

## **The Book of Mormon Holds the Covenant Pattern for the Full Restoration**

General Conference Address

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That was lovely. I contrast that with Bart Simpson sneaking in the In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida soundtrack for the church lady to play that resulted in near collapse.

I want to thank the organizers that have put this conference together and have spent the time and the effort and the resources to make all of this available. Unlike other groups of believers that associate together, we don't own any buildings; we don't have any facilities; no one gets paid to do any of the things that have to be done in order to put together a conference. And so, what we see and what we experience when we come to one of these conferences is the result of volunteer effort, volunteer sacrifices, voluntary contributions. All of the costs are borne by the folks that put a conference together.

And I want to thank all those that are involved in getting this event to take place. I also want to thank the organizers for inviting me to come and speak because those who organize a conference are entitled to ask who they will, and see who they can get to voluntarily contribute.

Beginning in 2013, I spoke for a year in what's called the Mormon Corridor, giving a series of talks. I've since traveled to Los Angeles, Dallas, and Atlanta to present talks to Christians. All of that (in the talks to the Christians) were done with the aid of volunteer technical support. I've also had, with the aid of volunteer technical support, a website devoted to the Restoration, another devoted to the Christian Reformation—that website is now being turned into a site for general Christianity, with the help of volunteers. I've been able to produce, with a lot of help, a series of videos about historic Christianity, about the Reformation, and about the Restoration, also requiring a lot of voluntary technical assistance.

In just this last year:

- In January, I was in Twin Falls for a meeting with folks. I attended a South Carolina conference, and then I met with a delegation of remnant folks (I call them remnant folks because I don't know what else to call it—people that believe as we do) who are undertaking an effort to try and approach the Jewish remnant.
- In February, I spoke at a meeting in Syracuse and attended appointments with several people that are doing and volunteering to do work.
- In March, I gave a talk in Centerville, and later that month I flew to Houston and met with a group of people in a fellowship there.

- In April, I spoke at a fireside in Independence, Missouri during the World Conference of the Community of Christ. The Community of Christ World Conference only occurs every four years, and I went back during their World Conference and spoke to a number of those that were interested in hearing something. Then I attended a conference and spoke in Colorado, and later that month, I flew out to Tennessee and attended a three-day conference in Tennessee involving Evangelicals.
- In May, I met with (and spoke with) a group, and then I traveled to Alabama to speak with a group of Christian folks about Christianity and about the Restoration.
- In June, there was a Restoration conference held in Boise, Idaho that brought together various factions that believe in the mission of Joseph Smith but have divided into separate groups, and I spoke at that Restoration conference. I also attended meetings with small groups in Utah during that month.
- In July, I spoke at a conference in Sandy, Utah that had been organized.
- Last month, in August, I went to Sandpoint, Idaho, and I visited with Rock and Connie Waterman. Rock intends to write again, particularly after his work slows down this winter, and he wanted me to give his regards to all of you.
- And I'm attending this conference this month.
- Next month there is a... Shawn McCraney (I think) is a former Mormon. He's doing a podcast called *Heart of the Matter* that I've agreed, at Rock Waterman's urging, to go ahead and participate in.

There are those who are working directly to try and reach a hand out to invite and present information to the remnant of the Lamanite/Nephite group, and there are those that are working on trying to complete several projects that will attempt to introduce the Restoration to Jewish communities and in Israel itself.

I'm doing what I can. All of that travel comes at a sacrifice. No one pays me to go anywhere or do anything; no one reimburses me for the cost of doing so, and very often, in order to be able to have the venue available, others have to contribute as well, in order to sacrifice their means to advance what's going on.

An issue was recently raised about how one harmonizes when they are contributing —contributing to a temple fund or contributing to those who may be in need. And I thought that was a good point to start with because I assume since the issue came up that it's an issue for more than one person. In the scriptures, we have little to guide us about conflicts, but we have lots to inform us about the issues that then leave it our responsibility to resolve the conflict.

There was an incident that occurred **just before** the Savior went in on the triumphant entry into Jerusalem, where he was greeted with people shouting, Hosanna, Hosanna, spreading out their cloaks or palm branches for Him to ride in upon the colt/the foal. That incident is covered in these words:

*"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. Then says one of his disciples (Judas Iscariot, Simon's son who should betray him), Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money bag, and stole from what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone, for she has preserved this ointment until now, that she might anoint me in token of my burial. For the poor always you have with you, but me you have not always." (John 7:9 RE)*  
(John 12:3)

So, here is an incident in which something in the form of an ordinance that is necessary to prepare the Savior for His burial, about which the scriptures don't say enough, is taken care of at an **extraordinary** expense. It was an **extravagance** to perform the ordinance, and the Savior, in response to the criticism about the apparent financial waste, says, "Don't criticize her; this has been kept in place and prepared until now *that she might anoint me in token of my burial.*" She and He both knew that this needed to be attended to, and it was; and it was essential and extravagant. When the issue of "What about the poor?" comes up, the Savior I don't think was being dismissive; I think he was being rather lamenting about the condition. *"The poor always you have with you, but me you have not always."* The time for taking care of what needed to be taken care of had a limited opportunity associated with it, and if it were not performed within that limited opportunity, then the time would come and the time would go and the event would not have occurred.

It's very often the case with assignments or opportunities that are presented to mankind that the opportunity is extended and the time has to be taken advantage of, but if not, then the opportunity comes, and the opportunity goes. And in this case, the principle that I would say relates to what we are concerned with and the question that was asked to me is that when we're given an opportunity, even though it may seem extravagant, if we don't take or avail ourselves of that opportunity, it will come, and it will go, and that will be that.

But you have to juxtapose that issue about the propriety of sacred things (even when they involve cost) being attended to, on the one hand, with another event involving the Savior, in which He told, in response to the query, "Who's my neighbor?" this account:

*"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance, there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side of the way. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked upon him, and passed...on the other side of the way — for they desired in their hearts that it might not be known that they had seen him. But a certain*

*Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the next day, when he departed, he took money and gave to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatever you spend more, when I come again, I will repay you. Who now of these three do you think was neighbor unto him who fell among the thieves? [And the person who had posed the question to the Savior responded] ...He who showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do likewise." (Luke 8:8 RE)(Luke 10:30)*

Those words, *go and do likewise*, echo down through the corridors of time into our own ears and remind us of the obligation not only to be neighborly to each other but to be neighborly to all mankind. See, when he was on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, that was not his fault. It was a well-traveled road and should have been safe. It's two places at which sacred events had and **would** take place. He was on familiar, even sacred, terrain, and he fell into misfortune, through no fault of his own; others came and perpetrated it. So, what I take from that (as a principle for us) is that we ought not be judging those who fall into bad circumstances, nor should we be hesitant about putting them on our own beast to be transported, paying the innkeeper, binding up the wounds, doing everything we can. Not to say, How might I conserve resources in the process of giving aid?

