

Mormon 4-9

I. **Wickedness never was happiness!**

- Evidence surrounds us
- Wicked people just aren't happy

II. Mormon 4:

- 1-23 *Greater wickedness than ever before prevails among the Nephites*
1-11 Nephites get their rears kicked for bragging

“Once the Nephite soldiers started to wage offensive war they soon became so bloodthirsty they were concerned only with the taking of human life...The leaders of this dispensation have also warned against the dangers of starting an offensive war. **President Charles W. Penrose** has said: ‘...we Latter-day Saints must watch ourselves and not give way to passion and desire to shed blood and to destroy, for that is the power of the evil one. We do not want to imitate any nation that is bent on a policy of destruction, to destroy where they cannot rule, to break down and trample under foot where they cannot dominate. If we have that desire, it is the spirit of the wicked one...‘There is a very great difference between arising to go forth for conquest, for blood, for plunder, to gain territory and power in the earth, and in fighting to defend our own possessions in the spirit of justice and righteousness and equity, and standing up like men for those things that we have a right to contend for.’ (Conference Report, April 1917, pp. 21-22.)” (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 301).

“Of one thing I am sure, God never institutes war; God is not the author of confusion or of war; they are the results of the acts of the children of men. Confusion and war necessarily come as the results of the foolish acts and policy of men; but they do not come because God desires they should come. If the people, generally, would turn to the Lord, there would never be any war. Let men turn from their iniquities and sins, and instead of being covetous and wicked, turn to God and seek to promote peace and happiness throughout the land, and wars would cease. We expect to see the day when swords shall be turned into ploughshares, spears into pruning hooks, and when men shall learn war no more. This is what we want. We are for peace, plenty and happiness to all the human family.” (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, pp. 366-367.)

“‘Often, very often, we are punished as much by our sins as we are for our sins,’ **Elder Boyd K. Packer** has written (*Teach Ye Diligently*, p. 262). As was the case with the Nephites, so often is it the case that God does not have to personally curse, condemn, or punish the wicked; their actions and associations produce natural consequences that in and of themselves become severe punishments. Many of the destructions, plagues, and atrocities that come upon the world are a direct result of the wickedness of man. C. S. Lewis insightfully observed: ‘The possibility of pain is inherent in the very existence of a world where souls can meet. When souls become wicked they will certainly use this possibility to hurt one another; and this, perhaps, accounts for four-fifths of the suffering of men. It is men, not God, who have produced racks, whips, prisons, slavery, guns, bayonets, and bombs; it is by human avarice or human stupidity, not by the churlishness of nature, that we have poverty and overwork.’ (*The Problem of Pain*, p. 89.)” (McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4, p. 228).

- 12 Most wicked time ever
15 Terrible wickedness
16-18 Get the broom/Nephites swept

“Mormon said, ‘And from this time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites, but

began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun [Mormon 4:18].’ A very powerful expression. There's nothing left. Everything is swept away as the dew before the sun, combing the land. It wasn't just a spot engagement here and there that would lead to a conference between the rulers, or something like that. No, it was a total thing. The most violent element of war, like a violent natural force, like a plague sweeping a nation, appears when, ‘freed from all conventional restrictions, it [breaks] loose with all its natural force. It is a natural phenomenon. There are no more artificial or other restraints. War is much nearer to real nature in absolutes.’” (*Teachings From the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 68, p. 136)

17-23 Women & Children tortured

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“Our moral environment is far more polluted than our physical environment. It seems as though good and evil are being homogenized out of existence by a generation largely led by ‘foolish and blind guides’ (Helaman 13:29). What was once whispered in shame is now electronically shouted from the housetops as the famous and the foolish appear on television to parade their sins, like so many medals, before laughing, applauding audiences. Every aspect of modern communication seems to have been appropriated by Satan to legitimize the everlasting legitimate. It is imperative that Latter-day Saints view these times from a gospel perspective and follow the counsel of our prophet by taking warning from the teachings - and the fate - of an earlier generation of Americans, the Nephites” (Rodney Turner, “Morality and Marriage in the Book of Mormon,” *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, Papers from the Fourth Annual Book of Mormon Symposium, p. 272).

- At this point, it has been 54 years since Ammaron entrusted Mormon as custodian of the plates. He had been writing on the Large Plates of Nephi for some time, but the many other Nephite records he had left in the hill. We often underestimate the number of records Mormon was in charge of. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were given the privilege of seeing some of these records.
- “Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited these plates... When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did. Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there, the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the light of the sun or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high, and there were altogether in this room more plates than probably many wagon loads; they were piled up in the corners and along the walls.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 19, p. 40).
- Mormon had left these “many wagonloads” of records in place until this point, but the hill Shim was about to become Lamanite territory. Mormon had to take possession of them in order to protect them. A brief review of his custodianship is in order.

Age	Year	Event	Reference
10	321 AD	Called by Ammaron	Mormon 1:2-4
24	335 AD	Removed plates of Nephi from the hill, but left most the records in place	Indirect reference in Mormon 2:17
34	345 AD	Fights battle near the hill, declares that he had been making a full account on the Large Plates	Mormon 2:17-18
64	375 AD	Removed all the records from the hill Shim	Mormon 4:23
74	385 AD	Abridges the Book of Mormon and secures almost all the plates in the hill Cumorah in anticipation of the final battle (Editor's note: I know you can't believe that he wrote the entire Book of Mormon at this hectic time. If you don't believe me, then come to your own conclusion based on Mormon 6:6 and Words of Mormon 1:1-9.)	Mormon 6:6, Words of Mormon 1:6-9

Mormon 5:

- 1-8 *Mormon again leads the Nephites into battle, but it is without hope for their success*
1-2 Mormon rescinds the oath

“In this crucible of wickedness the true greatness of Mormon shines like a star as he calls his son to action, telling him that no matter how bad things are, we must never stop trying to do what we can to improve matters, ‘for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay’ (Moroni 9:6). In this spirit Mormon took over command of the army even when he knew that all was lost, ‘for they looked upon me as though I could deliver them from their afflictions. But behold, I was without hope’ (Mormon 5:1-2). His is the predicament of the true tragic hero: ‘I had led them, notwithstanding their wickedness, . . . and had loved them . . . with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them; nevertheless, it was without faith, because of the hardness of their hearts’ (Mormon 3:12).” (Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, p. 400).

“The next verse is very revealing. ‘But it came to pass that whatsoever lands we had passed by, and the inhabitants thereof were not gathered in, were destroyed by the Lamanites, and their towns, and villages, and cities were burned with fire’ (Mormon 5:5). Here you have a clear picture of Nephite society. Separate ‘lands’ living their own lives, now in this last crisis terribly reluctant to move and join the swelling host in the retreat to the north. Those who refused to pull up stakes were one by one completely wiped out by the Lamanites. This was no planned migration but a forced evacuation, like dozens of such we read about in the grim and terrible times of the ‘Invasion of the Barbarians’ that destroyed the classic civilizations of the Old World. In this case Mormon's people were only part of the general and gradual evacuation of the whole land. The Nephites lost a general battle in the next

year and resumed their headlong flight, ‘and those whose flight was swifter than the Lamanites’ did escape,’ says Mormon, not mincing words, while the rest ‘were swept down and destroyed’ (Mormon 5:7). The fitful but continual falling back of the Nephites towards the north, which had now been going on for fifty-three years, became something like a rout, with speed the only hope of survival.” (Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, p. 267)

3-9 Lamanites continue to slaughter

Jeffrey R. Holland wrote, “As Mormon increasingly looked beyond the tragedy before him to a generation he hoped would profit from their mistakes, the destruction continued unabated. Mormon was torn not only by what he saw but also by what he must—and must not—write.” (*Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 320) The harrowing scenes of Mormon’s life, if depicted, would have to be rated “R” for graphic violence. Yet, amidst such carnage, he had the spiritual sensitivity to be concerned about how his descriptions would affect us. He was concerned that we might not have too great sorrow because of the wickedness of [his] people (v. 9). Accordingly, he does not go into much detail about their wickedness.

- However, in an epistle to his son Moroni, he tells it like it is. The Nephite women and children are fed the flesh of their husbands and fathers, and the Lamanite women are raped, tortured, murdered, and eaten for a token of bravery (Moroni 9:7-20). These are just some of the atrocities that Mormon wanted to spare us. His concern for us, again, shows his great charity, for he knew that at the last day, we would watch these scenes on the Lord’s big-screen TV, when all things which are hid must be revealed upon the house-tops.

9-24 *Mormon’s record to come forth to invite all to come unto Christ*

11 By repenting - clasped into Christ’s arms

“The inevitability of belonging either to Satan or to Christ is graphically portrayed by the scriptural imagery of that most human expression of belonging—to be embraced, or as the scriptures say, ‘to be encircled about.’ Those who follow Christ until they are accepted into his covenants of true belonging will one day be, as was Father Lehi, ‘encircled about eternally in the arms of his love.’ (2 Nephi 1:15.) That is why Mormon lamented in his ‘sorrow for the destruction of [his] people’: ‘They will sorrow that this people had not repented that they might have been clasped in the arms of Jesus.’ (Mormon 5:11.) Mormon’s sorrow was not just that his unrepentant people would be left unattended to continue wandering as they desired; rather, Mormon knew, as Alma explained, that ‘this was a snare of the adversary, which he has laid to catch this people, that he might bring you into subjection unto him, that *he might encircle you about with his chains.*’ (Alma 12:6; emphasis added.)” (Bruce C. Hafen, *A Belonging Heart*, p. 141)

15-24 The Curse - Loss of the Spirit

“Mormon described some people, his people, for whom the Spirit of the Lord had departed, and when I read that..., it seems clear to me that what he was talking about was not merely the inability to have the companionship of or the gift of the Holy Ghost, but he was talking about that light of truth to which everyone born into the world is entitled and which will never cease to strive with the individual unless he loses it through his own sinning” (Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report*, April 1956, p 108).

