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The Book of Mormon

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Abstract: This article states that the Book of Mormon scriptures clarify perplexing biblical passages such as John 10:16, Ezekiel 38:18-19, and Isaiah 29:1-2.



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judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure.

"Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have. . . ." (Lev. 19:11-13, 35-36.)

The prophet King Benjamin said, ". . . remember, that whosoever among you borroweth of his neighbor should return the thing that he borroweth, according as he doth agree, or else thou shalt commit sin. . . ." (Mos. 4:28.)

Notice that these prophets did not add to their statements on honesty any conjunction as did Pilate with his truthful statement of the Savior's innocence, which he followed by the condemning, "But ye have a custom. . . ." (John 18:39.)

To be honest, to adhere to truth, is not something to be conditioned by the situation of the moment. Honesty is the very foundation of character. Dishonesty takes upon itself many forms, some of which are the following, all condemned by God: larceny, kidnapping, misappropriation, plagiarizing, misrepresentation, purloin, swindling, usurping, misleading, embezzlement, graft, lying, concealing, cribbing, extortion, falsifying, forging, absconding, trickery, fraud, deceit, infidelity, and shoplifting.

As to the latter, it is reported: "The professional shoplifter, it seems, is being elbowed aside by swarms of amateurs. So says the Northwestern Life Insurance Company, which also predicts that final reports for 1966 will show a new shoplifting record—well over three billion dollars worth of goods. Leading the amateur looters are *juveniles* and *housewives*, most of

them from well-off families. The ultimate losses extend well beyond the store. More restrictions are imposed, more conveniences are eliminated, shopping becomes more of a chore. The problem was summed up in a sign spotted by one of Northwestern National's staffers on a candy vending machine: Please be honest—we know you can beat the machine. If we continue to lose money the machine will need to be removed, as we cannot afford to buy another one." (Allan R. Dodd, *Printers' Ink*, Vol. 53, No. 11, p. 213.)

An act of dishonesty immediately brands an individual. He is not to be trusted any more. His name is marked. His happiness may be ruined. His path begins to be strewn with thorns. How honorable would Pilate have been had he had the courage and state of mind to resist that which is not honest.

But Pilate lacked courage. Today's temptations demand the correct state of mind and courage to resist the cry of the mob, which Pilate found too much for him. Unless a serious attempt is made in the home to teach and practice honesty and implant it in the minds and characters of our families, grave problems are ahead for us. A few dishonest acts by parents, such as an item in a lunch pail taken from the employer, plant the seed of rationalization that will destroy true character. The Lord requires allegiance from the whole man. Plain, ordinary, simply honesty as was displayed by Barnabas is required to please God.

May we do this I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

The Book of Mormon

LeGrand Richards

Of the Council of the Twelve

● We sang as our rest song today "We thank thee, O God, for a prophet to guide us in these latter days," and I am sure that every Latter-day Saint feels in his or her heart an echo to those words. And after listening to the message of President McKay this morning, I am sure that there will be no life nor home that would not be successful if we would all follow his counsel and his advice. I thank the Lord for my testimony that he truly is a prophet of God and a true successor to those who have preceded him back to the Prophet Joseph Smith, to whom

God restored his truth through the opening of the heavens, in sending forth heavenly messengers in this dispensation. I love the Church, and I love its people.

I thought today that I would like to say a few words about the Book of Mormon. When I was a boy, in the little town where I was raised, I was asked in a Sunday School conference to lead the Sunday School in reciting the testimony of the three witnesses to the truth of the Book of Mormon. That made such an impression upon my life that I have loved the

Book of Mormon ever since. To me it is the most tangible evidence that we have, aside from the great Church itself, that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I would like to quote it to you as nearly as I can recall it:

"BE IT KNOWN unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things."

