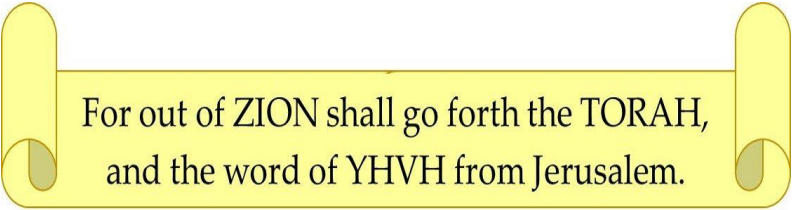


THE RECORD OF THE FIRST ANNUAL

RESTORATION TORAH CONFERENCE

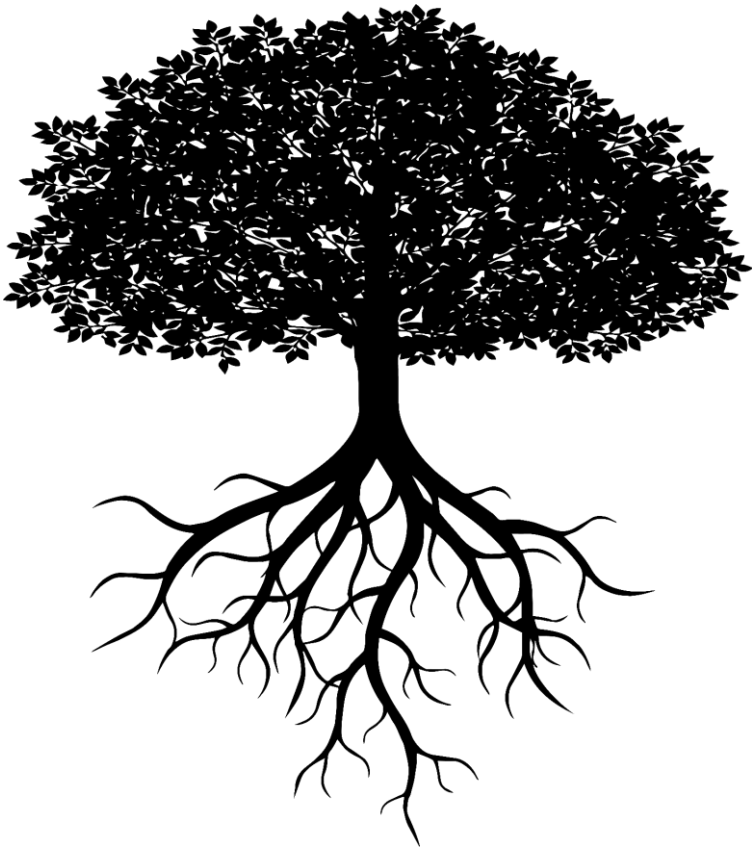
OF THE ZARAHEMLA FOUNDATION



For out of ZION shall go forth the TORAH,
and the word of YHVH from Jerusalem.

SHAVUOT 2020

*The Value of The Law, The Prophets, and
The Writings in The Latter Days*



The Lord of the vineyard wept, and said unto the servant: What could I have done more for my vineyard?... Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard?

And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard—have not the branches thereof overcome the roots which are good? And because the branches have overcome the roots thereof, behold they grew faster than the strength of the roots, taking strength unto themselves. Behold, I say, is not this the cause that the trees of thy vineyard have become corrupted?

- Jacob 5:41,47-48

Dedication

To the Lord of the Vineyard.

And to all the Branches of the Restoration:
May you bring forth good fruit in the place you
have grown. And may you never forget that it is
not given to the branches to decide which should
be kept and which pruned. It is the Lord of the
Vineyard who will declare it.

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Additional copies may be
obtained by sending an email to:
restorationtorahconference@gmail.com

Preface

We are very excited about the annual Restoration Torah Conference, and especially since this is the first of many to come. The theme of this first conference is "*The Value of The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings in The Latter Days*".

The purpose of this conference is to educate the saints about the often forgotten Hebrew roots of their faith and to encourage a greater appreciation, and application, of the principles found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

This conference is being held in conjunction with the Feast of Shavuot (aka Pentecost), which, as you may know, is when the Law and Covenant at Sinai was given. When the Law and Covenant was given to Israel at that time, they were given two days to sanctify themselves and prepare to receive the Torah (Exodus 19:10-11). What better way to prepare for, and celebrate, this memorial than to dedicate the time to teaching and learning about God's Word?

All branches of the restoration are welcome, and encouraged, to attend and speak. Despite differences that may exist, or be expressed, the focus of the talks ought to be on what we could or should be doing in our personal lives, families, and communities to understand and keep God's Law, come closer to him, and to teach and help others to do the same.

Shalom,

Joshua Erickson
Secretary, Zarahemla Foundation
May 25, 2020

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The Endtime Empowerment of Davidic Kings and Queens

By Gene Hagloch

The pinnacle of the Judeo-Christian faith is temple worship. The purpose of the temple is where God communes with man on the earth. It is where heaven and earth intersect. It is where men and women reach the highest level of blessedness as God's ruling class as Davidic Kings and Queens and High Priests. Indeed, the aim and focus of temple worship is to empower men and women to be God's savior leaders; to effect the Endtime gathering of Israel and to be His leadership at His Millennial reign. While the temple endowment today presents a lot of lofty ideals and general theological principles, it lacks the specific rules and commands to empower these ideals and principles, which result in bringing us to God, to know Him in a personal and tangible way. Today, we shall attempt to fill in these details.

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX

In his book, *The Stages of Faith*, Dr. James Fowler ascertained that only fifty percent of people of faith critically examine what they believe. So I hope this conference will be a watershed to help you in your own personal examination of the Gospel. To find out what God is really saying to humanity.

Religious indoctrination typically is inherited through parents or is voluntarily accepted by being proselyted by some faith system. But coming to know God behooves each one of us to search the scriptures ourselves, before committing to a faith system. Oliver DeMille in his book, *A Thomas Jefferson Education*, would call these kinds of people, who flesh out the truth for themselves, as those who know, "How to Think". Mr. DeMille outlines three general types of people – those who know "What to Think", those who know "When to Think" and those who know "How to Think". It is this last category of people – those who know "How to Think"- that seem to break out of mental programming that accompanies religious indoctrination. Mr. DeMille goes on

to explain that the education of those who know how to think is centered on the classics of men and women who were and are great thinkers. We can see this in the scriptures as well - Moses and Isaiah are giants here. It takes a certain kind of person to break out of religious traditions that have been perpetuated by faith systems and is this not the test of true discipleship.

TRADITIONS OF MEN

Joseph Smith said, "I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions."

What traditions? What traditions do you think Joseph is referring to? The vast majority of early church converts at the time came from some version of protestant Christianity. And what are the traditions of protestant Christianity that Joseph could be referring to? First, it's a poor understanding of Salvation by Grace through Faith, and second, that the Law was fulfilled. So are these the traditions that Joseph is referring to?

What do you get when you integrate the traditions, teachings and doctrines of men with the Gospel? You get what the prophet Isaiah calls "tables of vomit". The prophet Isaiah prophesied that in the last days the Gospel will be presented on tables of vomit meaning that ministers of the Gospel will teach the Gospel without a full understanding, and hence teach their own ideas, which results in a regurgitation of a jumbled mass of doctrines that lacks order and structure. Isaiah says,

"For all tables are filled with vomit; no spot is without
excrement."
- Isaiah 28:8

Conversely, we see in the Book of Mormon that the Sons of Mosiah had a sound understanding of the scriptures (Alma 17) and that Yeshua had brought the scriptures together as a unified doctrine for He expounded the scriptures as "one" (3 Nephi 23:14).

We see in the scriptures that overcoming traditions, which are deceptions, are a primary challenge of coming to know God. We see statements in the scriptures like:

Narrow is the way and few there be that find it (Matt. 7:14).

Working out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12).

Then there is Lehi's dream about the Tree of Life and going through a thick darkness - the darkness or the deceptions and doctrines of men. And how we are to hold onto the Word of God. (1 Nephi 8)

It is the premise of this address that yes indeed Joseph was referring to these protestant Christian traditions. That Joseph was attempting to restore much of the legal code of Ancient Israel and Ancient Gospel. Unfortunately, this restoration got derailed at his death.

And as we shall see, we have multiple testimonies that the legal code of Ancient Israel will be restored.

James McCune, *God's Law: The Neglected Element in Religious and Civil Life*, "The Christian world excitedly awaits an end-time religious revival, but they have barely a clue as to the nature and extent of the revival that is actually coming. Why don't they understand? Because they have rejected, almost in its entirety, the source from whence this revival will originate - the law! The law defines God righteousness, and any revival, or restoration of righteousness, must be centered around the law."

W. Cleon Skousen, *The Majesty of God's Law*, "I discovered that the Founders [of America] were in-depth students of the Bible, and equally familiar with secular history both ancient and modern. I was surprised that they knew we Americans would one day practice the revealed code of righteous law given to the Israelites by God."

R. J. Rushdooney, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, "God's law provides us with His law for every sphere. It alone can equip us to resist the encroachment of alien powers. It alone can empower the individual and family to govern properly. We cannot expect our present-day state to be favorable to God's law, because it denies to the state powers that the

state claims and use. We are in the latter stages of the growing decay and collapse of statist law. It is time to reconsider God's law. Our freedom depends on it."

But Israel's legal code is not the beginning or end of an Endtime restoration.

In our quest to know God, we study the writings and works of men that knew God and saw him face to face like Moses (Ex 19) and Isaiah (Is 6:1), and the Gospels so we ourselves can come to know God – to see Him face to face. Interestingly, the Jewish scriptures are assembled in an order of Holiness, by the quality of inspiration. Commenting on the order of the Hebrew Bible Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks said:

"The Hebrew Bible, Tanakh, and the Old Testament just happen to be two completely different books that just happen to contain the same words. But they are different because their order is different. In Judaism we order the books of the Tanakh depending on the degree of Holiness, the quality of inspiration, so Torah the direct word of God to man, Nevi'im, the prophets, the word of God through man, and Ketuvim the word of human beings to God."

Consequently, this is the order that the scriptures should be studied and taken as doctrinal precedents.

Type of Scripture (Degree of Holiness, Quality of Inspiration)	Old Testament	New Testament	Book of Mormon
Direct Word of God to Man	Torah	The Gospels	3 Nephi
Word of God Through Man	The Prophets	Apostle Paul, et al	Balance of the New World Prophets
Word of Human Beings to God	The Writings		

After the direct word of God to man - the Torah, the Gospels and 3 Nephi - we have the prophets. Can we place the prophets in an order of priority? Are some prophets more important than others? In the Gospels, Yeshua quotes Isaiah more than any other prophet. And in the Book of Mormon, Isaiah is a central thrust of the Book of Mormon. So studying the writings of Isaiah is paramount.

ISAIAH'S HEBREW GOSPEL

In 2000, I was introduced to Avraham Gileadi who has made it his life's work to understand and promote the words of Isaiah. I purchased his book *Isaiah Decoded*, which is light years ahead of any other author and scholar when it comes to understanding the Book of Isaiah. Dr. Gileadi skillfully organized the Book of Isaiah into an Endtime Scenario and also a Hebrew Gospel laying out a pathway to Godliness. Dr. Gileadi's analysis of Isaiah assembles Isaiah's Hebrew Gospel into a Ladder to Heaven placing humanity into ascending and descending spiritual categories. That Ladder looks like this:

Isaiah's Categories of Humanity
The Most High God - The Father (Heavenly Father)
Jehovah – Yeshua - The Son - The God of this World
Seraphim
Son/Servant & Daughter/Handmaidens
Zion/Jerusalem
Jacob/Israel
Babylon
<i>Sodom/Gomorrah*</i>
<i>Mahan*</i>
Perdition

* Added by G. Hagloch

However, as insightful as Dr. Gileadi's work is on Isaiah, it lacks a complete covenant theology and system of law, which is really the power behind the Hebrew Gospel. And further, that is the disconnect with Mormon theology - that it also lacks a complete system of law and a complete covenant theology. Where can we find this complete system of law and covenant theology? In the Torah and Tanakh.

A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF LAW

When we consider how Christianity looks at Biblical Law, we essentially see a limited view which includes accepting Yeshua as Messiah and embracing the seven laws of the Noahide Covenant that God gave to all humanity after the flood - promising that God would not destroy humanity if they would live it. Moreover, when we look at how mainstream Mormonism views the Law, this is all that Mormonism really offers because they ignore the Torah as being relevant for us today.

Christianity	Mainstream Mormonism
Messianic Covenant	Messianic Covenant
Noahide covenant	Noahide Covenant

Mainstream Mormonism's own theology lacks a complete system of law because their theology lays out a three dimensional view of Eternal Law - Telestial, Terrestrial and Celestial - but provides no details (D&C 76). They really only understand this limited view of God's plan of salvation, which includes Yeshua as the Savior of Humanity and the Noahide Covenant, because again, Mormonism ignores the Torah.

Mormonism's Doctrinal System of Law
Telestial/Spirit
Terrestrial/Son
Celestial/Father

OLD TESTAMENT COVENANT LAW AND THEOLOGY

As we survey divine law and theology in the Torah and Tanakh, we can take the commandments and assemble a complete covenant theology. Moreover, we can take this covenant theology and divide it into three general categories that correlate to the three heavens spoken of by Paul, which also correlate to the Mormon view of three eternal kingdoms - the Telestial, Terrestrial, and Celestial.

Kingdoms	Major Covenant Divisions
All Kingdoms	Messianic
Telestial	Noahide (7 Laws for all Humanity)
Terrestrial	Sinaide
Celestial	Davidide

And finally, we expand this covenant theology into a seven covenant structure that brings this theology to a condition of completeness, wholeness, and perfection.

The Seven Covenants of Perfection		
Kingdom	Major Covenant Division	Seven Covenants
All Kingdoms	Messianic	Messianic
Terrestrial	Sinaide	Abrahamic Threshold Priesthood Sinai (Includes 7 basic laws) (Collective)
Celestial	Davidide	Davidic Enochic

We can now take Isaiah's Hebrew Gospel and integrate these three levels of laws and God's Covenant theology.

Isaiah's Categories of Humanity	Eternal Kingdoms	Covenants
The Most High God	Celestial	Messianic
Jehovah, The God of Israel		
Seraphim		Enochic Davidic
Son/Servant		
Zion/Jerusalem	Terrestrial	Sinai (includes 7 basic laws) Priesthood Threshold Abrahamic
Jacob/Israel	Transition	\wedge_v
Babylon	Telestial	7 Laws for all Humanity (Noahide)
<i>Sodom/Gomorrah*</i>		
<i>Mahan*</i>		
Perdition	Outer Darkness	No Relationship

But we are not finished, we need to integrate the message of the New Testament with our Hebrew Gospel and System of Law with the message of becoming Perfect, and reaching the full image and stature of the Messiah - the Process of Perfection.

THE PROCESS OF PERFECTION

The Process of Perfection is the process of being Redeemed, Sanctified and Exalted. Redemption is accepting Jehovah-Yeshua as the God and Redeemer of all Humanity, which is being saved from the Fall of Adam and Eve - eternal death. Sanctification is the process of being made holy. And Exaltation is the process of becoming fully perfect and seeing God.

The Process of Perfection		
Redeemed	Sanctified	Exalted

We can expand this general view by being Born Again and Going Onto Perfection.

Isaiah's Categories of Humanity	Eternal Kingdoms	Covenants	The Process of Perfection
Seraphim	Celestial	Enochic Davidic	Exaltation (Going onto Perfection)
Son/Servant			Married Becomes Perfected Reaches the Full Image of Messiah See God the Son
Zion/ Jerusalem	Terrestrial	Sinai (include 7 basic laws) Priesthood Threshold Abrahamic	Sanctification (Born Again) Born of the Water Keeps the Commandments Born of God/Spirit
All Humanity	--	Messianic	Redemption Born of the Blood

THE FULLNESS OF THE GOSPEL

So in summary, how did we get here? We first looked at Isaiah's Hebrew Gospel, then we integrated the System of Commands and Covenants from the Tanakh and finally we integrated the Process of Perfection from the New Testament. The results of this analysis are that we have constructed a full view of the gospel and have expounded the whole of the scriptures into a “oneness” (3 Nephi 23:14).

The Fullness of the Gospel		
Isaiah's Hebrew Gospel	Tanakh System of Commands and Covenants	The Process of Perfection

ENDTIME TEMPLE ENDOWMENT

The prophet Isaiah prophesied that in the Endtimes that the righteous will go to the House of the Lord and learn of the Lord's way so that he can be our God and we will be His people. What we can expect with an Endtime Temple and becoming empowered through the temple endowment is found in this full view of the gospel that includes - Isaiah's Gospel, God's System of laws and covenants and the Process of Perfection. So now our Endtime temple looks like this.

Endtime Temple		
Temple Rooms	Creation Room	Garden Room
Process of Perfection		Redemption
Covenants/Signs		Messianic/Nail Prints
Isaiah's Categories		
Status	Individual	Individual
Titles		
Furnishings		Altar of Sacrifice

Endtime Temple (Continued)		
World Room	Terrestrial Room	Celestial Room
Sanctification Conditional	Sanctification Unconditional Exaltation Conditional	Exaltation Unconditional
Abrahamic/Circumcision Threshold/Name Priesthood/Altar Sinai/Sabbath	Davidic/White Robes	Enochic/Temple (Sealing Power)
Jacob/Israel	Zion/Jerusalem	Seraphim Son/Servants Daughters/Hand maidens
Individual	Individual/ Married	Married
Kings/Queens Priest/Priestesses	Davidic Kings/Queens High Priest/Priestesses	
Laver	Menorah Table of Shewbread Altar of Incense	Mercy Seat Ark of the Covenant

But we don't need to wait for this Endtime Temple to be built to progress, have a personal relationship with God, and receive power now. Abraham had his Mount Moriah, Jacob had his Mount Bethel, Moses had his Mount Sinai, Peter, James and John had their Mount of Transfiguration and Joseph Smith had his Sacred Grove.

Gene Hagloch was born a sixth generation Latter-Day Saint. He served an LDS mission to Canada, married in the Salt Lake City LDS Temple, and has served on five bishoprics. He graduated from Utah State University in Business and Accounting, and received Law paraprofessional training from Texas Tech University. He is currently an Accountant and Process/Information Analyst. Gene came to Torah in 2014, and is in his third year of Hebrew. He is the owner and founder of the Albuquerque Institute of Biblical Law website and blogs weekly on his site (<https://www.abqibl.com/>).

Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Torah

By Charlotte Erickson

I resumed the translation of the Scriptures. From sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled.
— Joseph Smith¹

Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God.
— 1 Nephi 13:28

The Joseph Smith Translation, or Inspired Version, is a thousand times over the best Bible now existing on earth.
— Bruce McConkie²

After the Book of Mormon was published and the Church formally organized³, another assignment from the Lord for Joseph Smith was for him to make a New Translation of the Bible. In fact, it was while the Book of Mormon was being printed that Oliver Cowdery purchased the Bible that Joseph Smith used in the New Translation.⁴ The Prophet spent about 3 years on this project, far more time than he spent translating the Book of Mormon.

The fact that the Lord commanded Joseph Smith to make a New Translation of the Bible bears testimony of the importance of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. This assignment alone is strong evidence that studying and having a proper understanding of the Bible is relevant to Latter Day Saints, separate from any of the actual changes

¹ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pages 9-11. See also the heading to section 76 of the Doctrine & Covenants.

² *Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, page 289.

³ The Church was called the Church of Christ at the time of its organization on April 6th, 1830.

⁴ The Book of Mormon was printed at E. B. Grandin's print shop, and the 1828 King James Version of the Bible used for the New Translation was purchased on October 8th, 1829, for \$3.75 at Grandin's Bookstore in Palmyra, New York.

made by the Prophet or revelations received during the translation process. If you only take away one thing from my message today, I hope this is the one.

History of Joseph Smith's New Translation

The Lord directed Joseph Smith to make a New Translation of the Bible. Joseph considered this responsibility a “branch of my calling”⁵ as a prophet. The specific assignment is mentioned several times in the *History of the Church* and in the Doctrine and Covenants⁶.

Perhaps the earliest sign in Joseph's calling that the Bible was due for a New Translation was when the angel Moroni visited him in his bedroom in September of 1823. Joseph Smith—History 1:36 says Moroni “commenced quoting the prophecies of the Old Testament. He first quoted part of the third chapter of Malachi; and he quoted also the fourth or last chapter of the same prophecy, *though with a little variation from the way it reads in our Bibles.*”⁷

This went against the prevailing opinion of the day that the King James Version of the Bible contained the inerrant word of God. But as Latter Day Saints, we value the Bible but also accept that it has been mistranslated, as even our children can recite the 8th Article of Faith:

We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

Another sign that the Bible wasn't perfect, which Joseph would certainly have noted, was in the Book of Mormon, where the “plain and

⁵ Joseph Smith, *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 1:238. Joseph wrote in his journal on December 1, 1831, “I resumed the translation of the Scriptures, and continued to labor in *this branch of my calling* with Elder Sidney Rigdon as my scribe.” Emphases in italics are mine thruout the paper, unless otherwise noted.

⁶ See Doctrine & Covenants 35; 42:56; 45:60-62; 73:3-4; 76:15; 77; 86; and 91.

⁷ Joseph Smith—History goes on to describe the changes made (or not made) in this reference and some other scripture verses.

precious” things being taken away from the book is talked about several times.⁸ Hence, the Prophet may have had some premonitions about the assignments he would receive from the Lord in the future.

The process of translating the Book of Mormon in 1829 was a catalyst for events related to the Restoration. Some examples: 13 revelations in the Doctrine & Covenants⁹ were received during the relatively short translation process, and Joseph and Oliver inquired of the Lord about the authority to baptize, which in turn, led to the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood on that same day, and to that of the Melchizedek Priesthood soon afterwards.

Similarly, the process of making the New Translation of the Bible seems to have been a catalyst for other revelation that contributed to the Restoration of the Gospel. During the time period of the work of the New Translation, many revelations published in the Doctrine & Covenants were received. All it takes is a perusal of the chronology of the sections of the Doctrine & Covenants to see that for yourself. By my count, more than half the Doctrine & Covenants was received during the period when Joseph Smith was actively translating the Bible. Additionally, more than a dozen sections arose directly from the translation process or contain instructions for Joseph and others pertaining to it¹⁰, such as the famous section 76 known as “The Vision of the Degrees of Glory” or even just “The Vision”, which the apostle Melvin Ballard called “the climax of all wonderful revelations that have come from the Lord from the days of Father Adam until the present moment.”¹¹

When he first began the work of the New Translation, the Prophet focused on Genesis, but partway thru¹², the Lord instructed him in a revelation¹³ to set aside the Old Testament for a time and begin work on

⁸ See, for instance, 1 Nephi 13:26, 28, 29, 34, 40; 1 Nephi 14:23; and Mormon 8:33.

⁹ Sections 6-18.

¹⁰ See Doctrine and Covenants sections 25, 35, 37, 41, 42, 45, 73, 76, 77, 86, 91, 93, 94, and 124.

¹¹ *Three Degrees of Glory* by M. J. Ballard, page 4.

¹² After Genesis 24:41 in the KJV.

¹³ Doctrine and Covenants 45, dated March 7, 1831.

the New Testament. After the New Testament was completed in July 1832, Joseph finished his work on the Old Testament.

The New Translation of the first part of the Old Testament¹⁴ and the first part of the New Testament¹⁵ were written in longhand, with the scribe writing out the entirety of every verse, not only those with changes but also those without. At some point¹⁶, a new system was begun in which the Bible purchased by Oliver Cowdery was marked with the location of the changes, and the manuscript indicated only the changes. Thus the “marked Bible” became an indispensable part of the New Translation, in addition to the manuscripts themselves.

Joseph Smith finished the New Translation of the Bible in 1833, and for the rest of his life continued to make improvements and preparations for publication. After completing the New Translation, the Prophet also studied German and Hebrew in order to better understand the Bible, and he gave sermons in which he provided better translations for Bible verses. When you read *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* or *Words of Joseph Smith* you will notice times in which the Prophet quoted a Bible verse and then made a statement such as “This word/phrase is better translated in this way.” His continued emphasis on the Bible and his personal efforts to understand it are further evidences that the Bible is worth the time and attention of all Latter Day Saints.

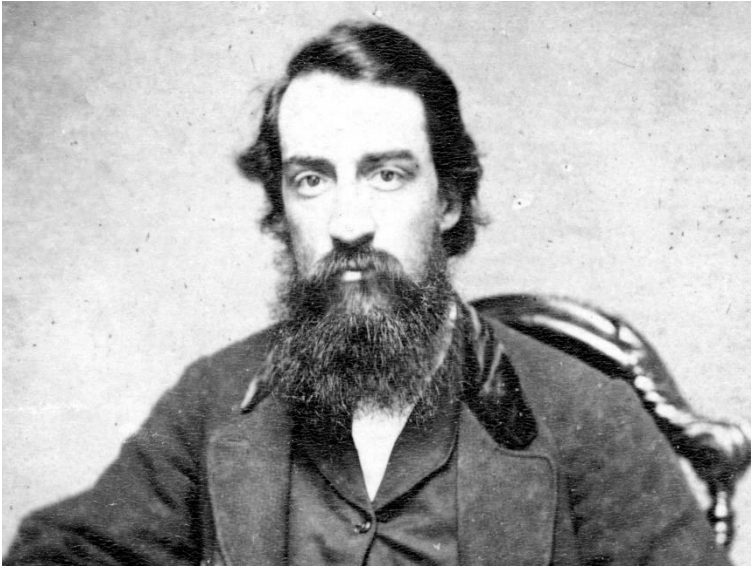
The New Translation was never fully published in Joseph Smith’s lifetime, altho extracts were printed. After Joseph Smith was killed, his widow Emma Smith kept the manuscripts and the marked Bible used in the translation process. After the RLDS Church was organized¹⁷,

¹⁴ Thru Genesis 24:41 in the KJV.

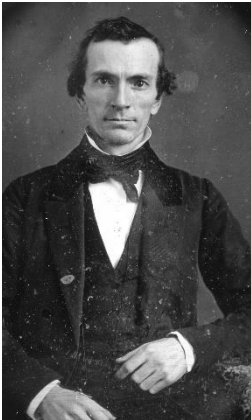
¹⁵ Thru John 5.

¹⁶ Beginning in February 1832.

¹⁷ When it first published the Bible in 1867, its name was the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints”. In 1872, the word “Reorganized” was added and it became the “Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints”, or RLDS Church. Under that name, it published several revisions of the Bible, the most recent edition being in 1991. In 2001 it changed its name to “Community of Christ”. Since most of the history of the *Inspired Version* happened under the name RLDS Church, that is the name used thruout this paper.



Joseph Smith III (*shown above*) set about to finally publish the translation, which was done in the late 1860s. Brigham Young's branch of the Church continued to use the King James Version of the Bible without any of Joseph Smith's changes for over 100 years.



Oliver Cowdery

Several people had the privilege of serving as a scribe for the New Translation (*see images on this and the following page*): Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Emma Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Joseph Smith himself, and a 7th as-yet-unidentified scribe whose writing "is generally consistent and is for the most part skillfully executed, easily readable, and even



John Whitmer



Emma Smith

mental in healing the relations between the LDS and the RLDS, and he finally got permission to study the manuscripts and marked Bible directly and compare them to the *Inspired Version* of the Bible published by the RLDS Church.