“In a special way, the Book of Mormon was written to the Lamanites, the descendants of Lehi, as a major tool to restore them to Christ. It seems that the righteous Nephite prophets, knowing the destruction of their own people, wrote with special feelings to the future Lamanites. Mormon in his final chapter said, ‘And now, behold, I would speak somewhat unto the remnant of this people who are spared’ (7:1); and Moroni in his last chapter said, ‘Now I, Moroni, write somewhat as

seemeth me good; and I write unto my brethren, the Lamanites' (10:1).

"In 1829, about a year before the publication of the Book of Mormon, the Lord spoke plainly to Joseph Smith after the 116 pages of manuscript had been lost. While reproofing young Joseph, the Lord impressed upon him the sacred character and purpose of the Book of Mormon and hence the great importance of his work.

'Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people-

And to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers-

And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquities of their fathers, whom the Lord has suffered to destroy their brethren the Nephites, because of their wickedness and abominations.

And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records-that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; and that the Lamanites might come to a knowledge of their fathers' (D&C 3:16-20; emphasis added)

"The Book of Mormon was written to all the world as another testament of Jesus Christ. In a special way, however, it was written and preserved to restore the Lamanites to the knowledge and testimony of Christ once had by their fathers and also to convince the Jew and Gentile that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God' (title page, Book of Mormon)." (Rex C. Reeve, Jr., *Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, 2 Nephi, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 266-7).

"Our case study now turns to the day of Lamanite gathering. The long night of apostate darkness that left the remnants of Lehi's seed in their low and fallen and loathsome state is drawing to an end. Already the rays of gospel light are rising in the eastern sky and the day of gathering is dawning. Lamanites in the United States and Canada, in Mexico and Central America, and in the various nations of South America, together with the Lamanites in the islands of the South Pacific, whom we call Polynesians -- all these are coming back, one by one as the divine decree requires. And when the day has fully dawned, as soon it must, they will be a glorious people indeed.

"Indeed, that day -- the day of the Lamanite -- shall dawn before the Second Coming. Its arrival will be one of the signs of the times, and all those who can read the promised signs will thereby know that the coming of their Lord is nigh at hand. Pending that day, the Lord's command to his people is: 'Be not deceived, but continue in steadfastness, looking forth for the heavens to be shaken, and the earth to tremble and to reel to and fro as a drunken man, and for the valleys to be exalted, and for the mountains to be made low, and for the rough places to become smooth -- and all this when the angel shall sound his trumpet.'

"Having so announced, the Lord then relates all this to the gathering of Israel, including the Lamanite gathering. 'But before the great day of the Lord shall come,' he says, 'Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness, and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed.' (D&C 49:23-25.)" (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Millennial Messiah*, p. 210).

Mormon 6:

1-15 *The last battles in the Land of Cumorah*

1-4 Battle of Cumorah

"The friendly controversy still goes on, the one camp holding that the only Cumorah in or out of the Book of Mormon is the traditional one in New York State, the other supporting the view that the Cumorah in New York has been named after the one in Middle America, but is not the one around which the last great battles of the Nephites and the Lamanites took place.

“Now which of these two points of view is correct? It would be desirable, if possible, to come to a unity in the matter. Truth should never be on the defensive, but sometimes it is hard to decide just where it is. Perhaps most people of the Church hold to the traditional view of Cumorah, and, indeed, I have defended that view in some of my writings. But in recent years we have again gone over the Book of Mormon evidence very carefully and are prepared to present what we feel are the elements of the strongest case that can be made for a Cumorah in Middle America.” (*FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, Spring-1995, pp. 261-2).

The cumulative evidence from the Book of Mormon itself, argues overwhelmingly for another hill Cumorah located somewhere in Central America. However, the student should be aware that **President Joseph Fielding Smith** adamantly declared that the final battle took place in western New York (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:232-243). How can anyone dare to question such a conclusion? We can only dare to question if we appeal to a higher source—the Book of Mormon itself.

The reader is referred to the *FARMS* article cited above for a more complete discussion of the subject, but one rather compelling bit of evidence comes from Ether 9. In that chapter, we learn that the Jaredite civilization was near the hill Cumorah (v. 3). Later, we learn of Jaredite flocks which fled from poisonous serpents. In their flight, some of them made it all the way into the land southward (Ether 9:30-34). Are we to believe that these miraculous poisonous serpents chased these equally miraculous herds over 3000 miles from today’s New York to South America? The story is incredible enough if they chased them only a hundred miles.

More evidence comes from Mormon 4:1-2. In this passage, the revenge-minded Nephites began an offensive in the land southward but were driven back. The geography described in Alma 22:31-33 places these battles just south of the narrow neck of land. For 14 of the next 22 years, the Nephites were driven back in a northern direction. Are we to believe that in these 22 years (8 of which were peaceful, see Mormon 4:15-16), the entire Nephite civilization was driven over 3000 miles? You would think that Mormon would of told us of such a huge mass migration. But he didn’t.

More examples could be given, but suffice it to say that the Book of Mormon, with its myriad of seemingly unimportant tidbits, paints the best picture. The text itself, as usual, becomes it’s own best evidence—providing the most clear proof that the land of Cumorah spoken of is in modern-day Central America.

Nevertheless, the counsel from President Lee gives us needed spiritual perspective on the subject.

“Don’t be concerned over Book of Mormon geography. Some say the Hill Cumorah was in southern Mexico (and someone pushed it down still farther) and not in western New York. Well, if the Lord wanted us to know where it was or where Zarahemla was, He’d have given us latitude and longitude, don’t you think? And why bother our heads trying to discover with archaeological certainty the geographical locations of the cities of the Book of Mormon like Zarahemla?

“The witness of the Book of Mormon is not found in the ruins of Central and South America. They may be outward evidences of a people long since disappeared. The real witness is that which is found in the Book of Mormon itself.” (*The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, p. 156).

“Before the last great battle ensued between the Nephite and Lamanite armies at Cumorah in the year 385 A. D., Mormon entrusted the plates containing his abridgment of the plates of Nephi to his son, Moroni. (Mormon 6:6.) Nevertheless, after the battle-in which he was wounded-Mormon again obtained the plates and added some final words found in chapters six and seven respectively of the book called after his own name. All of the other records of his people he had previously hid up in the Hill Cumorah. (Mormon 6:6.)” (*A Book of Mormon Treasury*, p. 122)

“...therefore I made this record [the Book of Mormon] out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates [the Book of Mormon] which I gave unto my son Moroni’ (Mormon 6:6). In

other words, the Book of Mormon explicitly states that the records hidden in the Mesoamerican Cumorah were not the plates of the Book of Mormon, but were the other records of the Nephites...Mormon 6:6 specifically states that all the Nephite records, except the Book of Mormon plates, were buried in the hill Cumorah near the narrow neck of land by Mormon, not Moroni. Nowhere in the Book of Mormon does it state where the Book of Mormon plates were finally buried.” (William J. Hamblin, *FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, Spring-1993, pp. 173,178).

6 Hide plates
7-9 Eminent Death

“The account of the gathering of all the Nephite people in the lands around Cumorah, and the way Mormon refers to his women and children, men, and people, somewhat interchangeably, introduces some ambiguity into his account. Could it have been that in their last-ditch effort at survival, preparing as they were for a prearranged great battle, Mormon and the 22 other leaders divided the whole Nephite people, rather than just the armies, into contingents of ten thousand each? If so, the victims of the slaughter at Cumorah were 230,000 men, women, and children, all of the Nephites who had gathered around Cumorah.” (*FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1994, pp.2-3).

“In the eventual terrible slaughter which occurred between the Lamanites and the Nephites, he watched the destruction of 230,000 Nephite warriors, including his own ten thousand. He was a witness to that awful carnage when the Nephite men, with their wives and children, saw ‘the armies of the Lamanites marching towards them; and with that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked, did they await to receive them’ (Mormon 6:7).” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*, p. 197)

10 Mormon wounded
11-16 100,000 killed

“Mormon himself fell wounded, but his life, for a time, was spared as the Lamanite armies swept on. Only he, Moroni, and twenty-two other Nephites remained; 230,000 of their nation had fallen.

“The scope and significance of that horrible slaughter may be seen more readily when we realize that the great American Civil War of the 1860s, the costliest war, in terms of human life, that the United States has ever known, took the lives of 140,000 men in a five-year period. Here, 230,000 fell in a single day.” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, Mar. 1978, “Mormon: The Man and the Book, Part 1”).

17-22 Lamentation of Mormon

“Following the tremendous battle at Cumorah, Mormon looked out over the catastrophic carnage—the destruction of a thousand years of dreams—and cried to ears that could no longer hear:

‘O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you!

‘Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. But behold, ye are fallen, and I mourn your loss.

‘O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have fallen!

‘But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return.’ (Mormon 6:17-20).

“In a soliloquy of death, Mormon reached across time and space to all, especially to that

‘remnant of the house of Israel’ (Mormon 7:1) who would one day read his majestic record. Those of another time and place must learn what those lying before him had forgotten—that all must ‘believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God,’ (Mormon 7:5)” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 321 – 322).