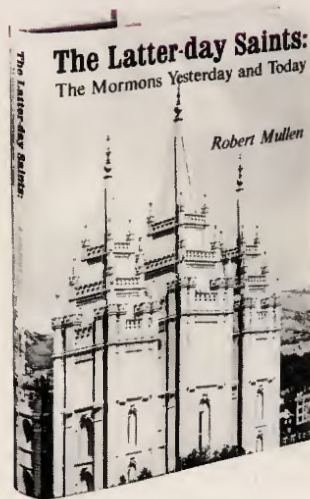
How could any lover of truth, any man or woman desiring to serve the Lord as he would like to be served, listen to such a testimony as that and then not want to know more about it, and whether it is true or not? In addition to that, we have the testimony of the eight witnesses to whom the Prophet Joseph Smith showed the plates; we have the testimony of the Prophet himself; and we have the testimonies of hundreds of thousands of sincere seekers after truth who listen to the admonition given by Moroni as he closed the records of the Book of Mormon, when he said:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost." (Moro. 10:4.)

Thousands and hundreds of thousands have put that promise to the test, and the Lord has made good the promise of his prophet as contained in the Book of Mormon.

I would like to discuss the Book of Mormon from a different angle; that

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 DOUBLEDAY

is, that the Book of Mormon has made possible the proper interpretation and understanding of many of the holy scriptures of the Bible that no theologian could properly understand or explain until the Book of Mormon came forth. I take for my first text the tenth chapter and sixteenth verse of John, in which the Savior said to his Twelve, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

No theologian could give a proper interpretation of that statement until the Book of Mormon came forth. It has been thought that he had in mind the Gentiles, but he said he had come only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. In the Book of Mormon we find the record of the Savior's visit to the Nephites following his resurrection and ascension, and that is not an unreasonable thing to understand, because he tarried for forty days with his disciples in the Holy Land before he left them.

He came to the people in this land of America, and he organized his Church here. He told his disciples that they were the other sheep of whom he had spoken to his disciples in Jerusalem. He said never at any time had the Lord commanded him to tell his disciples who the other sheep were, only that he had other sheep that were not of that land. He told his disciples here in America that they assumed he had meant the Gentiles, but he said that he never went to the Gentiles, that they did not understand that the Gentiles were to be converted through their preaching. But he said, ". . . behold, ye have both heard my voice, and seen me; . . . and ye are numbered among those whom the Father hath given me." (See 3 Ne. 15:21-24.) Isn't that a marvelous explanation of that glorious statement of the Master! Surely it had great significance to him, or it would never have been recorded in the holy scriptures.

I would now like to refer to the blessings given to the twelve sons of Jacob, or Israel. Jacob called his sons together and told them that he would tell them that which would befall them in the latter days. I will pass over all of them except Joseph's blessing. Jacob said that Joseph was a fruitful bough whose branches would run over the wall (and we have always understood that the wall referred to the great waters); and where was he to go over the wall? Unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. Is there any theologian in this world who can tell us where those everlasting hills are to which the Lord, through the father of Joseph, promised Joseph that he and his people would go?

He further said that his blessings would prevail above the blessings of his progenitors, and his progenitors were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Can you imagine that God would have in store for that chosen one blessings greater than those of his progenitors, and then not provide that a record should be kept of the fulfillment of those promises unto that great branch of the house of Israel?

The Book of Mormon tells us where that land is. It tells us how the Lord moved upon one, Lehi, and led him with his family and others to this land of America. He promised them that it would be a land choice above all other lands. He commanded them that they should keep records, and for a period of a thousand years the records were handed down from one prophet to another until they were finally buried in the earth, waiting to come forth in these latter days.

When Moses gave a blessing to the tribe of Joseph, he described the land that the Lord would give to the descendants of Joseph, who was separated from his brethren; he used the word *precious* five times in just four verses in describing that land. It is so important that I would like to read Moses' statement:

"And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord, be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath,

"And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon,

"And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills,

"And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush [in other words, the Lord who appeared to Moses in a burning bush]: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren." (Deut. 33:13-16.)

