

Signs Follow Faith
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The oldest, Old Testament scripture is the Book of Job. It's older than even the Pentateuch. There are three Old Testament texts in the King James Version of the Bible that are universally regarded as Wisdom texts: Job and Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. A total of seven Old Testament texts have been regarded as Wisdom literature, some of which are not in the King James Version.

Wisdom literature 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 his 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* (1 Nephi 1:1 RE). He saw many afflictions. He was highly favored of the Lord in **all** his days, including those in which the affliction was visited on him.

How can one suffer many afflictions and be highly favored of the Lord? Wisdom literature would suggest that perhaps they are related to one another. Do those who are highly favored need to encounter afflictions to understand God's grace and favor toward them? That is a Wisdom theme.

When we say life should be easier, we are foolish. We're not wise.

In his final blessing to his son Helaman, Alma says something similar: *I...know that whosoever shall put their trust in God shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions* (Alma 17:1 RE). Trusting God does not remove life's trials. Trusting God will not keep afflictions from you. Trusting God will not prevent troubles in your 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 is, among other things, a Wisdom text. What if trials, afflictions, and troubles are not negative? What if they are gifts provided as an opportunity to prove us therewith so that 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?* (Job 2:3 RE). 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* (Testimony of St. John 10:29 RE).

Each person experiences religion uniquely. No two persons have read exactly the same library of materials, which is why study of scriptures become a valuable common basis for understanding one another.

Reading scripture calls forth from each person all their background, education, and experience as they study and learn from the text. If a Christian reaches deeply into the New Testament canon, they'll eventually be lead to study New Testament Greek. Then 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's also a theory that the New Testament was translated into Koine from Aramaic, and that theory is called the Peshitta Primacy, also known as the Aramaic Primacy. If the original was in Aramaic and the Koine version a translation, then there will be unresolved questions about the quality of that translation that we can no longer answer.

Assumptions make hardline 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're 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 delve 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. If we're 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 separates each of us in our religious beliefs, there are also false spirits that mislead and confuse.

The term "false spirit" 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.

If you have a hierarchy, only the top needs to be taken captive by a false spirit. If it is a diffused religion, then all you have to do is take captive the theological seminaries in order to spread the false spirit. But if the religion is individual and each person is standing on their own—accountable for their relation to God, accountable to learn, to pray, to reach upward, and to have God connect with them individually—then the only way to corrupt a ~~diffused~~ [individual] religion is to corrupt every single believer, every single practitioner.

In the new scriptures there is a section in which Joseph Smith discusses at length the topic of false spirits. It's an editorial he published in the Times and Seasons on April the 1st of 1842. This new section 147 in the Teachings and Commandments is worth careful study—the Teachings and Commandments being the new volume of scripture recovering and restoring the text as it was originally; available (if you're interested) either for free online to read at www.scriptures.info, or if you want to purchase a copy, it's available through Amazon.

This new section of the Teachings and Commandments is worth careful study. Keep in mind the meaning of several words. Priesthood means a fellowship. You can have a priesthood that is a fellowship of men. You can have a priesthood that is a fellowship between men and angels. You can have a priesthood that is a fellowship between man and Christ; and you can have a priesthood that is a fellowship between man and God the Father.

In section 147, Joseph Smith 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.

Joseph Smith also uses the term "keys" in section 147. Joseph used to term to mean understanding—the greatest "key" being the ability to ask God and receive an answer.

In the Teachings and Commandments (Section 10 Verse 1), *I have given him [referring to Joseph] the keys of the mysteries of the revelations which are sealed.* In section 141, Joseph, speaking about his ordination of Hyrum and endowing and in blessing him: *Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive (vs 32),* and then a reference again in that same section to another servant, *Let my servant William...also receive the keys by which he may ask and receive blessings (vs 33).*

Joseph used the term, "keys of the kingdom" to mean: when a person can ask and receive an answer each time he asks, 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[s], laws, government, intelligence, [and so on], and imagine that when there is anything like power, revelation, or vision manifested, that it **must be of God** (vs 6; emphasis added).* That is a great evil.

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? (ibid).* He's just described what these people take as glorious manifestations, and he says, despite their supernatural appearance, it's 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 — [and] have the glories of futurity burst upon their view? No!*** (ibid; emphasis added). In other words, nothing has advanced that is of God—edifying, instructing, and providing greater intelligence. It's simply spiritual voyeurism, and its evil.

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 (ibid, vs 9). Then he extends this outward as he continued: 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 (ibid, vs 10).

Then he (close to the end) says,

*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** (emphasis added) 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 the 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. (ibid, vs 11)*

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's 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.