“Here is a voice that has spoken from the dust with a familiar spirit, and touched the hearts of men and women in many lands. Those who have read it prayerfully, be they rich or poor, learned or unlearned, have grown under its power.

“Let me tell you of a letter which we received a few years ago. A man wrote saying in substance: ‘I am in a federal reformatory in Ohio. I recently came across a copy of the Book of Mormon in the prison library. I have read it and when I read Mormon’s lamentation over his fallen people--O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you! Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. (Mormon 6:17-18.) When I read this I felt that Mormon was talking to me. Can I get a copy of that book?’

“We sent him a copy. He walked in the office some months later, a changed man. I am happy to report that a boy who had stolen gasoline, and then stolen automobiles, and then done other things until finally he was placed in a federal reformatory, was touched by the spirit of this book, and the report today is that he is now a successful man, rehabilitated, earning a living honestly for himself and family in a west coast city.

“Such has been the power of this great book in the lives of those who have read it prayerfully.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1959, pp. 119-20).

“The tragedy of the Book of Mormon is not what became of the Nephites but what the Nephites became.” (Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 477)

“Great nations do not fall because of external aggression; they first erode and decay inwardly, so that, like rotten fruit, they fall of themselves. The strength of a country is the sum total of the moral strength of the individuals in that country.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *This Nation Shall Endure*, p. 95 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 477).

“The fog and horror of battle pursue us right up to the end—the nation completely in arms at Cumorah with trained, experienced warriors, all a splendid sight marching forward. Alas, there’s nothing heroic about it. How could they have been such fools? Pity was Mormon’s only reflection on the splendid sight (Mormon 6:17-22). His last word to the survivors in the land is that they must lay down their arms and never take them up again, for they will never prevail by force. The only way they can prevail, he says (Mormon 7:3), is by repenting. Cumorah was no solution; the war went right on among the victors.” (Hugh Nibley, *Prophetic Book of Mormon*, p. 524).

Video: Media Series: Oh Ye Fair Ones

Mormon 7:

1-10 *Mormon’s Final counsel to Latter-day Israel*

“Mormon learned how to evaluate society from experience from abridging the Nephite records, and from heavenly visitants. So he based his historical judgment on the righteousness of the people, not on manifestations of military, political, economic, or cultural success. We discover this interpretation of history everywhere in Mormon’s writings. His concluding message, recorded in Mormon 7, is

poignant and direct. It reflects the maturity of his development as prophet-historian and offers his conclusion to the whole matter: the spiritual and cultural lessons future generations should learn from the disintegration of a once flourishing civilization. These lessons are precisely the recurring major motifs of the lengthy account of Nephite history that today bears Mormon's name." (Thomas W. Mackay, *Book of Mormon Symposium Series*, Hel – 3 Ne 8, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, p. 73).

"Careful and prayerful study of the scriptures-especially the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon-will not only bring people to understand in their minds the origin and destiny of the descendants of Jacob but will also cause them to know in their hearts what it means to come to earth through a chosen lineage and what God would have them do to be a light to the world, particularly to so many who sit in spiritual darkness. The words of the Lord to ancient Israel should be received by modern Israel with sobriety and humility, but they must be received and believed if we are to realize our potential to become a holy people and a royal priesthood. Jehovah spoke millennia ago of 'Israel, whom I have chosen' (Isaiah 44:1) and assured the Israelites that 'you only have I known of all the families of the earth' (Amos 3:2; see also Isaiah 45:4).

"And yet coming to this earth through a peculiar lineage involves much more than boasting of a blessing: it entails bearing a burden. 'Once we know who we are,' **Elder Russell M. Nelson** said, 'and the royal lineage of which we are a part, our actions and directions in life will be more appropriate to our inheritance' ("Thanks for the Covenant," 1988-89 BYU Devotional and Fireside Speeches, p. 59)." (McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4, p. 237-8).

"In its overall structure, the Book of Mormon begins and ends with concern for the Lamanites receiving the gospel. Reiterating the main points from the title page, Nephi says that through the Book of Mormon the Lamanites shall know they are of Israel and through it 'they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ' (2 Nephi 30:5; see 30:1-6). Then toward the end, Mormon says much the same thing: 'Know ye that ye are of the house of Israel. . . . Know ye that ye must come to the knowledge of your fathers, and repent of all your sins and iniquities, and believe in Jesus Christ' (Mormon 7:2, 5). At the physical center of the book is the narrative of the conversion of the Lamanites. This central part begins with the decree of the king of the Lamanites that Ammon and his brethren should be free to preach the word of God throughout all the land, and ends with gratitude by these great missionaries for the thousands of Lamanite souls 'brought to behold the marvelous light of God' (Alma 26:3). The narrative high point of the book is the ministry of the resurrected Savior. While discoursing to both the Lamanites and Nephites before him, Jesus as well speaks to their descendants, saying that the Book of Mormon 'shall come forth of the Father, from [the Gentiles] unto you' (3 Nephi 21:3). He confirms the prophecies of Isaiah that in the last days the children of Lehi will be gathered both physically and spiritually. 'Then is the fulfilling,' he says, 'of the covenant which the Father hath made unto his people, O house of Israel' (3 Nephi 20:12)." (Richard D. Rust, *FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 2, 1990, p. 16)

Hence, here is what you Lamanites need to do in order to believe, accept, & live Gospel:

1. Know who you are
2. Repent
3. Lay down weapons - purge selves of evil
4. Know what Father's knew
5. Believe in Christ
6. Repent & Be Baptized

"To those who wonder how Christ fits into our theology and our personal lives, we testify that Christ

is the Redeemer of the world. He is our Lord, our Light, and our Savior. He was ordained from on high to descend below all, to suffer above all! He is the focus of all that we teach and all we do. As a Church we are individual Christians, trying to prove our discipleship to the Savior. It is not an institutional matter; it is a personal matter” (Richard C. Edgley, *Ensign*, May 1998, 13).

“No man can say that this book (laying his hand on the Bible) is true...and at the same time say, that the Book of Mormon is untrue...There is not that person on the face of the earth who has had the privilege of learning the gospel of Jesus Christ from these two books, that can say that one is true, and the other is false. No Latter-day Saint, no man or woman, can say the Book of Mormon is true, and at the same time say that the Bible is untrue. If one be true, both are.” (*Journal of Discourses*, 1:38)

Mormon 8:

“Following this dismaying decline of Nephite civilization documented by his father, Moroni picked up the recorder's task, but he did not write to any living audience. Rather, he directed his final testimony—in fact, three final testimonies—to those who would receive the record in the last days...Moroni's experience was painful, for he observed in life, in history, and in vision the pollution and destruction of three glorious civilizations—his own Nephite world, the Jaredite nation, and our latter-day dispensation.” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 323).

1-13 *Moroni remains to relate a dire tale*

“Real courage includes standing against the evil one, even when we stand alone, often feeling the disdain and the ridicule of others. This is courage. This is strength. This is manhood, and it can be tough” (Bishop Richard C. Edgley, *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 42).

- 1-3 I remain alone - only one thing worse - to be alone while surrounded by people
- 4-7 Moroni the Lonely

“Let us take Brigham Young's advice and imagine we are standing in the place where Moroni, the last of the great Nephite prophets, stood. The assignment his father gave him to complete the record entrusted to his care was very difficult.

“He must have mourned as he described how his people had been hunted by the Lamanites until they were all destroyed. Imagine the loneliness he experienced as he reported that his father was among those who were killed. We sense that after that great destruction, the only thing Moroni was living for was to complete the record. He wrote, ‘Therefore I will write and hide up the records in the earth; and whither I go it mattereth not’ (Mormon 8:4).

“All that sustained Moroni is the faith that the Lord would preserve him long enough to complete the record and the knowledge that someday that record would be found by one chosen of the Lord. He realized that the record would be a voice of warning to nations of the consequences of turning away from the teachings of the Lord.

“It is from the depths of his heart that Moroni cries out to those who will eventually receive this record. He wants to spare those who read his account the heartache and misery that come from disobedience to God's laws.” (L. Tom Perry, *Living With Enthusiasm*, p. 63 – 64).

“While wandering as a lonely fugitive, Moroni added to his father's record. His words ring with pathos: ‘I would write ... if I had room upon the plates, but I have not; and ore I have none, for I am alone. My father hath been slain in battle, and all my kinsfolk, and I have not friends nor whither to go. ... And behold, the Lamanites have hunted my people, the Nephites, down from city to city and from place to place, even until they are no more; and great has been their fall; yea, great and

marvelous is the destruction of my people, the Nephites.’ (Mormon 8:5, 7.)

“Who can sense the depth of his pain, the poignant loneliness that constantly overshadowed him as he moved about, a fugitive relentlessly hunted by his enemies? For how long he actually was alone we do not know, but the record would indicate that it was for a considerable period. His conversation was prayer to the Lord. His companion was the Holy Spirit. There were occasions when the Three Nephites ministered to him. But with all of this, there is an element of terrible tragedy in the life of this man who became a lonely wanderer.” (President Gordon B. Hinckley, *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*, p. 197).