Frederick G. Williams

somewhat elegant.”¹⁸

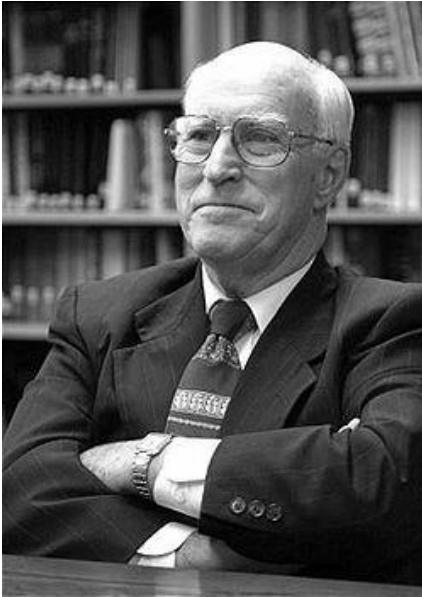
None of the scribes who worked with Joseph Smith on the translation process came west with Brigham Young. This was one possible reason Brigham’s branch of the LDS Church has never put much emphasis on the New Translation. Another, more obvious reason, of course, is that the LDS Church simply didn’t have access to the original manuscripts until about 50 years ago when Robert Matthews was instru-



Sidney Rigdon

Robert Matthews is definitely the authority on Joseph Smith’s New Translation, and a lot of the information in this paper is from his books (see footnote 18). In *A Plainer Translation*, which was also his doctoral dissertation, Robert Matthews said the “printed editions [of the *Inspired Version*] are accurate and

¹⁸ *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts*, edited by Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, page 48. Much of the information in this paper is from that book, as well as Robert Matthews’s other book, “*A Plainer Translation*”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible – A History and Commentary* (hereafter known as *A Plainer Translation*). While *A Plainer Translation* is considered the comprehensive treatment of the New Translation, the former book reflects more recent research.



Robert Matthews

faithful to the [original] manuscript[s] in almost every particular”¹⁹, altho he also says the later editions are even better.

In 1979 the LDS Church for the first time included in its edition of the Bible some of the changes made in Joseph Smith’s New Translation. Later in this paper I will discuss some of the changes included in the LDS edition as well as some of the interesting changes not found anywhere in the LDS canon.

Terminology

The RLDS Church first published the Bible in 1867 and used the title *Holy Scriptures*. The 1936 edition was the first to carry the title *Inspired Version* or IV. In 1944 the RLDS Church published *Holy Scriptures: Inspired Version*. The translation has also been known as the “Inspired Revision”.²⁰

However, Joseph Smith, his contemporaries, and the Doctrine & Covenants consistently used the word “translation” or the phrase “new translation”. For this reason and others²¹, the name “Inspired Version” is not my (or Robert Matthews’s) favorite title for the work. My preferences are “New Translation” and “Joseph Smith’s New Translation”, and “JSNT” for short.

¹⁹ Page xxviii.

²⁰ See *A Plainer Translation*, pages 12-13.

²¹ Another reason is the fact that the name “Inspired Version” semantically implies that other versions of the Bible are not in-spired, which of course isn’t the case. Additionally, it isn’t very descriptive and doesn’t provide any Restoration context to the uninformed.

“New Translation” was the name that was going to be used in the footnotes and appendix of the 1979 LDS Bible, but the acronym is unfortunately “NT”, which was already in use as the obvious shortened name for the New Testament. Robert Matthews proposed the name “Joseph Smith Translation” or “JST” instead, and that is what is found in the footnotes and appendix of the LDS Bible.

Joseph Smith changed over 3400 verses of the Bible, and the LDS canon includes only about 600 of them, and, for the purposes of this paper, the term “JST” will refer only to those changes. When I wish to refer to the entire translation, I will use “JSNT” rather than “JST”, and when I want to refer to the RLDS’s version I will use “IV”. (See the end of the paper for a table summarizing the acronyms and terms used here.)

I would like to share some examples of the JSNT which I find especially interesting. The New Testament has some fascinating examples as well, but because the theme of this year’s Restoration Torah Conference is *“The Value of The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings in The Latter Days”*, I will keep my examples to just a few noteworthy changes made to the Old Testament (specifically, the first book of the Torah). Since a disproportionate number of the changes in the JSNT are in Genesis²², I have plenty of examples from which to draw.

Where to read and study the JSNT

- 1) Within the LDS canon, short excerpts are found in the footnotes of the Bible; longer excerpts are found after the Bible Dictionary in an appendix called “Joseph Smith Translation”; and some of the largest chunks are found in the Pearl of Great Price (in the book of Moses²³ and in Joseph Smith—Matthew). Since all these locations put together still leave out thousands of the verses in the JSNT, you will have to go outside the LDS canon for the remainder of the changes.

²² Of the 3,410 verses that differ between the *Inspired Version* and the King James Version, 662, or almost 20%, are in the book of Genesis.

²³ It’s worth noting that the book of Moses is the complete text of the first several chapters of Genesis, but the chapter numbers are different from both the IV and Genesis. This is because in the IV, the chapter we know as Moses 1 is a “revelation” and placed after the preface and before the beginning of Genesis.

- 2) The *Inspired Version* as printed by the RLDS Church/Community of Christ. The later the edition, the more accurate, but even the original 1867 one is reliable. The IV contains the complete text of the King James Version of the Bible with all the changes made by Joseph Smith (including the complete absence of the Song of Solomon, due to the JSNT manuscript stating that “the Songs of Solomon are not inspired writings”). This is a good option if you just want to read the Bible in its purity, but the IV doesn’t indicate what has been changed. If you want to study the changes, you’ll have to use a different source. My favorite one is listed next.
- 3) Book: *The Bible Corrected by Joseph Smith*, integrated by Kenneth and Lyndell Lutes. Rather than a side-by-side comparison as found in some other sources, this book visually shows the corrections made by Joseph Smith by putting the deletions in a strikethrough font and the insertions in a bold font, leaving the text to read smoothly. This book is also cool because it includes (and indicates in the footnotes) some of the Bible corrections made by the Prophet in sermons, but that are not in the JSNT. For example, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, page 301, tells us how Joseph Smith said Genesis 2:7 ought to have been translated, but this change wasn’t made in the original JSNT manuscripts, which had been done 10 years earlier. While this book contains all of the JSNT, it leaves out most of the uncorrected Bible (it does include all of Genesis and all four New Testament gospels for the convenience of the reader). Thus, if you want to have the full text of the Bible, you’ll have to read this alongside a KJV Bible.
- 4) To read the JSNT online (which is particularly useful if you want to be able to copy/paste portions): <http://centerplace.org/> This is the website for a Restoration breakoff of the RLDS Church and it contains the full text of the IV as well as a side-by-side comparison of the IV with the KJV. This is the best place I’ve found to read the IV online.

Some interesting examples included in the JST

1) Noah and the Promise of the Rainbow

I'll start with one of my favorite examples of a change Joseph Smith made to the Bible in his New Translation. Bible books written and illustrated for children universally have the story of Noah and the Ark, and almost all of them include the promise of the rainbow (several examples from my own Bible storybook collection are shown in these pages). We learn from the KJV and the children's versions (including the picture below from the comic-book-style *Old Testament Stories* published by the LDS Church) that after God flooded the earth, he put



Noah thanked God for saving their lives. He built an altar. He burned sacrifices. God promised Noah he would never again send a flood to cover the earth. God put a rainbow in the sky. The rainbow helps people remember God's promise to Noah.

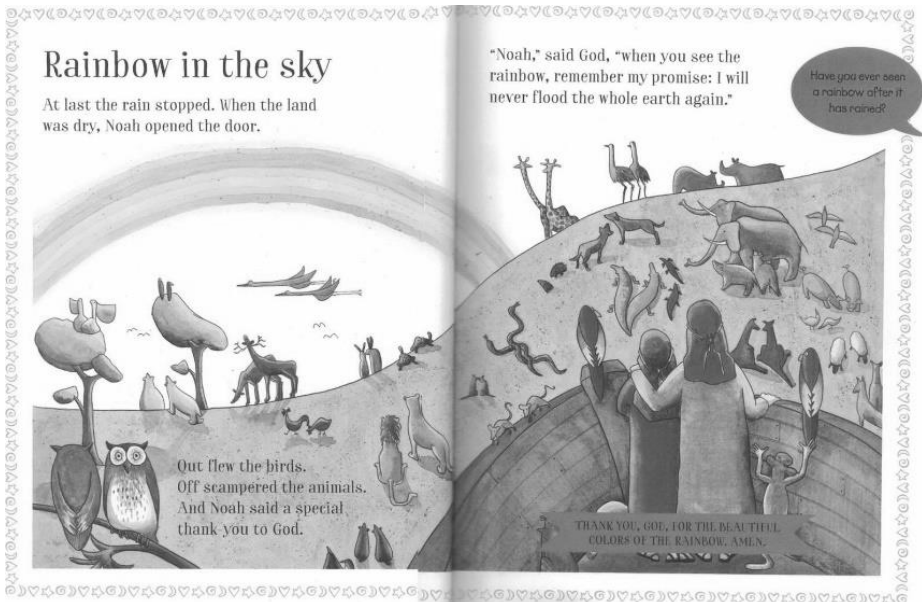
Genesis 8:20-22; 9:8-17

a rainbow in the sky as a sign of his promise to never flood the earth again.

The JSNT adds an additional, beautiful, promise (which you can find in the “Joseph Smith Translation” appendix at the back of the LDS edition of the Bible):

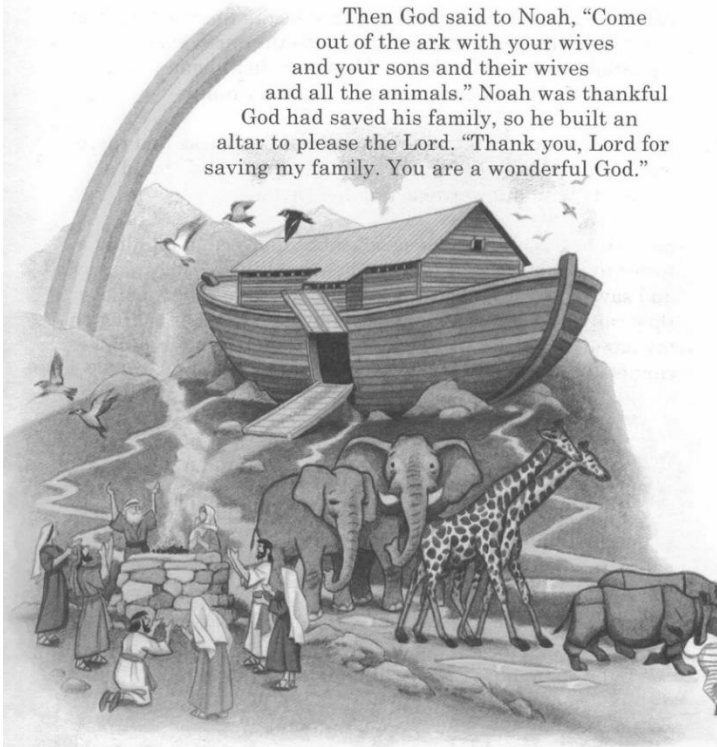
“Genesis 9:15. And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I will establish my covenant with you, which I made unto your father Enoch, concerning your seed after you.

16. And it shall come to pass, that every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, and of the cattle, and of the beast of the earth that is with you, which shall go out of the ark, shall not altogether perish; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth.



Come Out of the Ark

Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark with your wives and your sons and their wives and all the animals." Noah was thankful God had saved his family, so he built an altar to please the Lord. "Thank you, Lord for saving my family. You are a wonderful God."



God made a promise never again to destroy the world with flood waters. As a sign of His promise, He set a beautiful rainbow in the sky.

God made a promise!

27

17. And I will establish my covenant with you, which I made unto Enoch, concerning the remnants of your posterity.

18. And God made a covenant with Noah, and said, This shall be the token of the covenant I make between me and you, and for every living creature with you, for perpetual generations;

19. I will set my bow in the cloud; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

20. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant, which I have made between me and you, for every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.



Noah built an altar to worship God.

God was pleased, and He made a promise to Noah. "I will never again send a flood to kill all the living things on earth," He said. "The rainbow is a sign of this promise. When you see the rainbow in the sky, you will know that I remember my promise for all time."

21. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant, which I made unto thy father Enoch²⁴; that, when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself.

22. And this is mine everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth, and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, and all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy;

23. And the general assembly of the church of the firstborn shall come down out of heaven, and possess the earth, and shall have place until the end come. And this is mine everlasting covenant, which I made with thy father Enoch.

24. And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will establish my covenant unto thee, which I have made between me and thee, for every living creature of all flesh that shall be upon the earth.

25. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and thee; for all flesh that shall be upon the earth.”

²⁴ God is referring to the covenant made to Enoch as found in the book of Moses, which is of course another wonderful contribution of the JSNT.

God promised Noah and his family that he would never again cause such a mighty flood to come upon the earth to destroy the people. As a sign of his promise to Noah and his family that the earth would never again be covered with water, God placed a beautiful rainbow in the sky. Man, on the other hand, should also strive to so live that such a sad thing would never again be necessary.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. What is your favorite part of the story of Noah?



With the knowledge the JSNT provides us, we easily visualize a rainbow as a bridge between heaven and earth (and teach our children to visualize it as well). When we look in the sky and see a rainbow, we can remember God's beautiful promise that Zion will come again when God has a people who are willing to keep all of his commandments. I'm sure each of us longs for that day. I personally use this promise of Zion to inspire me to make my home as close to Zion as I can.

2) Abraham Paid Tithing

Another change Joseph Smith made pertains to tithing. This example is found in Genesis 14:39, which you'll find in the appendix to the LDS edition of the Bible. This verse says, "Wherefore, Abram paid unto him [Melchizedek] tithes of all that he had, of all the riches which he possessed, which God had given him *more than that which he had need.*" This description of how one righteous man calculated his tithing helped form my own understanding when I had questions about tithing.

3) The Innocence of Children and the Age of Accountability

Another contribution of the JSNT supports other scriptures in the LDS canon. Latter Day Saints know that children are accountable beginning at the age of 8 years old. The Book of Mormon teaches very clearly that little children have no need of baptism²⁵, but no specific age is given with which to distinguish "little children" from those who are accountable. The Doctrine & Covenants gives 8 years old as the age a child should be baptized²⁶. But even earlier than this revelation is the Joseph Smith New Translation of Genesis 17:7 (verse 11 in the JST, found in the appendix), in which Abraham gets taught that 8 years old is the age of accountability. (Words in italics are added in the JSNT.)

King James Version

(Genesis 17:7)

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Inspired Version

(Genesis 17:11)

And I will establish *a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be* my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; *that thou mayest know forever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old.*

²⁵ See, for example, the entire 8th chapter of Moroni, in which Mormon says (among other things) that you will go to hell if you are cut off while in the thought that little children need baptism.

²⁶ Doctrine & Covenants 68:25-28.

An even earlier example in the JSNT of the innocence of little children is in the book of Moses²⁷:

And the Lord said unto Adam, Behold, I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the garden of Eden. Hence came the saying abroad among the people, that the Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children, for they are whole from the foundation of the world.

I'm so glad to be part of a religious tradition that believes children are innocent!

4) Confusing Stories about Lot and His Daughters

The first time I read the King James Version of the Bible, I was confused by stories in which characters behaved in questionable ways, but of which the Bible provided no moral clarification. Two of these stories have to do with Lot and his daughters, and Joseph Smith's New Translation clears up the confusion in both cases. The KJV says Lot offered his daughters to the wicked men outside his door²⁸, and later in the same chapter it describes Lot's daughters' getting him drunk and sleeping with him²⁹. In the first story, the JSNT explains that the wicked men demanded his daughters and Lot refused their demands, and the second story is clarified by the JSNT to say the daughters dealt wickedly.³⁰

5) "Heavens" Versus "Heaven" in the Creation Story

Several times in the JSNT of the creation story in Genesis, "heavens" becomes "heaven".

²⁷ Moses 6:53-54.

²⁸ Genesis 19:6-8.

²⁹ Genesis 19:30-38.

³⁰ Joseph Smith's changes to the first story are found in the appendix to the LDS edition of the Bible; the changes to the second story are found in the footnotes.

Interesting examples of JSNT changes not in the JST

1) Rebekah Had a Nose Ring?

Genesis chapter 24 has the story about Abraham sending the eldest servant of his house to go get a wife for his son Isaac. Rebekah draws water from the well for the servant and his camels, which is the sign the servant was looking for, so in verse 47 he “put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.”

The LDS edition of the KJV has an interesting footnote at the word “earring”:

47a HEB ring on her nose.



I have used this verse and footnote in good humor to tease my judgmental LDS peers who consider nose rings to be rebellious, but in all truthfulness, this story has an example of a Joseph Smith change *not* included in the LDS edition of the Bible.

OrmaxWorld @Ormaxworld · May 27, 2018

The first written record of nostril piercing dates back to the Middle East 4,000 years ago. Nostril piercing is also referenced in the Biblical book of Genesis where Abraham's son Isaac gives his future wife, Rebekah, a golden "Shanf", which is Hebrew for "nose ring".



The same amount of footnote space could have clarified in a superior way: “*And I gave the earrings unto her to put into her ears, and the bracelets upon her hands.*” So, for better or worse, this particular verse can’t actually be used to make the point that Mother Rebekah had a nose ring.

2) Further Evidence of Abram and Sarah’s Faithfulness

Genesis chapter 15 includes an interaction between Abram and the Lord. The Lord promises Abram seed in number as the stars, as well as a land to inherit. Abram asks the Lord, “Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?”³¹ Joseph Smith’s New Translation adds a nice clarification, that despite Abram’s questioning the Lord: “*yet he believed God.*”³²

Genesis chapter 21 has the story of the miraculous birth of Isaac. I like the Joseph Smith’s New Translation of what Sarah says:

³¹ Genesis 15:8

³² This cannot be read in the LDS edition of the Bible but can be read in the *Inspired Version* in Genesis 15:14.

King James Version

Inspired Version

(most relevant changes in italics)

(Genesis 21:5-7)

(Genesis 21:4-6)

And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that

And Sarah said, God has made me to *rejoice*; and also all that

hear will laugh with me.

know me will *rejoice* with me.

And she said,

And she said unto Abraham,

Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck?

Who would have said that Sarah should have given children suck?

for I have born him a son in his old age.

For *I was barren, but the Lord promised*, and I have borne unto Abraham a son in his old age.

I love how Sarah says, “I was barren, but the Lord promised.” The Old Testament is full of examples of God keeping his promises.

3) The Mother of Nations

The KJV of Genesis 17:16 says Sarah is “*a* mother of nations” but the JSNT changes it to “*the* mother of nations”.

4) God Tried Abraham

Genesis 22:1 is changed from “God did *tempt* Abraham” to “God did *try* Abraham” when the Lord is about to tell Abraham to offer up Isaac.

5) Abraham Carried the Wood

Genesis 22:6 is changed in the JSNT to indicate that 100+-year-old Abraham carried the wood up the mountain, not his strong young son Isaac.

6) Thine Only ~~Son~~ Isaac

Thruout the story of the Akedah, in the KJV, Isaac is referred to by the Lord or the angel as Abraham's "only son", but Joseph changes it in multiple instances to "thine only Isaac"³³.

Study the JSNT for yourself to discover many interesting examples

- 1) Read the JSNT of the creation story to learn about the spiritual creation happening before the natural one.
- 2) The JSNT tells us the primary purpose of trees – it might surprise you!
- 3) Have you ever heard the line from the Lord to Adam that Adam may choose for himself whether to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil? It's unique to Latter Day Saint scripture and comes from the JSNT.
- 4) Was it only by reason of the fall of Adam only that man became carnal, sensual, and devilish, or did such a condition come upon man because of something else? Find out in the JSNT of an early story of Adam and Eve's posterity.
- 5) Learn more in the JSNT about the nature of Satan and the secret oath he taught to Cain.
- 6) Read about Adam's baptism in the JSNT.
- 7) Learn what animal sacrifices symbolize by reading the JSNT.
- 8) Read in the JSNT the many instances of the gospel being taught to Adam's posterity.

Don't forget that all these examples are found solely in the first book of the Torah – just imagine what the rest of The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings have in store for you!³⁴

³³ Genesis chapter 22 verses 2, 12, and 16.

³⁴ The JSNT of New Testament also has a huge assortment of almost irresistible changes. I exercised great self-restraint not to delve into them in this paper.

Work still to be done on the JSNT

1) More JSNT Changes Included in the JST

I would obviously love to see the LDS canon contain more of the JSNT. In my opinion this is a very valuable use for footnote and/or appendix space.

2) Audiobook

I hope I'm wrong and just haven't done the right search on the internet, but as far as I know, there is no audiobook version of the JSNT/IV. This would be a wonderful asset.

3) JSNT Without the JST

The Bible Corrected by Joseph Smith, integrated by Kenneth and Lyndell Lutes (mentioned previously) includes all the changes made in the JSNT, which is quite redundant for someone like me who uses the JST as well. I would love to see a copy of the JSNT specifically marked to indicate which passages are in the JST and which are not. This would be useful because you could use the LDS canon, have this as a supplement, and put together you'd have a complete JSNT but without any needless overlap. I've started working on my own personal version by marking a copy of the Lutes book with a red pencil whenever I discover a JSNT change not in the JST. I've already found it to be valuable.

List of acronyms/terms used

JSNT	Joseph Smith New Translation (including all the changes made by Joseph Smith)
JST	Joseph Smith Translation (only those parts included in the LDS canon)
IV	The <i>Inspired Version</i> of the Bible as published by the RLDS Church
LDS Church	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the largest branch of Mormonism)

RLDS Church	Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (the branch of Mormonism started by Joseph Smith III and which owns the manuscripts and marked Bible used in making the JSNT)
LDS canon	The scriptures as edited and printed by the LDS Church. Technically, the word “canon” only means the scriptures, but for the sake of this paper I include the study helps such as appendices, footnotes, and so on, under my use of the word.
KJV	King James Version (of the Bible)

Charlotte Erickson loves the scriptures, the holy-days, the restoration, and the hymns, and she constantly tries to be the change she wants to see in the world. She is grateful to her parents for raising her in the LDS Church and teaching her the importance of studying the scriptures and gaining her own testimony.

Charlotte is a homemaker, patriot, musician, astronomer, and blogger. Her most valued treasures are her five beautiful children, and one of her favorite things about homeschooling is learning new things along with them. She is an experienced event planner and runs the Homeschool Science Fair, which is only two steps away from the International STEM Fair.

Charlotte has a graduate degree in mathematics from the University of Utah, as well as a degree in math education, and she has taught and/or tutored math on every level from preschool to university. She has been fascinated with Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible ever since she read Robert Matthews’s work on it more than 10 years ago.

Why Is Torah Important To Our Day?

Because Of The Acceptable Year of the Lord!

By Eugene Richardson

What exactly did our Redeemer tell those that wished to be disciples about his ministry?

1 The spirit of the Lord God was upon me, since the Lord anointed me to bring tidings to the humble, He sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to declare freedom for the captives, and for the prisoners to free from captivity.

2 To declare a year of acceptance for the Lord and a day of vengeance for our God, to console all mourners.¹

- Isaiah 61:1-2 (Jewish Chabad Translation, JCT)

With this statement, Yeshua officially started his ministry. But Yeshua did something unheard of - he stopped in the middle of the scripture without finishing it, closed the scroll, and sat down and stated "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears." (Luke 4:19-21)

The Torah-literate of that day, after a time, understood Yeshua's meaning. But today the meaning of these words are totally lost upon Christianity and the world.

The Savior had a two-fold mission to fulfill during his life. The first was the Atonement. The second part, we are told in Deuteronomy 8:15, 18-19, was to mark the path, showing the way back to Heavenly Father. This Yeshua did by teaching Israel what to do, through his words and by personal example.

One principle Yeshua taught ten times in scripture. This principle was "Come follow me!" Yeshua not only said what to do, but he lived it perfectly! The only text Yeshua used to teach with was the Tanakh,

¹ Emphasis mine in all quotations.

what we call the Old Testament. These are the only scriptures that all of the Apostles used as well!

What was being taught and clarified was nothing else but the Torah.

To understand the importance of Torah, we must understand the fullest meaning of the words, “Come follow me!”

In order to accomplish this, here are ten references to study:

- Matthew 4:19
- Matthew 16:24
- Matthew 19:28
- Mark 1:17
- Mark 10:21
- Luke 5:27
- Luke 18:22
- John 1:38
- John 1:43
- John 8:12
- John 21:19

We only will review a couple here today, but study and ponder these well. These words are the true key to salvation.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, **“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”** - Matthew 16:24 (KJV)

Here are the qualifications of a true disciple of Yehovah. The path of discipleship is very straight, and even more narrow. The First requirement is to deny oneself. Yeshua openly taught, “I do nothing of myself.” (John 5:19, 5:30, 8:28)

In choosing to do only those things Yehovah wishes done, we take up the cross. Many believe and teach that this is a very extreme attitude. Yes it is, when one is a house divided, and a person is not fully committed to Yehovah, but instead looks back to the world with desire and is seeking to serve two masters. Following our Redeemer's example is much too hard.

But when a person is fully and completely committed, they find that this attitude is very doable. Once such people put their hand on the plow, they do not look back! (Luke 9:62)

By honestly following the path set before us, we are made objects of shame and ridicule before the world. We are tested to our emotional limits. We are forced to face our deepest and most terrifying fears. Our accuser will be before the throne pointing out every flaw he can - just as was done to Job.

Jesus said to them, **“Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones,** judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

- Matthew 19:28 (KJV)

This scripture was spoken to the Apostles, but every promise of scripture is available to those that are faithful. This promise is also given in Psalms 103:17-19. Many wrongly believe they are going to go to the Celestial Kingdom, or the Kingdom of God, with no more effort than keeping their personal church's codes of behavior.

To gain exaltation, one must give their all. That does not mean we must endure exactly what our Redeemer did while in this life. What it does mean is that we must meet the same standard Yeshua did - but only after the trial has been adjusted to our personal capacities.

In Matthew 19:21-27, this was taught. The disciples learning this were amazed, and taken aback. They asked “Who then can be saved?”

These men learned that by following Yeshua, and giving up everything (except obedience to Yeshua’s will), they would qualify themselves for exaltation.

That standard has never changed to this day! It is a very bitter pill for the slothful, selfish, and worldly.

What Yeshua has taught me, during the many hours spent at his feet learning, is that most all men are hypocrites. So these men create and

worship a god like they are. A god that tells one to live one way, while living in a completely different manner.

These worship a redeemer that lived and kept the Torah perfectly all his life, then did away with it, supposedly giving a new way to live - completely nullifying and changing the commandments of the unchanging God of their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

If the people are of Jewish descent, they follow the path and rules their Rabbis have set forth, having added their unwritten Law to the Law Moses delivered to Israel, in direct opposition to the commandment; that tells us to add nothing or take anything from the law that Moses delivered.

The God that is the same yesterday, today, and forever, according to their beliefs, changed. Yeshua finds people that believe in such lies abominable.

Yeshua did declare the year of acceptance before the Lord. But in actuality, what does that mean? To date, no one has understood that scripture or been able to expound upon it.

It is interesting that in Isaiah, declaring the year of acceptance was coupled with the destructions during the second coming - or the day of vengeance. When Yeshua read the passage in the synagogue, he stopped after reading declaring the year of acceptance. He never got to the day of vengeance.

Michael Rood covers this point nicely for those interested in learning about this in greater detail on YouTube.

But what exactly is, "The year of acceptance for the Lord?" To understand this point, we need to review history some.

Yeshua, in his premortal state, told Moses this:

44 I will sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and
I will sanctify Aaron and his sons to serve Me [as kohanim].

45 I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel and
I will be their God. - Exodus 29:44-45 (JCT)

For the Lord, your God, goes along in the midst of your camp, to rescue you and to deliver your enemies before you. [Therefore,] your camp shall be holy, so that He should not see anything unseemly among you and would turn away from you.

- Deuteronomy 23:15 (JCT)

Here within these two sets of scripture we have what is required to have Yeshua live among us.

But before this can happen, we must fulfill the requirements set forth. The first is to return to the covenant Yehovah made with Israel. This requires us to be interested in bringing forth the kingdom of God, or Zion by living the Torah! The commandment is:

You shall therefore, observe the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you this day to do. And it will be, because you will heed these ordinances and keep them and perform, that the Lord, your God, will keep for you the covenant and the kindness that He swore to your forefathers.

- Deuteronomy 7:11-12 (JCT)

This is the topic of this meeting. Living the Torah is the bottom line of Yehovah's requirements! But if we are to live these commandments today, how will this be accomplished?

First, in order to receive the kindness and protections promised in scripture, we must remember the Torah, and next return to and live the commandments given at Mount Horeb.

Next, as we of Israel are scattered throughout this world, we must start keeping the covenant made with Yehovah, wherever we find ourselves living at this time.