In one of the accounts that Joseph Smith wrote (about what precipitated his calling by God)—that appears in the new Teachings and Commandments as T&C (Section) 146—Joseph wrote this about what provoked him to go out and to pray to get an answer from God about which church to join:

*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 [other] principles which were diametrically opposed. (vs 4; emphasis added)*

That's what precipitated the restoration, and there are those who say we have reached a point of stagnation; we have reached a point of corruption; or we have reached a point of apostasy in the various factions of the Mormon world. And people can agree something must be done; something needs to be done.

But people are crying as much *lo here, and... lo there* (Joseph Smith History 1:11 RE) in their current search to try and reconnect through the restoration as were the Presbyterians and the Methodists and the Baptists at the time that Joseph went into the woods to pray.

What has come of the restoration? It's reached exactly the point now that was a dead end at the beginning. What is wrong with us that we can't overlook—based upon the individual experiences, the individual study, the individual's comprehension, even the individual's prayerful reflection and guidance through that—and accept one another, when in sincerity all of us are trying to follow God?

Why have we now managed to produce (among ourselves) contention, division, disruption? What is wrong with us? Better yet, what's wrong with me? Because whatever it is, it's wrong with every one of us.

It's no different than the mess that Joseph Smith saw in the landscape of Christianity in 1820 when he went to the woods to pray.

We should be ashamed of ourselves. We should be ashamed of our division. It should repulse us so much that I should be readily willing to embrace you even if you have some idea with which I disagree. I don't have your background. I don't have your experience. I haven't lived your life. I have to assume that you've reached the conclusion that you have reached because of the life you've lived.

And perhaps if you and I were to take a long enough walk with one another, we could reach an agreement. But we don't do that, just like the Christian's didn't do that, because we're unwilling to suffer the slightest variation to pass by without commenting on it, criticizing it, and rejecting it without ever considering that there may be a wealth of information that underlies that proposition. And if we understood that well enough, we might say, "Now that I understand, I see where your point fits in to a larger gospel context, and I need to embrace it. I would like to embrace it, but to do so in this fashion, because let me give you what underlies my experience, my background, and my education. " Why do we do this?

The vineyard that the Lord began the restoration in was cumbered with all sorts of strange fruit. I mean—

(I've spent a lifetime referring to it as the Jacob chapter 5. In the new Book of Mormon layouts, it's one of the very few chapters that I can actually point you to from memory. It's Jacob chapter 3 in the new layout. So I'm becoming familiar with it.)

Talking about the condition of this vineyard, and its cumbered with all sorts of strange fruit—none of it worth harvesting; none of it worth keeping; none of it worth laying up and preserving against the harvest—the allegory says:

*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 with 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.** (Jacob 3:26-27 RE; emphasis added)*

Well, that's fairly critical. The Lord's going to labor with you, but He's going to expect you to obey His commandments in all things. Have you recently read the *Answer to the Prayer for Covenant*? Are you determined to obey the master of the vineyard and his commandments in all things? Maybe we ought to read that twice before we berate one another, belittle one another, argue with one another, dismiss one another. Otherwise, we're really not laboring with the Lord of the vineyard to help for the coming harvest. Instead, we're embracing a false spirit, and we're dividing one another, and we're trying—

Our ambition, whether we're willing to acknowledge it or not, our ambition is to set this into the same sort of divisive factions as the Lord condemned to Joseph in 1820. They have

a form of godliness but they [deny] the power thereof (JSH 2:5 RE). They teach for [commandments] the [doctrines] of men (ibid). They're all corrupt.

*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** (Jacob 3:27 RE; emphasis added).*

Some of the plucking and some of the casting away is voluntarily done by those who submit to false spirits that stir them up to anger against one another, and they depart from fellowship thinking themselves justified before God, when in fact, all they're doing is being plucked and cast away.

And they did keep the root and the top thereof equal, according to the strength thereof (ibid). We are seeking to keep it equal. Everyone of us is on the same plain. No one's getting supported by tithing money. If they are, that's done by a local fellowship that has voluntarily determined that they have one among them in need. Because the tithes are gathered and used to help the poor. There's no general fund being accumulated, and there's no one who does anything that they get compensated for.

This is the only group of people whose religion requires, incessantly, sacrifice. No one gets paid. No one gets remunerated. Everything that is done is done at the price of sacrifice. If you are a person in need among a fellowship, the tithes are appropriately used because that's what they're for. They're for the poor. They're not for the leader.

You have to keep the root and you have to keep the top equal. If you allow inequality to creep in at the beginning, the end result is lavish palaces in which some fare sumptuously and others ask to eat the crumbs that fall from the table because they're treated so unequally, and their despair and their poverty and their need goes ignored.

Among us, it can't go ignored, because the money is gathered at a fellowship level, and if there is someone in need among you and you don't minister to their needs, you're cruel. You're...

