

The Greatest Easter Story Ever Told

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Look at the Book of Mormon in a new light and consider the profound witness it bears of the reality of the risen Christ.

Section I (Dani)

First Presidency Letter on Easter

You likely remember hearing a letter from the First Presidency read in your ward or branch several weeks ago. That letter announced that next Sunday—Easter Sunday—all wards and branches are to meet for sacrament meeting only, leaving additional time for worship at home as families to commemorate this most important holiday.¹

The First Presidency’s letter caught my attention, and it caused me to reflect on the way our family has celebrated Easter through the years. The more I thought about our celebrations, the more I found myself wondering if we are inadvertently shortchanging the true meaning of this holiday, so central to all believers in Jesus Christ.

Christmas and Easter Traditions

Those thoughts led me to ponder the difference between the way we have celebrated Christmas as compared with Easter. During December, we somehow manage to incorporate the fun of “Jingle Bells,” Christmas stockings, and gifts alongside other, more thoughtful traditions—such as caring for those in need, singing our favorite Christmas carols and hymns, and of course opening the scriptures and reading the Christmas story in [Luke 2](#). Every year as we read this beloved story from a large old Bible, our family does what your family probably does—dressed with towels on our heads and shoulders and donning bathrobes to represent Joseph, Mary, and the many who came to worship the baby Jesus, we reenact the treasured Christmas story of the Savior’s birth.

Our family celebrations at Easter, however, have been somewhat different. I feel our family has relied more on “going to church” to provide the meaningful, Christ-centered part of Easter; and then, as a family, we have gathered to share in other Easter-related traditions. I have loved watching our children and now our grandchildren hunt for Easter eggs and dig through their Easter baskets.

But the First Presidency letter was a wake-up call. Not only did they invite all of us to make sure our celebration of the most important event to ever happen on this earth—the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ—includes the reverence and respect the Lord deserves, but they also gave us more time with our families and friends on Easter Sunday to do so.

These words of the Prophet Joseph Smith add additional context to the significance of the events surrounding Easter: “The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and *all other things* which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.”²

Lesla and I have discussed ways that our family can do better during the Easter season. Perhaps the question we have asked ourselves is one we could all contemplate: How do we model the teaching and celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Easter story, with the same balance, fulness, and rich religious tradition of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Christmas story?

It seems we are all trying. I observe a growing effort among Latter-day Saints toward a more Christ-centered Easter. This includes a greater and more thoughtful recognition of Palm Sunday and Good Friday as practiced by some of our Christian cousins. We might also adopt appropriate Christ-centered Easter traditions found in the cultures and practices of countries worldwide.

New Testament scholar N. T. Wright suggested: “We should be taking steps to celebrate Easter in creative new ways: in art, literature, children’s games, poetry, music, dance, festivals, bells, special concerts. . . . This is our greatest festival. Take Christmas away, and in biblical terms you lose two chapters at the front of Matthew and Luke, nothing else. Take Easter away, and you don’t have a New Testament; you don’t have a Christianity.”³

Dani’s Thoughts:

I noticed leading up to Resurrection Sunday, many other churches advertising their “Easter services” trying to get people to go to their congregations. On the radio, I heard multiple times an ad for one church’s Easter program. It all sounded very exciting— a concert, children’s area, the pastor’s best remarks ever! In contrast, we were to have only sacrament meeting that day, and to “feature Christ-centered

messages and sacred music.” Elder Stevenson then challenged us to create a meaningful and reverent holiday experience at home.

Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee, p. 148

“The priesthood programs operate in support of the home; the auxiliary programs render valuable assistance. Wise [priesthood] leadership can help us to do our share in attaining God’s overarching purpose, “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Both the revelations of God and the learning of men tell us how crucial the home is in shaping the individual’s total life experience. . . . Much of what we do organizationally, then, is scaffolding, as we seek to build the individual, and we must not mistake the scaffolding for the soul.

The home [is] the most basic and vital of all God’s institutions. The key to our whole correlation program was given to us when the First Presidency declared one of the most fundamental principles on which we were to build: “The home is the basis of the righteous life, and no other instrumentality can take its place nor fulfill its essential functions. The utmost the auxiliaries can do is to aid the home in its problems, giving special aid and succor where it is necessary.”

With that in mind, then, every activity in the Church should be so planned as to strengthen—not to subtract from—the functioning of a well-ordered home. If parental leadership is weak, the priesthood home teachers and auxiliaries must give the necessary guidance. This means in essence that every event sponsored by the Church must be planned with this in mind, with particular emphasis on the importance of urging every family to observe faithfully the weekly home evening, and urging and aiding fathers who hold the holy priesthood in assuming their proper role as the heads of their households.”

This comment from Elder Stevenson seemed to “pinch” my spirit: *“I feel our family has relied more on ‘going to church’ to provide the meaningful, Christ-centered part of Easter; and then, as a family, we have gathered to share in other Easter-related traditions.”* I know I can do better to commemorate this sacred day with my family.

That is why I am so grateful for the faithful saints that gather together on Discord; there were so many wonderful ideas shared in a thread on how to better follow Elder Stevenson’s counsel. One that I would definitely like to try next year is creating an empty tomb “nativity.”

Since learning to study the talks from General Conference in greater depth, I have realized that what the Prophet and Apostles tell us today is not new. The urgings/counsel that our church leaders have given us have always been a “concert of clarity.” Speaking of celebrating Christ’s resurrection specifically, President Howard W. Hunter has said:

“On Palm Sunday, and next week on Easter Sunday, our minds turn very naturally to wonderful thoughts of Jesus. Indeed, Easter, along with perhaps Christmas, may be the only time in the whole year that some of our brothers and sisters in Christ’s flock find their way to church. That is admirable, but we wonder if thoughts of Jesus, which “with sweetness [fill our] breast,” ought not to be far more frequent and much more constant in all times and seasons of our lives. How often do we think of the Savior? How deeply and how gratefully and how adoringly do we reflect on his life? How central to our lives do we know him to be?

For example, how much of a normal day, a working week, or a fleeting month is devoted to “Jesus, the very thought of thee”? Perhaps for some of us, not enough...

Every day of our lives and in every season of the year (not just at Easter time), Jesus asks each of us, as he did following his triumphant entry into Jerusalem those many years ago, “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?”

We declare that he is the Son of God, and the reality of that fact should stir our souls more frequently. I pray that it will, this Easter season and always.” (*Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee*, April 1993).

Not only should we be making the Easter season a more intentional and reverent time, how are we remembering Christ at all times?

Mosiah 18: 9

Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to **stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in**, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life

As we partake of the sacrament, we covenant to:

“take upon [us] the name of thy Son, and **always remember him** and keep his commandments which he has given [us]; that [we] may always have his Spirit to be with [us].

Another way of studying Elder Stevenson’s talk could be to ask the question: what does it mean to take upon the name of Christ? What does it mean to always remember Him? If we should have Christ in our hearts at all times, then how do we give even greater reverence to the time of the year we celebrate Christ’s atonement and resurrection?

I’ll end with the quote that Elder Stevenson shared, “Take Easter away, and you don’t have a New Testament; you don’t have a Christianity.” I pray that we will all grasp the significance of that statement and follow the counsel of our leaders to be more intentional in our sacred celebrations.

Micah’s Thoughts:

The talk starts off with a reference to the First Presidency letter that got sent out before Easter, letting all members know that they would only have sacrament on Easter Sunday so that they could “have additional time for worship at home as families to commemorate this most important holiday.” This made me think of :

Isaiah 58

13 ¶ If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

14 Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

This talk primarily is focused around how we can make holidays more sacred, special and Christ-centered. The irony is that we are stuck on holidays when every Sabbath is supposed to be like this. Treating our holidays with more reverence, meaning, purpose, etc., is just a small steppingstone towards where we really need to be, which is proper Sabbath worship every week.