We are told of this in Ezekiel, and Zechariah.

And those of you that escape will remember Me among the nations where they were captured, that I yielded to their straying heart which turned away from

Me and to their eyes that strayed after their idols, and they will quarrel with themselves about the evils that they did in addition to all their abominations.

- Ezekiel 6:9 (JCT)

Here in Ezekiel we are told that if we wish to escape what is coming, we must remember to properly honor Yehovah by keeping the commandments given at Mount Horeb.

Is it not interesting that we are told that we will argue among ourselves? What evils are we arguing about? The commandment was that we were to add nothing to the Torah given at Mount Horeb.

Well, many doctrines have been added by the many different churches - or the many different versions of the same church - be they Jewish, or Christian. Every church argues how they are the correct way to approach Yehovah.

So this scripture is fulfilled in our eyes today. No one wishes to acknowledge the truth that Yehovah does not walk among any church or people that proclaims to be his, as he did with our fathers of ancient Israel!

Yehovah continues:

9 And I will sow them among the peoples, and in the distant places they shall remember Me. And they shall live with their children and return.

10 And I will return them from the land of Egypt, and from Assyria I will gather them. And to the land of Gilead and Lebanon I will bring them, and it shall not suffice for them.

- Zechariah 10:9-10 (JCT)

Once again, in Zechariah, we are told that in the distant places we Israel have been driven to, we must remember and return back to the covenant made at Mount Horeb - making the Covenant renewed within Israel once more.

Many falsely believe that we cannot offer the required sacrifices any place but Jerusalem (because of these next scriptures).

5 But only to the place which the Lord your God shall choose from all your tribes, to set His Name there; you shall inquire after His dwelling and come there.

6 And there you shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and the separation by your hand, and your vows and your donations, and the firstborn of your cattle and of your sheep.

7 And there you shall eat before the Lord, your God, and you shall rejoice in all your endeavors you and your households, as the Lord, your God, has blessed you.
- Deuteronomy 12:5-7 (JCT)

5 You shall not sacrifice the Passover offering within any of your cities, which the Lord, your God, is giving you.

6 Except at the place which the Lord, your God, will choose to establish His Name-there you shall slaughter the Passover Offering in the afternoon, as the sun sets, at the appointed time that you went out of Egypt.

- Deuteronomy 16:5-6 (JCT)

The Rabbis declared that after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, these scriptures could no longer be fulfilled - because there was no place upon the earth clean enough to offer the required sacrifices.

Scripture seemingly contradicts this teaching! These scriptures were given to the Israel that was first placed upon its inheritance - yet Yehovah knew that Israel would falter, then be scattered throughout the earth.

So in his infinite wisdom, Yehovah set in place a way for backsliding Israel to repent and return to him. Further, Yehovah gave us scripture to guide us in the way the honest in heart are to come back into his presence.

At first we do not need to keep the complete fullness of the Torah Law. We have not grown up being taught the gospel properly. Instead, we have inherited lies from our fathers, just as Jeramiah prophesied.

19 O Lord, Who are my power and my strength and my refuge in the day of trouble, to You nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Only lies have our fathers handed down to us, emptiness in which there is nothing of any avail!

20 Can a man make gods for himself, and they are no gods?"
- Jeremiah 16:19-20 (JCT)

After the death of the Disciples, our fathers created a god for themselves. This creation had all the names used correctly - mingling the philosophies of men in the dark ages with scripture while creating churches and traditions that exist into our day!

This is the same exact sin Israel did by creating the golden calf! They created the calf and called it Yehovah - the god that brought them out of Egypt. How are the churches of our day any different?

Our Redeemer fully understands these flaws in our spiritual education. We have a small window of opportunity to get up to speed, so to speak.

This is why we are allowed at first to start in our homes. From that start, we are to grow from grace to grace until we follow the example of our Redeemer and live a year acceptable to the Lord.

In this next scripture, the process is outlined.

If the place the Lord, your God, chooses to put His Name there, will be distant from you, **you may slaughter of your cattle and of your sheep, which the Lord has given you, as I have commanded you,** and you may eat in your cities, according to every desire of your soul.
- Deuteronomy 12:21 (JCT)

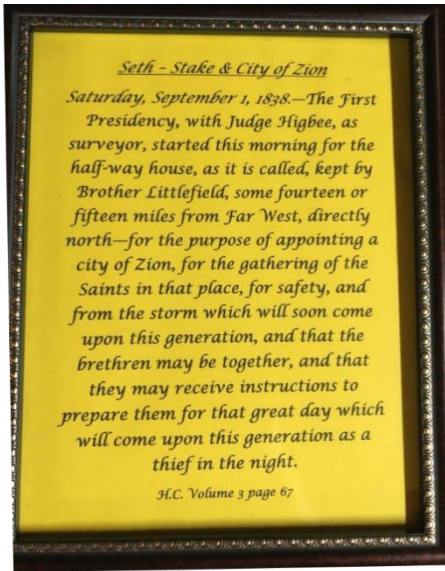
Not only is the place Yehovah has placed his name far from us, because of wickedness, it is nonexistent upon this earth at this time!

8 Remember now the word that You commanded Moses, Your servant, saying, 'If you deal treacherously, I shall scatter you among the nations.

9 And if you return to Me and keep My commandments and perform them-if your exile is at the end of the heaven, **from there I shall gather them, and I shall bring them to the place that I chose to cause My Name to rest there.** - Nehemiah 1:8-9 (JCT)

The true gathering of Israel will not happen until Israel returns to keeping the covenant. The Middle East will never be at peace until Yehovah returns his protection once again to his people. This places us in the position to have to keep our required three feasts at our own homes at this present time.

Yet, for the many different LDS factions, we do have a place Yehovah has set his name: the temple lot in Missouri, as well as Adam-Ondi-Ahman.



So, I and others go to Seth, Missouri, very near Adam-Ondi-Ahman to keep the feasts. Seth is a place that Joseph Smith Jr. set aside for Zion to be built!

Here at this place we are performing the festival sacrifices, in preparation for performing all of the required sacrifices and statutes given in Torah Law.

How is the full Torah Law going to be kept? We are told in scripture that a tent of meeting will be raised up. Other scriptures teach us that this tent is the Tabernacle of David:

4 May My exiles sojourn among you, Moab. Become a hiding place for them from before the plunderer, for

the milking has come to an end; the udders have vanished; the trampers have ceased from the earth.

5 And the throne shall be established through loving-kindness, and there shall sit thereon in truth in the tent of David, one who judges and demands justice and performs righteousness. - Isaiah 16:4-5 (JCT)

10 By the sword shall all the sinful of My people perish, those who say, "The evil shall not soon come upon us."

11 On that day, I will raise up the fallen Tabernacle of David, and I will close up their breaches, and I will raise up its ruins, and build it up as in the days of yore. - Amos 9:10-11 (JCT)

After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up, - Acts 15:16

These scriptures tell us we can perform sacrifices outside of Jerusalem, just as Israel did before Jerusalem had a Temple. These scriptures reveal that the true people of Yehovah will build and have in their midst David's Tabernacle! Not a Temple!

Within all of scripture, Yehovah has given us as a people only one way to have him come and dwell in our midst. We covered this scripture earlier in Exodus 29:44-45.

Since the scriptures are open to us and tell us how to have Yehovah in our midst, then why is Yehovah not dwelling among a people living on the earth at this time?

The answer is found in the Lord's year of acceptance.

Not only are Yehovah's people required to perform the Torah Law in its fullness; they are to keep it for the full year to become acceptable. The Law, with all of its feasts and commanded ordinances, was given as a yearly requirement.

This is why Yeshua was, **“To declare a year of acceptance for the Lord!”**

Yeshua declared how one should live the Torah, both in word and in deed. During his 70 week ministry, Yeshua went to all the feasts, keeping every jot, and tittle, (meaning every vowel, and consonant) required by the Torah!

In this way, Yeshua marked the path for the children of Israel - a path that must be followed by everyone that wishes to be included into The Kingdom of Heaven.

We should now understand the importance of the year of acceptance for the Lord. So to answer the question, “Why is Torah important to our day?”, we need to live Torah to establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon this earth.

Living Torah is the only way to have Yeshua walk among us within our midst! Every other religion, church, and group, is telling us that they are the way. How is that working out for them?

Where is Yeshua on this earth walking openly among his people? That exact situation cannot be found anywhere.

Albert Einstein stated; “The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over, yet expecting a different result.”

This is all that has been done in churches from the dark ages. Yeshua partially restored his church through Joseph Smith Jr. But the people could not bear what they were given. So again, Joseph’s Restoration was broken into many churches, contending about who had the authority to take the lead of what Joseph had left behind - again fulfilling Ezekiel’s prophecy.

We have been plainly commanded to add nothing, or remove anything from Torah. Yet, when a Rabbi, Prophet, Pope, Bishop, Priest, Evangelist, or Pastor adds something, we worship their pronouncements as if they are part of Yehovah’s Law. Further, we treat these rules created by men that have never seen Yehovah as being more important than

what Moses has given us - ignoring the very words of The God of Abraham, Issac, and Jacob; the God of our obedient Fathers!

Moses told us that we must hear and obey the Prophet that would rise up among us. That person being the God he talked to.

13 And Moses said to God, "Behold I come to the children of Israel, and I say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

14 God said to Moses, "Ehyeh asher ehyeh (I will be what I will be)," and He said, "So shall you say to the children of Israel, 'Ehyeh (I will be) has sent me to you.'"

15 And God said further to Moses, "So shall you say to the children of Israel, 'The Lord God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is how I should be mentioned in every generation.

- Exodus 3:13-15 (JCT)

A prophet from among you, from your brothers, like me, the Lord, your God will set up for you; you shall hearken to him.

- Deuteronomy 18:15 (JCT)

That very God of Jacob came down as the promised messiah, and everyone has chosen to ignore him; choosing instead to follow the traditions of their fathers as Jeremiah has Prophesied, or to completely invent new belief systems - adding to what we are commanded not to add to.

This brings us full circle to what we need to do. We, as the lost tribes of Israel (along with the Jews and the mixed multitudes of Gentiles that seek the greatness of Israel once again), in order to have our God, the God of our Fathers Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, dwell with and walk among us once more, we must return to keeping the Torah covenant that Israel's God made with Moses!

Additionally, we all must raise the Tabernacle of David, to keep the year of acceptance that was declared by Yeshua, so that we will be

accepted. This, my friends, is how the second coming will be accomplished.

Yeshua is waiting for an obedient people to keep his Commandments, so that he can come, and the world will not be utterly wasted at his, the Savior's coming. Because, the day of Yeshua's coming will be a day of destruction and terrifying vengeance. This is the day the second part of Isaiah's unfinished scripture will be fulfilled.

Yeshua gave us the words of Eternal Life, but, more importantly, the path was fully and completely marked out for us. The Messiah marked the path back to his Father in Heaven with a promise that those that took that path had a place within that Kingdom.

He invited us into that very Kingdom with the words, Come Follow Me!

Eugene Richardson has been married to his wife, Shirley for 40 years. They live in Beryl Utah. Eugene is a scholar of the scriptures and is the author of the book, 'Finding Power in the Priesthood, Obtaining Knowledge to Enter into the Presence of God & Create Zion.'

The Mystery of the Shemitah: The 3000-Year-Old Mystery That Holds the Secret of America's Future, The World's Future...And Your Future! A Summary of Jonathan Cahn's Book of the Same Title

By David M Patrick

I like numbers and I like people. From a young age I knew I wanted to work with money and business. My chosen profession is financial services. As a financial advisor, I always dreamed of predicting the future of stocks and bonds. What a guru I would be. How much wealth could I make or protect with such foreknowledge?

When I encountered this book in early 2015, it made me think I had found just such a key that would give me the edge in my business. This book gave me a promising look into patterns and timelines that seemed to deliver a "far above average" look into market cycles. We actually have a title for someone who tracks charts and graphs to predict future price movements of stock, bonds, and markets. We call them chartists. They deploy the art of technical analysis. This is usually a short-term strategy more than a long-term prediction tool, but I only needed a little edge to be ahead of market movements.

What did I do with my newly found information? I partnered with a money manager to help me prepare for a predictive future the Shemitah would likely deliver. That was how I got interested in this book. What I learned was far more intriguing and valuable than predictive market cycles. I was surprised - at the age of 49 - to be learning about the power and effect of the Shemitah for the first time.

What is the Shemitah?

So what is the Shemitah, or Shmita? It is a Hebrew word meaning "release" or Sabbath year. Here's what the Wikipedia page has to say:

The **Sabbath year** (**shmita**; Hebrew: שמיטה, literally "release"), also called the **sabbatical year** or *shəvi'it* (שביעית, literally "seventh"), is the seventh year of the seven-year agricultural cycle mandated by the Torah

for the Land of Israel and is observed in contemporary Judaism.

During *shmita*, the land is left to lie fallow and all agricultural activity, including plowing, planting, pruning and harvesting, is forbidden by *halakha* (Jewish law). Other cultivation techniques (such as watering, fertilizing, weeding, spraying, trimming and mowing) may be performed as a preventive measure only, not to improve the growth of trees or other plants. Additionally, any fruits or herbs which grow of their own accord and where no watch is kept over them are deemed *hefker* (ownerless) and may be picked by anyone. A variety of laws also apply to the sale, consumption and disposal of *shmita* produce. All debts, except those of foreigners, were to be remitted.

To see the original revelation on the Shemitah go to the third book of the Torah, which is the Book of Leviticus, Chapter 25 where it lays out the law.

Who is the Author Jonathan Cahn?

Now who is Jonathan Cahn and how did he come to write this book? You might notice his family name has a strong Jewish derivative. That is because he is a Messianic Jew. He was raised Jewish and came to know Yeshua, or Jesus, as the Messiah. He is now teaching others about that same Jesus in a ministry called Hope of the World (www.hopeoftheworld.org). He originally wrote a book titled, *The Harbinger*, about the prophetic relationship between the attack on September 11th, 2001, and Isaiah 9:10. *The Mystery of the Shemitah* is an outgrowth of *The Harbinger* and has legs of its own to stand on.

The Hebrew Calendar

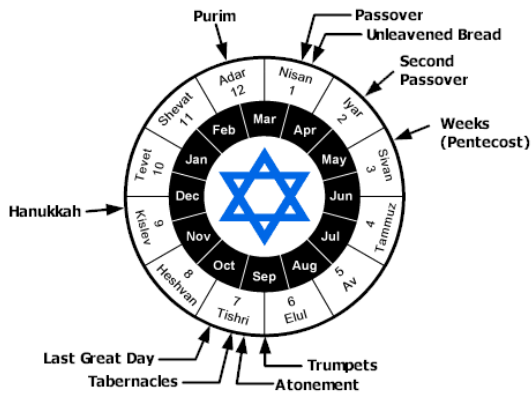
When you learn about the Shemitah, you will find it is not only about the Seventh Year (or Sabbath Year), but it is also a specific day of the year when all debts are nullified, and all accounts wiped clean. The promise of God in Leviticus 25:18-22 is that if they will observe the

Shemitah then they will have safety in the land and the blessings of harvest will be plenty to carry them through for 3 years, not just one.

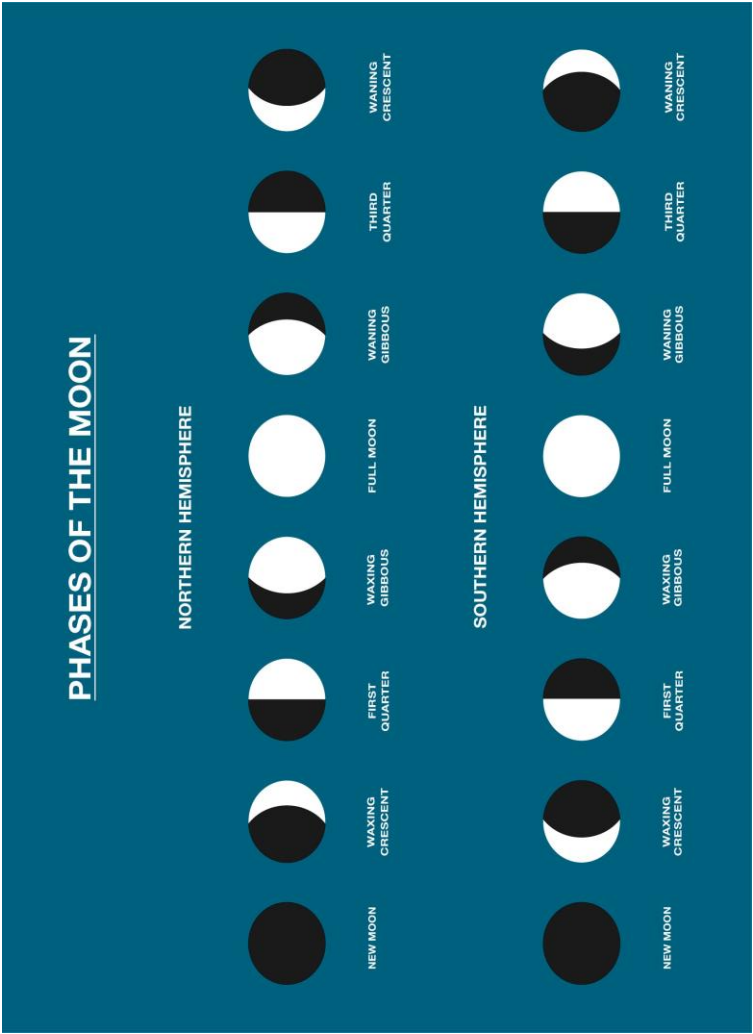
So how did this work out for our Israelite forefathers? We can go to the book of Jeremiah to discover that a blessing can be turned into a curse with punishment. But first we need to understand how the Hebrew calendar differs from our Gregorian calendar in common use today. This is critical to the message of the Shemitah.

The Hebrew, or Jewish, calendar is a lunar solar calendar made up of the cycles of the moon with a 29 or 30 day month. The following is a simplified comparison of the months of the two calendars.

The advantage and purpose of the Hebrew calendar is to determine the Hebrew Feasts and Holidays and agricultural cycles. Because the months are only 29 to 30 days long, every 2 to 3 years an extra month of Adar is



added to synchronize the calendar with the Solar Calendar (Gregorian calendar). In every 19 years, there are 7 months of Adar added to the Hebrew Calendar (Years 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19). These are called leap years. A lunar month starts with the New Moon, which is a completely earth-shadowed-moon peeking out its first crescent of the cycle. A new day always starts at sunset and goes to the next sunset in Hebrew calendaring.



Another confusing aspect of the Jewish Calendar is that they observe a civic year and a religious year cycle. This is important because when you reach the end of a Shemitah year you must know whether you are on the civic or religious cycle. The Shemitah follows the civic calendar so the last, or twelfth month, is Elul. See the first two columns in the chart below and how they correspond to the Gregorian Calendar to the far right:

Civic Month	Religious Month	Jewish Name	Days	Gregorian Calendar
1	7	Tishri	30	Sept - Oct
2	8	Heshvan	*29/30	Oct - Nov
3	9	Chislelev	29/30	Nov - Dec
4	10	Tebeth	29	Dec - Jan
5	11	Shebat	30	Jan - Feb
6	12	Adar	29/30	Feb - Mar
7	1	Nisan	30	Mar - Apr
8	2	Iyar	29	Apr - May
9	3	Sivan	30	May - June
10	4	Tammuz	29	June - July
11	5	Ab	30	July - Aug
12	6	Elul	29	Aug - Sept

** Hebrew months were alternately 29 and 30 days long.*

ELUL 29

This brings us to another important date as enumerated in Deuteronomy 15:1-2:

At the end of every seven years you shall grant a release(shemitah) of debts. And this is the form of the release(shemitah): Every creditor who has lent anything to his neighbor shall release (shemitah) it; he shall not require it of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the Lord's release (shemitah).

The last day of the civic calendar is Elul 29, so not only is the seventh or Sabbath year the Shemitah year, but also the last day of the year Elul 29 is also by biblical definition known as the Shemitah Day. So at the very end of the seventh or Shemitah Year, comes the day of financial release from debts. It is a day that wipes accounts clean, and creates a fresh start on the 1st day of the 1st year of the next seven years.

The Shemitah shares the attributes of the Sabbath day--an entire year given to rest and let rest, to release and be released, to unburden others and lay one's burdens down, to wipe clean the slate and have one's own slate wiped clean--the time appointed by God for rest, refreshing and revival.

- Mystery of the Shemitah, p. 31

Israelites Break the Shemitah Covenant

Now that we have an understanding of the terms and the dates, we can look at how the Israelites fared in this experience and go back to Jeremiah who was a young prophet. It is notable to chronicle the time period of Jeremiah's ministry near 600 B.C. (Scholars quibble about timelines between 586 and 626 B.C.) Another prophet to call repentance at Jerusalem was Lehi. He was preaching at the same time as Jeremiah (1 Nephi 1:18-20; 1 Nephi 5:13; 1 Nephi 7:14).

This period we will read about was the first time the children of Israel were attacked and taken captive from their own lands. The following verse explains the warnings and then what happened to the Israelites.

And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers...because he had compassion on his people...But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there

was no remedy...They burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. - 2 Chronicles 36:15-19

And the verses go on to explain their captivity and a clue to the purposes of the Lord.

And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years. - 2 Chronicles 36:20-21

Jonathan Cahn raises the question, “Until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths” is a very strange and striking statement. How does a land enjoy its Sabbaths? And what could this possibly have to do with the seventy years of exile? The period of their first exile was exactly 70 years as prophesied by Jeremiah since they didn’t repent.

This takes us back into the Torah to Leviticus Chapter 26 (chapter 25 introduced the Shemitah) and the ramification of turning away from God.

And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation...I will bring the land into desolation...I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies’ land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. - Leviticus 26-31-35

This is an ominous and prophetic telling of the eventual blessing turned to judgement - if they did not observe to keep the Sabbath year of the Lord. It was right there in front of them to read plainly and follow. A

pattern so often wasted by pride and ignorance. This tells us for the number of Sabbath Years (or Shemitah years) that the children of Israel did NOT observe the Shemitah, the land would rest, and they would be captives in another land. With Jeremiah's prophecy of 70 years in exile we need only do simple multiplication. Since the Shemitah year comes along every 7 years, and they were exiled 70 years, we can multiply 7 times 70 and find that the children of Israel must have broken the covenant with God for 490 years of not observing the Shemitah.

Pinpointing the Shemitah in Our Day

The Jewish Rabbis are not in agreement today as to which years in our current time are Shemitah years. But Jonathan Cahn believes he knows which years are Shemitah years, evidenced by the judgement and wiping away of accounts as a covenant curse, like ancient Israel experienced.

The following two historical occurrences have a striking similarity that create compelling evidence:

9/11 Terrorist Attack

The attack on September 11, 2001, with the felling of the twin towers was a shock and jolt to America in multiple ways. The subsequent re-opening of the stock market took place on Monday, September 17, 2001. This created, at that time, the greatest single day point losses in U.S. history. A drop of 685 points. The Dow Jones Industrial Average (Dow) was down 7.1% at the close of trading that day. Besides the \$40 billion in insurance claims paid for the downed towers. The airlines, tourism, and aviation industries took massive losses, and security protocols were forever changed. The number of lost jobs in New York was estimated over 400,000. The government gave billions to New York City to rebuild. Probably the most costly part, however, was the "war on terror" which took us to war in Afghanistan to the tune of trillions of dollars and additional lives lost among our military personnel.

Credit Crisis 2008

The housing bubble burst in 2008 due to credit markets overextending loans to poor credit risks. Again the stock market tumbled (with bond

markets) and suffered another big loss in the Dow of 777.68 points in intraday trading on September 29, 2008. The trickledown effect of the housing bubble burst created unemployment, especially in the housing-related industry. The U.S. Congress passed a Troubled Asset Relief Plan (TARP) to extend \$700 Billion to failing banks and insurance companies. The final payout was numbered in the \$431 Billion range in taxpayer funded aid.

The Other Shoe Drops

What's the link between these socioeconomic events? Is it an uncanny coincidence, or maybe the work of an unseen hand? You see, the 9/11 attack shut down Wall Street. When it finally opened on Monday (the 17th of September), and posted that massive 685 point drop, it was Elul 29. The last day of the year. The day of release. The Shemitah Day!

Trillions of dollars were wiped out of people's accounts as a result of the crash in the U.S. and across the globe. Then exactly 7 years later to the very day on Elul 29 (which happened to fall on September 29, 2008 that year), we experienced another crash of epic scale. Many more trillions were wiped out of existence in the credit crisis. The days were so precisely the same that you can't help but be humbled by the phenomenon.

So, this raises the question of the power of the Shemitah. Does a nation that was founded on Judeo-Christian principles have a requirement to recognize the 3000 year old Shemitah, or suffer the curse and penalty for not observing the law? Cahn further explores this 7 year cycle and back-tests the hypotheses of losses in economic markets, wars, towers, and rise and fall of nations. While the Jewish Rabbi's do not claim to know the actual 7th year or Shemitah year, Cahn's evidence seems to be overwhelming and solid when back-tested.

Prognosticating Is Dangerous

There have been many leaders of religion who have made future date claims that have not come true. Many prophets become false prophets by such date setting prognostication. (Such as if someone were to add another seven years to 2008 and Elul 29 lands on Sunday September 13, 2015.) Jonathan Cahn's book was written in 2014. He is careful not

to make any specific promise in the book of the Shemitah day Elul 29 being guaranteed to be a bad day. The Shemitah year is the ushering in time that started in 2014. He says this amazing phenomenon was to be the Wake Up Call for America. They would have a chance to be awed by the timing of events and repent and return to God and his ways. Otherwise they face more nullification, cursing, and destruction that comes from wandering away from God's plan, and law.

Hitting America and the world where they hurt the most - their wallet and security - and getting their attention was the purpose of the Shemitah years that nullified markets and changed lives. As stated, Cahn was not going to specifically do any date setting. He wants to warn us of the doom of the Shemitah year unless we return to God. Did America and other nations return to God? During both 2001 and 2008, a spike in church attendance was evident, but not long lasting.

This Was My Why

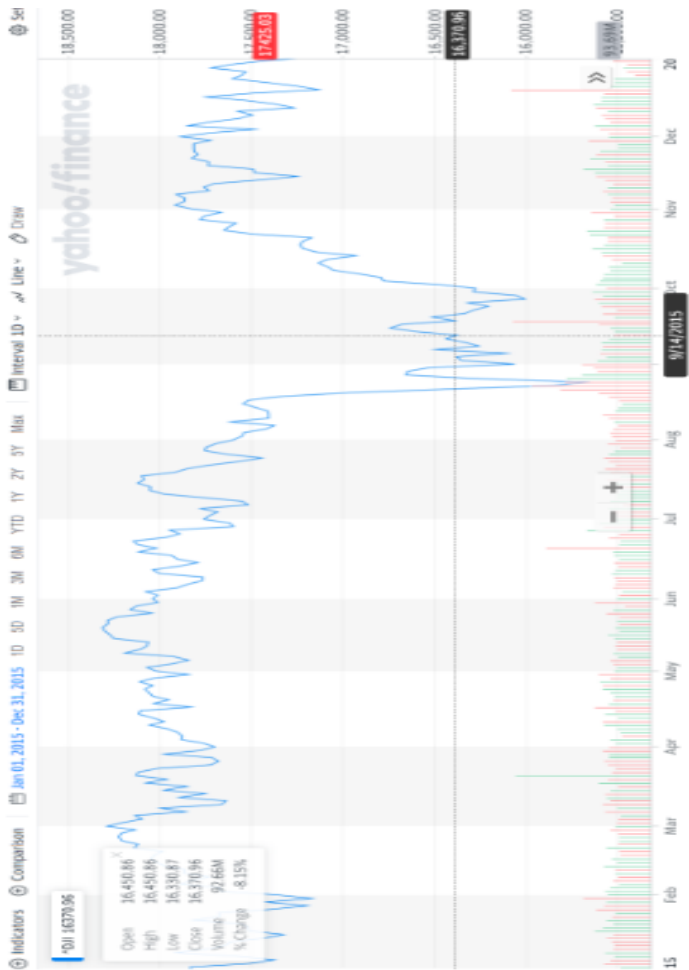
As I said in the beginning, I was motivated in 2015 to get a financial edge with the knowledge of the Shemitah, to protect or grow wealth for my clients. I went to work to find a money manager that would work with me in preparing for a probable crash in the stock market. The September and October time period is well known to financial experts as volatile times, which happens to be the Month of Elul, and the following month of Tishri, in the Hebrew calendar.