8-11 No one left but wicked people: no one to play with

12 Imperfections of the Book of Mormon

“Those persons who would esteem literary imperfections an evidence against the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon must belong to one of two classes—they are either not honest at heart and are seeking opportunity to evade the responsibility of knowing the truth, or they are shallow-minded, and to the world of sound reason, good judgment, and practical ability prefer the shadow compared with the substance. He ‘that will do the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine (cf. Jn 7:17)’ is the promise of our Savior; and the promises in the Book of Mormon that those who will not condemn the things of God because of human imperfections, but shall receive greater knowledge, are plain enough to condemn the world if they reject them, as much as the teachings of the Jewish record shall condemn mankind if they will not hearken.” (Matthias F. Cowley, *Cowley’s Talks on Doctrine*, p. 185).

“I would like to call your attention to one thing in the Book of Mormon. The Lord has promised us greater knowledge, greater understanding than we find in the Book of Mormon, when we are prepared to receive it. When the brother of Jared went upon the mount to have the Lord touch stones to give them light to light their way across the great ocean, the Lord revealed to him the history of this world from the beginning of it to the end. We do not have it.

“...Now the Lord has placed us on probation as members of the Church. He has given us the Book of Mormon, which is the lesser part, to build up our faith through our obedience to the counsels which it contains, and when we ourselves, members of the Church, are willing to keep the commandments as they have been given to us and show our faith as the Nephites did for a short period of time, then the Lord is ready to bring forth the other record and give it to us, but we are not ready now to receive it. Why? Because we have not lived up to the requirements in this probationary state in the reading of the record which had been given to us and in following its counsels.” (Joseph F. Smith, *Conference Report*, Oct. 1961, pp. 19-20).

“He that receives this record, and shall not condemn it because of imperfections that are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these. That is, they shall know of greater things than what are contained in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon contains some wonderful things...Great things, historically, are revealed in this book...concerning prophecies that are yet to take place, and that have already taken place...

“It does not mean those who should read this record and not perform the things that are contained therein; the promise is not extended to them. ‘Whoso receiveth this record’...No man or woman that fails to comply with these things that I have named (faith, repentance, baptism, laying on of hands)--believes and receives the record; they may pretend to believe the record, they may say it appears to be a very good record, and it speaks as if it might be true; but unless they do receive it, by obeying its ordinances, and its institutions, and complying with the principles of the Gospel, they would not be entitled to the promise recorded in the words of my text, ‘They shall know of greater things than these.’ (Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:69).

14-25 *Joseph Smith to bring forth record of infinite worth*

Imagine if Joseph Smith had removed the middle ring on the gold plates. He could have sold that to help his parents with financial matters. Perhaps the last leaf of the gold plates was blank, without any text. If so, Joseph could have removed it without harming the sacred record. These are the sorts of thoughts that Satan might have used to tempt the young prophet. Moroni had to warn Joseph, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family), to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive (JS-Hist 1:46).

"...when Joseph Smith went to the hill to obtain the plates, he was beset by conflicting emotions. The adversary sorely tempted him to desire the plates to relieve his family's poor financial situation. When the Prophet attempted to get the plates, he was forbidden to do so because, as Moroni stated, 'You have not kept the commandments of the Lord.' (As cited in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, p. 49) This lesson had a lasting impression on Joseph Smith as he more clearly saw how Satan was determined to stop the coming forth of this sacred record." (*Book of Mormon Student Manual*, 1981, p. 471).

14 I'm back

15-22 Prophecy and Promises of the restoration

"The Book of Mormon, which is a much more perfect translation than the Bible, not only makes no pretense of infallibility but specifically addresses the inevitability of errors existing in it. 'Whoso receiveth this record,' Moroni said, 'and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these.' He also said, 'if there be faults they be the faults of a man.' (Mormon 8:12, 17.) This principle and spirit apply to the reading of all scripture." (Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Gospel Symbolism*, p. 232).

"Some have alleged that these books of revelation are false, and they place in evidence changes that have occurred in the texts of these scriptures since their original publication. They cite these changes, of which there are many examples, as though they themselves were announcing revelation. As though they were the only ones that knew of them.

"Of course there have been changes and corrections. Anyone who has done even limited research knows that. When properly reviewed, such corrections become a testimony for, not against, the truth of the books..."

"Now, I add with emphasis that such changes have been basically minor refinements in grammar, expression, punctuation, clarification. Nothing fundamental has been altered.

"Why are they not spoken of over the pulpit? Simply because by comparison they are so insignificant, and unimportant as literally to be not worth talking about. After all, they have absolutely nothing to do with whether the books are true.

"After compiling some of the revelations, the ancient prophet Moroni said, '... if there be faults they be the faults of a man. But behold, we know no fault; nevertheless God knoweth all things; therefore, he that condemneth, let him be aware lest he shall be in danger of hell fire.' (Morm. 8:17.) 'And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these. ...' (Morm. 8:12.)

"...There has, over the years, been an endless procession of those who would examine these revelations by every formula save the right one. Each becomes evidence, as Paul said, 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (I Cor. 2:14.)

“These scriptural diamonds, as we have described them, will stand the test.” (Boyd K. Packer, *Conference Report*, May 1974 Ensign, “We Believe All That God Has Revealed”).

24-25 Power of Prayer

“The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. Mormon wrote near the end of the Nephite civilization. Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, he abridged centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us.

“Each of the major writers of the Book of Mormon testified that he wrote for future generations. Nephi said: ‘The Lord God promised unto me that these things which I write shall be kept and preserved, and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation.’ (2 Ne. 25:21.) His brother Jacob, who succeeded him, wrote similar words: ‘For [Nephi] said that the history of his people should be engraven upon his other plates, and that I should preserve these plates and hand them down unto my seed, from generation to generation.’ (Jacob 1:3.) Enos and Jarom both indicated that they too were writing not for their own people but for future generations. (See Enos 1:15–16; Jarom 1:2.)

“Mormon himself said, ‘Yea, I speak unto you, ye remnant of the house of Israel.’ (Morm. 7:1.) And Moroni, the last of the inspired writers, actually saw our day and time. ‘Behold,’ he said, ‘the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come, at that day when these things shall come forth among you. Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.’ (Morm. 8:34–35.)

“If they saw our day, and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, “Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?” (Ezra Taft Benson, “The Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1992, 5).

“Political unrest, warfare, and economic chaos prevail in many parts of the world, and the plagues of pornography, drug misuse, immorality, AIDS, and child abuse become more oppressive with each passing day. The media busily satisfies an apparently insatiable appetite of audiences to witness murder, violence, nudity, sex, and profanity. Is not this the day of which Moroni spoke when he recorded: “Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.” (Morm. 8:35.) And then he prophesied of conditions of the world as they are today” (M. Russell Ballard, “The Joy of Hope Fulfilled,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 31).

“My beloved brethren and sisters, today I would like to speak about one of the most significant gifts given to the world in modern times. The gift I am thinking of is more important than any of the inventions that have come out of the industrial and technological revolutions. This is a gift of greater value to mankind than even the many wonderful advances we have seen in modern medicine. It is of greater worth to mankind than the development of flight or space travel. I speak of the gift of the Book of Mormon. . . . This gift was prepared by the hand of the Lord over a period of more than a thousand years. . . . Once we realize how the Lord feels about this book, it should not surprise us that He also gives us solemn warnings about how we receive it. After indicating that those who receive the Book of Mormon with faith, working righteousness, will receive a crown of eternal glory (see D&C 20:14), the Lord follows with this warning: ‘But those who harden their hearts in unbelief, and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation’ (D&C 20:15)” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 4).

“There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. . . . Brethren and sisters, I implore you with all my heart that you consider with great solemnity the importance of the Book of Mormon to you personally and to the Church collectively” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 7).

26-41 *The Restoration to come in a day of wickedness and pollution*

24-25 Power of Prayer

26-33 The day the Book of Mormon will come forth

“A sex saturated society cannot feel the needs of its suffering members because instead of developing the love that looks outward, it turns man selfishly inward. Imperviousness to the promptings of the still small voice of God will also mean that we have ears, but cannot hear, not only the promptings of God but also the pleas of men.... we shout out people, nature, and God” (Neal A. Maxwell, *A Time to Choose*, p. 59-60, 71).

“In the name of “progress” and “growth,” we have plundered our planet and despoiled our environment. Many thoughtful observers are pessimistic for the future, even to the extent that some prophets of gloom believe that few people now alive will survive the next three decades. There is widespread agreement that in our mindless rush toward material prosperity we have unbalanced powerful biological forces that we do not fully understand, that portions of the environment are now extremely unstable and susceptible to rapid and potentially catastrophic change, and that we have not been paying sufficient attention to the very serious problems created by our technology” (A. B. Morrison, “Our Deteriorating Environment,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1971, 64–65).

“We all hear and read a great deal these days about our polluted physical environment—acid rain, smog, toxic wastes. But these parents recognize that there is another kind of pollution that is much more dangerous—the moral and spiritual.

“In a recent conference, **Elder Boyd K. Packer** said, ‘As we test the moral environment, we find the pollution index is spiraling upward’ (*Ensign*, May 1992, p. 66). The Apostle Paul foresaw ‘that in the last days perilous times shall come’ (2 Tim 3:1). And speaking of the last days, the prophet Moroni declared, ‘Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth’ (Morm. 8:31).

“Sadly, the effects of this great pollution are perhaps most evident in the mass media, films, television, and popular music. Of this, Senator Robert D. Byrd said, ‘If we in this nation continue to sow the images of murder, violence, drug abuse, ... perversion, [and] graphy ... before the eyes of millions of children, year after year and day after day, we should not be surprised if the foundations of our society rot away as if from leprosy’ (Michael Medved, *Hollywood vs. America*, New York: Harper Perennial, 1992, p. 194).