How many people when they heard that Church would only be one hour on Easter Sunday rejoiced because they could have more time to sleep, eat chocolate, look for eggs or other mammon worship? How many were upset because they rely entirely on the Church structure to

teach themselves and their children? And how many rejoiced because they could have more time to run spiritually edifying events on their Sabbath?

When Church went from 3 hours to 2 hours a similar thing happened- with some members upset because they want the Church to teach them and their children for them; there were those who were happy because it meant an extra hour of playtime on Sunday and then there were those who were happy because they could now spend that hour at home in serious scripture study and contemplation versus wasted in a Sunday School class that no one takes seriously.

At lot of people were upset at this talk because it felt like it attacked their mammon and pagan traditions. But this talk is so much more than that- it is, once again, a talk on preparation for the day soon at hand in which the scaffolding will come down. Patriarchs need to start taking their calling seriously.

"[The True Believer] understands the difference between ends and means and sees that some Church aids are, in a sense, scaffolding for the soul, which scaffolding one day will be removed—like waterwings or training wheels."

-Elder Maxwell (True Believers in Christ; October 7, 1980)

"The Church is a trial run for Zion..."

- Hugh Nibley (Approaching Zion)

"When the Angel Moroni appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1823, he made it very clear that the time had come to preach the gospel of the kingdom as a means of preparing people for the Second Coming of the Lord. How do you prepare them? You start by getting them into the Church. The Church is here as a construction crew; It's here to work. It's a work crew. For example, we had a temple built in Provo. It was contracted to a construction company that had been organized. Under the direction of the Brethren they built it; they designed it, they built it. They put the carpets in, and they put the capstone on. And when they got through, what did they do? They had completed their job, so they left, and if they had nothing else to do, they would be disorganized and that would be it. The men in the construction crew could then go to the Temple and receive its sacred blessings.

The Church is a construction crew. Its purpose is to work toward the perfecting of the Saints. And what is it building, that is being constructed? It is building the Holy Order. It is bringing people to Christ, and then it's purpose, then, is to establish them on the sacred covenants and program of the Temple, which is the way by which the Zion of God is built, over which Christ is the great High Priest and King. He is a King of Zion; he is the Father of the faithful in the Holy Order, under the exalted Man of Holiness, and in union with him.

When this divine order is built up and we apply its principles in our lives when this construction crew has done its work of teaching, counseling, and at times using a 4 x 4 to the side of our heads to get our attention, and at times in disciplinary courts, when this has been done and we have Zion in her perfected program, then what will happen to the Church? It will not have

anything more to do. So what will happen? It will be dissolved, and the Holy Order will continue in eternity.”

-Hyrum Andrus (Lecture – 16 THE LAW OF ZION -- CONSECRATION -- ELIAS, ELIJAH, MESSIAH)

In this same vein of thought, in the next paragraph Elder Stevenson says that at Christmas we at least try to serve both God and mammon but for Easter we don't even pretend to serve God, it seems to be entirely mammon. This talk very mildly tries to get us to serve to both God and mammon during Easter just like we do at Christmas. But we have to understand that the end goal, the patriarchal order when the “scaffolding comes down”, there will be no mammon. There won't be jingle bells, stockings and gifts alongside “other more meaningful traditions”, there will simply be the more meaningful traditions. Mammon, i.e., Babylon the Great, will fall. That does not mean “all of the things that I personally don't like about Babylon will fall but the things that I've normalized and enjoy from Babylon will remain”, i.e., our “summer cottages in Babylon”.

We should evaluate all of our family's traditions and celebrations and ask ourselves “does this celebrate, worship, serve, etc. God or mammon?” There is no mixing. If it is not a clear “this serves God” then it is a mixing and any mixture causes salt to lose its savor and is thenceforth good for nothing. It either serves God or it serves mammon. There is no balance or serving of both.

Section II (Courtney, read by Antonia)

Easter, the Bible, and the Book of Mormon

We cherish the Bible for all it teaches us about the birth, ministry, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. No three words embody more hope and eternal consequence for all of humankind than those uttered by a heavenly angel on Easter morning at the Garden Tomb: “He is risen.”⁴ We are deeply grateful for New Testament scripture that preserves the story of Easter and the Savior's Easter ministry in Judea and Galilee.

As Lesa and I continued to ponder and seek ways to expand our family Easter celebration to be more Christ-centered, we discussed what scripture reading tradition we might introduce to our family—the [Luke 2](#) equivalent for Easter, if you will.

And then we had this heavenly epiphany: In addition to the important verses about Easter in the New Testament, we as Latter-day Saints are endowed with a most remarkable Easter gift! A gift of unique witness, another testament of the Easter miracle that contains perhaps the most magnificent Easter scriptures in all of Christianity. I am referring of course to the Book of Mormon and, more specifically, to the account of Jesus Christ appearing to inhabitants in the New World in His resurrected glory.

The Prophet Joseph Smith described the Book of Mormon as “the most correct of any book,”⁵ and beginning with [3 Nephi 11](#), it tells the magnificent story of the resurrected Christ's visit to the Nephites, the Savior's Easter ministry. These Easter scriptures bear record of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In these chapters, Christ calls twelve disciples, teaches as He did in His Sermon on the Mount, announces that He has fulfilled the law of Moses, and prophesies about the latter-day gathering of Israel. He heals the sick and prays for the people in such a glorious way that “no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.”⁶

This Easter, our family is going to focus on the [first 17 verses of 3 Nephi 11](#), with which you are familiar. You recall the great multitude round about the temple in the land Bountiful who heard the voice of God the Father and saw Jesus Christ descending out of heaven to extend the most beautiful Easter invitation:

“Arise and come forth unto me, ... that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am ... the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.

“And ... the multitude went forth, ... one by one ... and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, ... and did bear record, that it was he. ...

“And ... they did cry out with one accord, saying:

“Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.”⁷

Imagine: the Nephites at the temple actually touched the hands of the risen Lord! We hope to make these chapters in 3 Nephi as much a part of our Easter tradition as [Luke 2](#) is of our Christmas tradition. In reality, the Book of Mormon shares the greatest Easter story ever told. Let it not be the greatest Easter story never told.

I invite you to look at the Book of Mormon in a new light and consider the profound witness it bears of the reality of the risen Christ as well as the richness and depth of the doctrine of Christ.

Courtney's Thoughts:

Why do we hear so often the compassion of Christ? What is the Joy that is spoken of by Elder Stevensen?

Matthew 14: 14

14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with ^acompassion toward them, and he healed their ^bsick.

Mark 6:35

35 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people and was moved with compassion towards them because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

3 Nephi 17:6

6 And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you.

Moses 7:41

41 And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Enoch, and told Enoch all the doings of the children of men; wherefore Enoch knew, and looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook.

Doctrine and Covenants 101:9

9 Verily I say unto you, notwithstanding their sins, my bowels are filled with compassion towards them. I will not utterly cast them of; and in the day of wrath I will remember mercy.

Elder Scott To Establish a Sure Foundation

I will share something that I should have learned a long time ago but didn't. I have become awakened to the limitless capacity of our Beloved Father and His Holy Son to express love and to feel joy, happiness, and gratitude as well as sorrow, disappointment, and sadness. This extraordinary range of capacity to feel emotion is repeatedly depicted in the scriptures, as the following Book of Mormon passages indicate:

And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus spoken, he cast his eyes round about again on the multitude, and beheld they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them.

And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you.

We cannot begin to appreciate how intense that feeling was for the Savior.

Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy.

For I perceive that ye desire that I should show unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you. . . .