So, I found some money managers that would believe me. To my luck and surprise they were Mormon and identified as Israelite. When I told them the whole story about the Shemitah and I put my reasoning on the table they said, "Okay, we'll do it." Then we put a plan together to make money, or preserve money in a rapidly declining market. They came back with a portfolio that would have a percentage of Gold stocks (a good hedge when stocks are feared), and a basket of inverse ETF's that would go opposite of various markets. If the market went up, an inverse fund went down. More importantly at this time, if the market went down, our inverse funds would go up in value! They even came up with a great name for the portfolio. They called it the Acro Portfolio, because Acrophobia is the fear of falling. Our strategy was to move the bulk of a client's assets to a cash position, and then allocate a minority

portion to the Acro Portfolio. We were on a heightened alert status as we moved into late summer.

What Actually Happened in 2015?

This is a chart of the Dow from January to December in 2015. You can see the capitulation of the market starting in August and climbing back to just under average levels by November - finishing the year down - 2.23%. Elul 29 was a Sunday, and the market was open on Monday September 14th. You can see the crosshairs and the date below showing that Elul 29 bisected the dip nearly down the center.



We did move some of our client's assets into cash and the Acro Portfolio. And we made money for a short time, but not much and not for long.

What Made This Drop Happen?

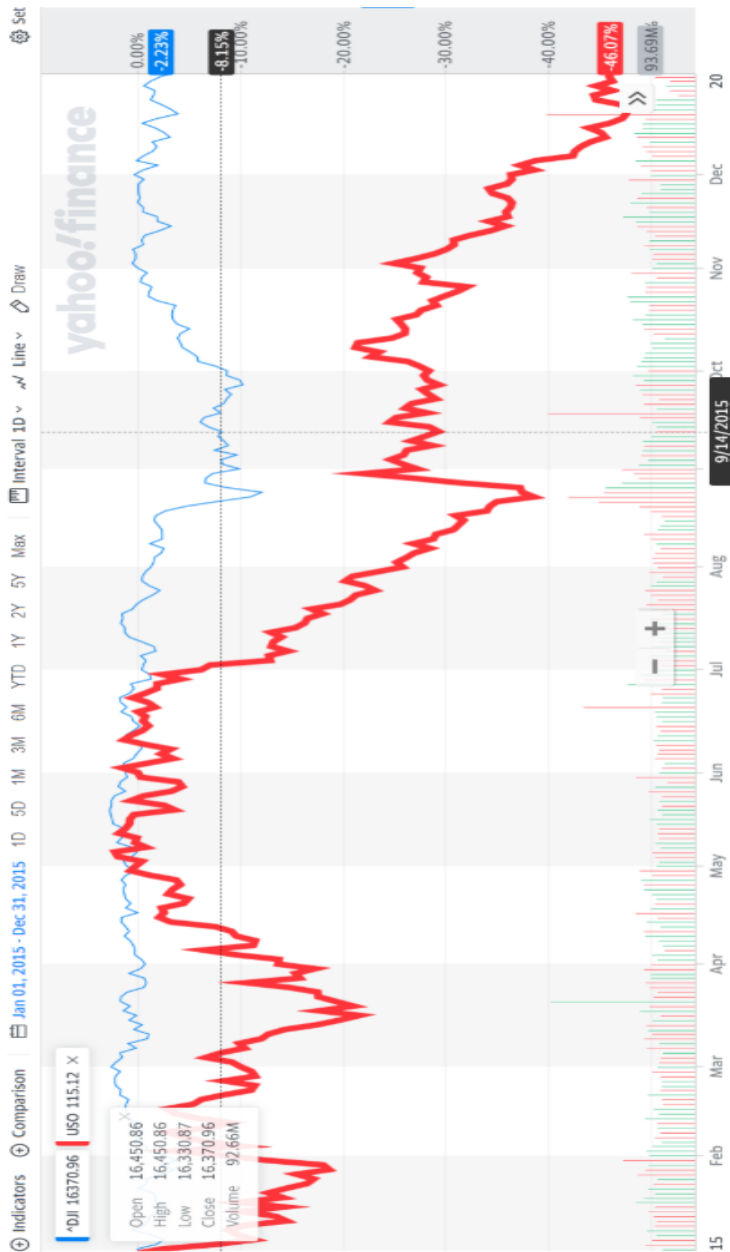
First I want to point out that the chart below is still the same chart with the Dow in the light line ending 2015 down -2.23%. The bold line is ticker USO and represents a stock fund that mirrors the Crude Oil Price. Energy stocks, especially oil, is known to be a boom and bust market. This shows that the oil price dropped -46.07% from Jan to December. Incidentally, in the following year (2016) the Dow ended up with a respectable 13.42% gain. Oil bottomed out in February and finished the year up only 6.18%. Let's learn something from this, and then we'll go back and talk some more about the Shemitah effect.

The steep oil price capitulation started in June (See the bold line). The drop in oil prices was a real contributing factor to spook the markets into a drop, as we noted, starting August. Let's try to apply some common sense. You have heard of oil booms and of wildcat oil drillers chasing the money in times of rising oil prices. But when oil prices are down, those companies close wells that aren't profitable. Some go out of business altogether. And the laws of supply and demand also dictate that an oversupply of something, like oil, will ultimately lead to lower prices - hence the bust.

Now dear reader consider this, do you like higher oil prices or lower oil prices? Lower is always better as a consumer. Higher is always better as a seller. The stock market players all realized eventually that low prices for energy are generally good for all (but the oil industry), so the stock market (Dow) quickly rebounded as you can see from the Yahoo! Finance chart.

I Believe...

It would appear that the stock market did not have a major crash in the probable year of the Shemitah, though it did dip for a period. Does that break down the theory or effect of the unseen hand - the forces that were put into effect by the word of God 3000+ years ago? I will argue



that it still happened. I say it was NOT the US stock market that took the hit. It was the oil producing countries that took the hit. Their profits were nullified. Accounts were swept away. Oil companies went broke. Their run was over. And it all started to unravel in 2015 (during the Shemitah year which started in 2014), and continues to drop even to this day. You see the Shemitah can and does affect the whole world in unexpected ways.

No Conclusion, Just More to Consider

The end of this article is not the last word on the Shemitah. I indicated that the economic cycles and 7-year sabbatical cycles have surprising overlaps. This is what drew me to the book. To my surprise, when Cahn identifies the rise and fall of nations (specifically the land of Israel), I was struck with more bold evidence that kept me excited to find further mysteries of the Shemitah.

One of these surprises that incites curiosity is the discussion of skyscrapers and towers. For centuries the tallest buildings were always churches and cathedrals. Then came a modern age and new techniques for building. Humans entered the race to lay claim to the tallest buildings. A subtle shift from ecclesiastical preeminence to secular preeminence. America owned that secular crown for a long time with an interesting correlation to the Shemitah sabbatical years. Now open your mind, and Cahn's book, to learn more than this short article can ever declare. If you take away a new appreciation for the unseen hand of God - as I have - you will find yourself richer for the experience.

David Patrick lives in Utah where he has raised his family. He has 20 years of experience marketing and operating a financial services business and holds multiple licenses to practice in securities and insurance. His interest in Mormon studies extends through all movements, organizations, and churches within the restoration. He is an active member of Christ's Church, The Branch. David can be reached for positive discussion or speaking engagements via email at: david.patrick@latterdayzion.org.

Who Are the Levites?

By Jonathan Felt

If you were looking for an undeceived man of the cloth, you came to the wrong talk. By the way, I am NOT afraid of being deceived! Which makes me dangerous indeed. Why am I not afraid? Because I was born deceived. I inherited the same lies you did.

Jeremiah predicted our situation didn't he?:

O Lord, Who are my power and my strength and my refuge in the day of trouble, to You, nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "**Only lies have our fathers handed down to us, emptiness in which there is nothing of any avail!**" — Jeremiah 16:19

We toil at our genealogies for years looking for that one opportunity to make a difference with a baptism or a washing for my ancestor only to discover the “work” has been completed for years by dozens of other zealous workers. “Why was I doing that,” we ask? Was it all for nothing?

The prophet Zenos, as quoted by Jacob, put it this way as he spoke to the House of Israel (House of Israel does not mean the Gentile Church alone that I inherited); the prophet Zenos said: “Hearken, O ye house of Israel, and hear the words of me, a prophet of the Lord...I will liken thee...unto a tame olive tree” Tame means a tree that has been cultivated in an orchard or vineyard.

I would say Moses was a servant of the Lord's vineyard who brought the wild-made, drifted house of Israel back to cultivation and order after the years of slavery in Egypt, but it was also the beginning of a House of God congregation on the first recorded Passover.

Each time the House of God demonstrates wild-ness and disorder, He (the Lord) comes back with other servants to bring it back, because a wild olive is like a weed that sucks up the moisture from the good fruit, but produces bitter fruit in abundance.

Jesus himself was the Author and Servant of servants, and he too re-established the House of God, from the foundation already laid, on Passover; the Passover; the one and same day He died for our sins; the one and same moment all the prophets had anticipated. His sacrifice made the commandment to Moses for offering a lamb have deep and obvious meaning. We can see it, because we are established on a foundation already laid.

So, it always seems happenstance and random to us when Yehovah brings to pass His work, so it wasn't that Pharaoh had finally brought about his own kingdom's destruction, because it had to be just before Passover. The same is true for the Sanhedrin and the fullness of their wickedness. Christ's sacrifice had to take place on time and on schedule.

The most recent "servant," in my estimation, was Joseph Smith, Jr. Once again the pattern of reestablishing the House of God was done on Passover, 1830 on a Tuesday. Have you asked yourself yet, why the new Church was started on a Tuesday? Maybe even like you, I didn't see the same guiding hand for a Passover fulfillment of 6 April 1830 while growing up in Utah, but, then again, a Gentile cannot see such things. Perhaps we were too focused on our own assumptions about Christ being born on that day to ever see there may be a better fulfillment. Christ was not born on 6 April.

We are lost; we are indeed the lostest of the Lost 10 Tribes that are known as Ephraim symbolically in scripture. Joseph, and all those who labored and continue to labor with him in spirit, were able, and will be able, to take fruit from the best branches of the vineyard to establish a restoration of the House of God in the due time of the Lord.

21 And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: How comest thou hither to plant this tree, or this branch of the tree? For behold, it was the poorest spot in all the land of thy vineyard. 22 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto him: Counsel me not; I knew that it was a poor spot of ground; wherefore, I said unto thee, I have nourished it this long time, and thou beholdest that it hath brought forth much fruit. 23 And it

came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: Look hither; behold I have planted another branch of the tree also; and thou knowest that this spot of ground was poorer than the first. But, behold the tree. I have nourished it this long time, and it hath brought forth much fruit; therefore, gather it, and lay it up against the season, that I may preserve it unto mine own self. 24 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said again unto his servant: Look hither, and behold another branch also, which I have planted; behold that I have nourished it also, and it hath brought forth fruit.
— Jacob 5:21–24

All these spots of ground remind me of the way a servant and the Spirit of God move around the congregations of His people to produce good fruits here and there. Joseph's people have spread out across the land where good fruit is found here and there among the Strangite, the Cult-lerite, the RLDS, the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the House of Aaron, the Utah LDS, the Zarahemla Foundation, and the Apostolic United Brethren to name a few. I am a witness of their good fruits:

25 And he said unto the servant: Look hither and behold the last. Behold, this have I planted in a good spot of ground; and I have nourished it this long time, and only a part of the tree hath brought forth tame fruit, and the other part of the tree hath brought forth wild fruit; behold, I have nourished this tree like unto the others. 26 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Pluck off the branches that have not brought forth good fruit, and cast them into the fire.
— Jacob 5:25-26

Any analogy can be stretched too far. An allegory is designed to teach the listener, and they are spun for the listener to liken the allegory unto himself. Thus, no one would say Utah is a good spot of ground, but I don't think we are talking necessarily about a place. The soil,... the ground, is what a vineyard is planted in, but a Church...; a congregation

is fertile if it possesses knowledge, pure scripture, liberty, a will to succeed, a goodly leadership, and a membership who is willing to sacrifice for the Lord. If this congregation exists, it is prospered and O did my people prosper for as long as we could in our way.

29 And it came to pass that a long time had passed away, and the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: Come, let us go down into the vineyard, that we may labor again in the vineyard. For behold, the time draweth near, and the end soon cometh; wherefore, I must lay up fruit against the season, unto mine own self. 30 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard and the servant went down into the vineyard; and they came to the tree whose natural branches had been broken off, and the wild branches had been grafted in; and behold all sorts of fruit did cumber the tree. 31 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard did taste of the fruit, every sort according to its number. And the Lord of the vineyard said: Behold, this long time have we nourished this tree, and I have laid up unto myself against the season much fruit. 32 But behold, this time it hath brought forth much fruit, and there is none of it which is good. And behold, there are all kinds of bad fruit; and it profiteth me nothing, notwithstanding all our labor; and now it grieveth me that I should lose this tree. — Jacob 5:29-32

The Lord has nurtured us and prospered us with waterings and nutrients like our scripture in an environment that should have produced better fruit, but the servants have grafted in too many wild olive branches. We celebrate Easter instead of Passover. We glory in our wealth as we put on a spectacle of splendor each Christmas season instead of doing what scripture has told us to do for a Feast of Tabernacles.

Indeed, we are still Catholics in the same way our ancestors became such as the tribes and peoples of Joseph were moved and pushed to the four corners of the globe. Other wild olive branches were grafted in order for our temples to be built on a grand scale; never mind that we

conflated a temple at Jerusalem with a temple in our own neighborhood; ancient Israel built groves and other temple places of worship that were more convenient than a long trip to Jerusalem. They became so complacent about the need for a Jerusalem trip that Nehemiah had to restore Israel and the temple again. Have the Latter-day Saints drifted away from even the idea and dream of a Jackson County, Missouri temple because we have so many convenient neighborhood temples?

Why should we be doing temple work in the way we do it? Did ancient Israel have signs and tokens. Were they baptizing for the dead? I am told Joseph said there needs to be a binding link between us and Adam; an unbroken chain. Does that mean we do it by listing our endless; and I mean endless, genealogies? Could it be done better by some other way?

Don't get me wrong... I think Joseph did a stand up job, but did he have time to explain all this to us? Were there any wild olive branches grafted into the tame olive tree after Joseph died? Can you get what I am talking about? A Levite is going to be a pain in the backside to Melchizedek, because we are not going to go along to get along. Why should we? If Brigham told me my black brothers could not hold the priesthood, I would ask, "then why did Ham walk and talk with God? Are you sure Brigham? Are you sure?"

If there is only one top-down priesthood, we will get a priesthood that corrupts itself and follows itself as Brigham Young's descendants did generation after generation until one of them, a hero of mine, decided to reverse what we have now admitted was an unfortunate policy regarding blacks and the priesthood, but that's NOT what we were taught growing up.

It's quite all right to build a university for the proper learning of the Melchizedek Priesthood, but it's another story to repurpose these latter-day university-like temples of learning to replace the temple at Jerusalem. Show me the revelation that replaces it. Rediscover it for yourself, the Joseph Smith temples were more university-like and places of higher learning for congregations and councils than they were for replacing a temple where God set his name as He did in ancient

Israel. Even Joseph Smith's vision of our temple at Jackson County consists of 24 universities of learning; 12 for the Melchizedek and 12 for the Aaronic priesthoods.

Brigham Young was the president who repurposed and replaced "Holiness to the Lord" and an ordinance of Baptisms for the Dead exclusively to replace Mikveh immersion for the temple-goer to be washed for the remission of his sins. When Jesus and his disciples went to the temple, they were immersed in water. When my Jewish friends study the scriptures, the men are immersed in water for their sins. If we truly were committed to restoring a New Testament church we would have gotten rid of the baptism for membership into a church as was established by our Catholic brethren.

And WHY all this emphasis on steeples, I would have asked even Joseph. Isn't that the stuff of GROVES? I suppose every guy and gal, for that matter, can appreciate a tall and erect steeple, but are we not supposed to be watching for idols and the symbols of Satan? You'll find these symbols everywhere in our collective consciousness from the holy days we actually observe to the resorts and hotels we inhabit.

I think Brigham could really have used Levites to point out that Aaron's priesthood was always on the East where Brigham positioned the Melchizedek Priesthood tower, while placing the Aaronic Tower on the west where David's Tabernacle stood. Was David of Melchizedek or Aaron? I think you can answer. A lot of things changed between Nauvoo and Salt Lake with not all the changes being good ones.

Without Levites and an effective opposition, Brigham could do pretty much what he wanted, and he did, just as Jeroboam the Northern Israel king innovated and changed the ordinances when he sent the Levites packing south. I suppose if you are consolidating priestly power in a clever, worldly stroke, one of the things you could do would be to release every darn Nauvoo elder and high priest of the Melchizedek priesthood and offer the role of Seventy to them.

My ancestor arrived at Nauvoo in 1845 and was promptly ordained a Seventy into the 129th quorum. Did we need 129 quorums of Seventy at Nauvoo? Was that only a good idea until it became some kind of

bureaucratic nightmare? It served the purpose of solving who was boss hierarchically, but was it right?

Do our modern prophets operate without Levites? Could they use an equal priesthood beside them? One thing is sure, the church would be vastly different today with regularly organized large stakes consisting of a presiding president of the Melchizedek Priesthood and another presiding president high priest of Aaron by his side. The Twelve would be out doing missionary work, as they should, because they are a traveling high council by revelation. There would be no central empire to manage like the Vatican. The stakes would have their own councils of Melchizedek elders and high priests and Aaronic councils of high priest bishops. The stakes would own property again and administer their own affairs with no bureau of oversight.

Joseph taught, “teach them sound principles and let them govern themselves.” With such an organization, and if humbly executed without compulsion from any quorum, Zion could have come already,... but it will. Hang on a while longer. Joseph got the revelation, now we just need to restore ourselves to where we were for starters.

So, keep on bearing with me for another moment as I tell you a quick story:

I met Eugene Paul Richardson, after returning from Missouri, which occurred after an errand I took ... to learn more about Joseph Frederick Smith and Bob Moore, who had returned from Brazil after meeting there with Mr. Mauricio Berger, who claimed to have the plates of Mormon; the very same plates Joseph Frederick Smith’s great grandfather, Joseph Smith Jr., translated by the Gift and Power of God. After returning from Missouri, I was depressed of spirit and determined never to return to the subject again.

My first meeting with Eugene took place by phone on exactly 15 Feb 2018 when I received a call from an unknown new friend named Jeff from Missouri. In Eugene’s mind, according to his words, was the correct practice of Exodus Chapter 12 (of all things... your Joshua knows all about that), and especially, on his

mind, was the correct practice for modern Ephraim without Levites to do a sacrificial rite.

He had me at the word “Levite,” but why? I don’t know anything! Why are you asking me about animal sacrifice, I asked, and there’s no way I want to be involved in something like that, right? Right! On the other hand, Eugene had knowledge I’d never encountered beforehand, and he was emphatic to do things right. Moreover, he sounded like he wanted to meet and interact with my friends of the House of Aaron at Eskdale, Utah.

Like most overconfident Mormon men who fancy themselves of “Ephraim,” I had a superiority complex when it came to ancient Old Testament rites involving innocent animals, especially lambs. Besides, I was raised a Utah LDS male, and we had successfully ignored the ordinances of Exodus 12, along with the rest of the Christian world, for at least 2,000 years, but probably more like 3,000 years. By Passover 2018, however, I stood reflecting, on the past 2 months, high above the Snake Valley of Nevada and Utah in a hidden canyon blessed by the undeniable Spirit of God. As the full moon rose in the east, I felt the assurance of the Holy Spirit that I had participated with Eugene correctly, and doing so was not of Satan.

What had I done? I had obtained a lamb less than 1 year old from my ward bishop’s family and tied it up outside the window of my bedroom to care for it and to get to know it. Never before had I cared for any farm animal and this one; “Big Boy”, was a determined, large, and beautiful Fall lamb, but he was gentle. All my friends and family thought I was nuts and surely that I was following Satan to an unsavory end.

But the same Spirit that drove me East to Missouri three months earlier urged me onward. Experiencing this ancient ordinance firsthand (of slaughtering an innocent animal for a feast) was like no other for learning what my sins actually did to the innocent Lamb of my salvation, and that was precisely what God (Yehovah) had in mind for Israel wasn’t it? How do we, therefore, get off by not doing it and claiming it has been done away? Who told us that

exactly? Is God a liar? Did Jesus tell us to stop? How about Paul or Peter? Hmm... is it possible the author of the lie to stop with the ordinance that was supposed to be practiced “forever” was none other than that father of lies?

Seeing the little lamb die, as a representation of my Messiah and Redeemer, but expressly for my rotten sins, was heartbreaking, and it gave me an opportunity to learn; to learn about myself and all the ways I sin, but that was only the beginning of my learning.

By the way, I have a soft spot in my heart for the Book of Elias. Zarahemla Joshua has a copy. I have a copy. Eugene Richardson has one. What book is that? I had the same question 34 years ago when I met Evelyn Richards. She was a sturdy, diligent woman who cleaned the walks at the apartment complex I supposedly managed, but she was my eyes and ears. Many was the Monday when I rolled up in my 1974 diesel Oldsmobile to see her beckoning with urgency.

“Jonathan, I haven’t seen Miriam (or Fay) or whomever since Friday. “Please,” she said in an unknown brogue that sounded kind of German, “let us go with your pass key to check on my friend.” Argh... I knew exactly what that meant. That was the part where I froze, but then she would take me by the hand (or the nape of the neck) to the door. “Open it,” she said anxiously, and she would rush in to find the body of her dearly beloved friend.

Every person in the complex was her friend and dear to her. Heck, even I was her friend, and as her friend she looked at me one day with earnest eyes, “Jonathan, I feel to tell you, you are a Levite.”

What?! “A Levite!” I screamed inside my head, but with a deceptive amusement look on the outside. “Oh, well that’s interesting, I said, but we have the Levitical Priesthood in our church...” She looked at me patiently and proceeded to tell me about Maurice Glendenning. She showed me a picture of him on her bookshelf. “Were you married to him,” I asked because she held such reverence. “No, young man. He is a high priest of Aaron, and a great man!” Hmm... this looked more like another tenant I had on a previous job who kept a picture of the pope John Paul II on her wall. She was earnest too,... but, so was I. “Thank

you, but no thank you,” I said. Thankfully my rebuff of her most sacred things didn’t stop her from being my friend and my youthful protests didn’t stop her from believing what she said to me.

The Book of Elias that Maurice Glendenning brought forth is a rather remarkable book of scripture. It isn’t like Joseph’s scriptures, but Glendenning wasn’t listening to the Lord’s voice, because all came from Elias. Elias, in this case, is the pre-existent End Time Servant who works with Aaron and Levi to bring about God’s work. Elias is another form of the name, or title, Elijah.

By the way... I am learning to be a Levite that I never wanted any learning about. That’s a funny thing about what we block out or make assumptions regarding. Do we ever stop to consider why we might be making assumptions?

As you meet, I am in an interesting place called “Seth” where Joseph Smith dedicated the land for a temple, and for the gathering of the House of Israel on 1 September 1838. The land of “Seth” sits halfway (by foot) between where God met with our first father at Adam-ondi-Ahman, in Davies County Missouri and Far West in Ray County. I am being taught to be a Levite and to observe the correct way to sacrifice.

I am being trained by this man primarily,



but I have also been trained by others, including this man.



But there are yet and will be many others to do their part. Both men pictured above say they knew about sacrifices from a long time ago, but I surely did not, and that's why Levites generally will need training.

Anyway... As I said, nearly 30 years after I met Evelyn, I started getting serious about the Aaronic Priesthood, and for what reason I didn't know. After all, I still had my bias. I still thought my Church was all I needed, but something nagged at me to continue learning. As I read the Book of Elias, I started hearing music; very pleasant music in my dreams at night. Suddenly I saw a seminal dream. I have them from time to time, so I know when to pay attention.

I am about to read to you a journal entry. It could be interesting to you, but one thing is sure. It is NOT too sacred to share. I am learning that "too sacred to share" is another way of saying, "I don't want you to know I may have been deceived, or, I don't want you to challenge my belief."

Go ahead and challenge me, because as a Levite, I may challenge you some day.

From my journal: Saturday, Feb 27, 2016, 7:00 AM MST

"Last night I had another pleasant dream regarding the Levites. After emerging from the great, spacious and

mall-like Church Office Building, I entered a public and festive courtyard full of celebrating happy people to the outside (of the building at my 11:00) were two shabby, rag-tag men of knowledge and art. I thought they wanted me to come over so they could paint my image and charge me a fee. However, as one of them started painting it seemed he would tell my fortune instead. As the work began to emerge, I wanted the painting to be hung in my living room and I was willing to give him all the money I possessed. He asked, "where is your congregation?" Before I could answer, ... he wrote in gold script on a nearly black, but a little bit brown colored leather canvas which was the size of a great steer in beautiful gold script was exactly "q u a r r a n" in lower-case roman letters... He started also to paint a lantern, but I'm not sure, plus he showed me also a brass basket of some kind which he appeared to want to paint (he communicated with me mind to mind). At that point the dream was taken from me and it felt unfinished. I also felt like it was Levite in nature. I prayed for its meaning, but only got the impression I will know more in the future."

I will say more on this later, but telling my beloved friend and stake president wasn't the best idea since he recommended, with his authority, that I visit the 12 step program of the church to learn to control myself. Ha! Little did he know how far I would take this.

Joseph, especially at Nauvoo, gave us many hints in his writings about Levites just before he died and earlier when he was in Missouri. Look up Utah LDS D&C Section 124. In ancillary journals etc, he mentions things about the priesthood getting fully restored including the actual Levites doing "memorials."

What is a memorial? A memorial is as common today as the Sacrament and as rare as the Zarahemla Foundation teaching the principles of the paschal lamb at Passover. If you are interested, open again your Words of Joseph Smith by Andrew Ehat and search on the word "Levi" or "Aaron." I think you will be pleasantly surprised. Earlier than Nauvoo,

but probably after 1831 from Missouri, Joseph gave us more hints. From Utah LDS D&C section 68:

14 There remain hereafter, in the due time of the Lord, other bishops to be set apart unto the church, to minister even according to the first;

15 Wherefore they shall be high priests who are worthy, and they shall be appointed by the First Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood, except they be literal descendants of Aaron.

16 And if they be literal descendants of Aaron they have a legal right to the bishopric, if they are the firstborn among the sons of Aaron;

17 For the firstborn holds the right of the presidency over this priesthood, and the keys or authority of the same.

18 No man has a legal right to this office, to hold the keys of this priesthood, except he be a literal descendant and the firstborn of Aaron.

19 But, as a high priest of the Melchizedek Priesthood has authority to officiate in all the lesser offices he may officiate in the office of bishop when no literal descendant of Aaron can be found, provided he is called and set apart and ordained unto this power, under the hands of the First Presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

20 And a literal descendant of Aaron, also, must be designated by this Presidency, and found worthy, and anointed, and ordained under the hands of this Presidency, otherwise they are not legally authorized to officiate in their priesthood.

21 But, by virtue of the decree concerning their right of the priesthood descending from father to son, they may claim their anointing if at any time they can prove their lineage, or do ascertain it by revelation from the Lord under the hands of the above named Presidency.

One of the more interesting tidbits I have picked up over the years is the high likelihood that Joseph Smith met with Maurice Glendenning's grandfather while in Missouri on his way back to Kirtland from Missouri. I carefully vetted this rumor and, sure enough, it is VERY possible this happened and may have influenced this passage of scripture.

There are a lot of clues in this scripture that may have to be read two or three times before it is understood. Will Levites and Literal Descendants of Aaron only operate within the Gentile Church or will there be other instances of this priesthood? Does "firstborn" mean firstborn of a father and mother in a blood sense? Does the phrase "Firstborn of the Father" have a different meaning than an eldest son? If a literal descendant of Aaron is to be determined by revelation, where is revelation?