Could you describe a land more wonderfully, a description that would

describe this land of America to which the seed of Joseph was led? Let me refer to this one statement, the first *precious* he named: he said, "for the *precious* things of heaven." I have thought a lot about that and what it means. I think it means that their holy prophets would have communion with the heavens so that they could be led and inspired and directed, as we are today, by living prophets at the head of this Church.

It seems incredible that such a promise would be made to Joseph of a new land in the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, with promises greater than those of his progenitors, and that there should not be a record kept of the fulfillment of those promises. No other people can tell you where the land is that the Lord promised to Joseph and his posterity. This we learn from the Book of Mormon.

That brings us to the command the Lord gave to Ezekiel that two records should be kept, one for Judah and his companions, the house of Israel, and one for Joseph and his companions, the house of Israel, and he said:

". . . the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these?

"Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand." (Ezek. 37:18-19.)

The stick of Judah is nothing more than the Holy Bible, which has remained with the people through the ages. But the record that had been in the hands of Ephraim, who was one of the sons of Joseph, was to be taken and put with the record of Judah to make them one in the Lord's hand. Why should the world hesitate to accept the word of the Lord and its fulfillment? We have that record, and it is the record that was kept of the Lord's dealings with his people in this great land of America.

I would like to give you another statement from the Bible that no theologian could understand until the Book of Mormon came forth. This is from the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah:

"Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! [that was Jerusalem, the city where David dwelt] add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

"Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel." (Isa. 29:1-2.)

In other words, Isaiah not only saw the final destruction of Jerusalem, but he also saw the destruction of another great center; that great center was here in America. No theologian could de-

A Bridge of Faith

(After reading Alma, Chapter 56)

By Loray C. Randall

The bridge of time spans a narrow chasm between us;

They two thousand, and I—both one and legion.

My enemy bears not spear or graven shield,

But comes in quiet, subtle ways to bid me stray.

I answer him as did the sons of Helaman;

God will deliver me if I doubt not.

termine where that other center was until the Book of Mormon came forth. Then Isaiah adds,

"And I will camp against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

"And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." (Isa. 29:3-4.)

No theologian could understand that statement of Isaiah until the Book of Mormon came forth. Now I will read you from the Book of Mormon the explanation:

"After my seed and the seed of my brethren shall have dwindled in unbelief, and shall have been smitten by the Gentiles; yea, after the Lord God shall have camped against them round about, and shall have laid siege against them with a mount, and raised forts against them; and after they shall have been brought down low in the dust, even that they are not, yet the words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten.

"For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit; for the Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground; and their speech shall whisper out of the dust.

"For thus saith the Lord God: They shall write the things which shall be done among them, and they shall be written and sealed up in a book, and those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not have them, for they seek to destroy the things of God." (2 Ne. 26:15-17.)

Now isn't that a wonderful explanation of that passage in Isaiah? Nobody could have given an explanation like that until the Book of Mormon came forth; it states here that it shall be sealed up and come forth out of the dust. In that same chapter in which Isaiah tells about the destruction of Ariel and this other center, he says, "... the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed." (Isa. 29:11.)

You know how literally that was fulfilled when Martin Harris took some of the characters copied from the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated to one Professor Anthon in New York; after Professor Anthon had

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given a certificate indicating that the translation was genuine, he asked that the records be brought to him that he might translate them. Martin told him that they were sealed, and he answered in practically the same words recorded in Isaiah, "I cannot read a sealed book."

How can you fit all these things together and imagine that it was the thinking of the mind of young Joseph Smith, at the time the Book of Mormon was published, if this isn't the work of God, the Eternal Father? As Isaiah said, the Lord has declared the end from the beginning:

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isa. 40:8.)