. . . All the multitude . . . did go forth . . . with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one. . . .

And it came to pass that he commanded that their little children should be brought.

So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground round about him. .

. .

. . . And Jesus . . . commanded the multitude that they should kneel down upon the ground.

Now consider the depth of the Savior's feeling expressed in this verse:

And it came to pass that when they had knelt upon the ground, Jesus groaned within himself, and said: Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel.

Think of it. The Savior of mankind groaned in agony because of the wickedness of some of the Father's children.

And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, . . . and the multitude did bear record who heard him. . . .

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3 Nephi 17:15-18

15 And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him.

16 And after this manner do they bear record: The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father;

17 And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.

18 And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome.

19

Doctrine and Covenants 101:36

36 Wherefore, ^afear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your ^bjoy is full.

2 Nephi 27:30

30 And the meek also shall increase, and their joy shall be in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

Elder Scott To Establish a Sure Foundation

And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which led our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.

And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome.

And . . . Jesus . . . bade them arise.

And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

And when he had done this he wept again.

The depth of how our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ feel when They see us make mistakes or not do the things They know can bring happiness in our lives is beyond our capacity to appreciate, as is the height of Their rejoicing when we are obedient. Therefore, let us resolve to ever live righteously.

My reverence and inexpressible gratitude for the Atonement of the Holy One of Israel, the Prince of Peace, and our Redeemer continually expands as I strive to understand more about it. I realize that no mortal mind can adequately conceive, nor can human tongue appropriately express, the full significance of all that Jesus Christ has done for our Heavenly Father's children through His Atonement. Yet it is vital that we each learn what we can about it. The Atonement is that essential ingredient of our Father in Heaven's plan of happiness without which that plan would have no significant meaning.

I strongly believe that there is an imperative need for you to strengthen your understanding of the significance of the Atonement of Jesus Christ so that it will become the secure foundation upon which to build the balance of your life. As the world in which you will live becomes more devoid of foundational standards and principles, and as honor, virtue, and purity are increasingly cast aside for the pursuit of appetite with an attitude of "me first" and "I want the biggest," your understanding of and faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ will provide much-needed strength and capacity in your life. It will also bring confidence in times of trial and peace in moments of turmoil.

[To Establish a Secure Foundation for Life | BYU Speeches](#) President

Benson:

“To press on in noble endeavors, even while surrounded by a cloud of depression, will eventually bring you out on top into the sunshine. Even our master Jesus the Christ, while facing that supreme test of being temporarily left alone by our Father during the crucifixion, continued performing his labors for the children of men, and then shortly thereafter he was glorified and received a fullness of joy. While you are going through your trial, you can recall your past victories and count the blessings that you do have with a sure hope of greater ones to follow if you are faithful. And you can have that certain knowledge that in due time God will wipe away all tears and that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

1974–O:65, Ezra Taft Benson, Do Not Despair

Ashley’s Thoughts:

I love Elder Steveson’s epiphany and invitation to use the Book of Mormon as part of our Easter traditions. This same invitation is in the Church’s 2020 Come Follow Me Manual:

During the days leading up to Easter Sunday, consider focusing your personal and family scripture study on the Book of Mormon’s powerful testimony of the life, death, Resurrection, and atoning power of Jesus Christ.

The ancient Apostles were bold in their testimonies of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection. Millions believe in Jesus Christ and strive to follow Him because of their words recorded in the Bible. Yet some might wonder, if Jesus Christ is the Savior of the whole world, then why were His eyewitnesses limited to a handful of people concentrated in one small region?

The Book of Mormon stands as an additional, convincing witness that Jesus Christ *is* the Savior of the world, “manifesting himself unto all nations” (title page of the Book of Mormon) and offering salvation to all who come unto Him. In addition, this second witness also clarifies what salvation means. This is why Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and all the prophets labored so “diligently to engraven these words upon plates”—to declare to future generations that they too “knew of Christ, and ... had a hope of his glory” (Jacob 4:3–4). This Easter season, reflect on the testimonies in the Book of Mormon that the power of Christ’s Atonement is both universal and personal—redeeming the whole world and redeeming you.

Because of Jesus Christ’s Resurrection, all people will be resurrected.

It’s traditional at Easter to ponder the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, but what exactly does it mean to be resurrected? What insights does the Book of Mormon offer about

resurrection? Perhaps as part of your Easter observance you could list truths about resurrection that you find in [2 Nephi 9:6–15, 22](#); [Alma 11:41–45; 40:21–23](#); and [3 Nephi 26:4–5](#). You could also record why you think it's important to know each of these truths.

Jesus Christ took upon Himself my sins, pains, and infirmities.

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ atoned for our sins. The Book of Mormon, however, expands our understanding of Christ's sacrifice and suffering in important ways. You can find some of these teachings in [Mosiah 3:7; 15:5–9](#); and [Alma 7:11–13](#).

The Atonement of Jesus Christ cleanses me and helps perfect me.

It could be said that the Book of Mormon is largely an account of people who changed because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. In fact, some of those people committed grievous sins and were even enemies of God's people before the Savior's power worked in them a mighty change according to their faith in Him. You can read some of these experiences in [Mosiah 5:1–2; 27:8–28](#); and [Alma 15:3–12; 24:7–19](#); you might think of other examples to study as well. What do you notice that each of these experiences has in common? What differences do you notice? What do these accounts teach you about how the Savior's Atonement can change you?

Ideas for Family Scripture Study and Family Home Evening

As you celebrate Easter with your family, look for ways to learn together about the Savior and His Atonement, including the Resurrection. Here are some ideas.

3 Nephi 11; 17

Some families have found that studying the account of the resurrected Savior's visit to the Americas is especially meaningful during the Easter season. Encourage family members to imagine what it would have been like to feel His wounds (see [3 Nephi 11:14–15](#)) or to be one of the children He blessed (see [3 Nephi 17:21](#)). How does this account deepen our gratitude for the Savior's Resurrection? A painting that depicts this account accompanies this outline; others can be found at ChurchofJesusChrist.org. Your family members might also enjoy drawing their own pictures of what they read.

Once again, I love the focus on the Book of Mormon to include in our Easter traditions. But:

“Some people may ask you why we need the Book of Mormon when we already have the Bible. In fact, Jesus Christ testified that this would happen (see [2 Nephi 29:3](#)). There are many reasons why the Book of Mormon is important in our day (for example, see [2 Nephi 29:7–11](#)). Here are just a few reasons why it’s essential.

Another Witness of Jesus Christ

The scriptures show us a pattern of using multiple witnesses to establish truth in Christ’s Church. The Book of Mormon adds a second witness to the Bible as a testimony of Christ. Elder Mark E. Petersen (1900–84) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once said, “The chief reason we have the Book of Mormon is that in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall all things be established. (See [2 Cor. 13:1](#).) We have the Bible; we also have the Book of Mormon. They constitute two voices—two volumes of scripture—from two widely separated ancient peoples, both bearing testimony to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹ President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) has added, “We must not forget that the Lord Himself provided the Book of Mormon as His chief witness.”²

- Why We Need the Book of Mormon (New Era, April 2013)

“It Testifies of Christ

The Book of Mormon has been at the center of missionary work since the gospel was restored through the Prophet Joseph. We use it every day in missionary work. One fact about the Book of Mormon being the key to power in each part of missionary work is this: the Book of Mormon is a testament of Jesus Christ. The title page tells us that. It says that the purpose of the book is to show what great things the Lord has done for His people, to help them know that the covenants the Lord has made with His people are still in force, and to convince all people that Jesus is the Christ.

There are thousands of references to the Savior in the Book of Mormon. The testimony of Jesus permeates every page. So, whoever reads it is reading words which testify of the Savior.”