*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** (ibid; emphasis added). If you can't tolerate equality; if you can't tolerate the top and the root being equal; if you can't tolerate peace among brethren, then go ahead, and be bad and cast yourself away. If you feel moved upon to do that, well, that's the Lord of the vineyard getting rid of you.*

*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** (ibid; emphasis added).*

That word "equal" shows up so often in the labor that the Lord of the vineyard is trying to accomplish with the people that you ought to take note. We ought to probably typeset it:

EQUAL in double-sized font. We're not going to do that, so you have to underline the word, or circle the word, or pay attention to it. The purpose is to go and become equal with one another. As soon as you set out to create rank and position and hierarchy—

Admittedly, within the parable there is a top, and there is a root, admittedly; but the objective is to achieve equality. If you start out saying the one is greater or better than the other, you're never going to arrive at the point that is the purpose of the parable, the purpose of the labor of the Lord of the vineyard: *and the fruit were equal*.

The Book of Mormon has had libraries of material written, and almost every single volume in the libraries of Book of Mormon material are filled with debates between polemicists and apologists. All the literature basically debates the pro and the con. I spent decades studying the back and forth of polemicists and apologists. One of the fellows that I admire greatly is Hugh Nibley, and Hugh Nibley was one of the very first serious-minded Mormons to take the Book of Mormon seriously. If you read what I wrote about the Book of Mormon history of scholarship in *Eighteen Verses*, you find that, literally, it was Hugh Nibley that ultimately persuaded the First Presidency that the Book of Mormon should be studied and taken seriously.

There were stake presidents and bishops in the LDS tradition who never read the book at the time, and when Hugh Nibley mounted a defense of the Book of Mormon, then-President David O. McKay essentially said, "You talk about it like you think it's true," and Hugh Nibley defended it. At the end of the day, however, Hugh Nibley is an apologist. He's defending the faith. The Book of Mormon itself, on the other hand, has this passage from Alma where he invites you to experiment upon the word. He says, You ought to plant it. Now think for a moment about what it means to plant something.

Alma says: *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**. Just think for yourself, for a moment, how you would do that. Now we will compare the word unto a seed. Now, if ye give place [unto that seed] 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 [yourself], 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 (un)to me**. Now behold, would not this increase your faith? I say unto you, yea. (Alma 16:27-28 RE; emphasis added)*

And he goes on to describe what happens after that and how it converts into knowledge once you gained experience with the process.

*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][this not] 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 [great] 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: [and] 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 [ye shall] by and by... pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, ... which is white above all that is white, yea, ... pure above all that is pure... And then you thirst not and you hunger not. (ibid, vs 29-30; emphasis added)*

Diligence, patience. Diligence, faith, patience.

We want a faith that will respond like Google. We don't want God to prepare a banquet' we want fast food and a short order cook and someone that will slap something on our plate fast, fast, fast! And the Book of Mormon is saying, "Slow down. Diligence isn't quick. Patience isn't fast." Planting the seed—

It's like the kids in elementary school that plant the pumpkin seed in the Styrofoam cup, and every day they go over and look at the Styrofoam cup, and nothing seems to be happening. And before long, a third of the class has killed the seed because they dug it up to see what's going on. Patience. Patience and diligence. Three times: diligence and patience. Diligence and patience.

I have had spiritual breakthroughs that are so profound and so sacred that when I described them one time I did so with only nine words. But I can tell you why it happened:

I taught the Book of Mormon in a Gospel Doctrine class for four different years on cycles while I was a Gospel Doctrine teacher, each time pushing the Book of Mormon deeper and deeper; always, for the first couple of decades, being a little reticent, being a little skeptical.

I accepted the arguments of the apologist. I knew, I understood, and I had studied the arguments of the polemicists.

But Alma was asking that I do something different. Alma was saying, "Hey, why don't you just experiment with this thing, and plant it as if you believed it. Plant it as if you had faith in it. So forget about the pros and cons, accept the Book of Mormon at face value, and let the Book of Mormon define itself; let the Book of Mormon be the source from which you evaluate whether or not it enlightens you, whether or not it appeals to your heart, to your soul, and to your mind."

And so I experimented on the word, and I took the Book of Mormon as if it were actually a revelation from God translated by the gift and power of God and delivered to me through no human instrumentality. Joseph Smith may have dictated it, and Oliver Cowdery may have penned most of it, but it was translated by the gift and power of God. Therefore, the book was translated into English by the Lord.

And so I took the Book of Mormon seriously. I entertained no doubts. I employed no apologetics. I just accepted the book and tried to understand it. As I did so, going through the text of the Book of Mormon, there were moments when there were glints where something leapt off the page to me, as if someone had flashed the reflection of the sun off a windshield passing down the street, and it aligns with the right angle of the sun. The text itself seemed to spark to me.