Everything you do for the benefit of another, as a neighbor, is a good thing. Don't question whether or not your contribution to help someone else is extravagant or could be better used (...or you could find a cheaper house to rent in which to house the injured man or, perhaps, a less demanding innkeeper to pay). Your contribution is good. It's right, and your assistance helps those in need. When you give, give with gratitude, and then take no more thought about it. And if you choose to donate to the temple, take no more thought about it. Don't go about always doubting and second guessing. No matter how you reconcile the conflict between the principle that "supporting and providing the means for ordinance work to take place is extravagant" or "there's a way to help and give less"—how you divide up the resources and how you contribute, you decide how you resolve the conflict. Do what you think best, and don't question yourself after you've done that. Be at peace. Christ's example covers both, and there are conflicts—deliberately. The gospel is full of dilemmas that require us to act and to choose and to resolve limited means, limited time, limited strength, limited resources, and how you apportion them. But when you make the choice and you do the apportionment, be at peace.

I mention the temple funds, and I can give you the following information because I met with the people involved this last week. Not one cent of the temple funds have been spent, nor are there, at present, any plans to spend any of the funds until we have some direction from the Lord.

Every name and every amount that is contributed is being maintained. There are those who contribute... A handful of people have contributed in very small amounts who have chosen

to remain anonymous. We know the date of the contribution, we know the amount of the contribution, but we don't know the name for that. But for almost all the funds that have been contributed, the person who made the contribution is known. When the temple is completed, a complete accounting will be available for anyone to review. However, most of those who have donated, to this point, wish to remain anonymous; therefore, the accounting will only show the names of those who consent to having their names disclosed. And for the others, the donations that they made will be disclosed and the dates on which the contributions were made—but their names will be withheld. Also, all the costs associated with the building will be provided. But donors who wish to remain unnamed will have their identities withheld.

The path to Zion is so far beyond the reach of mankind that we know of only two successful times in scripture where heaven and earth united in Zion. One was at the time of Enoch; the other, the city of Melchizedek. In Eden, heaven and earth were united—but Eden fell. Following the visit of Christ to the Nephites, there were several hundred years of peace. But Christ's visit was temporary, and they did not reunite with heaven as a people.

We face a challenge to become something very rare, godly—even holy. It's perplexing how people were able to lay aside all envy, strife, ambition, selfishness, and enmity between one another—yet that is exactly what **we** are asked to do.

We cannot obtain land without purchasing it. We have revelations that command us:

*"Behold, the land of Zion; I, the Lord, hold it in [mine] own hands. Nevertheless, I, the Lord, render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Wherefore, I, the Lord, will that you should purchase the lands, that you may have advantage of the world, that you may have claim on the world, that they may not be stirred up unto anger. For Satan puts it into their hearts to anger against you and to the shedding of blood. Wherefore, the land of Zion shall not be obtained but by **purchase** or by blood; otherwise, there is no inheritance for you. And if by **purchase**, behold, you are blessed, and if by blood, as you are forbidden to shed blood, lo, your enemies are upon you and you shall be scourged from city to city, and from synagogue to synagogue, and but few shall stand to receive an inheritance." (T&C 50:7, emphasis added)(D&C 63:25-31)*

The saints in Joseph Smith's day failed. The Lord, speaking of that, said:

*"Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people, speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed, even now. But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I require at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becomes saints, to the poor and afflicted among them, and are not united according to the union required by the law of the Celestial Kingdom. And Zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the Celestial Kingdom, otherwise I cannot receive her unto myself. And my people must needs be chastened until they learn*

*obedience, if it must needs be by the things which they suffer." (T&C 107:1)(D&C 105:2)*

This building up of Zion, according to the principles of the law of the Celestial Kingdom, does not initially involve the law of consecration. Joseph Smith ended that practice. He said, "...that the law of consecration could not be kept here and that it was the will of the Lord that we should desist from trying to keep it, and if persisted in, it would produce a perfect abortion, and that he assumed the whole responsibility of not keeping it until proposed by himself" (*History of the Church*, 4:93; cf. 105:34). And Joseph died, of course, without ever proposing again the keeping of that law, although there were subsequent attempts made which proved to be a perfect abortion.

Consecration will eventually follow, but like everything that is distant and above this fallen world, it is not a single step. It is a stepped-process and cannot be done in haste nor in a single instant. We have to grow, degree by degree, measure by measure, in order to attempt.

This is another revelation:

*"Therefore, in consequence of the transgression of my people, it is expedient in me that my elders should wait for a little season for the redemption of Zion that they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and **know** more perfectly concerning their **duty** and the things which I require at their hands. And this cannot be brought to pass until my elders are endowed with power from on high, for behold, I have prepared a great endowment and [the] blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful and continue in humility before me. Therefore, it is expedient in me that my elders should wait a little season for the redemption of Zion." (T&C 107:3)(D&C 105:9)*

It is clear, at least to me, that the temple is where the Lord intends for people to be taught more perfectly and have experience and know more perfectly concerning their duty and the things which He requires at our hands. He calls that an endowment with power. Knowledge is power, but to qualify to receive that endowment, we're required to be like Abraham, who described himself in these words:

*"Having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge..." (Abraham 1:1 RE)(Abraham 1:2)*

All of those things go together. These are not disconnected thoughts. They are also not thoughts that are unrelated to "returning knowledge and understanding that reaches back into the creation itself, and before the creation," and then goes forward to the end of this cycle of creation. So, he desired to possess:

*"...great knowledge...to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge [those things go together], ...to be a Father of many nations [he was*

situated at a time where that was **necessarily** one of the things that followed from obtaining what he sought after], *a prince of peace, and desiring to **receive instructions** and to keep the commandments of God* [We tend to think that instructions and commandments from God can be burdensome. Abraham viewed it as an opportunity to gain greater knowledge, greater understanding, and therefore, with a better perspective and understanding of what God expected of us, to be a greater follower of righteousness, to fit into a pattern], *"I became a rightful heir, a high priest, holding the right belonging to the Fathers. It was conferred upon me from the fathers: it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning (or before the foundations of the earth) to the present time, even the right of the firstborn (or the first man — who is Adam — or [the] first Father) through the Fathers unto me."* (Abraham 1:1 RE)(Abraham 1:2-3)

This is what God has in mind for the Restoration to be completed. This is what God intended for us to inherit as our endowment, as our greater knowledge, and enabling us to be greater followers of righteousness.

Now, for purposes of the discussion today, I want to redefine the term "Mormon." I thought it was going to be an orphaned term, but apparently, that has proven to be very problematic for another institution. But today, I want to redefine the term "Mormon" for purposes of my comments to mean those who accept the Book of Mormon as a covenant, so that they become those who are Mormons, of which I speak.

In this restoration process, there's an obligation we have to reach out to Lamanites and to the remnant of the Jews and to seek to recover and reclaim them. We do not need to turn ourselves into Jews, nor do we need to turn Jews away from the things that they prize in order to have them accept the Restoration. But **everyone** needs to understand what the **objective** of the Restoration is, because it's going to reach back into something that is altogether earlier and more complete than anything presently in the possession of Mormons or Jews or Lamanites. We need to have a greater understanding of God's covenants with **all** of Israel.

The Torah is part of the Old Covenants. It is important for us to preserve and to understand the Torah. It testifies throughout of Christ. Studying the Torah has value, but that is not the objective of the Restoration. A religion much older is to be restored. The gospel, as it was taught to and understood by Adam and the Patriarchs (or the fathers that Malachi refers to), is the gospel that God wants and we seek to have restored. Turning the hearts of the children to the fathers is turning the hearts to the faith that they believed and practiced.