“Although there are some uplifting exceptions, in most areas of the mass media there seems to be a declaration of war against almost everything the majority treasures most.” (*Conference Report*, Nov. 1993 *Ensign*, “Rearing Children in a Polluted Environment”).

“The soil, the air, the water are all pure and healthy. Do not suffer them to become polluted with wickedness. Strive to preserve the elements from being contaminated by...those who the intelligence God has bestowed upon the human family...Keep your valley pure, keep your towns as pure as you possibly can, keep your hearts pure.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 8:79-80 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 480).

“When I...fly over the vast and beautiful expanses of our globe...I have the feeling that the good earth can hardly bear our presence upon it...The Brethren constantly cry out against that which is intolerable in the sight of the Lord: against pollution of mind, body, and our surroundings.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, June 1976, p. 4 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 482)

35 The Book is for us
36-44 The Proud, the Few

The Book of Mormon “was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us...If they say our day, and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’” (Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning*, pp. 19-20).

“Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.” (Mormon 8:34-35.)

“If they saw our day, and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’

“And there is example after example of how that question will be answered. For example, in the Book of Mormon we find a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming. A major portion of the book centers on the few decades just prior to Christ's coming to America. By careful study of that time period, we can determine why some were destroyed in the terrible judgments that preceded His coming and what brought others to stand at the temple in the land of Bountiful and thrust their hands into the wounds of His hands and feet.

“From the Book of Mormon we learn how disciples of Christ live in times of war. From the Book of Mormon we see the evils of secret combinations portrayed in graphic and chilling reality. In the Book of Mormon we find lessons for dealing with persecution and apostasy. We learn much about how to do missionary work. And more than anywhere else, we see in the Book of Mormon the dangers of materialism and setting our hearts on the things of the world. Can anyone doubt that this book was meant for us and that in it we find great power, great comfort, and great protection?” (President Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning*, p. 20-21).

“The task of the in these concluding days of the world’s history is to proceed with ‘unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save,’ to ‘press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men . . . feasting upon the word of Christ, and endur[ing] to the end. This is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God.’ (2 Ne 31:17-18)

“No other book helps us do this so well. No other book was ever divinely produced and protected solely for that purpose. No other book has ever been written with such a full view of the future dispensation to which that record would eventually come. As with Moroni, so too with virtually all the Book of Mormon prophets: ‘Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.’ (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ And The New Covenant*, p. 9).

“If the ultimate test of the Book of Mormon’s validity is whether or not it really has something to say, then the closing chapters alone should be enough to silence all criticism. Those chapters are

addressed explicitly to our own age (Mormon 8:33-41), and we can be the best judges of how well or ill they apply to it.” (Hugh Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, p. 399).

“I guess one of the greatest mysteries of human history is why people fail to learn from the past. In the case of the Church, why do those who profess to be true followers of Christ repeatedly become victims of the enticements of the world? The evidence is strong regarding the blessings that accrue to those who trust in and follow the ways prescribed by the Lord, yet so many members of the Church fail to heed the evidence.

“Many of us are more concerned about our fine apparel, the size of our houses, and our luxury cars than we are about assisting the poor and the needy. The forces promoting legalized abortion, pornography, and banning of public prayer also threaten the values that bind us together as a community of Saints.

“Clearly, the members of the Church face tremendous challenges in the latter days. We must not only resist but mount a counteroffensive against the temptations and teachings of the world if we are to remain a distinctive people.

“Despite the challenges we face, I plead with each of you to stand firm in your convictions. There is no escape from the whirlwind of judgments God will unleash on the heads of his children who choose to pursue a course that is against his will. We need to heed Moroni’s warning to avoid the fate that destroyed his people.” (L. Tom Perry, *Living With Enthusiasm*, p. 65)

“Many people spend most of their time working in the service of a self-image that includes sufficient money, stocks, bonds, investment portfolios, property, credit cards, furnishings, automobiles, and the like to guarantee carnal security throughout, it is hoped, a long and happy life. Forgotten is the fact that our assignment is to use these many resources in our families and quorums to build up the kingdom of God—to further the missionary effort and the genealogical and temple work; to raise our children up as fruitful servants unto the Lord; to bless others in every way, that they may also be fruitful. Instead, we expend these blessings on our own desires, and as Moroni said, ‘Ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not.’ (Morm. 8:39.)” (Spencer W. Kimball, quoted by Marion G. Romney, *Conference Report*, May 1977 Ensign, “The Purpose of Church Welfare System”).

“I fear that, at times, we run the risk of acting like seasoned, conditioned athletes who are more interested in what kind of jogging suits we’ll wear than in buckling down to train for the race. C. S. Lewis had an intriguing way of evaluating this dilemma: ‘We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. ... We are far too easily pleased.’ (*A Mind Awake*, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968, p. 168.)

“The prophet Mormon put it another way: ‘Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?’ (Morm. 8:38.)” (Marvin J. Ashton, _____).

“In urging members of the Church to be more sensitive to other people we seek to avoid the trap the Book of Mormon predicted when it spoke of an age when men and women would allow the needy ‘to pass by you and notice them not.’ (Mormon 8:39.) The Book of Mormon speaks of the need for us to ‘be familiar with all.’ (Jacob 2:17.) This is not simply a matter of economic familiarity and of imparting of our economic and material substance to others, for in an affluent society, food and clothing often are not people’s primary needs. We need to be familiar with others psychologically and spiritually—to know them well enough to know their other kinds of needs: spiritual, *intellectual*, and

emotional. We should assist in the meeting of these needs.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *A More Excellent Way*, p. 58).

“‘Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?’ (Mormon 8:37-39.)

“The Master could be found mingling with the poor, the downtrodden, the oppressed, and the afflicted. He brought hope to the hopeless, strength to the weak, and freedom to the captive. He taught of the better life to come— even eternal life. This knowledge ever directs those who receive the divine injunction: ‘Follow thou me.’ It guided Peter. It motivated Paul. It can determine our personal destiny.” (Thomas S. Monson, *Pathways To Perfection*, p. 83)

Mormon 9:

“Moroni at first evidently intended this chapter to be the last one in the entire Book of Mormon. Thus he addresses himself to ‘those who do not believe in Christ.’ (Mormon 9:1.) Then in a powerful, logical, and forceful manner he outlines the major teachings of the gospel of Jesus Christ and indicates why all men must understand and apply these principles if they are to find the peace and happiness they desire. He says the gospel is not restricted to a chosen few, but is available ‘unto all, even unto the ends of the earth.’ (Mormon 9:21.)” (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 307).

1-6 *A warning to those who reject Christ*

“More than 50 years ago during World War II, I had an experience. Our bomber crew had been trained at Langley Field, Virginia, to use the latest invention—radar. We were ordered to the West Coast and then on to the Pacific.

“We were transported on a freight train with boxcars...The baggage car got sidetracked, so we had no change of clothing during the six-day trip. It was very hot crossing Texas and Arizona. Smoke and cinders from the engine made it very uncomfortable. There was no way to bathe or wash our uniforms. We rolled into Los Angeles one morning—a grubby-looking outfit—and were told to return to the train that evening. We thought first of food. The 10 of us in our crew pooled our money and headed for the best restaurant we could find.

“It was crowded, and so we joined a long line waiting to be seated. I was first, just behind some well-dressed women. Even without turning around, the stately woman in front of me soon became aware that we were there. She turned and looked at us. Then she turned and looked me over from head to toe. There I stood in that sweaty, dirty, sooty, wrinkled uniform. She said in a tone of disgust, ‘My, what untidy men!’ All eyes turned to us.

“No doubt she wished we were not there; I shared her wish. I felt as dirty as I was, uncomfortable, and ashamed.

“Later, when I began a serious study of the scriptures, I noticed references to being spiritually clean. One verse says, ‘Ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell.’

“I could understand that. I remembered how I felt that day in Los Angeles. I reasoned that to be spiritually unclean would bring shame and humiliation immeasurably more intense than I felt then. I found references—there are at least eight of them—which say that no unclean thing can enter the presence of God. While I realized those references had little to do with dirty clothes or soiled hands, I decided I wanted to stay spiritually clean.” (Boyd K. Packer, *Conference Report*, May 1997, “Washed Clean”).

7-30 *A warning for those who reject the revelations and gifts of God*

Spencer W. Kimball said, “the Son of God is the greatest miracle of all. He is, indeed, the miracle of miracles, and every day of his life he gave evidence of it.” (quoted by Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, May 1989, “The God That Doest Wonders”).

“I welcome this [Easter] season...which reminds us that God is a God of miracles, that his Only Begotten Son is ‘the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in [him], though he were dead, yet shall he live.’ (John 11:25.)

“Among the signs of the true church, and included in the evidences of God’s work in the world, are the manifestations of his power which we are helpless to explain or to fully understand...Not surprisingly, these signs and marvels were most evident in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, the very Son of God himself. But startling and wonder-filled as they were, Christ’s many miracles were only reflections of those greater marvels which his Father had performed before him and continues to perform all around us. Indeed, the Savior’s humble performance of such obviously divine acts may be just one very special application of the declarations he made:

‘The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise’ (John 5:19) and ‘I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me’ (John 8:28).

“For example, the first miracle by Jesus recorded in the New Testament was the turning of water into wine at the marriage at Cana. (See John 2:1-11.) But poor, indeed, was the making of the wine in the pots of stone, compared with its original making in the beauty of the vine and the abundance of the swelling grapes. No one could explain the onetime miracle at the wedding feast, but then neither could they explain the everyday miracle of the splendor of the vineyard itself.