As I took it seriously, I could breathe the spirit of the writers. I beheld more as I went through that text than the text will yield to the cautious and wary reader. The Book of Mormon, like the spirits I referred to earlier, the Book of Mormon also has a spirit, and that spirit is Christ. If you want to relate to the spirit of Christ and not a false spirit, drop all your apprehensions, lower your guard, and see if the Book of Mormon does not yield the spirit of Christ. It was a better text than any other I had encountered in conveying the spirit of Christ. It is, in fact, the most correct book, and a man can get closer to God by abiding its precepts than any other book.

It can be trusted as a source of direct information in our language. We don't have to encounter uncertainties and hurdles in trying to manage the language and understand the vocabulary as is always the challenge when you're looking at a New Testament or an Old Testament text.

The New Testament text has a statement that was made 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** all shall be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments and shall teach men so to do, he shall by no means be saved in the kingdom of Heaven. But whosoever 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. (Matthew 3:17 RE; emphasis added)

That's a text from Joseph Smith's translation or Joseph Smith's Inspired Version of the New Testament, and he's added a few words in there, including the word "until."

The English word that gets used in this text about "fulfilled" was translated from the Greek word *pleroo*. Pleroo can be interpreted: to make fully known, proclaim fully— instead of: to accomplish. In that sense a scholar might conclude from the Greek that Christ's statement has nothing to do with ending or with completing the law of Moses. And there are scholars who have taught that—Christians.

So there's an ambiguity about whether Christ intended for the law of Moses to come fully to an end. Or if he was simply establishing it firmly by fulfilling it or adhering to it. Any ambiguity about what Christ intended is removed when his declaration to the Nephites is added to your understanding:

*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.** (3 Nephi 7:2 RE; emphasis added)*

Those who teach the Law of Moses has not come to an end are led by a false spirit. That having been said, someone that has been misled by a false spirit does not necessarily mean that they are an evil person; it only means that they have been misled. Recall Christ rebuking Peter and calling Peter "Satan" because Peter was advising the Lord against the determined trip to Jerusalem where he would be crucified; and Peter told him, advised him, counseled him, and objected, *[Far] be it... from you Lord. [Don't do this thing]* (Matthew 9:2 RE). And the Lord, responding to Peter, called 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 some truth. We're no better than others who remain under that cloud, but we have an obligation to invite them to join

in receiving light and truth. Likewise, we have an obligation to continue to search for truth. Until you have an understanding of all things, you're still misled, at least in part.

The prophets are not all fulfilled and there will yet be many things returned and restored. This will include holy day(s)—when we have a holy place to observe in proper order the things practiced between the time of Adam until the time of Abraham.

Now I want to talk for a moment about signs that are in the New Testament canon involving Christ, in order to get to a principle that we need to understand. In Matthew:

*And when Jesus departed from there, **two blind men** following 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.** (Matthew 4:13 RE; emphasis added)*

“You need to obey my commandments! You don't tell anyone! You don't tell anyone.”

*And again departing from the borders of Tyre and Sidon [this is from Mark], 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, looked up to Heaven, he sighed and said unto him, ... (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. (Mark 4:14 RE; emphasis added)*

This is from Mark returning from the Mount of Transfiguration: *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 (Mark 5:6 RE; emphasis added).* In Luke, after raising a dead man's daughter, ***Her parents were astonished, but he charged them they should tell no man what was done** (Luke 6:12 RE; emphasis added).* In Luke, after healing a leper: ***He charged him to tell no man** (Luke 4:10 RE; emphasis added).*

Christ said to tell no one because it would attract the wrong kind of follower. It would attract the adulterers. It would attract the **sign seekers.** It would attract the wrong kind of people. Satan tempted Christ asking him for signs that were self-serving. Bread for the Lord to eat when the Lord was hungry. A show of angelic support when he would be cast off the Temple's pinnacle. At his death, the wicked demanded signs from him. Spare yourself from the crucifixion; heal yourself. Signs are by their very nature self-serving and attention

grabbing, and it is just inevitable. They attract followers, and 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 ... Pharisees a council, and said, What shall we do? For **this man does many miracles. If we let him alone, all men will believe on him**, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. (John 7:7 RE; emphasis added)*

But these would be the wrong kind of follower. The gentiles crave that sort of thing. Gentiles who try to get a sign to follow do so because their hearts are wrong. Signs follow faith. Signs follow faith by the will of God, not of man. From the Teachings and Commandments: *And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall do many wonderful works* (T&C 82:22). You want a sign that someone is a follower of Christ? Go ask the single mother with children who's being helped by the tithes of a fellowship that go directly to help her whether that is a wonderful work in her life and in her experience, and that's the first sign—perhaps the primary sign; perhaps the greatest sign. Because it's relieving the need of someone that needs it.