Joseph Smith taught this:

*"Jehovah...continued to [Noah] the keys, the covenants, the power, and the glory with which he blessed Adam at the beginning, and the offering of sacrifice which also shall be continued at the last time.*

*For all the ordinances and duties that ever have been required [of] the Priesthood under the directions and commandments of the Almighty, in any of the dispensations, shall all be had in the last [dispensation]. Therefore, all things had under the authority of the Priesthood at any former period shall be had again, bringing to pass the restoration spoken of by the mouth of all the holy prophets, then shall the sons of Levi offer an acceptable [offering] to the Lord. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord...*

*It will be necessary here to make a few observations on the doctrine set forth in the above quotation, [and] it is generally supposed that [the] sacrifice was entirely done away when the great sacrifice [that is, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus] was offered up, and that there will be no necessity for the ordinance of sacrifice in [the] future, but those who assert this are certainly not acquainted with the duties, privileges, and authority of the Priesthood or with the prophets...*

*These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood will, when the temple of the Lord shall be built and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored and attended to: [in] all their powers, ramifications, and blessings. This ever did and will exist when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood are sufficiently manifest. Else, how can the restitution of all things spoken of by...the holy prophets be brought to pass?*

***It is not to be understood that the Law of Moses will be established again, with all its rites and variety of ceremonies. This has never been spoken of by the prophets, but those things which existed prior to Moses' day, namely sacrifice, will be continued.*** (T&C 140:16-18,20-22, emphasis added)(History of the Church 4:211-212)

The Old Covenants now explain how the law given through Moses was an altered and lesser law intended to **prevent those under it from entering into God's presence.**

*"Hew [thee] two other tablets of [stone], like unto the first... But it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the Priesthood out of their midst. Therefore, my Holy Order and the ordinances thereof shall not go before them... But I will give unto them the law as at...first; but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment, for I have sworn in my wrath that **they shall not enter into my presence**, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage." (Exodus 18:5 RE, emphasis added)*

The Book of Mormon clarifies that the Law of Moses was both temporary, incomplete, and intended to come to an end. Abinidi declared:

*"And now ye have said that salvation cometh by the law of Moses. I say unto you that it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet; but I say unto you that the time shall come when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses. And moreover, I say unto you that **salvation doth not come by the law alone**; and were it*

*not for the atonement which God himself shall make for the sins and [the] iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, **notwithstanding** the law of Moses. And now I say unto you that it was expedient that there should be a law given [unto] the children of Israel, yea, even a very strict law. For they were a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity and slow to remember the Lord their God. Therefore there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him."* (Mosiah 8:1 RE, emphasis added)(Mosiah 13:27)

Paul explains essentially the same thing to the Galatians in his letter to them:

*"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He says not, And to [the] seeds (as of many), but as of one: And to **your** seed — who is **Christ**. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before [of] God in **Christ**, the law (which was four hundred thirty years **after**) cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, then no more of promise; but **God gave it to Abraham** by promise.*

*Wherefore...**the law** was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made in the law given to Moses, who was ordained by the hand of angels to be a mediator of this first covenant (the law). Now this mediator was not a mediator of the **new covenant**, but there is one mediator of the new covenant, who is Christ, as it is written in the law concerning the promises made to **Abraham and his seed**. Now Christ is the mediator of life, for this is the promise which God made unto Abraham.*

*Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture has consigned all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, **shut up** unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore, **the law was our schoolmaster** until Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after faith has come, **we are no longer under a schoolmaster.**" (Galatians 1:9-11 RE, emphasis added)(Galatians 3:16-25)*

We study the Torah to learn what the schoolmaster was instructing for generations about the Savior who would come. We don't study it to practice it (although I see no harm if someone wants to engage in that, so long as they understand the ends of the law were fulfilled in Christ and that they are no longer under the schoolmaster—or at least under **that** schoolmaster)."

The Lord declared in April of 1830: "You cannot enter in at the strait gate by the law of Moses..." (JSH 18:8 RE)(D&C 22:2)

If the law of Moses were salvific, then we would still be under the obligation of following it—but we are not. We seek the Restoration of the first, original gospel, as Paul wrote also in Galatians:

*“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In you shall all nations be blessed.”* (Galatians 1:7 RE, emphasis added)(Galatians 3:8)

**That** is the gospel **we** seek to have restored—not the one added 430 years later at the time of Moses but the one that existed at the time that it was preached unto Abraham. Abraham explains:

*“But the records of the Fathers, even the Patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord, my God, preserved in my own hands. Therefore, a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets and of the stars, as they were made known unto the Fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me.”* (Abraham 2:4 RE)(Abraham 1:31)

This is an English version of whatever it was that Abraham wrote, and we’re familiar with the word “planets,” in the present meaning of that sense. But the original word that got used (that is translated, now, as the word “planets”) was a word that meant “wandering stars.” So, at the beginning, knowledge of the beginning of the creation and knowledge about the wandering stars and the fixed stars were made known to Abraham. These are topics that belong squarely and comfortably within the gospel that was known to Abraham because all things testify of Christ. Abraham attempts to write some of them upon his record to give a clue of what it was that that original gospel included.

All volumes of scripture refer to the Restoration as having the effect of turning the hearts of the children to the Fathers, and the hearts of the Fathers to the children, which is not genealogical work. Genealogical work has a place in the grand scheme of things, but the Fathers to whom the hearts are to turn are the Fathers that were in possession of the original gospel in its completeness, the original patriarchs. Because they were entitled to come forth out of the grave (and did so at the time of the resurrection of Christ), they then assumed positions back in the heavens. Joseph Smith refers to *turn[ing] the hearts of the children to [the] Fathers* (T&C 98:3), as turning our hearts to the “Fathers in heaven.”

Because the first general resurrection occurred at the time of Christ (and because the second installment of that general resurrection is going to occur at His second coming), none of your ancestors who died after the resurrection of Christ until this day are among those who are the Fathers in heaven. Rather, they are imprisoned in the spirit world, awaiting the opportunity to be resurrected at the Lord’s return (or some time following that). Turning the hearts of the children to the dead is not the objective of the promise that is made about the Restoration of the gospel having the effect of turning the hearts of the children to the Fathers.

Is it your ambition to join your kindred dead? Well, you're going to do that. Why is it not your ambition to join the **Fathers of whom Malachi spoke**, who were the first fathers, who are the fathers now in heaven, having returned back in a resurrected and glorified form, to dwell in the heavens. **Those** are the ones about whom the promise is made. You're one motorcycle accident away from your dead kindred. You're one bout of some nasty, infectious disease from joining them. There's no great accomplishment to be spoken of by dying and going into the world of the spirits. The promises are more glorious, but they are also about something **far more ancient**.

*"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall seal the heart of the Fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their Fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Malachi 1:12 RE).*

That is how the prophecy of Malachi is worded in the Old Covenants (in the scriptures that are being published now that include Joseph Smith's interpretation or inspired rendering of the text). "*He shall **seal** the heart of the Fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the Fathers.*" That's not there in the typical rendering and not in the King James Version, because there it says, he will **turn** the hearts of the children to the fathers (see Malachi 4:6 LE).