-**Henry B. Eyring** (Why the Book of Mormon? New Era, May 2008)

The Book of Mormon “talks of Christ, rejoices in Christ, preaches of Christ, and prophesies of Christ” (2 Nephi 25:26 paraphrased). It is the perfect book to use to celebrate Christ at Easter!

Section III (Aussie Brandon)

The Book of Mormon Testifies of Jesus Christ

We might ask, How can reading Book of Mormon scriptures at Easter bless our lives and those of our loved ones in a meaningful way? More than one might realize. Anytime we read and study from the Book of Mormon, we can expect remarkable outcomes.

Recently, Lesa and I attended the viewing of a dear friend, a woman of faith whose life was cut short by illness. We gathered with her family and close friends, exchanging fond memories of this beautiful soul who had enriched our lives.

While standing away some distance from the casket, conversing with others, I noticed two young Primary-age girls approach the casket and stretch up on their tiptoes—eyes just reaching its edge—to pay their final respects to their beloved aunt. With no one else nearby, Lesa slipped over and crouched down beside them to offer comfort and teaching. She asked how they were doing and if they knew where their aunt was now. They shared their sadness, but then these precious daughters of God, with confidence brimming in their eyes, said they knew their aunt was now happy and she could be with Jesus.

At this tender age, they found peace in the great plan of happiness and, in their own childlike way, testified of the profound reality and simple beauty of the Resurrection of the Savior. They knew this in their hearts because of thoughtful teachings of loving parents, family, and Primary leaders planting a seed of faith in Jesus Christ and eternal life. Wise beyond their years, these young girls understood truths that come to us through the Easter message and ministry of the resurrected Savior and the words of the prophets as told in the Book of Mormon.

I have observed that when President Russell M. Nelson gives a gift of the Book of Mormon to someone not of our faith, including world leaders, he often turns to 3 Nephi and reads about the appearance of the resurrected Christ to the Nephites. In doing so, the *living* prophet is in essence bearing witness of the *living* Christ.

We cannot *stand* as witnesses of Jesus Christ until we can *bear* witness of Him. The Book of Mormon is another witness of Jesus Christ because throughout its sacred pages, one prophet after another testifies not only that Christ would come but that He *did* come.

(Aussie) **Brandon's Thoughts:**

First off, what a remarkable talk this was to open this years April General Conference.

Elder Stevenson, referring to his dear friend who had passed away, described her as ‘A faithful woman’, someone that family and close friends were able to ‘exchanging fond memories of this beautiful soul who had enriched (their) lives.’

This will no doubt bring up the question for each of us to ponder, ‘What will be said about me when I depart this mortal existence?’

Will you be described as a faithful servant?

Will your family and friends share memories of how you ‘enriched their lives?’

Perhaps like this faithful servant, you may have 2 young family members approach your casket and ‘With confidence brimming in their eyes’ say that they know you were ‘Now happy and...could be with Jesus.’

What an example these 2 primary kids are, that they can CONFIDENTLY declare that they know their Aunt is happy and can now be with Jesus, as Elder Stevenson explained ‘At this tender age, they found peace in the great plan of happiness and, in their own childlike way, testified of the profound reality and simple beauty of the Resurrection of the Savior. They knew this in their hearts because of thoughtful teachings of loving parents, family, and Primary leaders planting a seed of faith in Jesus Christ and eternal life.

There was no doubt in their heart because they had been taught by the power of God through those whom were their caretakers in this life.

Speaking concerning mothers, President Thomas S. Monson said:

One certain way each can demonstrate genuine love for mother is to live the truths mother so patiently taught. Such a lofty goal is not new to our present generation. On this continent, in times described in the Book of Mormon, we read of a brave, a good, and noble leader named Helaman who did march in righteous battle at the head of 2,000 young men. Helaman described the activities of these young men: “... never had I seen so great courage, ... as ... they said unto me: ... behold our God is with us, and he will not suffer that we should fall; then let us go forth; ... Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; ... yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it.

At the end of the battle, Helaman continued his description: “... behold, to my great joy, there had not one soul of them fallen to the earth; yea, and they had fought as if with the strength of God; yea, never were men known to have fought with such miraculous strength; and with such mighty power. ...”

Alma 56:47-48

47 Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.

48 And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it.

These young men known as the stripling warriors also had the example of their fathers when the Lamanites came to attack their families.

Alma 24:6, 21-27

6 Now there was not one soul among all the people who had been converted unto the Lord that would take up arms against their brethren; nay, they would not even make any preparations for war; yea, and also their king commanded them that they should not.

21 Now when the people saw that they were coming against them they went out to meet them, and prostrated themselves before them to the earth, and began to call on the name of the Lord; and thus they were in this attitude when the Lamanites began to fall upon them, and began to slay them with the sword.

22 And thus without meeting any resistance, they did slay a thousand and five of them; and we know that they are blessed, for they have gone to dwell with their God.

23 Now when the Lamanites saw that their brethren would not flee from the sword, neither would they turn aside to the right hand or to the left, but that they would lie down and perish, and praised God even in the very act of perishing under the sword—

24 Now when the Lamanites saw this they did forbear from slaying them; and there were many whose hearts had swollen in them for those of their brethren who had fallen under the sword, for they repented of the things which they had done.

25 And it came to pass that they threw down their weapons of war, and they would not take them again, for they were stung for the murders which they had committed; and they came down even as their brethren, relying upon the mercies of those whose arms were lifted to slay them.

26 And it came to pass that the people of God were joined that day by more than the number who had been slain; and those who had been slain were righteous people, therefore we have no reason to doubt but what they were saved.

27 And there was not a wicked man slain among them; but there were more than a thousand brought to the knowledge of the truth; thus we see that the Lord worketh in many ways to the salvation of his people.

The prophet Joseph smith said, writing to the saints from liberty jail

“And now, dear and well beloved brethren—and when we say brethren, we mean those who have continued faithful in Christ, men, women and children—we feel to exhort you in the name of the Lord Jesus, to be strong in the faith in the new and everlasting covenant, and nothing frightened at your enemies. . . . Hold on even unto death; for ‘he that seeks to save his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for my sake, and the Gospel’s, shall find it,’ saith Jesus Christ”

The stripling warriors had the examples of their parents, ones who not only laid down their lives for covenants sake, but taught their children so persistently and powerfully that they did not doubt.

Elder Robert D. Hales

“For all of us, doing our duty to God as parents and leaders begins with leading by example—consistently and diligently living gospel principles at home. This takes daily determination and diligence.

For youth, there is no substitute for seeing the gospel lived in our daily lives. The stripling warriors did not have to wonder what their parents believed. They said, “We do not doubt our mothers knew it”. Do our children know what we know?

In these perilous times it is not enough for our youth to merely *know*. They must *do*. Wholehearted participation in ordinances, quorums and auxiliaries, inspired programs, and fortifying activities helps youth put on the whole armor of God. Will we help them put on that armor so they can withstand the fiery darts of the adversary? To truly choose the Lord’s way, they must know His way. And to truly know His way, we must teach and lead them to act, to participate, to do.

...The greatest missionary work we will ever do will be in our homes...

...The greatest family history work that we will do will be within our own homes...

...The greatest rescue, the greatest activation will be in our homes.”

(General Conference April 2010)

As President David O. McKay has said:

“The home is the first and most effective place for children to learn the lessons of life: truth, honor, virtue, self-control; the value of education, honest work, and the purpose and privilege of life. Nothing can take the place of home in rearing and teaching children, and no other success can compensate for failure in the home.” *(Family Home Evening Manual, 1968, p. iii.)*

Now borrowing the insights of last weeks Book of Mormon or bust from the legend that is Mason,

3 Nephi 1:29

And there was also a cause of much sorrow among the Lamanites; for behold, they had many children who did grow up and began to wax strong in years, that they became for themselves, and were led away by some who were Zoramites, by their lyings and their flattering words, to join those Gadianton robbers.