*In my name they shall cast out devils, [and] in my name they shall heal the sick, [and] in my name they shall open the eyes of the blind and un-stop 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. (Ibid; emphasis added)*

They are not given to you to boast about.

Melchizedek and the order of priesthood he obtained is described in the book of Genesis chapter 7, in the current set of scriptures, the Old Covenants: *For God... [swore] 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*** (Genesis 7:19 RE; emphasis added). We have no direct account of when the mountains have been broken by those after that order. We have one indirect reference in the book of Genesis referring to Enoch: *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* (Genesis 4:13 RE).

You need to be careful how you parse that scripture. Enoch spoke the word of the Lord. The word of the Lord is spoken. And in response to the word of the Lord having been spoken, the earth trembled, and the mountains fled even according to his—the Lord—his command. And the rivers of water turned out of their course. Enoch preached, earthquakes followed, mountains moved. In Jacob 3:2 RE, there is another reference: *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.

That's Jacob illustrating that the faith they have has this effect. He doesn't describe that effect having occurred, simply that it's there. Nephi explained this is the power that God entrusted him with in Helaman: *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 quake, and by the power of his voice are broken up and become smooth, yea, even like unto a valley* (Helaman 4:10 RE).

He was given the sealing power. He was told that the earth will obey you—because he knew that he would not do anything with that power other than what God willed. And shortly after being entrusted by God to this, Nephi prays to God and asks God to send a famine to stop the people from killing one another. So here is someone who can speak the word of God, and the earth itself will obey him, and he uses that to get on his knees and pray and ask God. He doesn't command anything.

That kind of endowment of priestly authority is done because God expressed His faith in the man. Can God have faith in you? Can God trust you?

So the list goes on:

- The mountains is the first thing.
- **To divide the seas.** We have an example of that with Moses.
- **To dry up waters.** We have an example of that with Joshua when they reached the river Jordan.
- **To turn them out of their course**, which was done again at the time of Enoch.
- **To put at defiance the armies of nations**—Elijah.
- **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** (Genesis 7:19 RE; emphasis added).

When it comes to breaking every band, keep that in mind because we're going to return to that in a moment.

And then it says to **subdue principalities and powers** (ibid). These are in the spiritual realm. Commanding devils, subduing principalities and powers. These are rebellious spirits cast down from Heaven. These are those that pretend to be and often are false ministering spirits or angels.

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 (ibid).

Not always the case. The only reason translation occurred is because a mission was assigned to them, but that's outside of this.

Any one of the foregoing signs is a confirming sign. It's not required for all 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 of the Mount Zerihon is not recorded in his record or Moroni's abridgment of that record. It is only mentioned in passing as an illustration (see Ether 5:6 RE). 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 previously discussed. That third kind is described in the book of Helaman and involves Nephi, and I've previously talked about that.

The reason Nephi was granted this authority was explained by God when he said, *Thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will* (Helaman 3:19 RE). When Nephi used that authority shortly afterward, he deferred to God, prayed and asked God if he would cause a famine to stop the violence of the degenerate people of his generation.

One of the signs that someone has this authority is that they can break every band. An illustration of this is in Nephi. In the first book of Nephi, when Nephi, in the wilderness is bound by his brothers, left behind so that wild beasts would kill him:

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. (1 Nephi 2:4 RE)

Nephi is evidencing one of the signs of a person who is entrusted with that ordination of priesthood or that order of priesthood to which Melchizedek had been previously ordained. So we have a sign, and we have a testimony, and he's broken the bands, and it confirms who he is. But later, on the boat, Nephi was bound again, and a tempest came up:

Nevertheless, they did not loose me. And on the fourth day which we had been driven back, the tempest began to be exceedingly 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 they should repent of their iniquities. Wherefore, they came unto me and [loosened] the bands which were upon

my wrists, and behold, they had swollen exceedingly; and also mine ankles [which] were much swollen, and great was the soreness thereof. (1 Nephi 5:30 RE)

Nephi could not break the bands, and he suffered because of it. Why would that same God (who entrusted to Nephi the power and the authority to demonstrate one of the signs that he was beloved and trusted of God, ordained to the order of Melchizedek, and could break the bands) leave him in a bound condition for days, while his hands and (his) feet are swelling? Why would he do that? Why is God not Google? Why is God not fast food? Why is God not a short order cook that can be bossed around by those to whom he has entrusted this authority? Why does God leave them always subordinate to the will of God? Why does the conferral of the sealing power upon Nephi and Helaman state that it is only because he will obey God? Why must all men always remain subordinate to God?