This is referred to, also, in the New Covenants:

*"And he shall go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:3 RE)* is how it's rendered in Luke.

In 3 Nephi, the Lord quotes Malachi to have this information added to the record in possession of the Nephites. This is how the Lord rendered it:

*"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (3 Nephi 11:5 RE).*

In the Joseph Smith History, when he was visited by the angelic visitor Nephi, he quoted the prophecy in these words:

*"And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers; if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming" (JSH 3:4 RE).*

So, now we have (in various renderings of this) something that is referred to as “sealing hearts of Fathers to children and children to Fathers,” something that is called “turning the hearts,” and something that is called “promises made to the fathers.”

“Promises made to the fathers” are covenants that God made with them concerning the last days’ work, in which there would again be on the earth those who are connected to the Fathers in a way that avoids the earth becoming utterly wasted at His coming. This is something that has to be attended to through the restoration and construction of an authentic temple conforming to the pattern of heaven, in which these things can be attended to and the knowledge and understanding imputed, in order for people to comprehend what it means to be a “greater follower of righteousness.”

This was a revelation given in March 2015: “Hence, the great need to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and the fathers to the children—and this too by covenant and sealing through the Holy Spirit of Promise” (*Plural Marriage*, Denver C. Snuffer, Jr. March 22, 2015). This is to restore **us**—as God restored Abraham— to the original religion.

Abraham came into this world uniquely different from the fathers that had gone before. There was an unbroken chain that continued from father to son and father to son, from the time of Adam, down through the generations until the time of Melchizedek. All of them were participants in an unbroken familial line. Abraham came into an apostate family in which his father worshipped—indeed made—dumb idols as the god to be worshipped. Therefore, Abraham is the first one that will join this line, who emerges from apostasy into possession of the original holy order. In that sense, Abraham is representative of **all** who would follow after, that seek after righteousness, in a world that is **constantly** overcome by apostasy.

Apostasy exists the **instant** that God ceases to talk, the instant that God ceases to **restore**, the instant that further light and knowledge by conversing with the Lord through the veil comes to an end. Abraham—**because** he came at a time of apostasy and **because** his father had turned to the worshipping of dumb idols—could not inherit that same standing as the first uninterrupted period, unless it were possible for that to be accomplished through adoption. Therefore, Abraham represents the revolutionary idea that one can emerge out of a state of apostasy back into (and be adopted into) the line that is in possession of the fullness of the gospel and to be one equal with them. Abraham represents an astonishing revolutionary moment in the history of God’s dealing with mankind, and he also represents the opportunity for redemption for others at remote times, in remote places, who dwell among people who are apostate. It represents hope for **us**. And so, when the hearts of the children are turned to the fathers, that hope is verified and confirmed **primarily** through God’s covenant with Abraham. Abraham inherited the promises that had been given to the first fathers, to be sure, but Abraham represents **hope for us**. He represents **our** opportunity to, likewise, obtain that same hope, which was given to Abraham 430 years before the law was added through Moses.

Now, at the time of the founding of Egypt, the original Pharaoh of Egypt was a righteous man who sought earnestly to imitate the order that began with the first fathers. The government of Egypt was an attempt to imitate Adam and imitate a family order that came down from the beginning. That founding occurred at a period that is referred to as Predynastic; and the Early Dynastic Period also is plagued with some lack of records, some destruction of material. The Old Kingdom really begins with the Fourth Dynasty, and it's **after** the Eighth Dynasty that what is referred to in Egyptian history as the First Intermediate Period took place.

The First Intermediate Period represented a radical period of apostasy from what had gone on before. While there had been an effort to preserve the order that came down from the beginning in Egypt, the First Intermediate Period represented something very much akin to what would take place in the Jewish Kingdom at the time of the bickering and the fighting and the strife of the Deuteronomists, when the Southern Kingdom was taken captive into Babylon. And then a remnant of the Southern Kingdom returned back to rebuild the temple, at which point the religion had been remarkably revised and the content changed to reflect the kind of strife that was taking place just a few years before the “migration out” of Lehi and his family (that we read in the first chapters of the Book of Mormon—where the idea of the Messiah was trying to be suppressed, trying to be altered). One of the reasons why Zenos was dropped out of the record of the Old Testament is because it's filled with Christological content that they intended to suppress.

Well, the kingdom of Egypt was going through something similar, and in the First Intermediate Period, they were forsaking things that had come down from the beginning. What is remarkable is that **Abraham entered Egypt to teach the Pharaoh immediately following the First Intermediate Period**. Now, the right that Pharaoh claimed was not his; indeed, when Abraham went into Egypt, Abraham entered possessing that right. (I don't know that he claimed that in the presence of Pharaoh; that might have been fatal.) But he came to teach, and he came to restore, and he came to reinvigorate the understanding of the Egyptians concerning that first order that came down from the beginning. Therefore, when Abraham came, he came not merely as evidence that you can emerge from apostasy and inherit the rights that belong to the first fathers by adoption; he also came as a messenger and a restorer to provide such light and knowledge as those who were his contemporaries were willing to receive.

In many respects, **you** are now in possession of a great body of knowledge—much of it originally established through Joseph Smith, but neglected or misunderstood or misapplied or currently being opposed—that the people among whom you live would benefit by having that knowledge restored to them.

The works of Abraham are not limited to taking a son out and attempting to sacrifice him. The works of Abraham include all of these things:

- the seeking after righteousness;

- the willingness, indeed, the desire to receive commandments and to obey instructions, so that he might become a greater follower of righteousness;
- and then to go among those who were fallen and apostate (but who were attempting to mirror something they simply did not possess) and to bring to them news and light and truth and knowledge that could benefit them; so that what they were willing to receive, they could receive, but what they were not willing to receive did not need to be imposed upon them to their condemnation.

We have a delicate balance that we're trying to achieve.

I mentioned all of the folks to whom I have presently spent my time attempting to persuade to accept greater light and truth. It's a daunting effort. I began among the people that should **welcome** the idea that the Restoration (which is, obviously, incomplete) can and should move forward; and that if the original failure provoked divine ire for three and four generations, that they had now passed and the time had arrived in which it's possible to now move forward. I went on from there to the Christians, and we're now making efforts (me, primarily, behind the scenes) to reach out to the Lamanites (the remnant of Lehi) and to the Jews (the remnant that still identifies themselves with Israel). Don't spare your own effort in that regard—because only a handful are laboring to accomplish what needs to be accomplished to fulfill the covenant.

The Book of Mormon makes this subject a major theme of the Book of Mormon text. On the title page of the Book of Mormon, it says the purpose of Mormon's work in this book: *...which is to [show] unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers, ...that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off for ever.* It's the intent of the book to bring people to understand concerning the covenants that were made to the fathers.

