satan sought signs from Him were self-serving: bread for Him to eat when hungry. Show of angelic support when cast off the temple’s pinnacle.

At his death the wicked demanded signs from Him: Sparing Himself from the crucifixion, etc.

Signs are by their very nature self-serving and attention grabbing.

They attract followers. The Jews knew this and feared Christ’s miracles would result in Him becoming greatly popular:

“Then many of the Jews who came to Mary and had **seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.** But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council and said, What shall we do? For **this man does many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him** and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.” (NC John 7:7)

But these would be the wrong kind of follower.

The gentiles crave that sort of thing.

Gentiles now try to get a sign to follow because their hearts are wrong.

Signs follow faith, and are deeply personal.

T&C 82:22: "And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall do many wonderful works, in my name they shall cast out devils, in my name they shall heal the sick, in my name they shall open the eyes of the blind and unstop the ears of the deaf, and the tongue of the dumb shall speak, and if any man shall administer poison unto them, it shall not hurt them, and the poison of a serpent shall not have power to harm them. But a commandment I give unto them that **they shall not boast themselves of these things, neither speak them before the world**, for these things are given unto you for your profit and for salvation."

Melchizedek and the order of priesthood he obtained described in OC Gen. 7:19:

"For God, having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed, with an oath by Himself, that everyone being ordained **after this order and calling**, should have **power, by faith, to break mountains**, (Jacob 3:2: "we obtain a hope and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea." Nephi explained this is God's power Hel. 4:10: "For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God. Yea, behold, at his voice doth the hills and the mountains tremble and

Gen 4:13:

And he spoke the word of the Lord and the earth trembled and the mountains fled even according to his command and the rivers of water turned out of their course, ...

quake, and by the power of his voice they are broken up and become smooth, yea, even like unto a valley. Yea, by the power of his voice doth the whole earth shake, yea, by the power of his voice doth the foundations rock, even to the very center. Yea, and if he saith unto the earth, Move — and it is moved.” Moroni explained about the Brother of Jared: Ether 5:6: “For the brother of Jared said unto the mountain Zerin, Remove — and it was removed. And if he had not had faith, it would not have moved.”) to **divide the seas** (Moses), to **dry up waters** (Joshua), to **turn them out of their course** (Enoch), to put at **defiance the armies** of nations, to **divide the earth**, to **break every band**, to **stand in the presence of God**, to do all things according to **His will, according to His command**: **subdue principalities and powers** (THESE ARE IN THE SPIRITUAL REALM), and this by the will of the Son of God, who was from before the foundation of the world. And men having this faith, coming up unto this order of God, were translated and taken up into Heaven.”

Any one of these is a confirming sign. It is not required for all of these signs to be given before faith is confirmed. And because these are gifts from God, it is God who decides when the sign will be given. God determines if, when, what, and how often a sign will be given; NOT the will of men.

Notice that the Brother of Jared’s moving the mount Zerin is NOT recorded in his record or Moroni’s abridgement of

that record. It is only mentioned in passing as an illustration.

Even if we have faith to participate, the signs are God's. We are only witnesses. God sent Moses to deliver signs to Egypt, but the signs were God's. There is only one way in which a mortal can have discretion to invoke God's power, which involves one of the three kinds of sealing power I've previously discussed. That third kind is described in the Book of Helaman:

"I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works, yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will. Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels that ye shall have power over this people and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people. Behold, I give unto you power that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven. And thus shall ye have power among this people. And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple, It shall be rent in twain — and it shall be done. And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth — and it shall be done. And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass." (NC Hel. 3:19)

The reason Nephi was granted this authority was explained by God: "thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will."

When Nephi used that authority shortly afterward, he deferred to God, prayed, and asked if God would cause a famine to stop the violence of the degenerate people of his generation:

“And it came to pass that in this year Nephi did cry unto the Lord, saying, O Lord, do not suffer that this people shall be destroyed by the sword, but O Lord, rather let there be a famine in the land to stir them up in remembrance of the Lord their God, and perhaps they will repent and turn unto thee. And so it was done according to the words of Nephi, and there was a great famine upon the land, among all the people of Nephi.” (Id., 4:2)

Break every band: Nephi: In the wilderness: “And it came to pass that they did lay their hands upon me, for behold, they were exceeding wroth; and they did bind me with cords, for they sought to take away my life, that they might leave me in the wilderness to be devoured by wild beasts. But it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord, saying, O Lord, according to my faith which is in thee, wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren? Yea, even give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound? And it came to pass that when I had said these words, behold, the bands were loosed from off my hands and feet, and I stood before my brethren and I spake unto them again.” (NC 1 Ne. 2:4)

BUT: Nephi on the boat: “nevertheless, they did not loose me. And on the fourth day which we had been driven back, the tempest began to be exceeding sore. And it came to pass that we were about to be swallowed up in the depths of the sea. And after we had been driven back upon the waters for the space of four days, my brethren began to see that the

judgments of God were upon them, and that they must perish save that they should repent of their iniquities. Wherefore, they came unto me and loosed the bands which were upon my wrists, and behold, they had swollen exceedingly; and also mine ankles were much swollen, and great was the soreness thereof." (1 Ne. 5:30)

Moroni explained:

"Wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness — not until after the trial of your faith. For it was by faith that Christ shewed himself unto our fathers after he had risen from the dead, and he shewed not himself unto them until after they had faith in him; wherefore, it must needs be that some had faith in him, for he shewed himself not unto the world but because of the faith of men. ... Behold, it was by faith that they of old were called after the Holy Order of God. Wherefore, by faith was the law of Moses given. But in the gift of the Son hath God prepared a more excellent way, and it is by faith that it hath been fulfilled. For if there be no faith among the children of men, God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he shewed not himself until after their faith." (NC Ether 5:2)

I have witnessed many miracles. I have been ministered to by angels, and been both in the presence of and received authority and instruction from Jesus Christ. I have been shown unspeakable things. Yet I know that I am nothing.

I fear God, and pray continually, and submit to His commandments, even when it is difficult. I disagree and argue with God, and provide my best advice and counsel when I honestly believe something asked of me is unwise, or when I believe I am not the right person to be doing an assignment.

God has been patient, faithful, and willing to reason with me as one man reasons with another. I cannot tell you how often God's words to Isaiah have been vindicated:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. ... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (OC Isa. 20:2)

There is no institution for us, and none is planned. We are on our own, to individually accept the responsibilities of discipleship. We should help one another, but we are not powerless when strange fruit comes among us. If a teaching does not conform to the Book of Mormon, reject it. Denounce it. Be done with it. The Book of Mormon is the standard for our faith, the rule for our beliefs and practices, and a covenant for our day.

New Scriptures: Greatest event in our lifetime.

Condemned in 1831: Not only to "say" but to "do"

Rejected in 1844

Not one thing done to repent and remember until now