Moroni explained this principle:

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 and 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 [there is] no faith among the children of men, God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he [showeth] not himself until after their faith. (Ether 5:2 RE)

I have witnessed many miracles. I have been ministered to by angles and have been both in the presence of and received instruction from Jesus Christ. I've been shown unspeakable things, but I know that I am nothing. I fear God, and I pray continually and submit to his commandments even when it's difficult. I disagree with, I argue with, and I provide my best advice and counsel when I honestly believe something asked of me is unwise or when I believe I'm not the right person to be doing an assignment.

God is willing to speak plainly as one man speaks to another. God has been patient, faithful, and willing to reason with me as one man reasons with another. I can't 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 (Isaiah 20:2 RE).*

God knows and understand every one of us. God knows and understands when healing would prove to be a curse and not a blessing. God knows and understands when some person of faith, like Job, is called upon to endure something. Christ in the garden begged that the cup be taken from him, and the Father refused that request.

Have any of you ever witnessed the miracle of healing? Because I have; I've participated in some of those. But there are people I know who I would love to have healed, who I begged God for the blessing that they be healed. I've gotten answers. I've been told why they will not be healed. But I don't have the ability to require God to heal at my insistence—nor do any of you; nor has any man ever, in all the account of scriptures. Christ could not heal some people in some instances, and he was the Son of God. In all of scripture, there is only one moment when it appears that anyone could be healed no matter what their condition was—only one time. And at that moment, Christ was resurrected, and he was appearing as a resurrected being, not still as a mortal. As a mortal, Christ could not heal some. As a mortal, Christ could not persuade the Father to change the Father's will.

Some of you, like the antagonists of Job, have said to others of you that you don't have enough faith to be healed. You're worm-tongue. You're a false spirit. You're an accuser of the brethren. You have absolutely no right to make that assertion. Would you tell Christ, when he could not perform a healing, "Jesus, your problem is you don't have enough faith." Because that's essential what you're saying. You're saying, Men ought to be sovereign; not God. You're saying, Signs—which surely are given; signs follow people of faith incessantly. I don't know how many times—

I'm looking at Rob over there taking notes. Hey, Rob, do you know I'm here? He hasn't looked up. I don't know how many times you and I, in company with one another, have witnessed signs. Signs are given. Signs exist. You know what? I've told a few family members; I assume Rob's told a few family members. It's never been on the Internet; it's never been advertised, never found its way into one of my talks; and you know why? Because people that are only interested in signs are corrupt, and if someone will go perform some great sign and boast about it and that's of interest to you, then take your gentile, adulterous predisposition, and go follow them. But you will not witness the miracles of God unless you submit to the commandments of God, and if you do that, signs will follow.

Don't judge another because you think God can be turned into an obedient servant that must heal if you have faith. It doesn't work that way. It didn't work that way for Christ. It won't work that way for us. Go humbly to the throne of God, and petition him for intercession. If you have faith, He will either heal, or if you have faith, he will explain to you in an answer why it's denied. You will know. You will come away with intelligence. What you cannot do is ignore heaven and demand that you have your way. God has been patient, faithful, and willing to reason with me. And God will be patient, faithful, and willing to reason with you.

There's no institution for us, and none is planned. We are all on our own, accountable to individually accept the responsibilities of discipleship. We should help one another in that effort. But we are not powerless when strange fruit comes and cumbers our fellowships. If a teaching does not conform to the Book of Mormon, you are entitled to reject it, to correct it, to be done with it. The Book of Mormon is the standard for our faith, for our day. It is the rule for our beliefs and practices. It is a covenant for our day.

One of the greatest events that has occurred in history is that in our day—in your lifetime—new scriptures have become available. The extent to which that is a good work can hardly be put into words. Moses recovered scripture that had been lost. The Old Testament record originates beginning with Moses. Prior to Moses' day, the only volume of scripture that we can definitely say is preceding Moses' five books is the Book of Job.

In the Book of Mormon there is another prophet who may also have preceded Moses, and that's Zenos. The Book of Mormon quotes directly writings of Zenos. Somewhere over three thousand words of Zenos are quoted directly in the Book of Mormon. He may also be older than the five book of Moses. All of the scripture that was recovered through Moses was recovered again, a second time, through Ezra.

There had been a great deal lost as a consequence of the Babylonian captivity, and when a remnant returned, one of the things that a leader in that remnant did was to recover scripture. So the Old Testament cannon that we're familiar with is really a recovery by Ezra of what had been originally produced in part at the time of Moses. All these texts get corrupted over time.

We have a third attempt to recover the scripture that occurred through the prophet Joseph Smith. The prophet Joseph Smith was commanded to go through the Old and the New Testament and to make inspired corrections to it, and we have that. But the saints were condemned in [1832(1)] because they did not respect the Book of Mormon and the former commandments, not only to say but to do, and that condemnation rested upon all.