Verse 29 of 3 Nephi 1 illustrates that it only takes one generation for apostasy to occur. We read the sad tale of the children of faithful parents who were led away by “lyings and ... flattering words, to join those Gadianton robbers.”

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency taught: “The young people of the Church ... hold the future in their hands. The Church has always been one generation away from extinction. If a whole generation were lost, which will not happen, we would lose the Church. But even a single individual lost to the gospel of Jesus Christ closes doors for generations of descendants, unless the Lord reaches out to bring some of them back” (“We Must Raise Our Sights” [Church Educational System conference on the Book of Mormon, Aug. 14, 2001], 1; see [LDS.org under gospel library/additional addresses/CES addresses](https://www.lds.org/gospel-library/additional-addresses/CES-addresses)).

Cheers Mason.

Bonnie D. Parkin

We are all here as Church leaders. We're busy. But I have to remember—just like you do—that our first responsibility is to our own family. Remember, they are one of the few blessings we get to take with us to the eternities!¹ Newel K. Whitney was a bishop in the early Church in Kirtland. Like you bishops today, he must have been pretty busy doing lots of good things. But he was chastened by the Lord and commanded to “set in order *his* family” (D&C 93:50; italics added). Sisters and brothers, this counsel applies to all of us.
(*Ensign* June 2006 - *Parents Have a Sacred Duty*)

President Joseph F. Smith said that

“Parents in Zion will be held responsible for the acts of their children, not only until they become eight years old but, perhaps, throughout all the lives of their children, provided they have neglected their duty to their children while they were under their care and guidance, and the parents were responsible for them.”
(*In Conference Report*, Apr. 1910, p. 6.)

Many of us will be feeling the pressure of guilt on us now regarding this topic of the bringing up of Children.

Whether you are a grandparent, parent, aunt, uncle, church leader, ministering companion, friend or even a stranger, how has your **example** born testimony of your testimony of your Saviour to these little ones?

Elder David A. Bednar stated:

One of the greatest heartaches a valiant parent in Zion can suffer is a child who strays from the gospel path. Questions of “Why?” or “What did I do wrong?” and “How can this child now be helped?” are pondered without ceasing in the minds and hearts of such parents. These men and women pray earnestly, search the scriptures diligently, and listen intently to the counsel of

priesthood and auxiliary leaders as they turn to the gospel of Jesus Christ for guidance, strength, and solace.

...Faithful parents can invite the power of heaven to influence their children. Nevertheless, those children remain agents unto themselves, and the choice to repent or not ultimately is theirs. Alma the Younger did repent of his sins and was born of the Spirit (see [Mosiah 27:24](#)), the outcome all parents of wayward children yearn for with all of their hearts.

As parents are patient and persistent in loving their children and in becoming living examples of disciples of Jesus Christ, they most effectively teach the Father's plan of happiness. The steadfastness of such parents bears powerful witness of the redeeming and strengthening powers of the Savior's Atonement and invites wayward children to see with new eyes and to hear with new ears (see [Matthew 13:43](#)).

Acting in accordance with the teachings of the Savior invites spiritual power into our lives—power to hear and heed, power to discern, and power to persevere. Devoted discipleship is the best and only answer to every question and challenge.

(Ensign, March 2014 - Faithful Parents and Wayward Children)

It has been a rather interesting week preparing my thoughts for this section of Elder Stevenson's talk

We found out recently that a direct ancestor of mine, **Mary Ann Simmons** (5xGreat Grandmother) was a pioneer in the handcart companies. Many years later, my Grandparents were met at the door by missionaries when they were still young newlyweds, I have no doubt that this blessing was brought about by the faithfulness of their pioneer ancestor.

Jump forward 58 years to today, to the 7 children that they had, the 34 grandchildren (Which I am #15) and the 36 great grandchildren (so far) that have joined the family.

This large family ranges from those who serve faithfully in all capacities and keep their covenants, to those who fight against the Church, yet all have a great love for this incredible couple who joined the church and taught their children about Christ to the best of their ability through their service and sacrifice in the church for many years.

My Grandmother passed away this week to join my Grandfather, and like the 2 primary girls said so confidently, I know that she is 'now happy and she could be with Jesus'. I too know that we will soon gather with 'family and close friends, exchanging fond memories of this beautiful soul who had enriched our lives.'

The next great grand child to be born will be my own son, who we are expecting this week. I cannot express the gratitude I have that this child will be born under the New and Everlasting Covenant, being raised in a home centered around the Gospel of my Saviour Jesus Christ, by two faithful covenant keeping parents who love him.

I also feel the weight of my role as a steward and head of the family, and often doubt my ability to live up to the high standards that are set for me.

I often find myself being humbled on this matter, especially listening to the 2023 youth theme song based off [Philippians 4:13](#)

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

As Elder Stevenson reminds us:

We cannot *stand* as witnesses of Jesus Christ until we can *bear* witness of Him.

What place better to bear witness of our Saviour through our example than in our very own home to our very own family.

Micah's Thoughts

The one thing I found very interesting in this section was the explanation that when President Nelson is reading 3 Nephi to others, “the living prophet is bearing witness of the living Christ... we cannot stand as a witness of Jesus Christ until we can bear witness of Him”. Did you hear that? We covenant to “stand as a witness of Jesus Christ at all times, in all places, even unto death” (Mosiah 18) when we are baptized, and we actually cannot stand as witnesses of Jesus Christ until we can bear witness of Jesus Christ... He continues and says that the writers of the Book of Mormon, those prophets, testified that Christ did come to them...

So has Christ come to you yet? No...? Well then how are you going to stand as a witness of Christ and His resurrection and bear testimony of Him?! Through the scriptures...

Doctrine and Covenants 18

33 And I, Jesus Christ, your Lord and your God, have spoken it.

34 These words are not of men nor of man, but of me; wherefore, you shall testify they are of me and not of man;

35 For it is my voice which speaketh them unto you; for they are given by my Spirit unto you, and by my power you can read them one to another; and save it were by my power you could not have them;

36 Wherefore, you can testify that you have heard my voice, and know my words.

2 Nephi 11

2 And now I, Nephi, write more of the words of Isaiah, for my soul delighteth in his words. For I will liken his words unto my people, and I will send them forth unto all my children, for he verily saw my Redeemer, even as I have seen him.

3 And my brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him; wherefore, I will send their words forth unto my children to prove unto them that my words are true. Wherefore, by the words of three, God hath said, I will establish my word. Nevertheless, God sendeth more witnesses, and he proveth all his words.

Ether 12

38 And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood.

39 And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;

40 And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing.

41 And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. Amen.

2 Nephi 32

1 And now, behold, my beloved brethren, I suppose that ye ponder somewhat in your hearts concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way. But, behold, why do ye ponder these things in your hearts?

2 Do ye not remember that I said unto you that after ye had received the Holy Ghost ye could speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the Holy Ghost?

3 Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

4 Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

5 For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.

6 Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and there will be no more doctrine given until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh. And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do.

7 And now I, Nephi, cannot say more; the Spirit stoppeth mine utterance, and I am left to mourn because of the unbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the stiffneckedness of men; for they will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be.

Section IV (Josline)

Because of Him

I am holding in my hand a copy of the first edition of the Book of Mormon. Doing so *always* moves me. For much of my adult life, I have been fascinated, enthralled, and riveted with what young Joseph Smith did to get this sacred book of scripture translated and published. The miracles that had to occur are staggering to contemplate.