Jesus taught "A man receives only that which is given him from heaven." (John 3:26).

Authority is one of those things that cause us to question ourselves and to withhold ourselves. There's nothing more embarrassing than being deceived, right? Why is there a need for an Aaronic Priesthood if Melchizedek Ephraim can do all of what the "lesser" priesthood can do? Ask yourself, would you want to be married to a Levite man or, would you want to be a Levite yourself? I pondered and prayed about these kind of questions 3 years ago just before I had the dream I mentioned above:

"From my Voice, keys are given and taken from men. All the keys Brigham Young held were from me at the request of my servant Joseph Smith Jr. - Keys are passed to men of man, but as with all powers from me, keys also must be ratified by my Voice and sealed upon the shepherd who wields them in humility. If a man wishes to serve his fellow man with priesthood keys, he must first ask in my name that my power and greatness may descend to bless him. For without my Voice there is no conferance. A shepherd without my seal is as any other man upon the earth; wholly without mantle and majesty which can only come from my

throne. Thus I have entrusted keys of your dispensation upon Joseph Smith, Jr. and it is in him with whom the keys remain. He is active in doing my work to restore again that which you have been called to assist. But do not be deceived; for there is more than one remnant group with whom the prophet works. His work spreads from pole to pole and is not confined to the corporeal world. My Spirit is through and upon all who are my sons and daughters. ... Of your fellow churchmen, many choice spirits have been, and will be called to the work of Elias which you have begun to understand. Therefore it is my will you not speak ill of your brother Ephraim... Keys and mission and priesthood are inseparable; thus you possess keys which are not conferred by man for a season. Your keys are eternal and remain from the giver in you until you make them active. You received your keys by the hand of Elias in spirit, and will be revealed to you more fully as you do the things which you know are true... Ye shall make your keys active by seeking Me first and by my Voice even the Servant of the last days.”

— January 2016 Personal Journal
(See D&C 86:6-9, LW 298)

A Levite-type thinker and friend of mine from Missouri sent the following verses for me.

26. And I will restore your judges as at first and your counsellors as in the beginning; afterwards you shall be called City of Righteousness, Faithful City.

— Isaiah 1:26

19. On that day there shall be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a monument beside its border, to the Lord. 20. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness to the Lord of Hosts in the land of Egypt, for they shall cry out to the Lord because of oppressors, and He shall send them a savior and a prince, and he shall save them. — Isaiah 1:19-20

The Lord will reveal our prince and savior soon. He will be of the Blood and Voice of the Lord, and Levites will be taught by him. Who are the Levites? Look for them gathered around God's servants who have been awakened first, learning and considering what they are learning.

We have a favorite hymn that has lost some of its potency in my opinion, but we still sing:

The Lord is extending the saints' understanding—
Restoring their judges and all as at first;

Judges were Levites were they not?

Then there is this verse and yet another we lost since the 1835 publishing... it was hymn number 90:

Old Israel that fled from the world for his freedom, (Israel is Ephraim)

Must come with the cloud and the pillar, amain: (amain rhymes with again, and is the way the Jews generally pronounce it.)

A Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua lead him, (there will be another Moses, Aaron and Joshua?)

And feed him on manna from heaven again,
We'll sing and we'll shout &c.

But it's not time yet. The Lord has kept His Servant and his Levites hidden until (probably) we have sufficient number or strength to accomplish being judges, teachers, high priests, immersers and marshals among Ephraim. Some as young as 11 years are not going to accomplish this mighty work that needs to be done alongside Melchizedek. No, the gentile mind cannot perceive it. Yet.

Time is short, and you have listened long enough. Please read the rest of my talk if you like from the Zarahemla website. I have meandered down to about page 14 if you care. Bye for now.

(Original Page 14 Pre-recorded ending of talk)



As time has progressed, God has given me plausible justification for every symbol of the dream I received 4 years ago.

- The genealogy assignment I turned in was my ancestry, discovered in 2019.
- The word “quarran” was both Hebrew and Gaelic at the same time. In the Hebrew sense (discovered in 2016) it means “as aaron,” or so it was pointed out to me by an in-the-flesh Jew having had a dream to come to Utah. In the Gealic sense it means “from/to Arran,” as in the Isle of Arran that is near Holy Isle.
- My name is Felt, Felch, Felch, Felse, Fels and Failte most with the “ch” sound on the end (discovered as a youth and recently adding to it).
- The great ox skin is symbolic of Levitical sacrifices (see sacrament table in Kirtland Temple).
- 122 is a practical and plausible number of generations from the time of Joseph of Egypt to the present day. My patrilineal genealogy is my dad Rodger, his father Ben, then Nathaniel, Nathaniel, Nathaniel, David, Jonathan, Jonathan, George, George and all of that is 321 years in 6 stops for my Josephite

Lost tribe family. I can go back only 3 more generations in Leighton Buzzard England, but my name starts taking on the “ch” ending. If I go back another 30 generations I arrive at the oldest use of the Isle of Arran by Catholic Monks whose mission it was to convert perhaps my druid ancestors who gave sacrifice on Holy Isle and who raised deer for those sacrifices.

- My family crest is a stag deer. The symbol for the Island is a stag deer.
- There’s more, because I am still seeking

On June 27, 1844, Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff were staying in the home of my ancestor. Much of what we now associate with “succession authority” of the Twelve was developed rhetorically in Salem, Massachusetts first. You will recall the deep depressing feeling Woodruff had the moment Joseph and Hyrum were murdered because he wrote it in his diary relating it to his return to the Felt home. Don’t forget also the relief Brigham had when he realized all the keys had been given to the Twelve.

We always want a clear, unambiguous lineal priesthood authority through one man. It is our nature as men. One can see that in the Catholic traditions that put Peter in charge of the church before the Catholic church was even formed. How do we reconcile Peter being the “one man” at the time Joseph and Oliver received the Melchizedek Priesthood if John the Revelator is still on the earth ministering to the elect and heirs of salvation in the flesh? Does John’s priesthood preside over the whole earth today or is it through the priesthood of the prophet at Salt Lake? Priesthood is patrilineal (by blood) and it is by men to man (hierarchal). Does “one man” matter? It’s convenient and tidy, but does it lead us to seeing God in the flesh?

Even Brigham Young said as he clapped his hands as he said, “Joseph never took the keys away,” and indeed he holds them to this day. Anyone who says a Church can revoke your priesthood is simply not truthful. Show me your revelation on the subject. And because a church cannot take away keys, Brigham Young could have had them. Yes, that means Joseph Smith the 3rd then also had authority. I, Jonathan, clap my hands and thank God that Joseph still holds keys which means you

too have authority. No one took it away. It is up to you to be worthy and eligible for any confer-ance of authority from God, which is the only authority that matters.

I don't need a revelation from Musser. I don't need one from John Taylor or from Brigham Young to prove that I'm on the right track.

1 Behold I send My angel, and he will clear a way before Me. And suddenly, the Lord Whom you seek will come to His Temple. And behold! The angel of the covenant, whom you desire, is coming, says the Lord of Hosts. 2 Now who can abide the day of his coming, and who will stand when he appears, for it is like fire that refines and like fullers' soap. 3 And he shall sit refining and purifying silver, and he shall purify the children of Levi. And he shall purge them as gold and as silver, and they shall be offering up an offering to the Lord "with righteousness." 4 And then the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasant to the Lord, as in the days of old and former years. 5 And I will approach you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely; and also against those who withhold the wages of the day laborers, of the widow and fatherless, and those who pervert [the rights of] the stranger, [and those who] fear Me not, says the Lord of Hosts. 6 For I, the Lord, have not changed; and you, the sons of Jacob, have not reached the end. — Malachi 3:1-6, Chabad Version

I don't see this verse as you do (most likely). My angel is, as far as I am to understand, the End Time Servant. The angel I desire is that same End Time Servant, because I want to stand when He (the Lord) appears. Without training, Levites don't stand a chance. And he (the Servant) shall sit refining (and teaching) and purifying like silver is purified, and he (the Servant who is the Voice and Servant of Messiah) shall purge us... And here it is "and they shall be offering up an offering to the Lord with Righteousness (Righteousness is another name for the Servant. And then comes the offering by my brothers Judah. I love that last

verse: “For I, the Lord, have not changed; and you; the sons of Jacob, have not reached the end.” You, sons of Jacob through Joseph, still haven’t learned everything and your interpretation of past, current and future events is false in many ways.

My goal for this address was for you to know whom I think the Levites are. They are hidden among us. As in ancient House of Israel times, they are embedded among us and around us. Since the End Time Servant sets in order the entire House of God, I expect the Sons of Aaron and Levi to be scattered throughout the earth. I am, therefore, waiting to be anointed, in the flesh, by that Servant to confirm what has already come to be by being born and by revelation.

By the way... the part about Joseph Smith Jr restoring the House of God on Passover, no less, and him having done it seemingly without anyone noticing... Well, such has been noticed by an awakening sense of Israel inside of many of us. The rights and ordinances of sacrifice (especially starting with Passover) are taking hold again upon our hearts. Hebrew roots, our own Hebrew roots and identity, is a real thing; we have our patriarchal blessings, and the yearning for the House of God is back with us again for a reason; this due season of the Lord.

I love you. You are my brothers and sisters.

Jonathan Felt was born in Jackson County Missouri, in the urban city of Kansas in the late 1950s, his yearnings for Zion have never abated from that day until today. He can remember the nursery and his own circumcision, can't you? Little did he know just how strong that desire for the Gathering of Israel would become as time progressed. He and his wife Melody have seven children; all of them raised safely in the Utah LDS Church, but his careers professionally and church-wise have taken a drastic turn in the past decade. Jonathan has a deep friendship and genuine love for his professional boss who is, a devoted member of the Chabad community in Brooklyn, New York. Jonathan and his boss program software systems for Amazon Sellers, especially those of the Jewish brotherhood. His career in computer programming started when he was a young married general contractor in 1987. At the time he maintained apartments and managed them for his well-to-

do bosses and the Salt Lake County Housing Authority. As his skills increased on the computer, his places of domicile and employment included Salt Lake City, Utah; Monroe, Louisiana; Keene, New Hampshire; St. Petersburg, Florida; San Diego, California; Ahmedabad, India, and Brooklyn, New York. He served a fulfilling 2 years for his church in Sendai, Japan. He currently resides in Utah in the little old hamlet of Leland, which is the same ward precinct as the famous Bishop John Hyrum Koyle. The name Felt has migrated from the Celtic name (probably) Failte (fel-chiah) to Felse (fel-che) to Feltch to Felt in 1601 when his ancestors mostly inhabited the region around Salem, Massachusetts (and have for the last 400 years or so). Jonathan's family's more recent advent to Mormonism began in 1843 when Brigham Young sized up his great (and grand) 2nd great grandfather Nathaniel. Since he wasn't the best student of his era, no greatness will be found there, but he briefly studied "business" at the University of Utah before dropping out to get to work!

Why Is This Communion Different from All Other Communion?: How Jesus's Appearance in the Book of Mormon Counters Mosaic Supersessionism in the Synoptic Gospels

by Bradley J. Kramer

Few events in the New Testament promote the idea that the Law of Moses has been superseded by the Gospel of Jesus as forcefully as the institution of Christian Communion as it is presented in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Reenacted as it is in churches throughout the world as a regular part of their worship services, this scene shows in concrete terms just how this kind of supersessionism works, and it does so chiefly because of its Passover setting. There, before a table, much as Jesus did in the synoptic Gospels (Matt 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19), Christian ministers bless, break, and give bread to their congregants. And in so doing, they transform this simple food item from a remembrance of the Exodus into a memorial of Jesus's death and resurrection.

The whippings, the beatings, and the cruel deaths inflicted upon the children of Israel by their Egyptian taskmasters are never mentioned nor is the power of their divine deliverance ever discussed. Instead worshippers—frequently sitting in pews below crucifixes, crosses, and other reminders of Jesus's trials—concentrate on his whippings and on his beatings as they remember his cruel death and contemplate his deliverance from the tomb. The same is true of the wine. Here, in this context, the wine is no longer the blessed fruit of the vine, the paschal representation of all the earthly blessings that God has bestowed upon his children; it has been converted—either symbolically or literally—into the blood of Jesus, into a “new wine,” a substance that effectively shatters the old Mosaic “bottle” and represents instead the bounty that awaits Jesus's followers in heaven (Matt. 26:27–29; Mark 14:23–25; Luke 22:20–21).

Just as other New Testament books portray Sukkot and Shavuot, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke present Passover as a pointless

custom utterly emptied of its original Mosaic significance and devoid of any connection to contemporary Jewish observance. Here, Jesus may indeed celebrate the “feast of unleavened bread” and drink the “fruit of the vine” (Mark 14:1, 25; Luke 22:1, 7, 15–20), but he never discusses what these foods traditionally symbolize—the bitterness of Israel’s captivity, the miracle of their deliverance, the joy they experience as God’s special people—much less augment them by sampling charoset, constructing a “Hillel sandwich,” setting out a special goblet for Elijah, or otherwise acknowledging the ongoing significance and development of this holy day. In fact, the appearance of bread and wine in this meal seems to serve only as an opportunity for Jesus to “fulfill” them, by transforming these supposedly hollow Jewish symbols into tokens of his soon-to-be lifeless body and spilled blood (Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20).

In this way, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke solidify the supersessionist position prevalent throughout the New Testament—by sacramentalizing it, by using a Passover setting in order to change an otherwise joyous festival of life into a kind of never-ending funeral service, where Jesus’s death, as well as those who killed him, are continually remembered and the superiority of his way affirmed. The “Last Supper” is no ultimate Seder, in other words; it is instead a seized Seder, an appropriated Seder, a Seder wrenched violently from its Mosaic context and recast as a Christian rite.

The Book of Mormon, like the Synoptic Gospels, also shows Jesus instituting Christian Communion among his followers. However, in the New World he does so not during Passover but later, much later, after fifty days have passed, after the omer has been counted, and after he has observed Shavuot. In this way, through a change of setting, the bread and wine of Christian Communion are not only disconnected from Passover, but Christian Communion itself has been detached from any supersessionist implications derived from such a connection, and the validity and value of these Mosaic festivals is preserved.

Like Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, and Passover, Shavuot is not mentioned by name here or anywhere else in the Book of Mormon, and neither

are the seven weeks that separate it from Passover definitively presented. However, like Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, and Passover, its observance is clear in several significant ways. For one, the timing of Shavuot is consistent with Jesus's appearance according to both New Testament chronology as well as that of the Book of Mormon. John W. Welch writes,

We do not know how the Nephite ritual calendar in Bountiful related to the Israelite calendar in Jerusalem, for there had been no contact between the two for over six hundred years. . . . If one can assume, however, that the two ritual calendars had not grown too far apart, the feast of Shavuot would have been celebrated in Bountiful a few months after the Passover crucifixion and shortly after the best-known ascension of Jesus from Jerusalem reported in Acts 1:9–11. Such a scenario would thus make good sense of the reference in 3 Nephi 10:18 to Christ's appearing in Bountiful "soon after" his ascension.¹

Secondly, what is done during Shavuot dovetails with what the Nephites were doing immediately before Jesus's appearance in the Book of Mormon. During this holy day, all Israel is commanded to come before the Lord and offer up thanks for the blessings they have received, regardless of the size or number of those blessings (Ex. 23:14–17). It is significant therefore that not only had a great multitude gathered together round about the temple at that time but that this multitude was "marveling and wondering one with another . . . showing one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place" (3 Ne. 11:1). Such an upbeat reaction in the face of terrible storms, earthquakes, tidal waves, and other natural catastrophes suggests two things: first, that enough time had passed for the Nephites to begin to repair some of the damage caused by these events and, second, that there was

¹ John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple & the Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1999), 39.

some religious reason for their reaction—perhaps a special occasion or holy day, which challenged their perspective and encouraged them to put this disaster into a more positive context.

Thirdly, what Jesus says after he descends “out of heaven” (v. 8), much like Moses coming down from Sinai, corresponds with what is traditionally said on Shavuot. At this time, he does not deliver a speech consoling the Nephites, or congratulating them on their restorative efforts; instead, he offers instructions that emphasize the necessity of their obeying God’s commandments with increased devotion, and he does so so that they can be an example to the world.

One of the main purposes of Shavuot, according to the Talmudic rabbis, is to commemorate the giving of the Law to Moses on Sinai (Shabbat 86b; Exodus Rabbah 31) and to recreate, as much as possible, the time when all Israel committed themselves to obey it. As Rabbi Irving Greenberg writes, on Shavuot “only one reading could satisfy the liturgy of reenactment, namely the account of Sinai and the text of the Ten Commandments.”² As he explains, on that day in Jewish places of worship,

the account of the encampment at Sinai is read. Again, Israel stands as one before its Maker. Again, the people are told, “If you will harken to My voice and observe My covenant, you shall be My treasured people among the nations. You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy people to me.” And again, the People answer together: “All that the Lord said we shall do” (Ex. 19:5–8). Again, the mountain shakes and the world is riven by eternal revelation. The Ten Commandments are chanted . . . [and when they are read] the entire congregation rises to stand in awe as if it were once again hearing the Voice at Sinai.³

Jesus’s insistence that the Nephites avoid all thoughts and impulses that could lead to their breaking the Ten Commandments is therefore

² Greenberg, *The Jewish Way*, 83.

³ Greenberg, *The Jewish Way*, 84.

consistent with Shavuot—as is his call for them to become the salvific “salt of the earth,” to serve as the “light of this people,” and even to be “perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect” (3 Ne. 12:48). Rather than replacing the Torah, Jesus seems to be recreating how it was given and intensifying how it should be followed—all so that these New World Israelites may have another Sinai experience and pledge themselves to God once more. No wonder Jesus’s Nephite and Lamanite hearers cry “Hosanna” when he appears to them and bless “the name of the Most High God” (11:17). Blood sacrifice may have ended, and burnt offerings may have been replaced (9:20), but, as this setting suggests, this Mosaic festival, at least, is not spiritually hollow nor is it incapable of supplying new insights, supporting fresh perspectives, and generally enhancing the religious experience of those who observe it in an ever-expanding, ongoing way.

Fourthly, what Jesus does at this time similarly synchs up with Shavuot. Although one of the primary purposes of this holy day, at least since the Talmudic period, is to commemorate God’s giving of his Law to Israel at Sinai, Shavuot also serves as a harvest festival, when, according to Leviticus, the first fruits of the newly gathered in wheat harvest are offered to the Lord in the form of two special loaves of bread. Drink offerings are also brought forth (Lev. 23:17–19), and together these offerings are then consumed by those celebrating this festival. Like Sukkot, Shavuot is an upbeat thanksgiving festival, a feast where the gifts of God are enjoyed gratefully, regardless of their quality or abundance. It is therefore telling that the bread and wine Jesus requested in 3 Nephi 18 are, apparently, close at hand and that after these food items were brought forth, blessed, and shared with those in attendance, the Book of Mormon reports that the people “were filled” (3 Ne. 18:4, 9)—language identical to that used in the non-sacramental feedings of the 5,000 and the 4,000 in the Gospel of Matthew (14:20; 15:37).

Certainly, to many New Testament-influenced readers, this important meal may seem closely connected to the institution of Christian Communion as it is presented in the synoptic Gospels. After all, here in the New World Jesus appears to act much as he did in the Old, instructing that the bread should be eaten in remembrance of his broken body and

stipulating that the wine should be drunk in commemoration of his spilled blood. However, this connection is not as close as it may seem. A careful reading of 3 Nephi 18 shows that Jesus is not starting a new ritual at this time; he is instead using the established rituals of Shavuot to show what he will do later on.

Here, in this chapter, Jesus employs the future tense instead of the present when he describes Communion. After his followers have eaten the bread, he tells them, “this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you” (v. 7); and after they had partaken of the wine, he explains “this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you.” Finally, concerning the overall effect of these actions, he states “And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you” (v. 11; emphasis mine).

In other words, Rather than replacing a Jewish holy day with a new Christian law, Jesus is celebrating Shavuot in accordance with an old Mosaic law. However, as he does so, he uses the elements of this festival in order to prepare his followers for a new non-Mosaic ritual he will institute later on. And this makes sense. After all, the Nephites have not yet been baptized (a requirement for participation in Communion (v. 3)), nor have his disciples been authorized to administer baptism. Therefore, it is significant that here in this chapter when both Jesus’s disciples as well as the multitude had partaken of the bread and wine, they are “filled” but not yet with the Holy Spirit. Christian Communion with all of its spiritual benefits and blessings has not yet been given; it has only been introduced conceptually in the context of Shavuot, a festival that appropriately emphasizes remembrance and gratitude and joy.

In other words, Jesus does not institute the sacrament of Christian Communion during the first day of his visit to the Nephites. That comes during the following day, the second day—after his disciples have “ministered unto the people,” after Nephi has been authorized to baptize “all those whom Jesus had chosen,” and after the Holy Ghost has fallen upon them (19:1, 7, 12–13). It was on this day then, after all these things have occurred, that Jesus miraculously produces bread and wine

, blesses them, and gives them first to his disciples and then to the multitude. And as he does so, he uses the present tense. As Jesus declares, “He that eateth this bread eateth of my body to his soul; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood to his soul” (20:8). And perhaps most significantly, after they do these things the multitude is “filled with the Spirit,” just as Jesus promised (v. 9; emphasis added).

Given the high drama of this important event as well as the grammatical tense Jesus uses, it seems clear that in the Book of Mormon Christian Communion was not instituted on Passover or on Shavuot. It was instituted later, by itself, without any ritual connection to either of these Mosaic festivals. And this is significant. It means that the spiritual utility and viability of Passover and Shavuot remain intact. The bread and wine used to institute Communion was produced, not from a Seder table nor from a first-fruits offering but from Jesus himself, by himself, seemingly out of the air. These sacramental emblems are therefore new creations, much like Communion itself, and consequently, it and the Mosaic festivals exist symbolically as well as practically side by side, as separate religious rituals, each sharing helpful and enlightening connections but without any sense of competition or contention. As a result then, Shavuot and Communion can be celebrated individually by themselves, effectively and reverentially, just as Jesus did in the New World without one superseding or replacing the other.

It should be noted that such a resetting of the institution of Communion in the Book of Mormon in no way undermines the authority or the reliability of the New Testament. In fact, the Book of Mormon not only supports the New Testament by affirming that Jesus’s death did indeed occur during Nisan—“in the first month” (8:5), the same month when Passover is traditionally celebrated (Ex. 12:18)—but it reinforces that context by reenacting the original event this festival commemorates in a new and original way.

By the time of Jesus’s death, most Nephites had become not so much an oppressed people as an oppressive people. Like the Egyptians of Exodus, they had built many new cities and repaired old ones (3 Ne. 6:7; Ex. 1:11); they were exceedingly rich and consequently were “lifted up unto pride and boastings . . . even unto great persecutions”

of the people of God (3 Ne. 6:10; Ex. 1:14); they had even entered “into a covenant to destroy [the people of God] . . . and to establish a king over the land, that the land should no more be at liberty” (3 Ne. 6:29–30; Ex. 1:10–14). A prophet consequently came among these Nephites—Nephi, a man named after the original Nephi—who, like Moses, ministered “many things unto [his people] . . . with power and with great authority.” However, like Pharaoh and his courtiers, many of the Nephites were “angry with Nephi because of his power.” They did not believe the signs he spoke about and did harden their hearts against the Lord (3 Ne. 7:16–18, 20; Ex. 7:10–22). As a result, “there were but few righteous men among [the Nephites]” (3 Ne. 7:7), and consequently the majority of them were afflicted, like the Egyptians, with divinely created lightning and thunder, “thick darkness” (8:19–20), and other calamities that caused them to be burned in their cities (v. 8), “carried away in the whirlwind” (v. 16) and “sink into the depths of the sea” (v. 9)—much like Pharaoh’s people and his army (Ex. 14:26–28).

In other words, many of God’s plagues recalled during a Passover Seder are reenacted in the Book of Mormon—and so are his blessings. Here, the faithful New World Israelites are “passed over” just like their Old World ancestors; they are not “buried up in the earth,” “drowned in the depths of the sea,” “burned by fire,” “crushed to death,” or otherwise obliterated like their oppressors. They are instead delivered miraculously, Mosaically, precisely because they, like the children of Israel long ago in Egypt, “received the prophets,” (3 Ne. 10:12–15) and avoided the “wickedness and abominations” described in the Book of Exodus (9:7–13). In this way, the Book of Mormon verifies the New Testament’s timing of Passover while disassociating it from any meaningful connection with Christian Communion. Certainly, Jesus, according to the Synoptic Gospels, instituted this sacrament during a Seder in the Old World, but since he did not do so in the New, this fact is not significant. As the Book of Mormon shows, Christian Communion can be instituted at any time and at any place. There is no inherent link between it and Passover. Passover was simply the meal Jesus and his disciples were eating at the time.

In this way and in others, the Book of Mormon counters not only the supersessionist elements in the New Testament pertaining to the Law

of Moses but its other anti-Semitic elements as well. By changing the setting of significant events as well as by adding a multitude pro-Jewish statements, pro-Jewish portrayals, and pro-Jewish structuring elements to the Christian Canon, the Book of Mormon puts these events in an older, larger, wider, more Judaically positive context, and in this way it reverses the literary tide present in the New Testament and turns it, tsunami-like, in a decidedly different direction. No longer are the Mosaic commandments nonsensical rules promoted by self-serving, legalistic hypocrites. They instead have practical value and are observed by sincere, admirable people.

In other words, within this context, the Mosaic festivals in particular are not simply empty names, vain observances without any ancient or contemporary significance. By presenting them as truly holy days, observances consistent with ancient biblical practice but with hints of modern additions to that practice, the Book of Mormon confirms their ongoing utility both for Jews as well as for Christians. And, it does so without changing the text of the New Testament or otherwise undermining its scriptural reliability or authority.

Since Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, and Passover are presented so vitally and vibrantly in the Book of Mormon, the fact that the New Testament does not suggests that its description of these festivals is incomplete—that it was limited to a certain time and certain place or that its account was abbreviated for some reason, perhaps only because time or papyrus was limited. The New Testament is therefore not wrong, *per se*. There is simply more to these festivals than it describes, and consequently any argument requiring their replacement based solely on the New Testament is severely undermined. Why then is the institution of Communion so different in the Book of Mormon? To show to the wise that there is more to the Mosaic festivals than the New Testament lets on, that when the wicked and the scornful question their validity and value of Mosaic festivals, even the simple will have much to say. This year we are here; next year in Jerusalem. Yesterday we were slaves, today we are free.

Bradley J. Kramer holds an MA in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a BA in English from Brigham Young University with a minor in Near Eastern Studies. As the son of an LDS mother and a non-LDS father, he has had a life-long interest in inter-faith dialogue. For over a decade, he has been a regular participant in Torah and Talmud classes at a local synagogue in Durham, North Carolina, and has helped arrange joint Latter-day Saint-Jewish study sessions and other educational exchanges. He is the author of, 'Beholding the Tree of Life: A Rabbinic Approach to the Book of Mormon' and, recently, 'Gathered in One: How the Book of Mormon Counters Anti-Semitism in the New Testament.'

Bradley has given several presentations to local and regional groups on the affinities between Latter-day Saints and Jews and is a regular speaker at comparative religion classes.

Bradley has worked professionally as a writer and editor for several computer companies. He is an avid reader and researcher; a one-time youth soccer coach; a frequent Sunday School, Seminary, and Institute teacher; and devoted tennis player. He is married to the former Nancy Lubeck. They have three children and seven grandchildren.

Justice Is Mercy

Understanding God's Love

An Outline, by Enoch Foster

- “You don’t understand the first thing about the gospel”, the Holy Spirit said to me. I said, “Okay Lord you have my attention.”

- The 4 Ways of Being:

Perdition (Purposeful Oppressor)

Telestial (Pleasure Oppressor)

Terrestrial (Just Soul)

Celestial (Blessers/Saviors)

- I hope to make a case that Righteousness is a result of love, and that love rests upon the laws of justice. You cannot truly love and commit an injustice against your beloved...It Is Impossible! We lack understanding of Justice and as a result we struggle to love perfectly.

“A problem cannot be solved on the same level of consciousness that created that problem.”