After Nephi finishes his testimony that Christ will visit all of scattered Israel, he then uses Isaiah to show Christ's ministry and that He will visit Israel and keep His word that He gave. Then Nephi explains how God's work will take place after Israel has been scattered among all the nations. He writes:

*"After [they've] been nursed by the gentiles, and the Lord has lifted up his hand upon the gentiles, and set them up for a standard, and their children have been carried in their arms, and their daughters have been carried [on] their shoulders — behold, these things...which are spoken [of] are temporal, for thus **is** the covenants of the Lord with our fathers. [Then] the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the gentiles...**unto** the making known of the covenants of the Father of Heaven unto Abraham, saying, In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.*

And he goes on to say:

*...they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness." (1 Nephi 7:3 RE, emphasis added)*

That's the whole purpose of the Restoration—to bring further light and knowledge.

Lehi gave a final blessing to his son Joseph, the younger twin of Jacob, born in the wilderness. In his blessing to his son Joseph, he refers to and commends Joseph to the example of their ancestor, Joseph of Egypt. He says:

*"I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph. Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day. And he obtained a promise of the Lord that, out of the fruit of his loins, the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel, not the Messiah, but a **branch** which was to be broken off, nevertheless to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, ...bringing...them out of darkness unto light, yea, out of hidden darkness and out of captivity unto freedom." (2 Nephi 2:2 RE)*

Freedom, in the sense used by prophets, does not mean that you're not captive by a corrupt culture and subject to a corrupt government. Freedom means that you have the ability to escape sin in your life because you know enough to understand the will of God, and you're devoted, and you fulfill it. He goes on that—

Father Joseph of Egypt testified:

*A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins. [And then he says,] ...he [that choice seer, Joseph Smith,] shall do a work...which shall be of great worth unto them, even to the bringing of them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers....I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work. (2 Nephi 2:3 RE)*

In the grand scheme of things, Joseph Smith came here to do the work that God assigned to him to accomplish, and he did that against the resistance and opposition of people who were **internal** to his followers.

In the book *A Man Without Doubt*, I took the three longest things written by Joseph Smith, and in order to understand the heart of the man, I gave a brief historical context so that you could see the opposition or the failure or the trouble that produced the document that Joseph Smith wrote. Out of what should inspire bitterness and rancor, anger, frustration, and disappointment, what you get are three remarkably cheerful, upbeat, hopeful, encouraging, lovely documents that testify of truth. The hope that I had in writing *A Man Without Doubt* ([cough] excuse me) was to put people in possession of something Joseph wrote, so you could see the heart, you could see the mind of the man through his own words—but then you could understand him within a context that had extraordinary opposition.

Joseph Smith was, perhaps, least understood and least respected by the people who were closest to him because they tended, invariably, to assume that he was a man of like-passions

with them. Joseph Smith was different than his contemporaries. In many respects, his contemporaries **could not** understand him because they made the wrong assumptions in contextualizing him. As a consequence, when Joseph was nearing the end of his life and speaking to the audience in Nauvoo (that would subsequently write the history), he said, “You don’t know me; you never knew me.” And yet, they would be the ones to compose the history, and then take over the legacy, and then figure out that the legacy that he left behind was susceptible of aggregating social and monetary and political power. And then what Joseph Smith founded became a great institution—which, incidentally, has preserved much of Joseph Smith’s teachings that are of value to us.

I don’t begrudge them the accumulation of wealth and the satisfaction of self-interest. If they had not been able to monetize Mormonism, we might not have the Book of Mormon today. I’m grateful for all that they’ve done. (And there have always been among them sincere believers, devoted people who believe in and accept the work of Joseph and of the Book of Mormon and the revelations and teachings that came through him.)

But they’ve never done enough. Almost immediately after the process began, they fell under condemnation because they failed not only to say but to do the things that had been revealed in the Book of Mormon and in the former commandments, which is why—as an act of collective repentance, as an act of the desire to repent and return—one of the very first things that has been accomplished is for a group of people to go out and do the research necessary to try and find, as close as we can, the original text of the Book of Mormon, together with such alterations as Joseph Smith had made or authorized or clearly intended to have take place.

Now, you may have all heard this story, but the original transcript of the Book of Mormon is one long sentence from beginning to end with no punctuation. That original manuscript was copied by hand, and then the **copy** was taken to E. B. Grandin, and E. B. Grandin put the Book of Mormon into print. The **copy** made from the original still exists in its entirety. The original was put into the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, and the cornerstone leaked. We only have about 22% of the **original** manuscript, but we have 100% of the **copy** of the printer’s manuscript. Therefore, we can make a comparison between the two, and we know that (on average) mistakes were made throughout the copying. Then E. B. Grandin punctuated it; and E. B. Grandin’s punctuation reflects **his** understanding.

One of the first acts of repentance was to go back and to look at everything that is available, to try and sort through, and to get the Book of Mormon in as close a way to mirror what was intended to be handed to us as the text. Sadly, we **know** that the Book of Mormon that we have today—even though what we have put together (and the research effort) is the closest to anything that Joseph Smith endowed us with—it nevertheless, invariably, necessarily must contain mistakes. But as an act of penitence, we’ve gone as far as we can. We’ve done the same thing with the revelations that came through Joseph Smith, and we did the same thing with the Joseph Smith translation of the Bible, which is his inspired revision of the Bible. **The scriptures are not perfect**, but they were presented to the Lord as our best (though inadequate) effort, and they were **accepted** by the Lord. And He said that they

were **adequate for His purpose**. Therefore, we have the confidence that for the work that we are to perform in the process of completing the Restoration and getting us in a position to emerge from under the condemnation for failing not only to say but to do, we have the confidence that we can now rely upon something that the Lord has identified and clarified is sufficient or adequate, in order for the tasks that we've been handed to be accomplished. Or in other words, while they may not be perfect, they are **enough** for God to labor with us to continue the Restoration. Therefore, our act of collective repentance to return again has pleased the Lord enough that He's given us acceptance and extended to us the opportunity to enter into a covenant.

Jacob (Nephi's brother) delivered a sermon that Nephi records in his second book. In his second book, after Jacob had read from Isaiah to teach his brethren that were interested in learning about things, he then elaborates or explains the prophecy given by Isaiah:

*"And now my beloved brethren, I have read these things that ye might know concerning the covenants of the Lord, that he has covenanted with **all the house of Israel**" (2 Nephi 6:1 RE).*

That's important—because "all the house of Israel" is greater than those that they left behind at Jerusalem. "All the house of Israel" is greater even than the Nephites plus those left at Jerusalem. The Ten Tribes had left the Northern Kingdom. They had migrated away years before Lehi left Jerusalem. Therefore, "all the house of Israel" (which includes those scattered on the isles of the sea, as the Nephites were) were remembered, and Jacob wants his brethren to understand that God's plan is all-inclusive, wherever they are, in whatever scattered condition. Even if they've altogether lost their identity as members of the house of Israel, yet they are remembered in the covenants of the Lord.

*...[he's] spoken unto the Jews by the mouth of his holy [prophet], even from the beginning, down from generation to generation, until the time cometh that they shall be restored to the true church and fold of God, when they shall be gathered home [into] the lands of their inheritance [lands—plural, not singular] and shall be established in **all their lands** of promise. (ibid)*

What Jacob is teaching to his brethren is that there are those who have received (who belong to the house of Israel) covenants that have handed to them—by covenant—**lands**, plural. This land has people upon it today who have entered into a covenant (with the Lord today) that has made this land a place of their inheritance. The descendants of the Lamanites likewise descend from fathers with whom a covenant was made that **they** inherit this land. The Jews in Israel have a promise given them; that land is theirs by divine decree—God gave it to them; it is their land. And there are **other** broken branches from the house of Israel living on lands (their descendants today) that they possess by right.