But that is not why this book moves me. It is because this book, more than any other ever published on this earth, bears witness of the life, the ministry, the teachings, the Atonement, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. My dear brothers and sisters, studying regularly from this book about Jesus Christ will change your life. It will open your eyes to new possibilities. It will increase your hope and fill you with charity. Most of all, it will build and strengthen your faith in Jesus Christ and bless you with a sure knowledge that He and our Father know you, love you, and want you to find your way back home, with a capital *H*.

Dear brothers and sisters, the time has come, foretold by prophets of old, “when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.”⁸ We are seeing the fulfillment of this prophecy before our very eyes, through the witness of Jesus Christ found in the Book of Mormon.

No book does more to show that:

- Because of Jesus Christ, everything changed.
- Because of Him, everything is better.
- Because of Him, life is manageable—especially the painful moments.
- Because of Him, everything is possible.

His visit as a resurrected Savior, introduced by God the Father, is a most glorious and triumphant Easter message. It will help our family members gain a personal testimony of Jesus Christ as our Savior and Redeemer, who broke the bands of death.

I close with my testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and of Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Footnotes:

1. See First Presidency letter, Feb. 15, 2023.
2. [*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith*](#) (2007), 49; emphasis added.
3. N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (2008), 256.
4. [Matthew 28:6](#).
5. [Teachings: Joseph Smith](#), 64.
6. [3 Nephi 17:17](#).
7. See [3 Nephi 11:1–17](#).
8. [Mosiah 3:20](#).

Josline's Thoughts:

President Nelson explained:

Most books contained in libraries of the world were authored for contemporary readers. And they were generally written for profit, with royalties accruing from successful sales.

Not so with the Book of Mormon. It was written *anciently* for *our day*. It reveals the endless Lordship of Jesus Christ in accounts of two ancient American dispensations,¹⁶ preserved for the benefit of us who live in this dispensation of the fulness of times. Certainly no royalties came to its authors. In fact, they paid dearly for their privilege of participation. What motivated them? Their devotion to God! The book's four major writers—Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and Moroni¹⁷ were all eyewitnesses of the Lord, as was its martyred translator, the Prophet Joseph Smith.

... This appeal to all people must involve many languages and the work of skilled translators. The King James Version of the Bible, for example, was produced by 50 English scholars who accomplished their work in seven years, translating at the rate of *one* page per day.³⁹ Expert translators today do well if they can also translate scripture at the rate of one page per day.

In contrast, Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon at the rate of about *10* pages per day, completing the task in about 85 days! (Many of us feel good if we can read the book in that time.)

Such a pace is even more remarkable considering the circumstances under which the Prophet labored. In that same period, while enduring constant distractions and incessant hostility, Joseph Smith moved more than 100 miles from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York. ⁴¹ He applied for a copyright. ⁴² He received revelations comprising 12 sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. ⁴³ Heavenly beings restored the holy priesthood. Yet he completed the translation in less than three months. President Russell M. Nelson [A Testimony of the Book of Mormon](#)

Elder Milton R. Hunter:

No holy Scripture in the world is unique in as many ways as is the book of Mormon.

Jehovah, or Jesus Christ, began making preparations 2,500 years ago for this "great and marvelous work" in the latter days by initiating a project to produce a holy scripture to testify to his divinity. Also, the scripture was destined to play a prominent role in helping to give the gospel of Jesus Christ to the honest in heart and bring them into his Church in the latter days. This holy scripture is known as the Book of Mormon. Therefore, the Book of Mormon is the voice of God to our generation.

No holy scripture in the world is unique in as many ways as is the Book of Mormon.

-First, Jesus Christ initiated its writing and through numerous revelations supervised its production, which is unique.

-Second, as early as 600 B.C. the Master proclaimed that this record would play a unique role in the latter days in testifying that he was the Christ, the Savior of the world, thereby sustaining the testimony of the Jews, the Holy Bible.

-Third, through 1,000 years' time the prophets who wrote the book did so under the divine guidance of our Savior.

-Fourth, acting in accordance with revelation from Jesus Christ, the last two Nephite prophets—Mormon and Moroni—abridged the ancient records, making them suitable for use in our day. We know of no other similar occurrence in history; hence, unique.

-Fifth, the Book of Mormon is unique in its being translated from records of which an angel was the custodian for 1,400 years before they were brought forth in a book

-Sixth, the Book of Mormon stands alone in being the only book known to have been translated from ancient records delivered to an unlearned young man by an angel.

-Seventh, the feat of translating the ancient record was also an unheard of achievement. ... The writing on the plates was in an ancient script called "reformed Egyptian" (see [Morm. 9:32](#) a language that no mortal man through his own power could decipher. Then how did Joseph Smith accomplish such a mammoth job in such a short time? He has told us that he translated Book of Mormon "through the gift and power of God and through the Urim and Thummim."

-Eighth, no other book in the world has been testified to as to its truthfulness and divinity by the voice of an angel and by the voice of Jesus Christ other than the Book of Mormon. Elder Milton R. Hunter *Of the First Council of the Seventy, [A Great and Marvelous Work](#)*

Elder Milton R. Hunter continues: Let us now pay particular attention to some remarkable testimonies regarding the truthfulness and divinity of the Book of Mormon. One of the strongest testimonies came directly from the mouth of Jesus Christ himself. In June 1829, the Savior spoke from heaven and declared:

". . . as your Lord and your God liveth it [the Book of Mormon] is true" [D&C 17:6](#) I am positive that my Lord and God liveth—and so I am also positive that the Book of Mormon is true.

No other book in the world has ever had a witness borne to it as dynamic and powerful as the one the Master provided to sustain the Book of Mormon in what is known as "The Testimony of Three Witnesses." The ancient American prophets had predicted that through the power of the Lord the plates would be shown to three others [2 Ne. 27:12](#) [Ether 5:2-4](#) besides the prophet to whom the records would be given for the purpose of their bearing witness. Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris asked for that privilege.

In June 1829, Jesus Christ spoke from heaven to the three men through the Prophet Joseph Smith, declaring:

". . . you shall have a view of the plates, and also of the breastplate, the sword of Laban, [and] the Urim and Thummim" [D&C 17:1](#) Thereupon the four men went into the woods and kneeled down and prayed. In response, the Angel Moroni came down from heaven and showed these sacred objects to them. He turned the sheets of the gold plates leaf by leaf and let them examine the inscriptions thereon. He described Joseph Smith's work in translating the Book of Mormon records. As he was doing so, the voice of Jesus Christ spoke from heaven and said:

"These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear" (Cited in Preston Nibley, *The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon*, p. 8).

After the Angel Moroni left with the gold plates, the three men wrote their testimony, which is known as "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" [BM Three Wit](#). Their testimony states:

". . . we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon . . . the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it."

In no other time in history has such an astounding event occurred. Never before nor since have three men received their testimonies directly from an angel and from Jesus Christ, as did these three men. Elder Milton R. Hunter, *Of the First Council of the Seventy, [A Great and Marvelous Work](#)*

Worth noting here that some of the witnesses had left the church but never denied their testimonies and what was revealed to them. (See Joseph Fielding Smith, [They Bear Witness](#))

Then Elder Russell M. Nelson said:

Scriptures Testify of Jesus Christ

The Bible and the Book of Mormon are both witnesses of Jesus Christ. They teach that He is the Son of God, that He lived an exemplary life, that He atoned for all mankind, that He died upon the cross and rose again as the resurrected Lord. They teach that He is the Savior of the world.