- Albert Einstein.

We need heavens help! We need the rebirth of the spiritual nature, the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, the awakening of the Spiritual mind and Heart in order to become Just Souls, Loving Souls.

(Consider Ezekiel 36:26-27)

- Justice is the line which separates, or defines, RIGHT from WRONG. Justice, therefore, is judgment. It provides discernment.

(1 Kings 3:10-11&28)

- What Are Your Unalienable Rights? Do You Know?

(Declaration of Independence)

- God Loves Justice (Psalms 33:5; Isaiah 61:8; Proverbs 11:1)

THE 8 PRINCIPLES NECESSARY TO JUSTICE

(1) Personal Boundaries Defined

(2) Property Rights Defined.

Property is an extension of the individual.

(3) No Trespassing.

5th-10th Command – The ‘THOU SHALL NOTs’

Analyzing every expectation.

GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS.

(4) Right to Contract/Access Through Covenant.

7th Command - Covenants are Holy Ground. Gen 17:1; Isaiah 24:5; D&C 1:15,22; Jesus Mediator of the New Covenant, Hebrews 9:15)

(5) Investigation before Determination/Right to Due Process.

Fifth Amendment: No one shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.”

School Thy Feelings, Hymn 336.

Hear defense before deciding.

(6) Equal Treatment Under The Law/No Partiality.

James 2:1-10; Lev 19:15; 1 Tim 5:21

(7) Just Penalty Affixed/Rule of Law, Not Arbitrary Whim.

Alma 42:22

(8) Reap What You Sow/Cause and Effect/Law of Liberty.

James 2:12-13; Galatians 6:7-9, Luke 6:37-38, Matt 6:14-15

MERCY GROWS IN THE SOIL OF JUSTICE

- To Give You Must Possess.

Justice and defined boundaries are NECESSARY to kindness, forgiveness, generosity and all other forms of mercy and grace.

- God requires Justice and invites Mercy.

Embody Justice! Delight in Mercy!

“What does the LORD require of you? To Do Justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8

“You, Jesus, Love Justice and Hate Evil.” Hebrews 1:9

“Righteousness and Justice are the foundation of your throne. Unfailing Love and Truth walk before you as attendants.” Psalms 89:14

- THE LIE OF FALSE LOVE!

There is a false notion circulated nowadays that Justice and Mercy are in conflict.

The Laws of Justice Govern the Application of Mercy.

- Mercy/Forgiveness on the part of the injured party is Godliness.

Corinthians 13:5

- Anger which is not focused at injustice is Evil/Pride.

Parable of The Unforgiving Debtor – Matt 18:21-35 esp. verse 34

- The Root of injustice is Self-Focus!

Self-Focus is Pride!

Being born to humility, born to the spiritual mind is the answer/New Eyes.

Alma 5:6-32 esp. 7-9 & 27-30

FROM GOD’S PERSPECTIVE – WHO OWNS THIS EARTH?

- Pondering Eternal Property Rights–The 8 Principles from an Eternal Perspective.

“And God gave Adam dominion over it...” Genesis 1:26-28 & 2:15

“The Earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world and all its people belong to Him.” Psalms 24:1

“Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.” Deuteronomy 10:14

”Behold, all these properties are mine, or else your faith is vain, and you are found hypocrites, and the covenants you have made to me are broken; And if the properties are mine, then ye are stewards; otherwise you are no stewards.” D&C 104:55-56

“And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who will give you that which is your own?” Luke 16:12

“Prodigal Son...” Luke 15:11

Enoch Foster is a husband, father, and friend to many. Enoch is a lover of Jesus Christ and the Gospel, and has a great desire to see an increase in unity and understanding between the various branches of the Restoration, and between all people. Enoch hosts the Rock Rally, an annual event that draws hundreds of participants from many different Restoration groups, and provides them an opportunity to both socialize and worship together.

You and I on the Road to Emmaus

An Outline, by Nathan Dilts

Luke 24:13-53 (especially 25-48)

- They knew what happened to Christ
- They knew about Christ
- They knew Christ
- But only after He expounded the Tanakh (TNK) did they come to know the Truth of Christ

2 Nephi 11:4

2 Nephi 25:23-30

Jacob 4:5

Jarom 1:11

Moses 6:63

D&C 93:24

(TNK) Tanakh is the Hebrew Word for Bible

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| • Torah | Instructions | (The Law) |
| • Nevi'im | Spokesman | (The Prophets) |
| • Ketuvim | Writings. | (The Writings) |

Torah - The First Five Books of Moses

- Genesis - Who God was, is, and will be in relation to who you are, were, and will be.
- Exodus - Redeemer saving completely lost slaves to invite them into a Covenant relationship.
- Leviticus - Conditions, a framework for a Covenant relationship.
- Numbers - Consequences for fulfilling or violating the Covenant relationship.

- Deuteronomy - Sealing the Covenant relationship.

Nevi'im - Former Prophets, Latter Prophets (Including the 12 Minor Prophets)

- Former Prophets
 - Joshua
 - Judges
 - Samuel
 - Kings
- Latter Prophets
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Ezekiel
- 12 Minor Prophets
 - Hosea
 - Joel
 - Amos
 - Obadiah
 - Jonah
 - Micah
 - Nahum
 - Habakkuk
 - Zephaniah
 - Haggai
 - Zechariah
 - Malachi

Ketuvim - The Documents of Truth, the Five Scrolls and Other Books

- Documents of Truth (Poetry)
 - Psalm
 - Proverbs
 - Job
- Five Scrolls of Wisdom
 - Song of Songs
 - Book of Ruth
 - Book of Lamentations
 - Ecclesiastes

- Book of Esther
- Other Books
 - Daniel
 - Ezra-Nehemiah
 - Chronicles

Matthew 5:17-18

Matthew 7:12

Matthew 22:36-40

JST Luke 16

John 1:45-51

When realization leads to revelation about your relationship - who moved? Who came to clarity?

Come unto Christ - come into a Covenant relationship with Him by understanding who He was, is, and will be to You.

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The First Vision, Apostasy, and Restoration

By Joshua Erickson

Today I would like to talk to you about things that are both abominable, and admirable; about both detestable and pleasant things. As we go, I may alternate between the two; however, I will begin with something pleasant.

In Joseph Smith's own words:

It was on the morning of a beautiful, clear day, early
in the spring of eighteen hundred and twenty.

– Joseph Smith-History 1:14

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the event we know as The First Vision. Specifically, and there are very good reasons to believe this, the anniversary was on the 26th of March on our Gregorian calendar. The evidences for this are numerological¹, astronomical, meteorological, and horticultural.²

On the Hebrew Calendar, this event was just prior to Passover. It is entirely probable that Joseph Smith read that key passage in James, became convicted of its verity, decided upon a course of action that would change his life and the world forever, and thus became set apart for his earthly mission, on the 10th day of the first Hebrew month (which is called Nisan or Aviv).

This timing mirrors the day when Passover lambs are selected and set apart, and is also the day that Yeshua was set apart and proclaimed as Messiah upon his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Therefore, I thought it would be good to make some remarks about this pivotal event in the history of the world.

Of course, the LDS Church celebrated the anniversary of this event in their most recent general conference, with a new movie depicting the

¹ M. Garfield Cook, Cornerstones of the Restoration, a Message Extracted From a Genealogical Record, p. 44-45

² John C. Lefgren and John P. Pratt, Oh, How Lovely Was the Morning: Sun 26 Mar 1820?, Meridian Magazine (9 Oct 2002).

event, and a new proclamation from the First Presidency and the Quorum of 12. In the days leading up to the Proclamation there were many announcements. For example, on January 1st of this year, President Nelson wrote on his Instagram:

“I designated 2020 as a bicentennial period commemorating 200 years since God the Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, appeared to Joseph Smith in a vision. That singular event in human history initiated the Restoration of the Lord’s gospel—an unfolding Restoration that continues today.”

Of course, the First Vision has always been important to the Latter Day Saints. Joseph F. Smith wrote of the First Vision:

The greatest event that has ever occurred in the world, since the resurrection of the Son of God from the tomb and His ascension on high, was the coming of the Father and of the Son to that boy Joseph Smith.³

Historians find fertile soil for their studies in the First Vision. There are multiple accounts of the vision, both from Joseph and his contemporaries, with various details being shared, or unique, between them. The most commonly known version, and the one that has been canonized in the Pearl of Great Price, was dictated by Joseph in 1838.

Regardless, we are all familiar with the general outline of the story. After reading in the Epistle of James, that those lacking wisdom ought to ask of God, Joseph determined to do so. After all, he reasoned, if anyone needed wisdom from God, he did. And why did he need God’s wisdom? He tells us in his account; he tells us that he did not know how to *act* (JS-H 1:12).

His was not merely a confusion about belief, as we sometimes imagine, but about action, and this, I think, is a crucial point to understand about the opening scene of the Restoration. As Joseph Smith himself said, “If we start right, it is easy to go right all the time; but if we start wrong, it

³ Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 495-96

is a hard matter to get right.”⁴

As I mentioned this event was on the cusp of Passover. The Passover Seder speaks of four sons: one wise, one rebellious, one simple, and one that does not know how to ask a question. All of these sons are taught, but the one who knows how to ask a question, and is seeking to understand the ways of God, will receive more for his efforts.

Joseph wanted to know at least two things from God. First, he wanted to know his state and standing before God, and second (and related to the first), he wanted to know which of all the sects of Christianity were correct so that he could unite himself to it.

In the earliest account we have, which is the 1832 account⁵, Joseph describes the answer he received to his first question thus:

I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying, “Joseph, my Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Go thy way, *walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments.*”⁶

What is a statute? It is not a word that appears anywhere in the New Testament. Statutes are a part of the Law of Moses. Sometimes when referring to commandments the scriptures will say something like, “keep my commandments, my statutes and judgements⁷”. These are categories of commandments. Sometimes the Lord will also say to keep his testimonies⁸ as well.

Testimonies are commandments which commemorate something. Commandments like keeping the Sabbath to remember the 7th day of creation, or observing Passover, and the other festival days. The judgements are those commandments that we, as rational beings, could have derived on our own. As a result, these things are known and kept across

⁴ Discourse (King Follet Sermon), 7 April 1844, as Reported by Times and Seasons, p. 613

⁵ This is the only account which contains any of Joseph’s handwriting. It was partly written by Joseph, and partly dictated to his scribe, Frederick G. Williams.

⁶ All italicized words are my own emphasis thruout.

⁷ See for example, Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 11:1

⁸ See for example, Deuteronomy 6:17 and 1 Kings 2:3

cultures, even among those cultures that have not (until recent times) been exposed to the God of Israel. These are things like, thou shalt not murder or thou shalt not steal. The statutes are those commandments that we would not necessarily have derived on our own; things like the kosher dietary laws and purity laws.

Just as Joseph's two questions were related, so were the answers he received. Both were tied directly to the commandments (and also the "statutes" – which is not a New Testament idea at all). Continuing in the 1832 account, the Lord declares:

Behold, the world lieth in sin at this time, and none doeth good; no, not one. They have turned aside from the Gospel *and keep not my commandments*. They draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me.

In order to understand these words, we have to know what "good" means, because this word can be used in different ways. Of course the Lord is not meaning that there was not a single Christian person who was doing good deeds, or were good people in the normal sense of the word as we use it. But, when the scriptures speak of things that are "good", it is referring to keeping and upholding covenant. *That* is good, and that is what no one was doing, and what their hearts were far from.

The more familiar version in Joseph Smith-History also relates what the Lord told Joseph, in response to his question about the various Christian sects:

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that *all their creeds were an abomination in his sight*; that those professors were all corrupt; that: "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, *they teach for doctrines the commandments of men*, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."

– Joseph Smith-History 1:19

What a perfectly, politically incorrect thing for God to say! After all, what is so abominable about Christian creeds or teachings?

Allow me to state the most famous of all formalized Christian creeds, the Nicene Creed, originally formulated in 325 AD (just a few days after Shavuot by the way), and later expanded in 381 AD.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible
and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten
Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds,
Light of Light, true God from true God, begotten, not
made, of one Being with the Father; through him all
things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from
heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Vir-
gin Mary and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified. Under Pontius Pi-
late; he suffered death and was buried, and on the third
day he rose again according to the Scriptures; he as-
cended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Fa-
ther.

He will come again in glory to judge the living
and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver
of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the
Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who
has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy universal and apostolic
Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the for-
giveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the
dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

This creed is used and accepted by Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and many others. In fact, as you were reading or hearing it, you probably found yourself agreeing with most all of it. Maybe we misunderstand what the Lord meant by, “all”.

What else do Christians teach? They teach that we should pray, have faith in Jesus, and on his name, love God and love your neighbor, forgive one another, and ask God for forgiveness. What then is so awful about Christianity? What is so abominable about the creeds?

I do want to point out here that it seems that when the Lord said, “all their creeds”, he certainly wasn’t referring to “all” the things that Christians believe. How could it mean that, when our own beliefs overlap with them in many, many ways? No, that is not the meaning. So, what then did the Lord mean when he said, “all their creeds”? I submit to you that we ought to understand this phrase not to mean that everything that Christians believe is abominable; rather, we should understand “all” to mean that all the various branches of Christianity universally held onto something that was abominable or offensive to God.

As Latter Day Saints, we might answer this question about what is so abominable by pointing to The Great Apostasy. LDS missionaries teach it to investigators before baptism (when I was on a mission in the 1990s it was the third discussion). The concept of The Great Apostasy is just as important to Mormonism as the concept of the First Vision. In fact, it was communicated to young Joseph in his first vision experience. We have whole books about it, most famously, *The Great Apostasy* by James Talmage.

The Apostasy was a necessary prelude to the restoration thru Joseph Smith. Indeed, Apostasy and Restoration are two sides of the same coin. However, pointing to The Great Apostasy is only relabeling the question. We want to know what exactly was lost from the ancient faith, added to it, or changed. Why? Because, we must know what was lost in order for it to be restored.

The Book of Mormon talks about the concept of The Great Apostasy quite a bit. Nephi discusses at length the Great and Abominable (there is that word again!) Church which will take away the plain and precious parts of the Gospel. In his vision, Nephi sees a book, from the Jews, which contains the fullness of the Gospel (1 Nephi 13:24). He sees that this book is taken by the Apostles to the Gentiles (v. 26). Note that the book is not from the Apostles (so the book is not the New Testament).

Rather, it is transmitted by them. Furthermore, he sees that the book is delivered to the Gentiles (via the Apostles) in its *purity* (v. 25).

Not until after these events have transpired does the Great and Abominable Church form, which takes away many parts of the Gospel, including the covenants of the Lord (v. 26). Nephi says they have, “taken away” and “kept back” the knowledge of those things (v. 32). It was Apostasy by subtraction.

However, God will be merciful unto the Gentiles, and one day in the future, Nephi is told, God will take away their stumbling blocks (14:1). There will be a return to the covenants and Gospel that was contained in that Jewish book, the Book of the Lamb. In that day the Gentiles will be grafted into, and blessed with, the House of Israel (14:2) (and not the other way around, as we sometimes suppose), and the Great and Abominable Church will have the wrath of God poured out upon her to her ultimate demise.

At the very end of the First Book of Nephi, he gives a formula for how to avoid being destroyed along with the Mother of Harlots.

But, behold, all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people shall dwell safely in the Holy One of Israel *if it so be that they will repent....* Wherefore, my brethren, I would that ye should *consider that the things which have been written upon the plates of brass* are true; and *they testify that a man must be obedient to the commandments of God.* Wherefore, ye need not suppose that I and my father are the only ones that have testified, and also taught them. *Wherefore, if ye shall be obedient to the commandments, and endure to the end, ye shall be saved at the last day.* And thus it is. Amen.

— 1 Nephi 22:28, 30-31

This is a version of the oft repeated promise of the Book of Mormon, that if you keep the commandments, you will prosper in the land. This promise was not only for those ancient people who recorded it. It is a promise to us as well! Therefore the question arises, which commandments?

In answer, and speaking of this future time (which has not yet been fulfilled), Nephi encourages the reader to look to the things written on the Plates of Brass in order to be obedient to the commandments, and escape the destructions to come. The commandments spoken of are in the Torah!⁹

Of course we know that The Great Apostasy is also foretold in the New Testament as well, and we are familiar with Paul's words about the Apostasy and the Antichrist before the second coming of Messiah:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
— 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4

The KJV uses the term “Man of Sin” when referring to the Antichrist in this verse. However, other versions use the term “Man of Lawlessness” or, “Man of Torahlessness”. This actually fits very neatly with the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures about the efforts of this man.

In the 7th chapter of Daniel we read, in verse 25, that prior to dominion being given at last to the saints of God, there will arise a king who, “shall speak great words against the most High”. In fact, he will oppose and exalt himself against God, just as Paul mentioned earlier. Furthermore, he will, “wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws”.

The changing of the times spoken of here is a changing, or abolition, of the appointed times of the Lord – the Holy Feast days and Sabbaths. The changing of the laws spoken of here is a changing, or abolition, of the Law of God – the Torah.

⁹ This, after all, was the original reason that Lehi was commanded to obtain the Plates of Brass. They contained the Torah, which contained the commandments, and the people would not be able to keep the commandments unless they had them written down to study (see 1 Nephi 4:14-16).

This concerted effort by the Man of Lawlessness points to the very root of what constitutes abomination. Indeed, Daniel speaks of the ultimate abomination – the Abomination of Desolation (see Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11), Jesus speaks about this as well (see Mark 13:14, Matt 24:15, JS-M 1:12), in connection with this Man of Torahlessness. The context of these passages leaves no room for doubt as to what was intended by this somewhat odd expression; namely, the transformation, by Antiochus Epiphanes, of the sacred Temple at Jerusalem into a heathen one.¹⁰

Now, going back to the abominations of Christianity, as told to Joseph in the First Vision, what constitutes *them*? What is the error of the teachings of Christianity? Talmage, and other Latter Day Saint authors, will list as chief among their abominations, the belief in the Trinity, or the incorporeal nature of God, or Gnostic beliefs about the nature of sin and the origins of life, or various other ideas which crept into the ancient Church that are worthy of a heretical label. As Talmage writes:

First among the specific causes of disturbance operating within the Church, and contributing to its apostasy, we have named: “The corrupting of the simple principles of the gospel by the admixture of the so-called philosophic systems of the times.”¹¹

Of course, Christians have argued, persecuted, and schismed, among themselves for centuries over many things: the nature and name of God, the divinity and nature of Yeshua, the extent of the Atonement, the mechanism of salvation, the meaning of the Sacraments, the content of the canon and the continuation of Divine revelation, the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, and perhaps most importantly, who has the right or authority to decide and administer these teachings. Those who disagree are called, “Heretic”, and over the millennia many saints have been killed for the crime of believing the wrong things.

The Mormon branch of Christianity has likewise contributed to the continuing schisms, with several hundred sects both small and large,

¹⁰ The Jewish Encyclopedia, *Abomination of Desolation*

¹¹ James E. Talmage, *The Great Apostasy*, 7:1

both active and defunct. We have also argued about the identity and names of God and Yeshua, the proper content of the canon, the proper arm or leg positions while blessing the sacrament, and many other things, but again, and most importantly, we argue about who has the right or authority to decide and administer these things. Those who disagree are called “Apostates”.

Again, incorrect beliefs seems to be a large portion of our concern. There is however, one problem with this view. It is that God never calls beliefs abominable. Only actions which are contrary to his instructions receive this label. It is actions that are detested; it is always behaviors that are judged, and never beliefs. John Conrad, High priest of the house of Aaron once wrote:

For a movement [speaking about the Messianic movement] based upon the Hebraic mindset there is nothing more Hellenistic than our insistence that people ‘think’ right. There is no better way to know how someone truly thinks than to observe how he acts. Yeshua drives this point home in many of his parables. ‘The Good Samaritan’ pits two men with perfect doctrine, an Aaronite priest and a Levite, against a hated Samaritan, a perfect example of someone with bad doctrine. The Samaritans had a different priesthood, a different temple and a different holy site from Jerusalem. The one who is justified is the one with merciful behavior, not the ones with good doctrine. ...

Every instance of Biblical condemnation is based upon behavior. In Matthew 25 Yeshua does not separate the sheep and goats based upon their acceptance or rejection of the Trinity, their correct rendering of Yeshua's name, their repudiation [or acceptance] of the Book of Mormon. The separation is based upon

behavior toward other people, those created in His image.”¹²

Good doctrine, good belief, and good faith only serve us well as long as they lead us to good action¹³. This is exactly the problem we see communicated in the First Vision, “They teach for doctrines the commandments of men.” Doctrine becomes more important than commandments! Indeed, we have inherited a thoroughly Greek view of our religion.

Yeshua had similar things to say, in his own day, to those who did away with the commandments of God, and replaced them with their own teachings.

He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. [Isa. 29:13] For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men... And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. — Mark 7:6-9

In scripture both modern and ancient, we have from God’s own mouth those things that he finds abominable, detestable, or offensive, and they fall in to two categories only.

- 1) Those who confess not his hand in all things. [ingratitude]
And,
- 2) Those who obey not his commandments.¹⁴

¹² Statement by John Conrad (from the House of Aaron) regarding the Article, "The Plain Truth about MIA's House of Aaron" posted on Facebook June 9, 2013.

¹³ This is not to say that discussions and debate about doctrines and tenants of faith are not interesting, strengthening, and useful in their own ways.

¹⁴ D&C 59:21

Jesus has many things to say about the commandments during his ministry, but never that they were done away. “Think not,” said Jesus, “that I am come to destroy the law.”¹⁵ It is almost as if he could see the future, and what people would do with his teachings. He warns us not to allow ourselves to think that one of his purposes of his coming was to destroy or do away with the Law. “I am not come to destroy the Law,” he said, “but to fulfil.”

He goes on to tell us how long the Law will be in force:

For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass,
one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law,
till all be fulfilled. — Matthew 5:18

Finally, he says that whoever teaches the contrary – whoever does not keep the commandments, and teaches others that they no longer need to keep the commandments (even the least commandments) – will find themselves demoted.

No, I have not come to destroy the Law, says Jesus. The Law will not be done away one bit, says Jesus – not till heaven and earth pass away. Jesus chides the Pharisees for nullifying the commandments by their traditions, and teaching that their traditions superseded the commandments.¹⁶ Jesus says that whoever will break the commandments, and teach others to do so, will be called the least. Jesus says that people draw near to him with their lips but their hearts are far from him.¹⁷ Jesus predicts that many will say, “Lord, Lord” but do not the things that he says.¹⁸ Jesus says, “if you love me, keep my commandments”¹⁹, and then sadly predicts that in the last days the love of men will grow cold (because lawlessness will abound).²⁰

¹⁵ Matthew 5:17

¹⁶ Mark 7:13

¹⁷ Mark 7:6

¹⁸ Matthew 7:21 & Luke 6:46

¹⁹ John 14:15

²⁰ Matthew 24:12

How then is it that we, in our modern world, with all the words of Jesus and the prophets laid plainly before us, have come to view God's Law as burdensome, flawed, and even wicked in some cases?

It is the abominations of the creeds.

It is important to note that creeds are not exclusively formal declarations of faith (as in the Nicene Creed, Athanasian Creed, or Apostle's Creed, etc.). Creeds are also:

That which is believed; any system of principles which are believed or professed.²¹

We are living in a kingdom of clay mixed with iron, descended from Rome. We have been taught that the apostasy and resulting abomination is largely due to persecution from Rome, influences of Greek ideas, and a break in the chain of succession. All these things are true, but there is another component.

A full history of the apostasy also involves the separation of Jews from Gentiles, and the purging of all "Jewishness" and all Israelite identity from the Church (this was done to avoid association with Jews, and hence to avoid partaking in the persecution of the Jews, from Rome). Yeshua was a Jew, his apostles were all Jews, all the first Christians were Jews, and all the bishops of Jerusalem were Jewish until more than a century after Yeshua's death.²²

The wording of the creeds is relatively well known, certainly among Christians, but even among some Latter Day Saints. What is much less

²¹ Webster's 1828 Dictionary of the English Language, entry under the word *Creed*. This dictionary provides the best reflection of what words meant in Joseph Smith's day.

²² Bishop Marcus was the first gentile bishop in Jerusalem. He was appointed in 135 AD. This is also the year that the second Jewish revolt was brutally suppressed, the city of Jerusalem razed to the ground, and rebuilt as a Roman city. All Jews were forbidden from entering the city (including Jewish Christians). Gentile Christians therefore began distancing themselves from the House of Israel at this time to avoid partaking in persecutions from Rome. Eventually, Christianity became popular in Roman, and was made the official religion of the Empire by Constantine the Great.

well known is the other decisions that were made in these early Church Councils.

For example, the first Nicene Council, besides formulating the creed which bears its namesake, also made decrees such as:

“It was declared to be particularly unworthy for this, the holiest of all festivals (Easter/Passover), to follow the custom [the calculation] of the Jews...We ought not, therefore, to have anything in common with the Jews...we desire, dearest brethren, to separate ourselves from the detestable company of the Jews...it would still be your duty not to tarnish your soul by communications with such wicked people [the Jews]...it is our duty not to have any single point in common with [them].”²³

These are harsh words but not the harshest that would come. In the early centuries of Christianity there were many calls for separation from the Jews, state and church sponsored persecution of the Jews, “legal” restrictions imposed upon them, calls to expel them, burn their synagogues and homes, and execute or enslave them. Centuries of this sort of thinking built up and ultimately culminated in the Nazi Holocaust of the Jewish people. The Christians indeed had followed in the footsteps of Rome, Greece, Babylon, and Egypt.

Whoever blesses Israel will be blessed, and whoever curses them will be cursed.²⁴

This is not the way it was supposed to be. The apostle Paul and the prophet Zenos spoke of Gentile Christians being grafted into the tree of the House of Israel; thereby becoming part of Israel.²⁵ Indeed, they had been grafted in at the first, but now the Christians were sitting on the distal end of the branch while sawing away on the trunk side. A

²³ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* Vol. III Ch. XVIII

²⁴ Genesis 12:3 & Numbers 24:9

²⁵ Romans 11:11-24 & Jacob 5

falling away indeed was going to occur. Christianity has cut off its roots.

What is the cure for this death of sorts (for indeed, death is separation)? Restoration! We must look back to our roots, and become reconnected and regrafted.

Hearken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness.
Look unto the rock from whence ye are hewn, and to
the hole of the pit from whence ye are digged. Look
unto Abraham, your father, and unto Sarah, she that
bare you; for I called him alone, and blessed him.

– 2 Nephi 8:1-2 & Isaiah 51:1-2

The prophet Moses, in the 30th chapter of Deuteronomy, made a prophecy about the latter days and the gathering of Israel, and we may choose whether we will help or fight its fulfillment. It is a prophecy about restoration of both the land and the Law – for these two always go together.²⁶

1 And it shall come to pass, when all these things are
come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I
have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind
among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath
driven thee, 2 *And shalt return unto the Lord thy God,
and shalt obey his voice according to all that I com-
mand thee this day*, thou and thy children, with all
thine heart, and with all thy soul; 3 That then the Lord
thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion
upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the
nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered
thee.... 8 *And thou shalt return and obey the voice of
the Lord, and do all his commandments which I com-
mand thee this day.*

²⁶ This promise is often repeated in both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. For example: "Inasmuch as ye keep my **commandments** ye shall prosper **in the land.**" (2 Nephi 4:4)

Someday, Israel will be fully gathered to the lands of their inheritance, and will undertake to keep all the commandments that God gave to them thru Moses, and they will do this with all their heart and soul and for love of the Lord their God.

It will be a restoration, a restore-nation, and a re-torah-nation!

Moses goes on to list some of the blessings that will attend those future Israelites who fulfill this prophecy.

9 And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: 10 *If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.*

Someday, we will turn back to our roots, look to the rock from which we were hewn, and divest ourselves of our Greek and Roman religious inheritance. For those who think this is too lofty a goal, Moses, continuing in Deuteronomy 30, gives some encouragement in this regard.

11 For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? 13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it? 14 But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.

John the Beloved agrees with Moses when it comes to the reality of keeping God's Law:

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

– 1 John 5:3

Whether we realize it or not, the Torah (the five books of Moses) forms the basis of our religion, and we cannot have our Mormon faith without these five books. The Book of Mormon predicts that Gentile Christians will show contempt and ingratitude for the House of Israel.