Jacob continued his sermon over a second day; and in the sermon the second day, this is the second part of Jacob's teaching concerning the covenants:

*Wherefore, for this cause, that my covenants may be fulfilled which I have made unto the children of men, that I will do unto them while they are **in the flesh**, I must needs destroy the secret works of darkness, and of murders, and of abominations. Wherefore, he that fighteth against Zion, both Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female, **shall perish**; for they are they who are the whore of all the earth. For they who are not **for me** are against me, saith our God. For I will fulfill my promises which I have made unto the children of men that I will do unto them **while they are in the flesh**. (2 Nephi 7:3 RE, emphasis added)*

This isn't some dreamy, distant, other-worldly event. He says He is going to establish, in the flesh, a people that will become Zion; and He will defend those people who are His Zion.

As Nephi closes his record, he explains plainly what he wants us (the Gentiles) to understand from his record:

*Woe...unto him that shall say, We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough. ...unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them [which] say, We have enough — shall be taken away even that which they have.*

*...I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will repent and come unto me...*

*There shall be many at that day when I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I...remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may...remember the promises which I have made unto thee, Nephi, and also unto thy father, that...shall say, A bible, a bible, [we've] got a bible, ...there cannot be any more bible. But thus saith the Lord...O fools, [that] shall have a bible...*

*O ye gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? Nay, but [you've] cursed them, [you've] hated them, and have not sought to recover them...*

*Thou fool that shall say, A bible, [we've] got a bible and we need no more bible. Have ye obtained a bible, save it were by the Jews? Know ye not that there are more nations than one? ...I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and...I remember those [that] are upon the isles of the sea? ...I rule in the heavens above and [I rule] in the earth beneath...Wherefore murmur ye because...ye shall receive more of my word? (2 Nephi 12:6-9 RE)*

That was the very objective that Abraham sought: to **get more** of God's word. He wanted to know more; he wanted to receive commandments; he wanted to receive instructions.

*Because that I have spoken one word, ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another...*

*The Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews, and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel, and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews. ...My people which are of the house of Israel shall be gathered home [into] the **lands** of their [possession], and my word also shall be gathered in one. ...I am God, and...I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed for ever (2 Nephi 12:10 RE, emphasis added)—*

That includes those portions of the family of Abraham that migrated out of the view of the scriptures we presently possess, so that when they drop out of the Biblical narrative (or they drop out of the Book of Mormon narrative), God was still with them; He was still doing with them; He was still leading them and teaching them; and ultimately, He visited them. All of them kept records. Those are all to be restored.

*Ye need not suppose that the gentiles are utterly destroyed. For behold, I say unto you, as many of the gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord... For the Lord covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel. (2 Nephi 12:11 RE)*

Therefore, the covenant people of the Lord (according to the Book or Mormon) who will inherit the promises of Abraham necessarily include those gentiles who are willing to covenant with Him to allow Him to labor through them to restore things that will bring the remainder of the house of Israel back to the knowledge of their God.

Mormon interrupts his narrative summary of events by an observation he makes about the work of the Lord (inserted into his account just prior to the final round of apostasy, violence, and the great tempest that destroyed the wicked—and then Christ's visit to the other sheep that are covered in the Book of Mormon). This is Mormon's insertion into the record:

*Surely shall he again bring a remnant of the seed of Joseph to the knowledge of the Lord their God. And as surely as the Lord liveth [he will] gather in from the four quarters of the earth all the remnant of the seed of Jacob.... He hath covenanted with all the house of Jacob, even so shall the covenant wherewith he hath covenanted with the house of Jacob be fulfilled, in his own due time, unto the restoring all the house of Jacob unto the knowledge of the covenant [which] he hath covenanted with them.... Then shall they know their Redeemer, who is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.... (3 Nephi 2:18 RE)*

In Christ's teachings to the Nephites (after He had been resurrected, appeared to them, had them come and be in contact and witness of His death and resurrection), He delivered to them the Sermon on the Mount in a slightly different form, the Sermon at Bountiful. And after He had taught that sermon, He commanded that they write down and preserve these teachings that He's going to give:

(Hmm... someone wrote in the margin of my book. It looks like my handwriting, so I wanted to read that.)

*...the remnant of their seed, who [should] be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in... (3 Nephi 7:4 RE)—*

Okay, He's now talking to the Nephite believers about the descendants of the Nephite believers, and He's telling them, "You have to write this down." And He tells them what they're to write down is that eventually their descendants are gonna be scattered upon the face of the earth because of their **unbelief**, but those descendants may be brought in. The note I wrote in the margin is that even the Lamanite remnant, who are the target of the covenant, **have to be reclaimed**, have to be brought in, have to **know** of their inheritance in order to take advantage **of** it. If they're not brought in, then they still suffer under the plague of unbelief.

*...because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me...I [will] gather them in...I [will] fulfill the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel.... In the latter day shall the truth come unto the gentiles, that the fullness of these things shall be made known unto them. (Ibid.)*

In other words, He's promising to the Nephites... Their descendants are going to fall away, but He promises their descendants will be gathered back in. In order to bring the descendants back in, He's promising them that the Gentiles shall receive **this knowledge**—the truth shall come unto the knowledge,

*...that the fullness of these things shall be made known unto them... I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fullness of my gospel. But if the gentiles will repent and return unto me, saith the Father, behold, they shall be numbered among my people, O house of Israel. (3 Nephi 7:4-5 RE)*

When the Gentiles repent and they return, then they're numbered back—just like the descendants of the Nephites when they're awakened and repent and are taught the truth and return unto God. All become one house, one fold, one people.

Then, after Christ had introduced the sacrament and had commanded that Isaiah's words be searched because they tell of fulfilling of God's covenant, Christ then teaches:

*This people will I establish in this land unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob, and it shall be a New Jerusalem. And the Powers of Heaven shall be in the midst of this people, yea, even I will be in the midst of you. (3 Nephi 9:8 RE)*

Christ is reiterating to this group, in this setting, promises directly to them that He had previously given to Enoch about what would happen in the last days. When He told Enoch

about it, He said that there would come a point at which righteousness and truth would spring forth; it would be upon the earth; there would be a tabernacle or a temple there; and that He, along with Enoch's people, would return and fall upon and kiss the necks of those who gathered there. This is the same prophecy that was given to Enoch (one of those first Fathers in that first direct descent)—this is a covenant that Christ is reiterating, but it goes back to the first Fathers. Indeed, if we had a full restoration of all that had been given, we would know that the gospel in its fullness was understood far better by the first generations, or the original Fathers, than it is understood by us today. He says to the people gathered there (this is Christ, same talk):

*Ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, the Father having raised me up unto you first, and sent me to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities — and this because ye are the children of the covenant. And after...ye were blessed, then fulfilleth the Father the covenant which he made with Abraham, saying, In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, unto the pouring out of the holy ghost through me upon the gentiles. (Ibid.)*

In genealogical research, what you find is that if you start with yourself and you go backwards generations for about 500 years, your genealogy chart expands and expands and expands. And at about the 500-year-mark, it begins to contract and contract and contract, so that the genetic spread of the blood of Abraham throughout the world is so far and so wide that you practically can't find people anywhere on the earth that don't have some of the blood of Abraham, to whom He said, "all the kindreds of the earth will be blessed in thy seed."