One of the things that has been discovered in the effort to recover the scriptures and to get them in a form that closely— At this point it's hopeless to make it exactly, but it is extremely close to what was here originally. One of the things we've learned is that the condemnation was for two things: failure to say, and the failure to do. Most people think that the problem was the failure to do—like, You're condemned because you say it, but you don't do it. That's not what it meant. God condemned them because they weren't saying it, and they weren't doing it. In other words, the Book of Mormon and the former commandments that had been entrusted to the saints: they failed to say it, and they failed to do it, because the text of the Book of Mormon had become "roughed up" in the process.

An extraordinary effort was required in order to try and get it back to the beginning. We know that we did not, because you cannot, at this point, fully recover the original—can't be done. We got as close as we could, and in the process of that recovery effort and praying about it, as a sign to us of divine approval, God made edit corrections to the text of the Book of Mormon, and those have been put into— Divinely, recently obtained corrections to the text have been put into the Book of Mormon, almost every one of which are quotes of Christ. He fixed what he said into a correct set of instructions for us.

The original revelations of Joseph Smith were mishandled, mistreated. They were interlineated by people that probably shouldn't have done that. A great deal of

conscientious effort when into trying to get that recovered. We now have, for the first time—it didn't happen while Joseph Smith was alive—we now have as close and as accurate a set of scriptures as can be recovered at this late date that are remarkably faithful to the restoration that the Lord intended through Joseph Smith.

The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible—the Old and New Testament—when the Latter-day Saints left and came out West, that manuscript remained in the possession of Emma Smith. Emma Smith handed it down to her son, Joseph Smith III; and ultimately, the church that he led—the Reorganized Church—published the Joseph Smith Translation or the Inspired Version of the Bible. But when they published it, the committee that did the publication left out a number of the changes and corrections that Joseph Smith had made. Likewise, they felt it their prerogative to insert some editorial changes of their own. And so the Inspired Version of the Bible that people purchase and look at today is actually not what Joseph Smith did. The new scriptures have what Joseph Smith did—all of his punctuation changes; all of his alterations. And Joseph never published it during his lifetime and continued to make changes to the text right through the sermons that he delivered in Nauvoo.

Several times in his sermons he would say/read a verse from the Bible or the New Testament, and he would say, “I could give a plainer translation,” and then he says something about the verse that is plainer or more correct. For the first time, all of those Nauvoo-era alterations that he said “is plainer or more correct, or it should read,” all of those have been gathered and put into the New Testament and Old Testament of the New Covenants and Old Covenants text that are published. This is a great work. This is a sign. Whether you respect the effort that it took or the fact that it has finally rolled out or not, it is a remarkable, historical occurrence in your lifetime.

Now, I wrote a book— I wrote a book that got me into a lot of trouble. It was an intellectual exercise, it was a historical exercise. I was attempting to start from the theoretical standpoint that the Book of Mormon text and the prophecies of Joseph Smith foretell events that will occur when the gentiles obtain the restoration gospel. And so, as a matter of curiosity, investigation, study, and effort, I posed the question, “What would it look like if the things that are prophesied have occurred?”

Passing The Heavenly Gift is a text attempting to answer the question, “What if it’s already happened? How would you tell the story of the restoration?” It is not put out as a dogmatic claim that [in Cronkite voice], “This is our history, and you better look at it and know it’s the truth.” (That's my best Walter Cronkite. He was the guy that everyone trusted, at one point.)

[In McConkie voice] “I did not regard it as my responsibility to declare the history, and your responsibility to accept what I declared,” —as if I were some, you know, McConkie figure.

I did it as conjecture, to see: Does it fit? Would it work? Can the story be told that way? And I never reach a conclusion in the book. I simply say, Look at what might have happened. The fact that it fits hand-in-glove may be incredibly persuasive (alarming, distressing...),

but it doesn't assert that its true, and that book took like 200,000 words to tell the story of the restoration.

Well, when the Kirtland Temple was dedicated (Joseph didn't live long enough for the Nauvoo Temple to be completed, much less dedicated), but when the Kirtland Temple was dedicated, Joseph Smith thought that that occasion required a formal prayer to be given. And so Joseph prepared a formal prayer for the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple, and he said that that prayer, that dedicatory prayer was actually a revelation. That the content—it's in the D&C; it's Section 109 of the Doctrine and Covenants—it was an inspired prayer.

I wrote a book that was 200,000 words. I thought that petitioning God for his approval of the new scriptures required a formality akin to the formality of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. And so, I knew that there needed to be a prayer presented.

I was prayerful about considering the content of the prayer, and one evening I sat down to compose a prayer for presenting the scriptures (which I intended to present to the scripture committee for their approval before presenting it to the Lord, and to get their input on the prayer). When I sat down, the prayer was revelation. It was what God wanted us to ask. Well that left me no choice to go the committee and say, "Hey, give me your input." Because I don't have the right to change what God wants the prayer to include.