Thus saith the Lord God: O fools, they shall have a Bible; and it shall proceed forth from the Jews, mine ancient covenant people. And what thank they the Jews for the Bible which they receive from them? Yea, what do the Gentiles mean? Do they remember the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles? O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? Nay; but ye have cursed them, and have hated them, and have not sought to recover them. But behold, I will return all these things upon your own heads; for I the Lord have not forgotten my people.

– 2 Nephi 29:4-5

What thank they the Jews? I thank them tremendously! The Torah is not only the foundation for our religion, but the foundation of many of the societal structures and legal ideas we hold sacred. It contains the Lord's covenant with Adam, his covenant with Enoch; his covenant with Noah; his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; his covenant with Israel; his covenant with Phineas, and his covenant with David.

In one way or another, we are all beneficiaries of these covenantal arrangements. Furthermore, none of these covenants have been annulled. Despite this, we sometimes hear the idea that we can still lay claim to the benefits of these covenants, while simultaneously saying the conditions no longer apply.²⁷

²⁷ Lectures on Faith 6:8 "It is in vain for persons to fancy to themselves that they are heirs with those, or can be heirs with them, who have offered their

It is often said that the Torah and its laws are a “burden” since there were so many laws and minutia that the Jews had to live by, but this is a misunderstanding on our part about what the Law actually requires. Even if it were true, that the Law of God given thru Moses was as complex as we imagine, how can we, in our Western, Christian society feel justified mocking the complexity of Jewish laws, which are based upon the Word of God, and then happily accept our own secular law which is many orders of magnitude more complex and burdensome – it is not even comparable. We fulfill Jesus’ words to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel!

In reality, The Law of the Lord is a delight.²⁸ The Law of the Lord is Perfect.²⁹ The Law is Holy and Righteous and Good.³⁰ His Law is Truth.³¹ His Law is Light.³² His Law is Wisdom³³, and His Law is our righteousness.³⁴ All our notions to the contrary are due simply to our misunderstanding, and our misunderstanding has resulted from the Great and Abominable Church removing the understanding of God’s ways, removing the understanding of our Israelite heritage and culture, and removing the understanding of the beautiful things contained in his Torah.³⁵

The theme of this year’s conference is, *The Value of The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings in The Latter Days*. For those of us who believe, these things have tremendous value. The covenants of the Lord with the House of Israel are not been forgotten, nor annulled, and neither have their conditions. Therefore we, who are of Israel (whether by

all in sacrifice, and by this means obtained faith in God and favor with him so as to obtain eternal life, unless they in like manner offer unto him the same sacrifice and through that offering obtain the knowledge that they are accepted of him.”

²⁸ Psalm 119:16

²⁹ Psalm 19:7

³⁰ Romans 7:12

³¹ Psalm 119:142

³² Proverbs 6:23

³³ Deuteronomy 4:6

³⁴ Deuteronomy 6:25

³⁵ Psalms 119:18 “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Torah.”

birth or by adoption), must learn of and appreciate our ancient heritage. We must also make a decision about where we will stand – the stone cut out of the mountain without hand rolls slowly at first. But it is rolling steadily, and growing as it does, and we all know where it is headed.

I have already quoted Moses' prophecy in chapter 30 of Deuteronomy, but we as Latter Day Saints have another prophecy of Moses as well, which speaks of similar things:

And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught, and take many of them from the book which thou shalt write, behold, I will raise up another like unto thee; and [then] they [the things which Moses wrote] shall be had again among the children of men—among as many as shall believe.

– Moses 1:41

Joshua Erickson was raised in an LDS home in Utah, by a father who was a scholar and lover of all things Israelite. His father has now passed away, but planted a loving seed in Joshua for those things. The seed grew slowly in earlier years, but has now blossomed and is continually growing. He is hoping to plant similar seeds in his own children. Joshua is a chemist by training and profession, and loves his job. He is also the secretary of the Zarahemla Foundation, and author of the book, 'Wine of your Own Make.'

The Zohar Of The Book Of Mormon

By Robert Kay

The Book of Mormon contains a great and marvelous spiritual technology by which the miracles of God are unleashed, the light of heaven is unveiled, and the natural man is transformed into the spiritual child of God. For thousands of years this science has been hidden from the masses but was prophesied by many wise men of the House of Israel to come forth in preparation for the Messianic Age.

According to tradition and lore, the source of this technology was given by the voice of God to Adam. After being cast out of the Garden of Eden, it was taught that Adam and Eve longed to return to the presence of God in their former condition. After the fall, however, their bodies had changed, and they could no longer endure the direct presence of God.

To make a long story short, upon seeing the despair of Adam and Eve and their longing to return God sent the Angel Raziel (who is often referred to as the angel of mysteries and the keeper of secrets) with the book containing the mysteries of the universe wherein was recorded the great knowledge that was meant to return Adam and Eve from their fallen condition and to transform the world back into its Edenic condition. The book was said to contain important knowledge on the nature of man, his spirit, the spirit of God, and the physical world. It contained the laws of nature, great knowledge of astronomy, the workings of the universe, and the power of the names of God.

Whether this particular account is true or not, what is important to note is that by both tradition in the House of Israel and modern revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, we understand that a book existed that was preserved by Adam and his descendants that contained great knowledge as revealed by God to man. This great science was passed down by prophets such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob even until Moses. From the prophet Moses, this technology was transmitted to holy men who sought the voice and presence of God.

Because of the sacred nature of this technology, much of this knowledge was recorded in an encoded manner. To unseal the Book of Mormon and to unlock the code it contains requires usage of an understanding of the name of God and the methods of scriptural interpretation preserved by the House of Israel. The knowledge was then encoded into the Hebrew text of the Torah for the time when future generations would unlock it and use it to prepare themselves for the world to come, and the revelation of the Holy One of Israel, and what Mormons call the Millennium.

The prophets of Israel encoded this spiritual technology in the account of the Exodus where Moses parted the Red Sea and the Israelites walked across on dry ground. The Scriptures tell us that after the children of Israel left Egypt they arrived at the shores of the Red Sea. Pharaoh and his armies were in hot pursuit of the Israelites. Coming up from behind, the recently delivered House of Israel was trapped at the waters of the Red Sea with nowhere to go. It was then that Moses spoke the word of God and the waters divided allowing Israel path of escape on dry ground.

But what was this word that Moses spoke? What caused the waters to divide? It was passed down by the sages of Israel that there was a secret science of miracles passed down from The Fathers. This science was encoded in three verses of the Torah that details this miraculous event. This technology came to be known as the 72 names of God or Shem HaMe'foresh. The 72 names of God are encoded in the book of Exodus 14:19-21. Each verse in this portion of scripture contains exactly 72 letters. The names are constructed by combining the 1st letter (yod) from the 1st box with the 1st letter of the 2nd box (hey) with the 1st letter from the 3rd box (yod) as shown below:

“And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:” (v. 19)

וַיִּסַּע מִלֶּאכָר הָאֱלֹהִים הַחֹלֶר לִפְנֵי מוֹנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל חֹלֶר מֵאֲזִרֵיהֶם
וַיִּסַּע עֲמֹד הַעֲנָן מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲמֵד מֵאֲזִרֵיהֶם:

ו	א	ל	ש	א	ע	מ	מ	1
י	ל	פ	ר	ח	ע	פ	ד	2
ס	ה	ז	א	ר	מ	ז	מ	3
ע	י	י	ל	י	ו	י	א	4
מ	ס	מ	ו	ה	ד	ה	ח	5
ל	ה	ח	י	ס	ה	ס	ר	6
א	ה	ז	ל	ו	ע	ו	י	7
ך	ל	ה	ך	י	ז	י	ה	8
ה	ך	י	מ	ס	ן	ע	ס	9

“And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.” (v.20)

וַיָּבֹא בֵּין מוֹנֵה מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין מוֹנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי־הָעֲנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּאָר
אֶת הַקִּלְקִלָּה וְלֹא קָרַב זֶה אֶל זֶה כָּל הַלַּיְלָה:

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
ה	כ	ל	ה	ל	י	ל	ה	
ק	ר	ב	ו	ה	א	ל	ו	
ה	ל	י	ל	ה	ו	ל	א	
ש	ך	ו	י	א	ר	א	ת	
י	ה	ע	ז	ן	ו	ה	ח	
י	ש	ר	א	ל	ו	י	ה	
ו	ב	י	ן	מ	ח	ז	ה	
ח	ז	ה	מ	צ	ר	י	ס	
ו	י	ב	א	ב	י	ן	מ	

And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.” (v.21)

וַיֵּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת יָדוֹ עַל הָאֵשׁ וַיּוֹלֶךְ יְהוָה אֶת הָאֵשׁ בְּרוּחוֹ קִדְּוִים עֲלֶיהָ כָּל
הַלַּיְלָה וַיֵּשֶׁם אֶת הָאֵשׁ לְזִכְרָהּ וַיִּבְרְקֵהוּ הַמַּיִם:

ו	ד	ו	ה	י	י	ה	י	1
י	ו	ל	י	ם	ל	י	ב	2
ט	ע	ך	ם	ע	ה	ם	ק	3
מ	ל	י	ב	ז	ו	ל	ע	4
ש	ה	ה	ר	ה	י	ח	ו	5
ה	י	ו	ו	כ	ש	ר	ה	6
א	ם	ה	ח	ל	ם	ב	מ	7
ת	ו	א	ק	ה	א	ה	י	8
י	י	ת	ד	ל	ת	ו	ם	9

The 72 Names of God

והו	ילי	סיט	עלם	מהש	כלה	אכא	כהת
הזי	אלד	לאו	ההע	יזל	מבה	הרי	הקם
לאו	כלי	לזו	פהל	זלך	יזי	מלה	וזהו
נתה	האא	ירת	שיאה	רזי	אום	לכב	ושיר
יזו	להזו	כוק	מנד	אני	וועם	רהע	יז
ההה	מויכ	וול	ילה	סאל	ערי	עשל	מיה
והו	דני	הזש	עמם	זנא	זית	מבה	פזי
זמם	ייל	הרוז	מצר	ומב	יהה	עזו	מוזי
דמב	מזק	איע	וזבו	ראה	יבמ	היי	מום

References to this technology have been recorded in many ancient texts such as The Sepher Yetzirah, The Bahir, The Zohar with many Jewish scholars in agreement that the oral tradition comes from a much older set of teachings the records of which have been long lost. While the 72 names of God are not names like Tom, Dick, or Harry, they are a conduit through which the light of God is manifest in this world. It was

taught that by these names Moses parted the Red Sea, Enoch spoke and the giant stood afar off, and men set at defiance armies, quenched the violence of fire, great mountains were lifted up leaving great valleys, great healing took place, and the knowledge of the all things both past, present, and future were revealed. It was a technology by which spirit interacted with spirit and matter was organized.

In Israelite thought, holy names were used in connection with prayer and meditation whereby a person combined the sounds of the names or letters which comprised the names repeated in a certain fashion. Mixed with focus, concentration, and real intent in prayer and meditation, the holy names were the energetic and spiritual mechanism whereby people received the Record of Heaven or the Holy Ghost (Ruach Elohiym), manifested the powers of Heaven to produce real miracles, and obtained the spirit of prophecy whereby knowledge of all things past, present, and future were made known.

If one wished to walk in “The Way” or the prophetic paths, then they undertook the discipline of the holy names. In doing so they were strengthened. They took upon The Name, walked in The Name, and worked in The Name. In doing so, their consciousness connected with heaven and men and women became men and women of God – disciples of the Holy Order.

NEPHI REVEALS THE 72 NAMES OF GOD

The Prophet Nephi encodes his record with instructions regarding the knowledge of the Fathers that he received from both his father and through revelation from God. Hidden in plain sight his first encoded teaching is encoded in his account of obtaining the Record of the Jews. As discussed in an earlier article, rather than the account being just a story about Nephi and his brothers obtaining the record of the Jews on a much deeper interpretive level the story contains a hidden teaching on obtaining The Record of Heaven, The Ruach Elohiym, or The Holy Ghost. After being cast out by Laban and hiding in the cavity of a rock (which represents a place of correction) the prophet Nephi employs the use of an Israelite literary device called *remez* to teach his reader the

technology by which he, Nephi, was corrected and ascended into the treasury of Heaven past a Mighty One (Laban) and the Angel of the treasury of Heaven (represented by Zoram) to obtain The Record of Heaven. While in the cave Nephi admonishes his brother using the account of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea:

"And it came to pass that I spake unto my brethren, saying: Let us go up again unto Jerusalem, and let us be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold he is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands?

Therefore let us go up; let us be strong like unto Moses; for he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither, and our fathers came through, out of captivity, on dry ground, and the armies of Pharaoh did follow and were drowned in the waters of the Red Sea." (1 Nephi 4:1-2)

Here Nephi refers the reader to the account of Exodus 14: 19-21 which contains the 72 names of God. In doing so he records the manner by which he transformed himself to subdue the carnal man and to emerge as the spiritual child of God who in submission to the transformative spirit of God becomes a mighty one to obtain the Record of Heaven.

NEPHI, The 72 Names of God, and The Lightning Strike of Heaven:

Nephi again refers to this ancient spiritual technology in 1 Nephi 17. Here Nephi's brothers had been rebuked because they withheld their labor in constructing the vessel by which they as a tribe could ascend to the land of promise across the great deep (the waters of Binah). Their response was to throw their brother into the depths of the sea, but Nephi having been filled with the Power of God demonstrates an ancient mystery of the Flaming Sword or Lightning bolt of God.

In the course of this account Nephi again draws upon Exodus 14:19-21:

"Now ye know that Moses was commanded of the Lord to do that great work; and ye know that by his word the waters of the Red Sea were divided hither and thither, and they passed through on dry ground. But ye know that the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, who were the armies of Pharaoh."

(Nephi 17:26-27)

In doing so he is directing his readers to the ancient technology of spiritual transformation that came down from the Fathers and was encoded in this passage of Scripture. In doing so, he reveals the ancient technology of redemption and transformation by which he was able to make manifest what is called the lightning strike of God:

"Behold, my soul is rent with anguish because of you, and my heart is pained; I fear lest ye shall be cast off forever. Behold, I am full of the Spirit of God, inso-much that my frame has no strength. And now it came to pass that when I had spoken these words they were angry with me, and were desirous to throw me into the depths of the sea; and as they came forth to lay their hands upon me I spake unto them, saying: In the name of the Almighty God, I command you that ye touch me not, for I am filled with the power of God, even unto the consuming of my flesh; and whoso shall lay his hands upon me shall wither even as a dried reed; and he shall be as naught before the power of God, for God shall smite him."

(1 Nephi 17:47-48)

So great was the power of God like a lightning bolt that it caused Nephi's body to quake. As he reached forth his hand according to the command of God his brother's received the shock of their life:

"And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: Stretch forth thine hand again unto thy brethren, and

they shall not wither before thee, but I will shock them, saith the Lord, and this will I do, that they may know that I am the Lord their God.” (v. 53)

Nephi in Helaman and the 72 Names of God:

In Helaman 7 a descendant of Nephi son of Lehi prophesies to the people in the land northward and foretells the impending destruction of their cities should they fail to repent:

"And for this cause wo shall come unto you except ye shall repent. For if ye will not repent, behold, this great city, and also all those great cities which are round about, which are in the land of our possession, shall be taken away that ye shall have no place in them; for behold, the Lord will not grant unto you strength, as he has hitherto done, to withstand against your enemies."

(Helaman 7:22)

The prophetic power granted to Nephi astonished the people and enraged the Gadianton Robbers. They could not believe that anyone could know of such things. Nephi responds to their doubts and accusations:

"And it came to pass that those people who sought to destroy Nephi were compelled because of their fear, that they did not lay their hands on him; therefore he began again to speak unto them, seeing that he had gained favor in the eyes of some, insomuch that the remainder of them did fear.

Therefore he was constrained to speak more unto them saying: Behold, my brethren, have ye not read that God gave power unto one man, even Moses, to smite upon the waters of the Red Sea, and they parted hither and thither, insomuch that the Israelites, who were our fathers, came through upon dry ground, and the waters

closed upon the armies of the Egyptians and swallowed them up?

And now behold, if God gave unto this man such power, then why should ye dispute among yourselves, and say that he hath given unto me no power whereby I may know concerning the judgments that shall come upon you except ye repent?" (Helaman 8:10-12)

Here the Prophet Nephi in the Book of Helaman also uses the literary device known as *remez* to draw his readers to Exodus 14:19-21:

"Therefore he was constrained to speak more unto them saying: Behold, my brethren, have ye not read that God gave power unto one man, even Moses, to smite upon the waters of the Red Sea, and they parted hither and thither, insomuch that the Israelites, who were our fathers, came through upon dry ground, and the waters closed upon the armies of the Egyptians and swallowed them up?"

In doing so he is instructing his readers in the same spiritual technology of redemption and transformation that he received from his Fathers Nephi and Lehi that was passed down in the House of Israel whereby Hearts were changed, the Spirit of Prophecy was obtained, and miracles were manifest. It is no accident that these scriptures were carefully chosen and placed within the text of the Book of Mormon. As a sealed book, The Book of Mormon still waits for its readers to desire to reach the inner soul and teachings the book contains.

The inner soul of the Book of Mormon can change and transform the hearts and souls of both Jews and Gentiles. Through the soul of the Book of Mormon a radiance is provided to restore the light of Sinai. Through it an umbilical cord of light was created by which the light of Heaven could once again connect with earth. But rather than unleashing the full power of the soul of this Heavenly Gift the book itself remains sealed with access to this radiance being obscured by a veil.

"Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief.

Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief.

Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you—yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel."
(Ether 4:13-15)

Robert Kay is a Jewish believer in the Book of Mormon. Robert is an avid researcher of the Hebrew Roots of the Book of Mormon. He is the author of a Hebrew Roots version of the Book of Mormon, 'Voices From the Dust.' Besides having a degree in Mathematics, and an MBA, he has spent many years studying the Hebrew language and culture. He has also been schooled in the Talmud and several esoteric disciplines of Judaism.

The Daniel Code

Presentation by Farrell Pickering



All My plans will be fulfilled,
for I know the end from the beginning.

ISAIAH 46:10

Purpose of Daniel 70 week

- To finish Transgression. (or Rebellion)
- To put an end to sin.
- To atone for wickedness.
- To bring an everlasting righteousness.
- To seal up vision and prophecy.
- To anoint the most holy.

(Daniel 9:24)



The 70th Week Prophecy of the Messiah

Daniel 9:25 Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be **seven weeks**, and **threescore and two weeks**: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in **troubless times**.

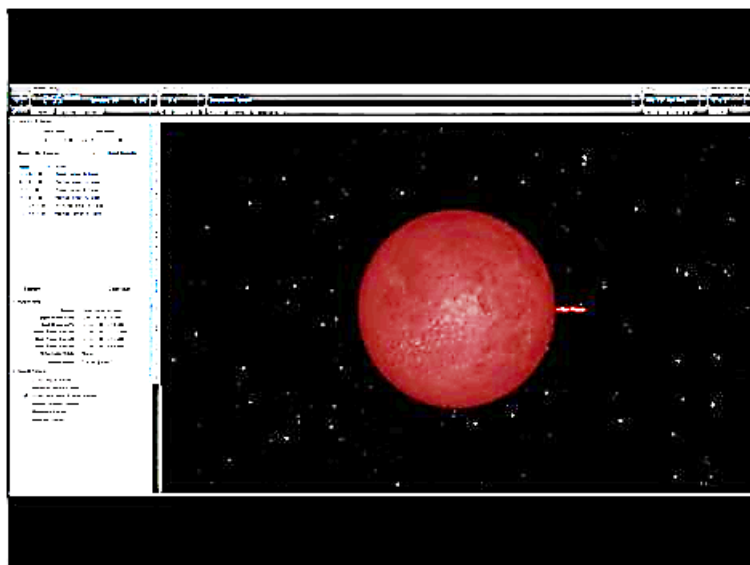
Daniel 9:26 And after **threescore and two weeks** shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the **age** desolations are determined.

Daniel 9:27 And **he** shall confirm the covenant with many for **one week**; and in the **midst of the week**, he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make **it** desolate, even until the **consummation**, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

What known factors must our timeline include?

1. Does it fit the historical records of **Josephus** (including his "3-year discrepancy" problem)?
2. Is it after the 15th year of **Tiberius Caesar** (as stated in Luke 3:1–3)?
3. Does it maintain that Christ is about **30 years** old at the beginning of His Ministry (Luke 3:23)?
4. Does it work with **Daniel's** prophetic markers?





Tiberius

Imperator Tiberius Caesar Augustus

By N.S. Gill

Tiberius was born 42 B.C.; Died A.D. 37; Reigned as Emperor A.D. 14-37. (More info on Tiberius beneath his picture.)

3 of 12



Tiberius, AR Denarius, 14-37, Rome. Commonly referred to as the "Tribute Penny" from the bible. The coin shows an early portrait type of Tiberius Caesar. Personal Collection - BeastCoins.com

Tiberius: 2nd Emperor of the Roman Empire

Reign: 18 September 14 AD – 16 March 37 AD

Luke 3:1–3, 23

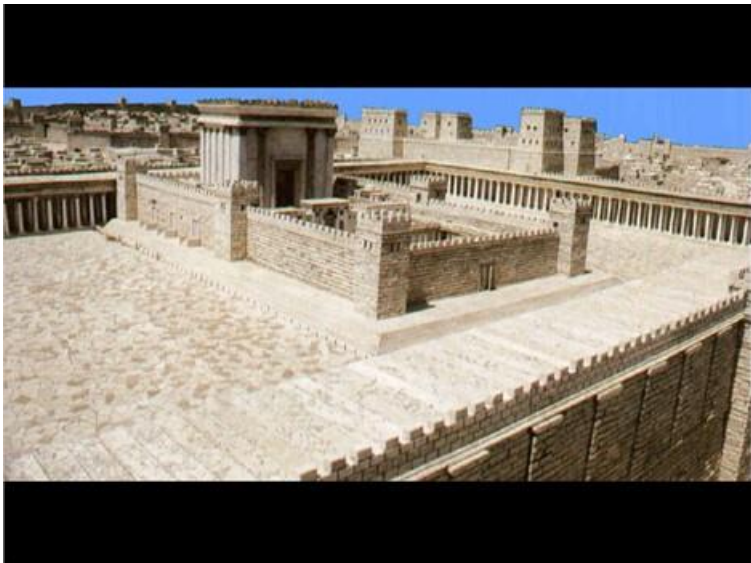
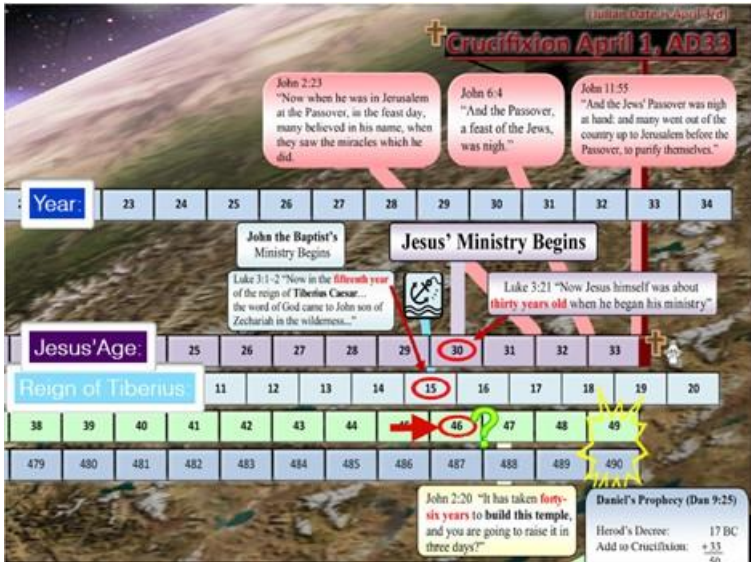


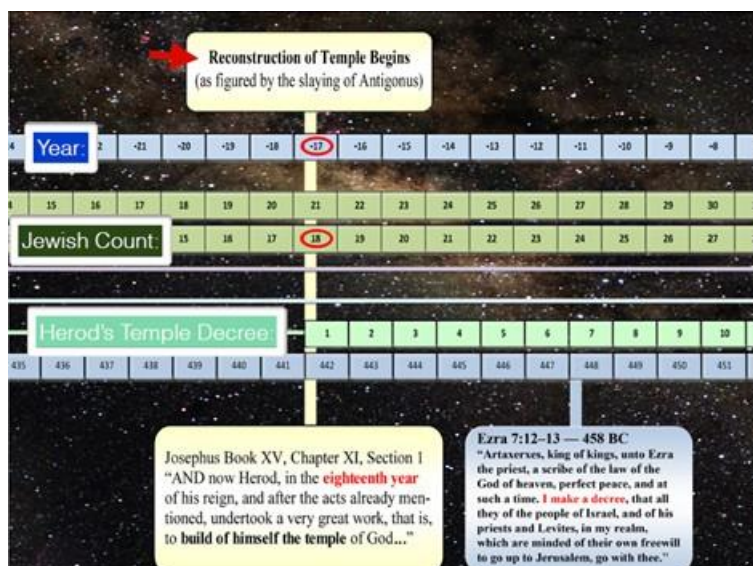
1. Now, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar...
2. ...the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.
3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching...

23. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age...

14 AD + "15th year of reign" = approx. 29 AD, when "Jesus began to be about 30 years of age..."

So according to Tiberius' reign & Luke 3, Jesus was born: 29 – 29 = 0 (or 1 B.C.)





Lexicon :: Strong's H7620 - shabuwa'


Aa

שבוע

Transliteration

shabuwa'

Pronunciation

shā-vū'-ah (Key) 

Part of Speech

masculine noun

Root Word (Etymology)

Properly, pass part of שָׁבַע (H7650) as a denom. of שָׁבַע (H7651)

Dictionary Aids

TWOT Reference: 2318d

Outline of Biblical Usage

I. seven, period of seven (days or years), heptad, week

A. period of seven days, a week

i. Feast of Weeks

B. heptad, seven (of years)

KJV Translation Count — Total: 20x

The KJV translates Strong's H7620 in the following manner: week (19x), seven (1x).



The Heptadic (7's) Calendar



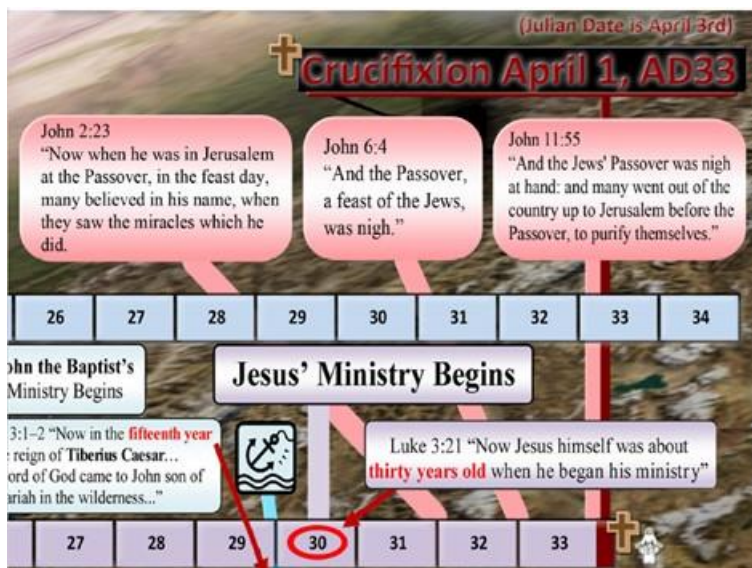
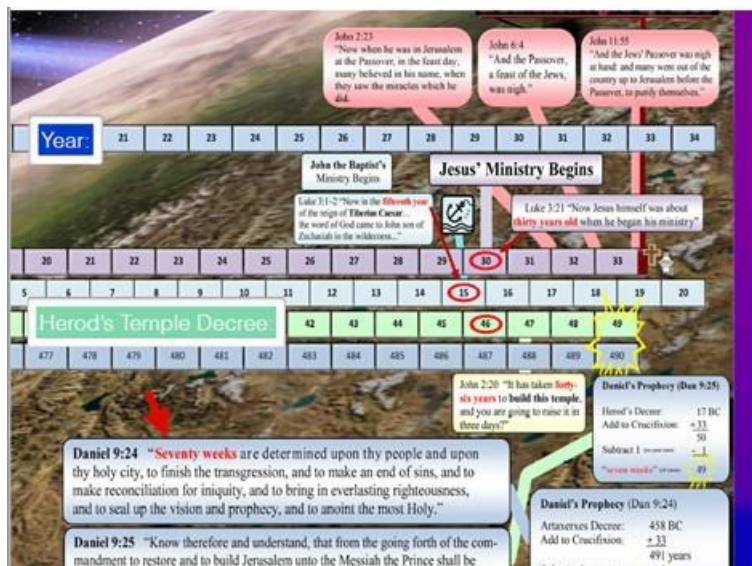
- Week of days = *Shabbat*
- Week of weeks = *Shavuot* or *Firstfruits*
- Week of months = The Religious Year (in two halves)
- Week of years = *Sabbatical* Year (the land rests on the 7th year)
- Week of *Sabbatical* Years + 1 = *Jubilee* Year! (50th year — land reverts back to original owner; all slaves go free; all debts forgiven)



The Appointed 70 Times



- 52 *Sabbaths*
+ 7 days of *Passover* (including its related Feast days of *Unleavened Bread* and *Firstfruits*)
+ 1 *Shavuot*, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)
+ 1 *Yom Teruah*, Feast of Trumpets
+ 1 *Yom Kippur*, Day of Atonement
+ 7 days of *Sukkot*, Feast of Tabernacles
+ 1 *Shemini Atzeret*, 8th Great Day of Assembly
70





day + this night + day (morrow) =
One Day!