“It is most remarkable to witness one who is deaf made to hear again. But surely that great blessing is no more startling than the wondrous combination of bones and skin and nerves that lets our ears receive the beautiful world of sound. Should we not stand in awe of the blessing of hearing and give glory to God for that miracle, even as we do when hearing is restored after it has been lost?

“Is it not the same for the return of one’s sight or the utterance of our speech, or even that greatest miracle of all—the restoration of life? The original creations of the Father constitute a truly wonder-filled world. Are not the greatest miracles the fact that we have life and limb and sight and speech in the first place? Yes, there will always be plenty of miracles if we have eyes to see and ears to hear.” (Howard W. Hunter, *Conference Report*, May 1989 *Ensign*, “The God That Doest Wonders”)

“If we want something for this Church, and Kingdom, or if we want something for our individual lives, we must have a great, earnest, overpowering desire for that thing. We must reach out for it, with full faith in our Heavenly Father that the gift may be given us. Then it would seem as if the Lord himself cannot resist our petition. If our desire is strong enough, if our whole will is tempered and attuned to that which we desire, if our lives make us worthy of the desired gift, the Lord, by his own words, is bound to give us that which we desire, in his own time and in his own manner” (John A. Widtsoe, *CR*, April 1935, p. 82).

“...God will do more than what is best for *us*. He will do what is best for *us and all of our Heavenly Father’s children*. The conviction that the Lord knows more than we do and that he will answer our prayers in the way that is best for us and for all his other children is a vital ingredient of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, May 1994, p 99).

Consider the following lesson learned by Elder John H. Groberg as a young missionary traveling in the Tongan Islands by sailboat:

“We would always pray for protection, success, and good seas and wind to take us to our destination. Once I asked the Lord to bless us with a good tail wind so we could get to Foa quickly. As we got under way, one of the Older men said, ‘Elder Groberg, you need to modify your prayers a little.’ ‘How’s that?’ I replied. ‘You asked the Lord for a tail wind to take us rapidly to Foa. If you pray for a tail wind to Foa, what about the people who are trying to come from Foa to Pangai? They are good people, and you are praying against them. Just pray for a good wind, not a tail wind.’”

“That taught me something important. Sometimes we pray for things that will benefit us but may hurt others. We may pray for a particular type of weather, or to preserve someone’s life, when that answer to our prayer may hurt someone else. That’s why we must always pray in faith, because we can’t have true, God-given faith in something that is not according to His will. If it’s according to His will, all parties will benefit. I learned to pray for a good wind and the ability to get there safely, not necessarily a tail wind” (John H. Groberg, *In the Eye of the Storm*, p. 175).

“Faith must include trust...When we have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we must have trust in him. We must trust in him. We must trust him enough that we are content to accept his will, knowing that he knows what is best for us” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, May 1994, p. 99).

“As to the possession of signs and the working of miracles, we have this assurance from the Lord Jesus: ‘Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.’ (3 Ne. 18:20.) Four centuries later, the prophet Mormon rendered Jesus’ promise in these words: ‘Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you.’ (Moro. 7:26.) If it be right, if it be good, faith will bring it to pass. Moroni affirmed the same truth by saying: ‘Whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him; and this promise is unto all, even unto the ends of the earth.’ (Morm. 9:21.) Moroni then quotes Jesus’ promise that miracles and signs shall follow them that believe” (Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, p. 572).

As soon as the dispensation of the fullness of times was opened, the saints have been privileged to witness these signs. After the many miracles which attended the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, a public miracle was performed by **Joseph Smith** in April of 1830. Newel Knight had been overcome by an evil spirit. Joseph was called to help:

“I went and found him suffering very much in his mind, and his body acted upon in a very strange manner; his visage and limbs distorted and twisted in every shape and appearance possible to imagine; and finally he was caught up off the floor of the apartment, and tossed about most fearfully.

“His situation was soon made known to his neighbors and relatives, and in a short time as many as eight or nine grown persons had got together to witness the scene. After he had thus suffered for a time, I succeeded in getting hold of him by the hand, when almost immediately he spoke to me, and with great earnestness requested me to cast the devil out of him, saying that he knew he was in him, and that he also knew that I could cast him out.

“I replied, ‘If you know that I can, it shall be done;’ and then almost unconsciously I rebuked the devil, and commanded him in the name of Jesus Christ to depart from him; when immediately Newel spoke out and said that he saw the devil leave him and vanish from his sight. This was the first miracle which was done in the Church, or by any member of it; and it was done not by man, nor by the power of man, but it was done by God, and by the power of godliness; therefore, let the honor and the praise, the dominion and the glory, be ascribed to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

“This scene was now entirely changed, for as soon as the devil had departed from our friend, his countenance became natural, his distortions of body ceased, and almost immediately the Spirit of the Lord descended upon him, and the visions of eternity were opened to his view...All this was witnessed by many, to their great astonishment and satisfaction, when they saw the devil thus cast

out, and the power of God, and His Holy Spirit thus made manifest.” (*History of the Church*, vol. 1, pp. 82-3)

31-37 *Means prepared by God to translate the Book of Mormon*

“President McKay, I have been a personal witness in these last six months that, as the apostles of old found, we are finding today that the servants of the Living God are going forth, the Lord is working with them confirming the work, with the same signs following.

“I bear personal witness that the gift of tongues to a whole congregation, which I witnessed, as in the day of Pentecost, was observed down in one of the Latin American Missions, by which this congregation understood what was said, although what was being spoken to them was in a strange tongue. I have witnessed the healing of an impotent and crippled child from birth in the Brazilian Mission. I have witnessed the healing of a blind child in the Central American Mission.

“And so, enumerating all of these, more important than any of these signs, I have witnessed the reformation in the personal lives of individuals who accept the gospel and are true to its principles, which results from a true conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I bear you my solemn witness to the onrolling of the work of the Lord. The work is awakening everywhere.” (Harold B. Lee, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1960, p. 109)

“I have a son now in the mission field, a boy about twenty years of age, who went forth with a limited knowledge of the Gospel, with fear and trembling, not knowing what he would say, not knowing what he would do, but, nevertheless, trusting in the Lord. Within a few days, I received a letter from him, and he relates to me a very remarkable healing--I say it was remarkable, and yet it was such an incident as often occurs in the mission field. He said that he and his companions were visiting with a friend, when a little girl came rushing into the house and asked the elders to go immediately to her home and bless a little child that was afflicted--a child of non-Mormon parents. The elders responded. When they reached the place they found the little one stricken down with bronchial pneumonia. There was the mark of terrible fever in its eyes, and it was at the point of death; in fact, the death-rattle was in its throat, and the mother was bending over the child expecting every moment to see its spirit depart for the spirit world. The two elders took the child in their arms and anointed it with oil, and blessed it, and rebuked the disease. Relief came instantly; the child rested and was comfortable through the night; and when the elders came to inquire the next day they found the little one seated at the table, eating an orange, and fully recovered. My son goes on to say--and this is the point I desire to emphasize--‘Father, I laid my hands, with my companion, upon that child, and I saw it healed I know that this could have been done only by the power of God. My faith has been strengthened; and this is a testimony to me of the truth of the Gospel;’ and he adds, ‘I would not give it for millions of money.’” (Rudger Clawson, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1909, p. 94)

“Applicable today is Paul’s admonition to the Philippians, given over nineteen hundred years ago:

‘Wherefore, my beloved...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.’ (Phil. 2:12-15.)

“An outstanding doctrine of the Church is that each individual carries the responsibility to work out his own salvation, and salvation is a process of gradual development. The Church does not accept the doctrine that a mere murmured belief in Jesus Christ is all that is necessary. A man may say he believes, but if he does nothing to make that belief or faith a moving power to do, to accomplish, to produce soul growth, his professing will avail him nothing. ‘Work out your own salvation’ is an exhortation to demonstrate by activity, by thoughtful, obedient effort the reality of

faith. But this must be done with a consciousness that absolute dependence upon self may produce pride and weakness that will bring failure. With ‘fear and trembling’ we should seek the strength and grace of God for inspiration to obtain the final victory.

“To work out one’s salvation is not to sit idly by dreaming and yearning for God miraculously to thrust bounteous blessings into our laps. It is to perform daily, hourly, momentarily, if necessary, the immediate task or duty at hand, and to continue happily in such performance as the years come and go, leaving the fruits of such labors either for self or for others to be bestowed as a just and beneficent Father may determine.

“I am not unmindful of the scripture that declares: ‘by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.’ (Ephesians 2:8.) That is absolutely true, for man in his taking upon himself mortality was impotent to save himself. When left to grope in a natural state, he would have become, and did become, so we are told in modern scripture, ‘carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature.’ (Alma 42:10.) But the Lord, through his grace, appeared to man, gave him the gospel or eternal plan whereby he might rise above the carnal and selfish things of life and obtain spiritual perfection. But he must rise by his own efforts and he must walk by faith.” (President David O. McKay, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1957, p. 7).

“Should we not baptize all those who want to or are willing to be baptized? The answer is not that simple. It is a great responsibility to bring someone into this Church who has not been adequately taught and who has not received of the Spirit so that through baptism they may become a new person through repentance. Moroni gave a solemn warning about this in Mormon 9:29: ‘See that you are not baptized unworthily.’ ”

“Some of our young missionaries are so hungry for baptisms they may urge people to be baptized before their investigators understand what they are baptized for. Peter said, ‘Repent and be baptized.’ (Acts 2:38.) We must be certain the repentance process is at work.” (James E. Faust, *Church News*, 06/29/96)

“There is no more simple yet profound statement on the posture the generations who are separated in many ways by time and experience should adopt toward each other than the one found in the Book of Mormon (Mormon 9:31):

‘Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.’