Scriptural witnesses authenticate each other. This concept was explained long ago when a prophet wrote that the Book of Mormon was “written for the intent that ye may believe [the Bible]; and if ye believe [the Bible] ye will believe [the Book of Mormon] also.”⁶ Each book refers to the other. Each book stands as evidence that God lives and speaks to His children by revelation to His prophets.⁷ Love for the Book of Mormon expands one’s love for the Bible and vice versa. Scriptures of the Restoration do not compete with the Bible; they complement the Bible. We are indebted to martyrs who gave their lives so that we could have the Bible. ...

An angel proclaimed that the Book of Mormon¹² shall establish the truth of the Bible.¹³ He also revealed that writings in the Bible available in our day are not as complete as they were when originally written by prophets and apostles.¹⁴ He declared that the Book of Mormon shall restore plain and precious things taken away from the Bible.¹⁵

A prophecy in the Book of Mormon warned that some people would object to the notion of additional scriptures. To those who think they “need no more Bible,”¹⁶ consider this God-given counsel:

“Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, ... created all men, ... and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?

“... Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And ... the testimony of the two nations shall run together also.”¹⁷

To doubters of that second witness—the Book of Mormon—the Lord issued a warning: “Because you have treated lightly the things you have received ... [you] shall remain under ... condemnation until [you] repent and remember ... the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given ... , [the Bible, and] ... do according to that which I have written.”²¹

The Lord provided other scriptures of the Restoration²² and declared that those words will also be fulfilled.²³ With these scriptural witnesses, false doctrines will be confounded.²⁴ With these scriptural witnesses, doctrines of the Bible are not only reaffirmed but clarified.

On this same subject Elder LeGrand Richards said:

But 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 travels, 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.

Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews? [2 Ne. 29:3-6](#)

It would therefore appear that the Lord has indicated that the curses and hatred that we pronounce upon the Jews he will return upon our own heads, and he indicates his displeasure that we "have not sought to recover them." LeGrand Richards, [The Gospel to the Jews](#)

Elder Craig C. Christensen:

All who study and ponder its teachings are given a promise found in the last chapter of Moroni (see [Moroni 10:3-4](#) as well as in the introduction to the Book of Mormon, where we read:

“We invite all men [and women] everywhere to read the Book of Mormon, to ponder in their hearts the message it contains, and then to ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if the Book is true. Those who pursue this course and ask in faith will gain a testimony of its truth and divinity by the power of the Holy Ghost.”

From the title page we read that the Book of Mormon was “written by way of commandment” and “by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation” to “come forth by the gift and power of God” to the convincing of each of us “that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.” In a personal expression of this purpose, Nephi, as one of the authors of the Book of Mormon, wrote, **“The fulness of mine intent is that I may persuade men to come unto the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and be saved”** [1 Nephi 6:4](#)

... We learn of faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, of repentance, of the importance of baptism by immersion, and of the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. By studying and feasting upon the doctrines of the Book of Mormon, we gain “a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men,” with a desire to “endure to the end” that we may “have eternal life” [2 Nephi 31:20](#), (Craig C. Christensen, [A Book with a Promise](#))

President Nelson:

The Book of Mormon provides the fullest and most authoritative understanding of the Atonement of Jesus Christ to be found anywhere. It teaches what it really means to be born again. From the Book of Mormon we learn about the gathering of scattered Israel. We know why we are here on earth. These and other truths are more powerfully and persuasively taught in the

Book of Mormon than in any other book. The full power of the gospel of Jesus Christ is contained in the Book of Mormon. Period.

The Book of Mormon both illuminates the teachings of the Master and exposes the tactics of the adversary. The Book of Mormon teaches true doctrine to dispel false religious traditions—such as the erroneous practice of performing infant baptisms.⁸ The Book of Mormon gives purpose to life by urging us to ponder the potential of eternal life and “never-ending happiness.”² The Book of Mormon shatters the false beliefs that happiness can be found in wickedness¹⁰ and that individual goodness is all that is required to return to the presence of God.¹¹ It abolishes forever the false concepts that revelation ended with the Bible and that the heavens are sealed today.

When I think of the Book of Mormon, I think of the word *power*. The truths of the Book of Mormon have the *power* to heal, comfort, restore, succor, strengthen, console, and cheer our souls. Russel M Nelson , [The Book of Mormon: What Would Your Life Be Like without It?](#)

Mosiah 3:20

20 And moreover, I say unto you, that the time shall come when the “knowledge of a ^bSavior shall spread throughout “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

21 And behold, when that time cometh, none shall be found “blameless before God, except it be little children, only through repentance and faith on the name of the Lord God Omnipotent.

22 And even at this time, when thou shalt have taught thy people the things which the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, even then are they found no more blameless in the sight of God, only according to the words which I have spoken unto thee.

23 And now I have spoken the words which the Lord God hath commanded me.

24 And thus saith the Lord: They shall stand as a bright testimony against this people, at the judgment day; whereof they shall be judged, every man according to his “works, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.

Bruce R, McConkie:

Our Lord's beloved disciple John saw in vision the restoration of the gospel in our day and recorded in the Bible this testimony: ". . . I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth."

Then, as guided by the spirit of inspiration, he recorded that this restored gospel was to be preached "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" before the hour of God's judgment, before the second coming of the Son of Man (see [Rev. 14:6-7](#)

The restoration of gospel knowledge commenced in modern times in the spring of 1820. The promised angel began the process of revealing gospel truths and powers in September of 1823. By November of 1831 the restoration was sufficiently advanced for the Lord to say to the world through Joseph Smith: "O inhabitants of the earth, I have sent forth mine angel flying through the

midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel, who hath appeared unto some and hath committed it unto man, who shall appear unto many that dwell on the earth.

"And this gospel shall be preached unto every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people"
[D&C 133:36-37](#)

Truly did the Lord Jesus say of our day: ". . . this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come" [JS—M 1:31](#)

And truly did Joseph Smith prophecy: ". . . the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 4, p. 540).

What then of the future growth of the Church? Eventually, in a millennial day, the knowledge of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, meaning that every living soul on earth shall be converted to the truth, for truth shall prevail.

In the meantime, we shall go forward according to the divine timetable, a timetable under which the Lord will prepare the way for us to teach the gospel in one nation after another as rapidly as our strength and means are sufficient for us to do the work.

Nephi foresaw that we shall establish congregations of the Saints in all nations and among all peoples and kindreds before the promised unity of the faith. Speaking of this dispensation, he said:

". . . I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw" [1 Ne. 14:12](#) Bruce R. MacConkie, "[Go Ye Into All the World](#)"

What makes me happy is that God is the same yesterday today and forever, He has not changed, He doesn't deviate from His words. When He speaks through His prophets of things to come they will be fulfilled. Just as His prophets prophesied of Christ who was to die and would be resurrected, through whom we hope to gain eternal life. They also prophesied of scattered and the eventual gathering of all Israel. I am so glad that He still speaks to prophets in our days and has not forsaken those who have faith in Him. I am doing all I can to be ready and prepared for Christ's second coming. As I know that He will come again, just as His prophets ancient and modern have foretold. This is my testimony in the name of our resurrected Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ amen

Ashley's Thoughts:

President Nelson's testimony of the Book of Mormon:

"Not long after my call to serve as one of the Twelve Apostles, I was summoned to the office of the President of our Quorum, President Ezra Taft Benson. He expressed deep concern that members of the Church did not fully appreciate the value of the Book of Mormon. With emotion in his voice, he read to me from the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"Your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received —

"Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation."

By that time, President Benson had completely captured my attention. He then concluded his admonition:

"And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon."

I shall never forget that lesson. Since then, President Howard W. Hunter, President Gordon B. Hinckley, and many other leaders of the Church have continued to extol the Book of Mormon to people throughout the world.