3 Nephi 1:13

- Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfill all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets.

Nephites begin a new reckoning of time...

3 Nephi 2:8

- Now the Nephites began to reckon their time from this period when the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ; therefore, nine years had passed away.



Signs of His death—3 Nephi 8:1–3

1 And now it came to pass that according to our record, and **we know our record to be true, for behold, it was a just man who did keep the record**—for he truly did many miracles in the name of Jesus; and there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity—

2 And now it came to pass, if there was no mistake made by this man in the reckoning of our time, **the *thirty and third year had passed away;**



3 And the people **began to look with great earnestness** for the sign which had been given by the prophet Samuel, the Lamanite, yea, for the time that there should be darkness for the space of three days over the face of the land.

Signs of His death—3 Nephi 8:4–5

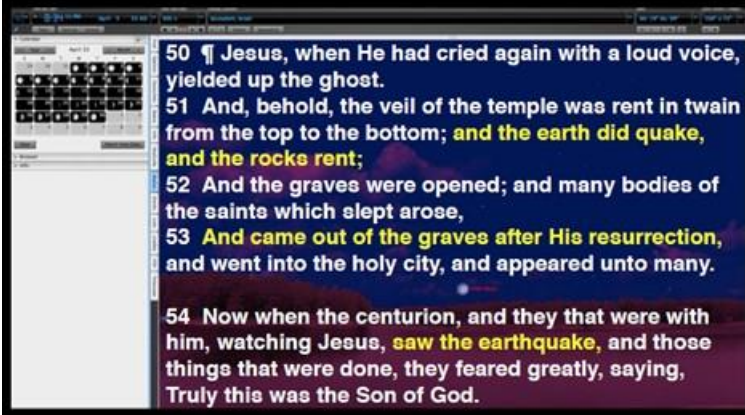
4 And there began to be **great doubtings and disputations** among the people, notwithstanding so many signs had been given.

5 And it came to pass **in the *thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month,** there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.



Matthew 27:50-54

Passover April 2nd-3rd, 0033



50 ¶ Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; **and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;**

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 **And came out of the graves after His resurrection,** and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, **saw the earthquake,** and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

History of Church Vol. 1 pp. 336–7

“On the 6th of April, [1833] in the land of Zion, about eighty officials, together with some unofficial members of the Church, met for instruction and the service of God,



at the Ferry on Big Blue river near the western limits of Jackson county, which is the boundary line of the state of Missouri and also of the United States. It was early spring, and the leaves and blossoms



enlivened and gratified the soul of man like a glimpse of Paradise. The day was spent in a very agreeable manner, in giving and receiving knowledge which appertained to this last kingdom—it being just 1800 years since the Savior laid down His life that men might have everlasting life, and only 3 years since the Church had come out of the wilderness, preparatory for the last dispensation.”

History of the Church Vol. 1 p. 64

"In this manner did **the Lord** continue to give us instructions from time to time [*i.e. Fayette, New York, June 1829; D&C 18, etc.*] ...which not only gave us much information, but also **pointed out to us the precise day** upon which, according to His will and commandment, **we should proceed to organize His Church** once more here upon the earth" [*i.e. D&C 20 follows*].

Convert from Gregorian to Hebrew date

6 April 1830

☒ After sunset

[Convert to Hebrew](#)

Convert from Hebrew to Gregorian date

14 Nisan 5590

[Convert to Gregorian](#)

(Passover)



Organization of the Church

April 6th, 1 B.C.



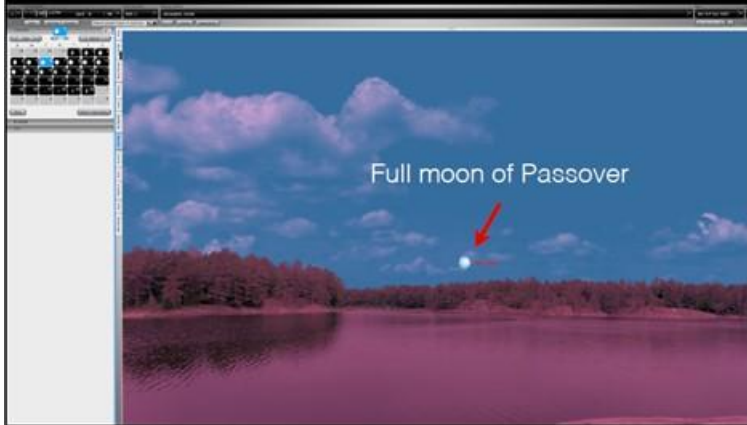
Christ's Birth

- D&C 20:1 "The rise of the Church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh, it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month which is called April..."

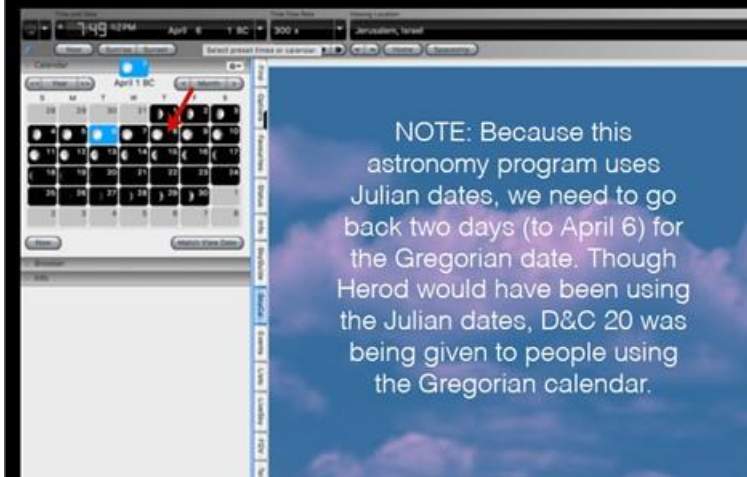
1830 - 1830 = 0...

But the years number from
1 B.C. - 1 A.D.
There was no year '0'
So this points to 1 B.C.

Passover, April 6 (Gregorian), 1 BC



Passover, April 6 (Gregorian), 1 BC



The Fields of Bethlehem

Bethlehem is known as the City of David. The temple lambs were raised in the fields of Bethlehem. The High Priest would have been on his way back with a specially chosen perfect lamb

Lambs are only born in the spring. At this time, shepherds are on duty throughout the night to help the birthing ewes.



“Behold the Lamb of God”
John 1:29, 36

The Paschal lamb had to be a firstborn. Only the shepherds could know and be witnesses as to which lamb was firstborn.



Messianic Rabbi Jonathan Cahn looks to the springtime New Moon of Nisan 1, 1 BC, for the birth date of Christ using the writings of early Church Father, Hippolytus

“In his quest for still more evidence that Nisan 1 was the birth date of Jesus, Cahn moves to the writings of the early Christian church father Hippolytus of Rome, who lived and taught in the third century, having been martyred in 235 A.D.

His writings are among the first that refer to Dec. 25 as the birth of Christ. But because one page of Hippolytus’ writings still mentions springtime as the proper birth date, some historians have speculated that his writings were later doctored to reflect the new Dec. 25 date with the caveat that the one reference to spring somehow got past the censors.

“There is one manuscript left that actually gives us two different dates,” Cahn said. “One says Messiah was born in the springtime. They forgot to put the Whiteout.”

In fact, the statue of Hippolytus in Rome today still mentions April 2 as the month of Christ’s birth.”

<http://www.wnd.com/2014/01/due-to-christs-birth-date-revealed/3149194/DNAWMUM0 99>

Helaman 14:5–6

“And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you. And behold this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in heaven.”



Prophetic Fulfillment

The signs before his birth

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjunction of Jupiter & Venus • King Planet/Morning Star/Betrothal 	August 12, 3BC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjunction of Jupiter & Regulus • King Planet/King/Proclamation 1 	September 15, 3BC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjunction of Jupiter & Regulus • King Planet/King/Proclamation 2 	February 18, 2BC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjunction of Jupiter & Regulus • King Planet/King/Proclamation 3 	May 9, 2BC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conjunction of Jupiter & Venus • King Planet/Morning Star/Wedding-Conception 	June 17, 2BC

June, 17 B.C. – April, 6 B.C. = 9 ½ months

COURSE OF ABIJAH

The Calendar Scrolls, found in the *Dead Sea Scrolls* collection, point to the start of the 1st priestly course, serving in the temple on the **1st of Nisan in 42 BC**. We also find in the *Talmud* that the priestly course serving at the destruction of the Jerusalem temple on the **9th of Av in AD 70** was "*Jehoiarib*"—again, the 1st priestly course.

By filling in a 24-course rotation between those dates (**which fits exactly**), our research confirms that **Zechariah's priestly course (Abijah—course #8) was serving at the end of December in 3 BC**.

If Elizabeth conceived soon after, John's birthday would have been in late September/early October (Tabernacles) in which case **Jesus' birth** could have followed six months later in March or early **April (Passover) of 1 BC**.

Early April is a nine-month gestation period from the conjunction of Jupiter (Father), Venus (Mother), and the star Regulus (King) on the 17th of June in 2 BC—the probable event called **His "star"** in Luke.

1 Chronicles 24:7–18

The Priestly Divisions

1. Jehoiarib	9. Jeshua	17. Hezir
2. Jedaiah	10. Shecaniah	18. Apses
3. Harim	11. Eliashib	19. Pethahiah
4. Seorim	12. Jakim	20. Jehezekel
5. Malchijah	13. Huppah	21. Jachin
6. Mijamin	14. Jeshebeab	22. Gamul
7. Hakkoz	15. Bilgah	23. Delaiah
8. Abijah	16. Immer	24. Maaziah

52 weeks – 48 (twice/year) = 4 weeks left-over;

"Courses begin on Wednesday (tightly tied to the week);
6-year cycle with "leap-week" adjustment the 7th year; etc."

<http://www.johngarth.com/temple/docs/tdb/meridian/2003/johngarth.html>

All My plans will be fulfilled,
for I know the end from the beginning.

ISAIAH 46:10

www.propheticappointments.com

Farrell Pickering

Farrell Pickering attended SUSC (Southern Utah State College, now SUU) in the field of Engineering and excels in spatial skills and the logic of the building. He has combined a love of the scriptures, numbers, and science to explore fascinating relationships about the treasures left for us in the heavens, in the earth, and in His Word. Along with his wife, Rhonda, who is a passionate student of Isaiah and Biblical Astronomy, Farrell is the founder of Prophetic Appointments (<http://www.propheticappointments.com/>)

Through their studies, the Pickerings have developed a profound love and appreciation for the perfection of God's Plan of Salvation. It is their dream to share their on-going discoveries with others, and to shine the light of hope for future generations.

Guest Article

Avoiding Satan's Deceptions

By Jim Shaffer

We have to go back to the foundation of our Heavenly Father and his beloved Son, our Savior. We need to know the Bible, which is the foundation of the Commandments. Since many who will read this are LDS, I will start with the words of the Savior in the Book of Mormon:

1 And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah.

2 For surely he spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles.

3 And all things that he spake have been and shall be, even according to the words which he spake.

4 Therefore give heed to my words; write the things which I have told you; and according to the time and the will of the Father they shall go forth unto the Gentiles.

5 And whosoever will hearken unto my words and repenteth and is baptized, the same shall be saved. Search the prophets, for many there be that testify of these things.

6 And now it came to pass that when Jesus had said these words he said unto them again, after he had expounded all the scriptures unto them which they had received, he said unto them: Behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not.

- 3 Nephi 23:1-6

Pay special attention in the first verse where the Savior says, “a Commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah.” The second verse says that Isaiah spoke on ALL things touching the house of Israel and the Gentiles. The third verse talks about all things being according to the words which he spake; thus, the Savior is vouching for the accuracy of Isaiah. The fourth verse talks about giving heed to the words of the Savior himself, and instructions to write what he has said. The fifth verse is key. We are to repent, be baptized and, pay attention here, it says we are to search the prophets.

I ask you, was Moses a prophet? Wow, now you are required to study the Torah – the first five books of the Bible. Was Isaiah a prophet? Oh yes! Was Jeremiah a prophet? Yes, and there is a multitude of other prophets that make up the whole Old Testament. So, you are required to study the whole Old Testament. And then the Savior, in verse six, expounds all the scriptures, that's all the scriptures they had received up until that time. Then he tells them to add some things that weren't covered, like the words of Samuel the Lamanite. In those days the scriptures were the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon down to this chapter.

The Book of Mormon also says to those who read it, that they are blessed to have the book of the Jews. To see the deceptions of Satan we need to know what is in the Bible, and chiefly what it says about keeping the Commandments. For LDS people I would remind you that it says in the prayer on the bread for the sacrament, towards the end, to always remember him and keep his Commandments. The Savior's Commandments were not just the letter of the law but the spirit of the law as well. They include what is in your heart.

The major examples that most people immediately think of are first, not to look at another with lust in your heart, otherwise you've committed adultery in your heart. The other example is to not hate anyone in your heart, or else you have committed murder in your heart. These are examples that show the new law of the Savior is the old law expanded, or in LDS terms, the old law with the bar raised. What are we

judged for when we stand before the Savior and our Heavenly Father on the day of judgement? We are judged on what is in our hearts.

The next thing is to recognize is that this foundational book of scripture, the Bible (including both Old and New Testaments), was very heavily preached out of by Joseph Smith. In order to avoid deception we have to have a great comprehension of the Commandments and how Satan will attempt to twist them and convert them, as he did with Adam and Eve in the garden Eden, when he asked them, “Did God really say that?” He will twist the truth if we are not intimately familiar with it. He will try to put lies in the minds of people that are based on gaps in their knowledge.

The Commandments are of such vital importance. So many Christians have said (and continue to say) that the Commandments have been nailed on the cross, and are no longer important. This is a huge deception of Satan! I would refer you to Matthew chapter 5, verse 17 and 18,

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly I say to you till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law till all is fulfilled.

The Savior tells us here that the Law is not to change. One thing that Christians should understand is there is a difference between the Law and the ordinances. The ordinances were designed to turn people to the Savior, but the Law itself is not to be changed. Therefore, we should read that foundational piece of scripture, the Old Testament, and really understand more fully the Law of God it contains, and all the important teachings of the Old Testament.

I know it is repetitive and tedious at times, but there are a lot of treasures there as well. I especially like to go through Deuteronomy. Exodus also has a lot, but we especially need to go through all five of the first books of the Old Testament. Since all of the Old and New Testament is vitally important, I will just refer to it from now on as the Bible. I

also would like to point out that the Savior kept all the Law, including all the feasts. Many Christians have a wristband with an acronym on it that means, “What Would Jesus Do?” It is an interesting question, but also one that many people don’t want a real answer to. If we are seriously going to follow the Savior, we should live the Law the way he did.

We are especially commanded many times in the Bible not to do, or worship, as the pagans do. We should now go to Deuteronomy chapter 12 the last four verses.

29 ¶ When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;
30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.
31 Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.
32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

One of the Gods that they worshipped was Molech, and they did abominable things to serve him. This is one of many places that we are told not to do as heathens did. The Most High God of Heaven and Earth was angry, livid, and horrifically mad at the murder of babies which were sacrificed to various false pagan gods. These include Ashtoreth also known as Ishtar, and Eostre, and known today as Easter, her Catholic name.

I feel it is important to know about the wickedness that sprang up almost immediately after the flood in the person of Nimrod, builder of the Tower of Babel. Some of these ancient pagan influences are still

deeply rooted in our modern culture. There are various versions of the stories, but in some of them Nimrod came to power along with his wife, Semiramis (who was later known as Ishtar). Nimrod was worshiped by his people as the sun god (many ancient kings were worshiped as deity). At the time of Nimrod's death his wife was pregnant, but her conception was declared immaculate, and their son, Tammuz, declared to be the incarnation of the sun god. Like all versions of the ancient sun god, his birth was celebrated on December 25th (because of the winter solstice). Veneration of Tammuz and Ishtar (his mother, or sometimes wife) is mentioned several times in the bible, notably Ezekiel chapter 8 (and also read chapter 9 to see what the Lord thinks of it and what he does about this false worship).

Fortunately, the Lord is very patient, waiting for people to repent. He loves us all so much, even in our sins. We live in a time, and in a country, that has sadly become extremely wicked, and follows many of the sins and traditions of the pagan gods. We have inherited many of these cultural things from Rome, and it will take some repenting to fully divest ourselves of Roman and Babylonian traditions. I was taught these things, and lived them also, from when I was a little child starting some 70 years ago. So, I am repenting, and turning to my Heavenly Father and my Savior and to their culture.

Remember, the Savior said to the woman at the well, "Salvation is of the Jews", and as the Book of Mormon says, we are blessed to have the book of the Jews. The Bible is also being refined with discoveries of ancient texts and is becoming more accurate all the time. As the woman at the well realized, we must also realize that the Savior is salvation.

Paganism and pagan belief was very common everywhere back in biblical times, and yes, even the Jewish people would get involved with pagan worship. This led to the destruction of Jewish society on several occasions. They were hauled off by the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the final destruction, which has lasted for some 1,800 years, was the Roman's. The Bible teaches repeatedly not to follow false religions and gods, so how did they get caught up in these things? It started in

Egypt, with golden calves and other wicked practices. Things were removed, but they always came back. These things are very persistent and have a way of slowly creeping into society – sometimes over generations. I think its subtle deceptions of Satan; he will very carefully lead us all down to Hell if he can. That is his goal! We have to be smart enough to see past the deceptions, and try to help others to see and repent the best we can – even to the level attempting to change our country from its evil ways by repentance on a very big scale.

One of the main deceptions we have to face is that Satan is trying to work on us in our minds. We have to recognize these bad thoughts, change them for good ones, and cast them out. Again, we need to change and turn back to the Most High.

In order to save this country we have to have a big revival. Without that, God will not be on our side, just like it was with ancient Israel. We cannot expect different treatment than they received. They were constantly having problems with ups and downs in their devotion to God. They would be righteous for a while, then they would turn back to paganism, and then get punished with famines and pestilence. Then they would repent and come back to following the Most High God.

Isaiah chapter 24 talks about the world being wasted and the earth being empty. It talks about how the land shall be entirely emptied, and utterly plundered, for the Lord has spoken his word. Verses 3 and 4 carry this message but pay special attention to verse 5:

The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof;
because they have transgressed the laws, changed the
ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

This is really serious stuff! This is what churches so often do; especially the ones I cannot follow because I want to follow my Heavenly Father, and he tells you right here not to change ordinances, not to disobey the Commandments, and not to break the everlasting covenant. The covenant is a promise between us and our Heavenly Father and his

beloved Son. Verse 6 talks about the earth again – how curses will devour the earth, etc. Ancient Israel would suffer when they became ripe in their disobedience, and so will we as we become more wicked, and as we follow pagan ways.

Go into your computer and look at the Roman god, Sol Invictus, then look at a picture of the Statue of Liberty which came along long after the founding fathers in the 1890s. We've been on a downward spiral for a while. We need to repent and have a revival in America. For those who are LDS, how did things go in the Book of Mormon? The story was the same as with the Isra-



Roman Imperial silver disc of Sol Invictus

elites in the Bible. It was back and forth between being righteous and being wicked. Even in our modern America, we've had times of punishment; think of wars, pandemics, economic depressions, etc. our Heavenly Father is trying to warn us, and get us to turn back to him and repent for all have sinned.

I am speaking to myself as well here. I know I have to also keep working at being righteous, repenting, and being faithful to our Heavenly Father. Remember, Satan puts filthiness in our minds, and before us, and around us all the time. Many of the churches today have changed because of traditions of men. These traditions, in many cases, come to us from the Romans and actually violate the first four Commandments of God and how he wants us to worship Him.

Some of these things include the incorporation of pagan festivals into our worship of God. This practice is common on our culture, and it is something the Lord specifically forbids in Deuteronomy chapter 12:

29 ¶ When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;

30 Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, **How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.**

31 **Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God:**

This includes many of the traditions we have incorporated into Christmas (I call it false Christmas) and Easter. The Sabbath is another example; it is not on Sunday. It is on Friday night sundown to Saturday night sundown. This is the way God placed it, but the Catholic Church said that they had the authority to change the commandment of God. Emperor Constantine made the change compulsory in 321 AD. These are bold and shocking statements, but we must seek out the truth and not let ourselves be offended by it. We have to worship our God in righteousness and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Remember, God hates a lie (Prov 12:22). We have to love the truth and apply it in our lives to grow as Christians. We have to be like the people known as Bereans (Acts 17:11); we have to check things out with the scriptures, and live the truth to be saved. The Bereans were first century Christians who had the right idea. They sought to keep the Commandments, and kept the faith of Jesus Christ, or in Hebrew, Yeshua our Messiah. I like the Hebrew name.

What was going on in this time was that corrupt religious leaders were teaching the doctrines of men, mingled with scripture, which made it hard for the Jewish people to recognize and accept their long awaited Messiah. Meanwhile, many first century Christians were zealous for the Law of God. They also remembered the savior telling them that, when Jerusalem was surrounded with armies, they were to go to the mountains to be safe. When this began to happen, they left Jerusalem and moved to the 10 cities of the Decapolis. They moved and took their

religion with them. They were not there in Jerusalem when the destruction came from the Romans who sacked the city, destroyed the temple, and built a temple to Jupiter on the Temple mount.

Nobody that was Jewish, or who followed the Jewish or Christian religions, was allowed in the city. However, there was a new religion that came out of these circumstances. The first bishop in Jerusalem after this time was Marcus. He was the very first bishop in Jerusalem who was not of Jewish decent, and he had a free pass to be there in Jerusalem. How so? By having the church not obey the Commandments, or adhere to other items of Jewish teachings, whether they be from the rabbis or the Savior.

He subscribed more to the worship of Mithra and other Roman religions. Thus we see a Great Divide happening in this time of history, and it would be a short time later that they would be formally starting the Catholic church under Constantine who worshipped Sol Invictus, the Roman sun-god, and who's traditions come down to us through Christian churches.

We've discussed a little history, but not covered it very thoroughly. There are so many things that have happened which have lead us to our present state of affairs. It is an important study to follow the fall of the Roman Empire in relation to religion. The Roman Empire fell after it had had corrupted many teachings in order to bring people to a one-church religion for the entire empire. There's so much history I can't relate it all here, but there's plenty to show the deceptions of Satan bringing all of Christianity to false teachings - all except those who will follow the scriptures, and prove everything by them.

Having mentioned some of the major holidays, there is one more I haven't mentioned. It is the most horrible of all, October 31st, the day of Satanism and death. I once listened to an interview with the president of the church of Satan, and I heard him boast to all Americans that he is glad that everyone worships his god one day each year. Of course this isn't true, but it is true of many Americans. I myself have participated in these things when I was young and didn't know better, and I

have had to repent of all these things. Don't be caught up in this worldliness of everything painted all rosy and nice. Satan's deceptions are about false gods, money, big houses, and fancy cars. I've owned some fancy cars; even some older ones – collector's cars.



1927 Stutz Black Hawk hood ornament

Do you know what the hood ornaments were on some of those? My dad's favorite car, which I never owned, was from the Stutz Motor Company. They were famous for making sports cars; they competed with Bugatti, and the hood ornament was the head, polished up all pretty, of the sun-god, Ra, of the Egyptian Empire.

I liked Packards, and on several of their cars were hood ornaments called, *The Goddess of Speed*. The hood ornament on a Rolls-Royce was another female goddess. We go out and polish them, take pictures, and love our cars. They are idols for idol worshippers. Cars should just be transportation. I know about these things because I've been there. I've done it, and lived it. We are surrounded by satanic worldliness everywhere, and it's painted up pretty, and we don't even recognize that we're being carried away instead of paying attention to our Heavenly Father and our Savior, Yeshua. No, we're too busy polishing a car, too busy playing here or there with things that are worldly.

We need to pay attention. Things that are painted up so pretty and enticing, but which are just worldly, are mere distraction. Satan wants to distract us long enough to lead us away from where we should be: loving God. The two great Commandments are, to love the Lord thy God with all my heart might mind and strength, and the second is like unto it, to love our neighbor as our self.

So, if Satan can't get us to sin willfully, he will try to distract us and distract our thoughts, especially while we're trying to accomplish

something that's good and important: to help our neighbors, which is all people, to worship God and his son Yeshua. So, we shouldn't dwell too much on the negative, but we should be aware of Satan's distractions, and seek to follow the positive and beautiful gospel teachings of Yeshua our Savior. We should seek to be the group of people that are waiting and ready for his return, whether we're still alive here, or are among those who have passed on from this world. The people that follow him are to be his bride, and he is to be the groom. It is interesting to put this in the perspective of a marriage – the most solemn commitment.

What are we doing when we follow holiday festivals that are pagan? According to the scriptures we commit adultery against our Savior, Yeshua. If you read enough of the scriptures, you will see more and more how important it is to totally understand and see the deceptions of Satan, our mortal enemy, who wants to take us down to Hell with him. He will try any distraction, any out-and-out sin, temptations of all kinds, transgression, or even abomination. He will try anything he can to lead us away. We cannot ignore these things and say, all is well in Zion. We must constantly face our sins, resist the tide of worldliness, repent, and turn back to our Heavenly Father and Yeshua.

Jim Shaffer was raised south of Oakland California in a place called San Leandro. His parents did not like religion or churches because as children they had to go to Hellfire-and-Damnation-type churches. Nevertheless, his mother always instructed him that there was a God and his son Jesus Christ. As a child he wanted to go to church and he prayed that he would be able to have that. Growing up they had many people come to the door to talk about religion. His mother would always very nicely say, "We aren't interested." Until an elderly couple came to the door from Salt Lake City on their mission and his mother invited them in. Jim's Mother liked the Book of Mormon; however, his parents did not want to join the church. They did say that he could join, and he was baptized March 5th, 1960.

He was active for a while but then fell into inactivity as a teenager. During this time he met his future wife on a blind date. She was a staunch Catholic but they still dated and loved each other. They were

married in a huge ceremony in the Catholic Church. One day they had been on a trip and were coming back through Salt Lake City where his wife went through the Temple Square Visitor Center and became very interested in the LDS Church. She received the missionaries and was baptized in the middle of January 1970. We were happy being LDS until some of my sons were investigating things in church history, and started to see problems in the LDS Church. He studied some fundamentalism with a couple of his sons, but as he studied the Bible more and more his thinking became more and more sympathetic to Hebrew roots. He follows the Most High God and his beloved Son to the best of his knowledge and abilities, and wants to take the truth wherever he can find it. He tries to be like the Bereans, to obey the Commandments, and have faith in Yeshua (Jesus the Christ).