“What more sublime statement could be made?—the ‘outgoing’ generations asking the ‘incoming’ generation not to be harsh or too quick to judge—to profit from the mistakes of the past, but to be grateful to God for the opportunity to ‘learn to be more wise’ than predecessors have been. Each of us leaves a ‘record’ of memories for our friends and children to ‘read.’ Would that the ‘reading’ could occur in the spirit of Moroni’s counsel.

“The young should be slower to condemn those who have preceded them, for they have not yet worn the ‘moccasins’ of power and decision making. The old are urged to hope genuinely that their successors will be ‘more wise’ than they have been. Obviously, the scripture relates to the major spiritual lessons about the failure and success of the societies described in the Book of Mormon stream of history; but the pithy verse, as scriptures often are, is replete with insight at several levels simultaneously.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *For the Power is in Them*, p.16–17).

“We are responsible for our reactions when we see imperfections in others. Moroni said of the labors of the recording prophets some things that are very relevant with regard to how we should respond to imperfections in others: ‘Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather *give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.*’ (Mormon 9:31. Italics added.)

“A wise leader will be aware that his imperfections are noticed, but he will also humbly hope

that when others see his imperfections, this will provide them with a chance to learn to be more wise than he has been. Good parents, as well as good prophets, always so hope, too.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, p. 112)

III. The Day of Miracles Has Not Ceased

See Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “Miracles,”

“Although we are generally counseled not to speak of sacred things like the miracles we have witnessed, there are times when the Spirit prompts us to share these experiences, sometimes even in a setting where our account will be published. The miracles written in the scriptures were obviously intended to be shared, usually to strengthen the faith of those who already believed. Modern servants of the Lord have also felt impressed to describe miraculous events to strengthen the faith of believers. Many of these have been published. I have chosen to share some of these here.

“A few years after the pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, a young man took an ox team up Millcreek Canyon on a cold winter day to get logs to build a house. It was extremely cold, and the snow was deep. His sled held five large logs. After he loaded the first one, he turned around to load another. In that instant, the log already on the sled—22 feet long and about 10 inches in diameter—slipped off the sled and rolled down on him, striking him in the hollow of his legs. He was thrown face-forward across the four logs still on the ground and pinned there, alone, with no way to extract himself. He knew he would freeze to death and die alone in the mountains.

“The next thing this young pioneer remembered was waking up, sitting on a load of five logs nicely bound on his sled with his oxen pulling the load down the canyon. In his personal history he wrote, “Who it was that extricated me from under the log, loaded my sled, hitched my oxen to it, and placed me on it, I cannot say.” Thirty-three years later, that young pioneer, Marriner Wood Merrill, was ordained an Apostle.

“Many miracles happen to aid individuals in pursuing their personal family histories. In an issue of the *Church News*, a woman told how she returned to her ancestral home in Japan to seek information about her ancestors. After finding nothing in official records, local libraries, and cemeteries, she gave up and was driving away empty-handed when she became lost and somehow drove past a cemetery she did not know existed. From the car window she saw a familiar name on a tombstone, stopped, and found many markers with the information she sought.”

“Miraculous healings through priesthood blessings and the prayer of faith are familiar to most of us. An experience related in the *Friend* magazine is typical. During his early childhood, Elder John M. Madsen was afflicted with double pneumonia. After examining the little boy, a doctor told his parents he could do nothing for him and offered no hope that he would live through the night. Soon the child sank into unconsciousness. When his mother felt for his pulse and could find none, she prayed fervently, and the father gave the dying child a priesthood blessing. Immediately he recovered consciousness and began to feel better.

“In his great talk on miracles, Elder Matthew Cowley tells of several miraculous healings, including this one that occurred while he was serving as a mission president among the Maori people of New Zealand.

“One Sunday a father brought a nine-month-old baby forward to Brother Cowley, requesting that he give him a name and a blessing. Here I quote Brother Cowley:

“I said, ‘All right, what’s the name?’ So he told me the name, and I was just going to start when he said, ‘By the way, give him his vision when you give him a name. He was born blind.’ It shocked me, but then I said to myself, why not? Christ said to his disciples when he left them, ‘Greater things than I have done shall you do.’ (See John 14:12.) I had faith in that father’s faith. After I gave that child its name, I finally got around to giving it its vision. That boy is about twelve years old now. The last time I was back there I was afraid to inquire about him. I was sure he had gone blind again. That’s the way my faith works sometimes. So I asked the branch president about

him. And he said, ‘Brother Cowley, the worst thing you ever did was to bless that child to receive his vision. He’s the meanest kid in the neighborhood; always getting into mischief.’ Boy, I was thrilled about that kid getting into mischief!”

President Gordon B. Hinckley shared another miracle in the restoration of sight: “I recall once when I arrived in Hong Kong I was asked if I would visit a woman in the hospital whose doctors had told her she was going blind and would lose her sight within a week. She asked if we would administer to her and we did so, and she states that she was miraculously healed. I have a painting in my home that she gave me which says on the back of it, ‘To Gordon B. Hinckley in grateful appreciation for the miracle of saving my sight.’ I said to her, ‘I didn’t save your sight. Of course, the Lord saved your sight. Thank Him and be grateful to Him.’ ”

“As I said earlier, the Lord works miracles in response to the faith of His children. No denomination—not even the restored Church—has a monopoly on the blessings of the Lord. He loves and blesses all of His children.

“In an airport one day I picked up a copy of the *Dallas Morning News*. My eyes were drawn to a columnist’s report of a letter detailing a remarkable miracle. The writer’s five-year-old granddaughter, Heather, suddenly became feverish and lethargic. She breathed with difficulty, and her lips turned blue. By the time she arrived at the hospital, her kidneys and lungs had shut down, her fever was 107 degrees, and her body was bright red and covered with purple lesions. The doctors said she was dying of toxic shock syndrome, cause unknown. As word spread to family and friends, God-fearing people from Florida to California began praying for little Heather. At the grandfather’s request, a special prayer service was held in their Church of Christ congregation in Waco, Texas. Miraculously, Heather suddenly came back from the brink of death and was released from the hospital in a little over a week. The columnist concluded that Heather “is living proof that God does answer prayers and work miracles.”

“We do not usually speak of spiritual gifts as a miracle, but sometimes the effect of a spiritual gift is miraculous. For example, many missionaries who must learn a new language are blessed with the gift of tongues. Most often this gift merely accelerates the normal process of learning, but sometimes its effect is so immediate that it can only be called a miracle. A young mission president experienced this in the South Pacific in 1913. John Alexander Nelson Jr. spoke Samoan but not Tongan. When he arrived for an assignment in Tonga, he found that he had been scheduled to speak to a congregation of 300 Wesleyan Methodists. He began in faith by speaking a few sentences of greeting he knew in the Tongan language, and then suddenly found himself continuing to speak in Tongan. He spoke without hesitation for nearly an hour “as fluently as any native.” In Eric B. Shumway’s book *Tongan Saints: Legacy of Faith* describes many other miracles experienced in those islands of faith. For example, in the midst of the furious hurricane that devastated Vava’u in 1961, a Tongan father reasoned that he had priesthood power to heal a body and saw no reason why he could not also “heal” the raging storm. Brother Shumway writes, “His dramatic blessing at the peak of the hurricane saved his home and the people who took refuge there.”

“In another experience, heavy ocean waves were crashing onto a beach at a time when the missionaries had scheduled some baptisms. An elder “stepped out and blessed the ocean, commanding it to be still so these sacred ordinances could be accomplished.” Almost instantly the ocean calmed down and five people were baptized. Then as the party started up the path from the ocean, “the waves came crashing in again over the very spot the sacred ordinances were held.”

“One of the greatest miracles we can imagine is for someone to be brought back to life after being dead for a time. So it was with Lazarus, whom Jesus raised (see John 11:17, 39-44). So it has been with others in our day.

“The miracle of raising someone from the dead is so exceptional and so sacred that those who have been privileged to see it should never speak of it publicly unless the Spirit specifically induces them to do so. Our published literature contains two such examples I can share. The first is from the Matthew Cowley talk that impressed me so deeply when I was a student at BYU. I quote:

“I was called to a home in a little village in New Zealand one day. There the Relief Society

sisters were preparing the body of one of our saints. They had placed his body in front of the big house, as they call it, the house where the people come to wail and weep and mourn over the dead, when in rushed the dead man's brother. He said, 'Administer to him.' And the young natives said, 'Why, you shouldn't do that; he's dead.' 'You do it!' ...

"The younger native got down on his knees and he anointed this man. Then this great old sage got down and blessed him and commanded him to rise. You should have seen the Relief Society sisters scatter. He sat up and said, 'Send for the elders; I don't feel very well.' ... We told him he had just been administered to, and he said, 'Oh, that was it.' He said, 'I was dead. I could feel life coming back into me just like a blanket unrolling.' He outlived the brother that came in and told us to administer to him."