*If they shall harden their hearts against me, I will return their iniquities upon their own heads, saith the Father. And I will remember the covenant which I have made with my people, and I have covenanted with them that I would gather them together in mine own due time, that I would give unto them again the land of their fathers for their inheritance. (Ibid.)*

So, it should begin to emerge into your view that physical descendancy is one thing to open up an opportunity—but covenanting, remembering, repenting, returning, accepting what God has to offer is the component in the last days that distinguishes whether or not they are **redeemed**, whether or not they are to be **gathered**, whether or not they are to be **recognized** in the own due time of the Lord as His, to be protected and to be preserved against the harvest. It's not enough merely to have genealogical connection back to some remnant of Father Abraham.

I can trace my genealogy back to Jewish ancestry, to Native American ancestry. That doesn't mean a thing if I don't repent and return. I remain on the outside. I remain a Gentile. I remain a disbeliever unworthy to be gathered. I suspect everyone in this room has a direct genealogical connection, probably, not only to Abraham but also Joseph—and perhaps eleven out of the twelve tribes of Israel. It's just the way that descendancy works.

Christ continues:

*Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people be fulfilled; ...then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people, and it shall be the land of their inheritance....*

*When these things which I declare unto you — and which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself and by the power of the holy ghost...shall be made known unto the gentiles, that they may know concerning this people who are a remnant of the house of Jacob...it shall be a sign unto them that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel. ...The gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, and know of the true points of my doctrine, that **they may be numbered among my people, O house of Israel...** (3 Nephi 9:10-11 RE)—*

...means that it was always the design that the Gentiles should also be gathered in—or that what is, in all likelihood, an unsavory, bitter-fruit-producing branch of the original tree should be taken and gathered back to the original root and gather nourishment from that original root, that they may come in and be numbered among the house of Israel. It's always been the intention of the Lord to restore the Gentiles and to make them the means through which the last days' work would become accomplished.

As Mormon completed the record of Christ's visit to the Nephites, he provided this description of the Book of Mormon's purpose:

*When the Lord shall see fit in his wisdom that these sayings shall come unto the gentiles according to his word, then ye may know that the covenant which the Father hath made with the children of Israel concerning their restoration to the **lands** of their inheritance is already beginning to be fulfilled. And ye may know that the words of the Lord which have been spoken by the holy prophets **shall all be fulfilled**.... The Lord will remember his covenant which he hath made unto his people of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 13:7 RE, emphasis added)*

And as Moroni concluded the record, he inserted some final words of instruction for the people who would receive the Book of Mormon in the last days. These words were taught to him by his father. He says:

*Hath miracles ceased? ...I say unto you, nay; neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For...they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, [showing] themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind*

*in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfill and to do the work of the **covenants** of the Father which he hath made unto the children of men, ...declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him; and by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the holy ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father the **covenants** which he hath made unto the children of men. (Moroni 7:6 RE, emphasis added)*

There are numerous other passages in the Book of Mormon that speak to the same thing. The Book of Mormon is a forerunner—a harbinger—that was intended to say to the people who receive it: There are covenants that go back to the very beginning, to the original Fathers. Those covenants got renewed/they got restored/they got continued in the form of Abraham (who received all that had been there originally) coming out of apostasy and being adopted back into that line of Patriarchs. That original covenant material provoked the creation of the Book of Mormon, and it is one of the major testimonies that is given to us by the Book of Mormon about the work that God intends to do in the last days. You can believe in the Bible; you can accept Jesus as your Savior; you can be (in the words of the Evangelical community) “born again.” You can be (in the words of Latter-day Saints) someone whose calling and election is made sure. But the work of God, at this point, is not about, merely, individual salvation; it is the work of fulfilling the covenants that were made with the Fathers. It is the work of restoring again that original gospel (of which the law given to Moses pointed forward to but did not comprehend).

We tend to view priesthood in institutional ways. And it’s hard to be terribly critical of misunderstandings because, quite frankly, priestly authority (following the success of the Petrine branch of original Christianity and its triumph, with emphasis on authority and priesthood and keys) predisposed the entire Christian world. Even the Christian world, after the Protestant Reformation, succeeded in finally breaking off areas in which a different form of protest Christianity could be practiced that was not subservient to the Roman “See” and papal decree. They still had this misapprehension about priesthood. So, when Joseph Smith began to talk about priesthood and to begin the process of restoring it, he gave a new kind of vocabulary, but possession of a vocabulary does not mean possession of the thing.

When Abraham talks about becoming a rightful heir and becoming a high priest, it would be best if you threw out everything that you have heard or learned or understood about the concept of priesthood. Priesthood includes the prerogative, the right, the obligation, or the duty to go out and perform ordinances that are effective, that God will recognize to be sure—and that’s part of it, and it’s a true principle.

However, priesthood in the original sense was something far more vast. It included an understanding of things that relate back all the way to the beginning—or before the world was—and goes forward through all periods of time until the end. It includes a basis of knowledge. So, when you read Abraham’s description of what it was he looked for, and he

mentions priesthood, you have to merge that into the entirety of what he's talking about: knowledge, understanding, commandments, instructions; having the capacity to see things in their correctly-ordered fashion, similarly to how God originally intended that it be ordered—so that you are no longer out-of-sync with this creation and doing your best to “reign with blood and horror” by subduing nature with the iron plow and gunpowder and lead—but instead you find yourself situated in a place that Eden itself can be renewed, and harmony can be achieved between man and the earth.

The Book of Mormon is talking about something vast, but it continually points back to Abraham. And I do not care what arguments can be made (or what a pitiful effort has been put together) to defend the Book of Abraham that Joseph Smith provided us. It was essential to the Restoration that the book of Abraham be given to us, because without it, we would not understand a great deal about the Restoration and what the final objective of the Restoration was to achieve.

If you're going to please God, you don't please Him by having your “born again” experience (or having your “calling and election made sure” experience) if the result of that is to make you proud, conceited, self-assured, and arrogant, and to disconnect you from the restoration process that was begun through Joseph Smith and has yet a greater work to be done than was achieved at the time of Joseph Smith. Go off and be saved, but you will not fulfill the work of the covenants that God intends to achieve. He has committed himself to that end.

Those who will labor alongside Him—whether they be Gentile or Lamanite or Jew, it does not matter—if they will repent and accept the process of the Restoration, as it began through Joseph Smith, not only to say it correctly but to do what it tells us needs to be done, then you will be numbered among those people that God has covenanted to gather against the coming harvest.