There is another great principle that was made plain by the coming forth of the Book of Mormon that no one could understand until then; that is the fact that there were to be two gathering places for the Lord's children. All through the scriptures, after the division of Israel into two great kingdoms, there were the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel; the kingdom of Israel was scattered among the nations, and the world does not understand that there should be two gathering places. They think that Israel will all be gathered back to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Yet the scriptures in the Book of Mormon make so plain that when the Lord provided this land of America for the descendants of Joseph, the new Jerusalem should be built upon this land and that this should be the land of the gathering of many descendants of Joseph.

There isn't time to go into all the scriptures, but you remember when the Angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph three times during the night and again the next morning, he quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, wherein Isaiah said the Lord would set his hand again the second time to gather scattered Israel, and that he would bring in the dispersed of Judah and would set up an ensign unto the nations. (See Isa. 11:11-12.) Thus there were to be two great gathering places.

Again, when Isaiah saw the latter days, he said, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Isa. 2:2-3.)

He knew there would be two great gathering places. He knew that Israel would be gathered here in these valleys

of the mountains, and I think that the temple on this block is the very house of the God of Jacob that Isaiah was privileged to see. He knew that the Jews would be gathered back to the land of their inheritance, for the scriptures are replete that when Jesus shall come and visit them, they will ask: "What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." (Zech. 13:6.) The Church was to be established here, and the law to go forth from here, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

I will now add one more thought concerning another great truth that is revealed through the Book of Mormon and that is not understood in the scriptures by the theologians; that is the promise mentioned by Brother Sill concerning the new heaven. John saw the new Jerusalem let down from heaven. (See Rev. 21:1-3, 10-11.) The world has never understood that there were two Jerusalems. They did not know anything about the new Jerusalem, or where it was, or why it should come down from heaven. But we read in the Book of Mormon the words of Ether, who tells us that this is the land of the new Jerusalem, and that it would be established upon this land. Then he goes on to tell how the new Jerusalem would come down from heaven, and that this would not be

the old Jerusalem in the Holy Land. (Eth. 13:2-3.)

Brothers and sisters, just think how these truths so completely evidence the fact that the Prophet Joseph's story and the Book of Mormon are true. I bear you my witness that the Book of Mormon is true, that it is the one tangible evidence that Joseph Smith was truly a prophet, for no man nor body of men could have written such a book as that without the divine help of God, the Eternal Father. I know it is true. I know it is part of God's great "marvelous work and a wonder," and that promise is in the same chapter about Ariel and the sealed records, where he said that he would proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder, and that the wisdom of their wise men would perish and the understanding of their prudent men would be hid. (Isaiah 29.) That is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

This is my testimony to you: that this Church is built upon the foundation that Paul declared of apostles and prophets, with Christ our Lord as the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), and that through his living prophet today, Christ the Lord is directing his kingdom; it shall continue to roll forth as the prophets have foretold until it shall become as a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

I bear you that witness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

Thursday Afternoon Session, April 6, 1967

The Pangs of Unlearning

Delbert L. Stapley

Of the Council of the Twelve

● Recently, I read a talk, given by a doctor to a convention of medical men, entitled "The Pangs of Unlearning." He called attention to the discoveries through research of new drugs and improved treatments that require much unlearning by physicians and surgeons, because many former practices and medicines do not best serve the interests of today's patients. A doctor friend of mine significantly stated that the majority of medical services practiced ten years ago are obsolete today. This talk challenged my interest, as I envisioned updated learning, reorienting, and retraining as applying to the pattern of our own lives.

I should like to share with you some of my thoughts on this subject of unlearning and the possible personal improvement each individual can at-

tain by living strictly within the framework and spirit of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The word *unlearn* as here used does not mean a casting aside of eternal truths and everlasting knowledge. Rather, it means altering our habits of behavior so as to live more in harmony with God's will. It reflects a desire and a willingness to keep pace with up-to-date knowledge gained through research (as well as inspiration and revelation), which provides advanced learning, new methods, and techniques to replace the less effective or obsolete. Are we faithful and obedient enough in the Church to accept authorized changes that represent improvement and growth?

The wonderful, complex instrument for registering our experiences that we