Another sacred experience is related in the book *Tongan Saints*. It happened while Elder 'Iohani Wolfgramm and his wife were serving a mission in their native Tonga, presiding over a branch on an outlying island. Their three-year-old daughter was accidentally run over by a loaded taxi. Four of the occupants of the taxi sorrowfully carried her lifeless body to her parents. "Her head was crushed and her face was terribly disfigured." The sorrowing helpers offered to take the little girl's body to the hospital so the doctors could repair her severely damaged head and face for the funeral. I now quote the words of her father, Elder Wolfgramm: "I told them I did not want them to take her but that I would ask God what I should do and, if it was possible, to give her life back."

"The helpers took the little girl's body into the chapel. Elder Wolfgramm continued: "I asked them to hold her while I gave her a priesthood blessing. By then the curious people of the village were flocking in to see our stricken little daughter. As I was about to proceed with the administration, I felt tongue-tied. Struggling to speak, I got the distinct impression that I should not continue with the ordinance. It was as if a voice were speaking to me saying: 'This is not the right time, for the place is full of mockers and unbelievers. Wait for a more private moment.'

"My speech returned at that moment and I addressed the group: 'The Lord has restrained me from blessing this little girl, because there are unbelievers among you who doubt this sacred ordinance. Please help me by leaving so I can bless my child.' "

The people left without taking offense. The grieving parents carried the little girl to their home, put her body on her own bed, and covered her with a sheet. Three hours passed, and her body began to show the effects of death. The mother pleaded with the father to bless her, but he insisted that he still felt restrained. Finally, the impression came that he should now proceed. I return to his words:

"All present in the home at that moment were people with faith in priesthood blessings. The feeling of what I should do and say was so strong within me that I knew Tisina would recover completely after the blessing. Thus, I anointed her head and blessed her in the name of Jesus Christ to be well and normal. I blessed her head and all her wounds to heal perfectly, thanking God for his goodness to me in allowing me to hold his priesthood and bring life back to my daughter. I asked him to open the doors of Paradise, so I could tell her to come back and receive her body again and live. The Lord then spoke to my heart and said, 'She will return to you tomorrow. You will be reunited then.' "

"The parents spent an anxious night beside the body of the little girl, who appeared to be lifeless. Then, suddenly, the little girl awoke, alive and well. Her father's account concludes: "I grabbed her and examined her, her head and face. They were perfectly normal. All her wounds were healed; and from that day to this, she has experienced no complications from the accident. Her life was the miraculous gift from Heavenly Father during our missionary labors in Fo'ui."

"I have seen quite a few miracles during my Church service. I feel I can share two of them at this time.

"I had an experience with the gift of tongues in the newly opened country of Bulgaria. In November 1990 we sent missionaries into Bulgaria. A handful of elders entered from Serbia, without any contacts or training in the Bulgarian language. Through their labors and the blessings of the Lord, we soon had 45 Bulgarian members.

“In April 1991 I went to Bulgaria with Area President Hans B. Ringger and mission president Dennis B. Neuenschwander. There, most of our members and about 150 investigators assembled in an attractive civic building in Sofia for a fireside at which I was to speak. My interpreter was Mirella Lazarov, a newly baptized member in her 20s. The audience included many professional people and some government officials. I had prayed fervently for guidance in this talk but had little time for preparation.

“I began by telling the audience about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and how we differed from other Christian churches. I then felt impressed to speak about the Apostasy, which I did in some detail. In doing so, I completely forgot that I was speaking through an interpreter who had been a member only five months and had almost no background in the subject of the Apostasy. Forgetful of this, I made no attempt to speak in simple terms but made extensive use of the unfamiliar English words involved in a detailed explanation of the Apostasy and the Restoration.

“After the crowd had departed, Sister Lazarov tearfully told me of her unique experience in translating my talk. Despite her fluency in English, she sometimes heard me speak words or express thoughts she did not understand in English. She said that whenever this happened, “another voice” spoke through her so she found herself using words or explaining concepts in Bulgarian that she did not understand in English. I told her to cherish this experience and testify of it to others. She had experienced the gift of tongues in a classic circumstance in which the Lord gives a spiritual gift to one person so that others of His children can be edified and His work can be forwarded (see D&C 46:9)

“I experienced another miracle during an attempted military coup to overthrow the government of Philippine president Corazon Aquino in December 1989. Many persons were killed in nearly a week of heavy fighting between rebel and loyal government troops. A principal site of this fighting was Camp Aguinaldo, which adjoins our temple in Manila.

“During the first day of the attempted coup, gunfire and bombing could be heard from our temple. That night the road in front of the temple was occupied by rebel armored vehicles, trucks, and many soldiers. With the coming of daylight on Saturday, these rebel forces exchanged gunfire with the loyal government troops in Camp Aguinaldo. Opposing aircraft fired rockets and dropped bombs.

“At about 3:00 P.M. Saturday afternoon, the rebel soldiers breached the gate of the temple and occupied our temple grounds. At this time we had five Philippine employees there: three security men and two custodians. Our temple president, Floyd H. Hogan, instructed them by phone not to resist the soldiers entering the temple grounds or the temple annex, which housed auxiliary facilities like name processing, but to secure the temple and take cover there. The man in charge, Brother Espi, later wrote that he worked to develop a good relationship with the rebel soldiers to convince them that even though they wanted to get access to the temple, “because of the sacred nature of the temple, they should not try to enter.”

“Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning there were almost continuous exchanges of gunfire between the government troops in Camp Aguinaldo and the rebels around the camp, including those occupying our temple grounds. Brother Espi later wrote: “We all thought that we are on our own but still asked our Heavenly Father to strengthen each one of us and to spare the temple from being desecrated.”

“Others were praying too. In his later report, Area President George I. Cannon wrote: “The Sunday when the rebellion was going on was fast Sunday. Throughout the Philippines the members were praying and fasting for the temple, for the members, and for the missionaries.”

“Sunday morning a government helicopter gunship appeared and strafed the vicinity of the temple, but retreated because of stiff resistance from the rebels’ 50-caliber machine guns. About noon that day an air force plane dropped several bombs that hit the residence house near the temple. Bomb fragments broke windows in the temple annex.

“Sunday evening Manila radio reported that the Mormon temple was in rebel hands but that a government force was moving in to drive them out. At that report, President Hogan, the temple

president and a retired colonel in the U.S. military, went into action himself. He made the dangerous walk from the temple president's home to the assembling government troops. There he found that their commander had given the rebels one hour to surrender and planned to attack them at 11:00 P.M. His force included armored personnel carriers, heavy mortars, and at least 150 soldiers, who believed they outnumbered and could easily defeat the rebel force in the temple annex. But their attack would obviously employ extensive heavy weapons and rifle fire and would cause great damage to the temple facilities. President Hogan argued with the commanding officer that if he would only wait until daylight, the rebels might abandon the temple grounds and no attack would be necessary. The commander insisted that he had to follow his orders, and President Hogan was not able to contact the general who had given the order to see if he would rescind it.

"During this time I was the member of the Quorum of the Twelve whom the Philippines Area President contacted for help at headquarters. Thirty minutes before the 11:00 P.M. Manila deadline, Area President George I. Cannon phoned me to report that our temple annex and grounds were the last remaining rebel stronghold in Manila and the army had massed artillery and troops for an assault at any moment. He said he had done all he could through the Philippine government and the American ambassador to discourage the attack, but without success. It was then 7:30 A.M. Sunday in Salt Lake City.

"By a remarkable coincidence—one of those happenings that cannot be coincidental—the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles had scheduled an unusual meeting that Sunday morning. At 8:00 A.M., 3 December, just 30 minutes after I received that alarming report from Manila, the assembled First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve bowed in prayer and pleaded with the Lord to intervene to protect His house. Elder Marvin J. Ashton led our prayer. As we prayed, it was 11:00 P.M. Sunday evening in Manila, the exact hour appointed for the assault.

"The attack never came. Twenty minutes after our prayer, President Cannon phoned Church headquarters to report that the military commander had unexpectedly decided against a night assault. Early the next morning, Philippine time, President Hogan phoned to say that the rebels had melted away during the night. I recorded in my journal, "I consider this a miracle of divine intervention no less impressive than many recorded in holy writ."

"On Monday morning President Hogan inspected the temple annex. It had shrapnel marks and many broken windows on the north side, but inside, none of its locked rooms had been entered. The temple itself had not been entered and was not damaged. A total of six mortar or rocket shells had exploded inside the temple grounds. From their trajectory, President Hogan concluded that some of these shells had to have passed between the spires of the temple. The patron housing building under construction nearby had been hit by four or five rockets and had sustained extensive damage. The Manila temple opened for normal sessions the next day.

"A week later I received a letter from the Philippine ambassador to the United States, Emmanuel Pelaez, whom I had recently hosted at Church headquarters. His letter explained how he had worked behind the scenes, as soon as he learned that our temple was threatened, to urge the Philippine military to "do everything possible" to spare this sacred building from damage. After the fighting was over, they had reported to him that "they were careful in their counter-shelling, so as not to cause damage" to the temple. I concluded that the Lord had worked behind the scenes through these government servants to save His house.

"When I was in the Philippines a few months later, I personally inspected the temple and grounds and found that despite all of the shelling and exchanges of gunfire within a few feet of this sacred edifice, it was completely unmarked by any shell fire except for one bullet hole, apparently a single stray rifle shot, at the top of the highest steeple. As President and Sister Donald L. Hilton of the Philippines Manila Mission wrote in a letter sent to their missionaries, "an unseen army of angels assisted faithful temple guards that the temple was not desecrated." (Dallin H. Oaks, "Miracles," *Ensign*, June 2001, 6; From a talk given at a Church Educational System fireside in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on 7 May 2000).