It's part of the new scriptures. That prayer tells the same story, in an inspired way—with far fewer than 200,000 words, with footnotes and chapter divisions. It is God's view of what we have done with the restoration.

I do not assert that *Passing The Heavenly Gift* is good, true, and faithful history. But I testify to you that the *Prayer for Covenant* is, in fact, a revelation from God that tells you what the history of the restoration has consisted of. And if you want to know what has happened, read the *Prayer for the Covenant* that describes the project, and you'll know what God thinks we have done and what we have not done.

The new scriptures is a historical event that throughout the entirety of history, going back to the time of Moses, has only happened three times. It happened with Moses; it happened with Ezra; it happened through the prophet Joseph Smith and through the faithful diligence of a remnant of the people who sought to reconnect, in our day, and to honor that third restoration through Joseph Smith. It is beyond historic. It is something designed to alter the course of history.

But some people look upon signs like that as inconsequential and easy to dismiss. I can testify to you that the heavens themselves rejoice at what happened there. Even if you're dismissive; even if you're nonchalant about it. It is, nevertheless, one of the greatest developments to occur in history, and it happened in your lifetime. The saints were rejected in 1844. Nothing has been done to repair the condemnation in [1832(1)] or to reclaim people since the rejection in 1844. No one has attempted to repent and remember the former commandments—not only to say, but to do—until today.

Stop your damn squabbling! Don't go back and revert to pre-1820 Christian conduct that aroused God's ire. I use the word 'damned' in the scriptural sense because that's exactly what it is. Stop squabbling! Stop disagreeing! Surrender your pride! If you think you're right; if you think someone needs to be corrected; if you think you have a higher, holier better way—stay and persuade. Be meek. Be humble. Solicit other people, and appeal to their heart.

We should welcome everyone. We should welcome Latter-day Saints. We should welcome Community of Christ. We should welcome Catholics. We should welcome Presbyterians. We should welcome every kind of person and then treat them with respect and kindness and understanding. Let them bring their ideas, and let you teach them those truths that you presently understand. The religion of Joseph Smith which—it's in that video that was shown just before the opening prayer—the religion of Joseph Smith is to accept all truth.

Just because it hasn't entered into your hard heart and your closed mind yet, doesn't make it untrue. There are truths in rich abundance that hail from all quarters of the earth. As religions have discarded truths, many of them have sought and fought to retain the most important core. And the most important core of many faiths and the highest aspiration and the highest ideal—

It doesn't matter if you're talking the Cherokee tradition, the Hindu tradition, the Islamic tradition, the Polynesian, the Hawaiian tradition. It doesn't matter. The highest aspiration remains for the individual to connect to God and for God to recognize and connect with the individual. There's really no difference. If we welcome one another, and we treat each other kindly—

Someone that may have a religion that is very strange to us, if they bring with them the aspiration to know God, and we can persuade them that God has done a work among us through Joseph Smith—through the labor that has been done to recover that restoration—maybe they'll labor alongside us as the restoration wraps up.

There is a great deal left to be done. And there is no one seriously entertaining the possibility of constructing a city of holiness, a city of peace, a people that are fruit worthy to be laid up against the harvest. No one has made the effort until now. And while you may look at us and say, "You've done a crude job. You've done a rudimentary job. It needs improvement." Then help us improve it! Stop sitting back and throwing rocks! This is a time to gather, not to disperse. The same garbage that existed at the beginning (when Joseph looked around and saw confusion and disharmony) wants to creep in among us. Recognize that's a false spirit.

If you'll cast it out of yourself and if you'll look at the words of the covenant that was offered in September of 2017, what you'll find is that Christ wants us—like the Book of Mormon explains—to be meek, to be humble, and to be easily entreated. And therefore, entreat one

another to honor God, and recognize that all of us aspire to be equal, whether you're at the top or at the root. The aspiration is the same: to be equal.

Well, the time is far spent, and we need to be out of here in less than an hour, and there's some work that has gone on behind the scenes that needs to continue. So, I'm going to wrap this up. Let me end by bearing testimony to you that what I've said has not been just me up here giving a talk. Guidance has been given and content has been provided from a higher source than myself, and I hope you take seriously the things that have been said today.

Because this is a Sunday, as an act of rebellion, I wore a tie; and because it's a Sunday, I had someone give an opening prayer, and we're going to have someone give a closing prayer. But if you want to know the history of the restoration from God's perspective, read the *Prayer for the Covenant*, that's in the Teachings and Commandments and you'll see what God thinks the history is. If you want to know my research project and how I parsed it together in a lot more words than that, you can read *Passing the Heavenly Gift*. I don't know how many footnotes are in there, but it's a research project. Thank you.

[Transcription v1.2]