I would like to add my testimony of the divinity of this book. I have read it many times. I have also read much that has been written about it. Some authors have focused upon its stories, its people, or its vignettes of history. Others have been intrigued by its language structure or its records of weapons, geography, animal life, techniques of building, or systems of weights and measures.

Interesting as these matters may be, study of the Book of Mormon is most rewarding when one focuses on its primary purpose — to testify of Jesus Christ. By comparison, all other issues are incidental.

When you read the Book of Mormon, concentrate on the principal figure in the book — from its first chapter to the last — the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God. And look for a second undergirding theme: God will keep His covenants with the remnants of the house of Israel.

The Book of Mormon is a crucial component of that covenant. It is holy scripture that encompasses sacred writings from the small and large plates of Nephi, the plates of Mormon, the plates of Ether, and the plates of brass, which contained "the five books of Moses, . . . a record of the Jews, . . . and . . . prophecies of the holy prophets."

When Mormon abridged these records, he noted that he could not write a "hundredth part" of their proceedings. Thus, historical aspects of the book assume secondary significance.

The Holy Bible has 66 individual books; the Book of Mormon contains 15. Its first book of Nephi — written some six centuries before the birth of Jesus — records that the prophet Lehi⁸ received a vision of the tree of life. His son Nephi prayed to know its meaning. In answer, he was given a remarkable vision. He beheld a virgin bearing a Child in her arms. He envisioned the Redeemer of the world, His earthly ministry, and His Crucifixion. He saw 12 others who would follow the Holy One. And he foresaw the ongoing opposition to the work of God and of His Apostles.

Other great prophets of the Book of Mormon — in their own way and time — testified of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Among them were the brother of Jared, Zenock, Neum, and Zenos. Testimonies of Jesus Christ that predated His birth in Bethlehem were also recorded from King Benjamin, Abinadi, Alma the Elder, Alma the Younger, Amulek, the sons of Mosiah, Captain Moroni, the brothers Nephi and Lehi, and Samuel the Lamanite. In a seemingly endless sequence of prophetic proclamations — testimonies of "all the holy prophets" for "a great many thousand years before his coming" — the Book of Mormon makes the solemn declaration that Jesus is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer.

Authors

Most books contained in libraries of the world were authored for contemporary readers. And they were generally written for profit, with royalties accruing from successful sales.

Not so with the Book of Mormon. It was written anciently for our day. It reveals the endless Lordship of Jesus Christ in accounts of two ancient American dispensations, preserved for the benefit of us who live in this dispensation of the fulness of times. Certainly no royalties came to its authors. In fact, they paid dearly for their privilege of participation. What motivated them? Their devotion to God! The book's four major writers — Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, and Moroni — were all eyewitnesses of the Lord, as was its martyred translator, the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Content

Their writings centered upon the Lord, His mission, and His ministry. Jacob, for example, repeatedly referred to the Atonement and Resurrection of Christ. "Beloved brethren," wrote Jacob, "be reconciled unto [God] through the atonement of Christ, his Only Begotten Son, and ye may obtain a resurrection, . . . and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God. . . .

"And now, . . . why not speak of the atonement of Christ, and attain to a perfect knowledge of him," and a "knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?"

Jacob's advice is priceless and timeless.

The Savior declared that the Book of Mormon contains "the fulness of [His] everlasting gospel." How did He define the gospel? The resurrected Lord taught, "This is the gospel which I have given unto you — that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me."

Then He amplified that one-sentence definition: "My Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me."

This unique mortal mission of the Lord — the gospel as He defined it — we know as the Atonement. The fulness of the gospel, therefore, connotes a fuller comprehension of the Atonement. This we do not obtain from the Bible alone. The word atonement, in any of its forms, is mentioned only once in the King James Version of the New Testament. In the Book of Mormon, it appears 39 times! The Book of Mormon also contains more references to the Resurrection than does the Bible.

The Savior referred to the Book of Mormon as His "new covenant" with the house of Israel. It is a tangible sign of Christ's culminating covenant with mankind. The divine teachings of this book, as a third testament, clarify doctrine and unify the Old Testament with the New Testament. Scriptural covenants, testaments, and witnesses since the beginning of time relate to the Atonement of Jesus Christ, the central act of all human history.

The Book of Mormon is the most important religious text to be revealed from God to man "since the writings of the New Testament were compiled nearly two millennia ago." Joseph Smith declared the Book of Mormon to be "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion." It is the only book that the Lord Himself has testified to be true.

The crowning event of this sacred record is the personal ministry of the resurrected Lord to people of ancient America. To them He made this revelatory announcement:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. . . .

". . . The scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled. . . .

"I am the light and the life of the world. . . .

". . . Whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost. . . .

". . . I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.

"Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me, . . . and be saved."

After that supernal introduction, the Master reinforced His identity by allowing the multitudes to thrust their hands into His side and feel the prints of the nails in His hands and in His feet. Then they knew that the very God of Israel stood in their presence — He who had been slain for the sins of the world.

He instructed the people. He taught them to pray, to repent, to be baptized, to partake of the sacrament, to know of His doctrine, to understand the importance of sacred ordinances and covenants, and to endure to the end.

The Book of Mormon is a gift from God to all humankind, and He has "commanded his people that they should persuade all men to repentance." He invites all "to come unto him and partake of his goodness," and He denies "none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female."

Translation

This appeal to all people must involve many languages and the work of skilled translators. The King James Version of the Bible, for example, was produced by 50 English scholars who accomplished their work in seven years, translating at the rate of *one* page per day. Expert translators today do well if they can also translate scripture at the rate of one page per day.

In contrast, Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon at the rate of about *10* pages per day, completing the task in about 85 days!(Many of us feel good if we can read the book in that time.)

Such a pace is even more remarkable considering the circumstances under which the Prophet labored. In that same period, while enduring constant distractions and incessant hostility, Joseph Smith moved more than 100 miles from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Fayette, New York .He applied for a copyright. He received revelations comprising 12 sections of the Doctrine and Covenants. Heavenly beings restored the holy priesthood. Yet he completed the translation in less than three months.

The First Presidency provided opportunity for the Twelve Apostles to see portions of the original manuscript and the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon. Words cannot describe the deep emotions we felt as we examined these precious documents and observed that marks of editing were remarkably rare.

Personal Testimony and Blessings

Each individual who prayerfully studies the Book of Mormon can also receive a testimony of its divinity. In addition, this book can help with personal problems in a very real way. Do you want to get rid of a bad habit? Do you want to improve relationships in your family? Do you want to increase your spiritual capacity? Read the Book of Mormon! It will bring you closer to the Lord and His loving power. He who fed a multitude with five loaves and two fishes— He who helped

the blind to see and the lame to walk — can also bless you! He has promised that those who live by the precepts of this book "shall receive a crown of eternal life."

The Book of Mormon is true! I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

-Elder Russell M. Nelson (A testimony of the Book of Mormon, October 1999)

I love the Book of Mormon and bear my testimony of its truthfulness!

I would encourage everyone to check out Zion or Bust!'s weekly series called Book of Mormon or Bust! done by Tracy, Renae, Mason and Levi. They share amazing insights from the Book of Mormon and have amazing guests on like Josline, Elisha, Karen, and Lisa to name a few. Their videos are so good and leave you with a burning testimony of the Book of Mormon each week. I highly recommend checking it out.

I know that as we read the Book of Mormon we are drawn closer to Christ and he becomes a reality in our lives. I know that the account of the resurrected Lord visiting the Americas after his crucifixion as recorded in the Book of Mormon did in reality occur. I know our Savior is waiting to come visit us and to be crowned King of kings in his city, the New Jerusalem, if we only but ready ourselves. Let's commit to be better each day so that this prophecy can be fulfilled before our eyes! In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.