But if you want to be the lone guru, whose commentaries fill pages of blogging and hours of pontification, but you're going to labor at odds, I read you the warning: All that fight against Zion are going to perish. So, you can shout your hallelujahs in the spirit world, and you can proclaim your calling and election guarantees you something, but quite frankly, practically everyone's calling and election can be made sure. You get to continue progress. You get to continue to repent. God's not gonna terminate you at the end of this cycle of creation but you're gonna be allowed to go on—and upward, if you'll continue to repent.

You will always be free to choose, but the work of the covenants that the Book of Mormon foretell are to be accomplished through the reclaiming (by repentance and returning to Him) of Gentiles that will, ultimately, reach out to (and include) restoring the Lamanites/ restoring the Jews to a knowledge of the works of the Father, that—**that**—is what is on the mind of God today. **That** is the purpose of the covenant that was given unto us in Boise, just a few years ago—two years ago. **That** is what fulfilling the covenant ultimately requires that we labor to achieve.

That effort began in earnest with the reclaiming of the scriptures and the presenting of those to the Lord for His acceptance—and the marvelous news that God accepted them as adequate for His purpose for us—and the commitment that He would labor with us to go forward.

Anyone can join the party. Anyone can come into this work. Anyone can remain a Catholic or a Presbyterian, a Catholic or a Latter-day Saint. It doesn't matter. Those things are more like civic clubs. I don't care if you're a Rotarian or a Kiwanis Club member—means about the same thing as belonging to any of those organizations. Associate with whoever you like to associate with, but you **must** accept baptism. You **must** accept the Book of Mormon. It is a **covenant**. The covenant must be accepted, and you **must** help labor alongside those who seek to return Zion.

Now, just a couple of short comments.

(Wow, I took more time than I thought I was gonna take. I know they gave you a schedule, but whatever I'm gonna cover, I'm gonna cover—and then we'll sing or whatever comes next.)

In September 2014... I want to remind you of something. This was the talk given down in Phoenix, September 14, 2014:

Last general conference the entire First Presidency, the 12, the 70, and all other general authorities and [their] auxiliaries, voted to sustain those who abused their authority in casting me out of the church. At that moment, the Lord ended all claims of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to claim it is led by the priesthood [meaning the leaders who exercise control, compulsion, and dominion, and not the powerless who had no part in the affair]. They have not practiced what He requires. The Lord has brought about His purposes. This has been [done] in His heart all along. He has chosen to use small means to accomplish it, but He always uses the smallest of means to fulfill His purposes. (*40 Years in Mormonism*, Talk 10, "Preserving the Restoration," page 8 of the paper)

If you will take a moment to consider the path that has been taken by that church's leaders since April of 2014, you can see how (in only five years) they have shown, by their decisions, the lack of heavenly guidance. Their trajectory will continue to arc downward. If you doubted my declaration in Phoenix in September 2014, then do not doubt the course taken by those church leaders since then.

Then I gave some closing remarks in the September 3, 2017 conference that I want to read to you:

Those who have entered faithfully into the covenant this day are going to notice some things. The spirit of God is withdrawing from the world. Men are increasingly more angry without good cause. The hearts of men are waxing cold. There is

increasing anger and resentment of gentiles. In political terms, it's rejection of white privilege.

Language of scripture gives a description of the events now underway and calls it the end of the times of the gentiles. This process, with the spirit withdrawing, will end on this continent as it did with two prior civilizations in fratricidal and genocidal warfare. For the rest of the world, it will be as in the days of Noah in which, as that light becomes eclipsed, the coldness of men's hearts is going to result in a constant scene of violence and bloodshed. The wicked will destroy the wicked.

The covenant, if it is kept, will prevent you from losing light and warmth of heart as the spirit now steadily recedes from the world. The time will come when you will be astonished at the gulf between the light and truth you will comprehend and the darkness of mind of the world. (Closing Remarks, Covenant of Christ Conference, 3 September 2017, pg. 1)

And I ended by saying:

May God bless you and send to each of you a growing light and warmth. As the spirit withdraws from the world may it continually shine un-eclipsed on each of you to enlighten your minds and warm your hearts. (Ibid, pg. 2)

In the *Answer* that we received, there was an explanation given to us. It says:

*In your language you use the name Lucifer for an angel who was in authority before God, who rebelled, fought against the work of the Father and was cast down to the earth. His name means holder of light, or light bearer, for he had gathered light by his heed and diligence before he rebelled. He has become a vessel containing only wrath and seeks to destroy all who will hearken to him. He is now enslaved to his own hatred.*

*Satan is a title, and means accuser, opponent and adversary; hence once he fell, Lucifer became, or in other words was called, Satan, because he accuses others and opposes the Father.*

*...there are those who have been Satan, accusing one another, wounding hearts and causing jarring, contention, and strife by their accusations. Rather than loving one another, even among you who desire a good thing, some have dealt unkindly as if they were opponents, accusers and adversaries. In this they were wrong.*

*You have sought to recover the scriptures because you hope to obtain the covenant for my protective hand to be over you, but you cannot be Satan and be mine. (T&C 157:7-10)*

I read those excerpts from the talk in Phoenix and from the Covenant Conference in Boise to remind you about what was described in both of those events. There **is** a process that **is**

underway. People are increasingly accusing, opposing, and fighting with one another without good cause. It is as if they are submitting themselves to listen to obey the spirit of Satan (or the spirit of strife, envy, jarring, accusing). That course is not going to change. I hope it may plateau for a season. There are things we have to do, and we need something other than chaos and warfare, in order to accomplish the things that we need to achieve. But I believe when the command is given, that we're going to have to act with alacrity if we are going to be able to fulfill the covenants and the obligations that have been promised by God and handed to us to do.

But don't expect the world to get better, and don't expect organized religions to get better. But hopefully, there will be more and more who come to take refuge among a band of believers who have no hierarchy, office, position, who have only ourselves to fellowship with informally, gathering at one another's homes, renting (on occasion) facilities like these to meet in larger groups.

I intend to continue my efforts among all of those people that I have been working with up to this point. I will continue that labor for so long as I am allowed to participate in any of this. But each of us, similarly, have the same kind of obligation to spread the truth and the knowledge and the scriptures (that we now have) that more accurately recover. We have to go back to what was given to us through Joseph Smith as the foundation, in order to qualify to be able to move forward.

The new scriptures are a vital part of the Restoration process. And I want to thank all of those who participated in that recovery effort—because it was not easy and it wasn't just one or two people. There was a great number of people, ultimately, who were necessary, in order to get the work accomplished. But as the Lord labored with the group and opened doors, there literally were computer programs that were essential to the collaborative process that were not available. There were resource materials that were essential to the collaborative process that came out, either online or in print, just in time to be available so that the work could be accomplished. The timing, the serendipitous occurrence that coincided with the scripture effort was remarkable. And all that were involved realized that this was not a work that could have been done ten years ago, let alone attempted last century. This is a work that only could be done at the time that it took place because the doors opened and materials became available.

So with that, there is a musical number and then an intermission. And so, we can shout, Hallelujah, indeed! And then, I'm supposed to come back here and answer questions. Someone handed me a bag of questions. I'll come back; I'll be back at twelve. The musical number is next—if they want to come up. You know, why don't we resume at ten to twelve. Is everyone okay with that? Let's do that. Let's do that.

[Transcription v1.1]