

Podcast Episode 58: Nephi, Part 1

QUESTION: In our day, what can we learn from the example of Nephi, son of Lehi, and from the legacy he left us in scripture?

DENVER: Look, we're enacting ancient events. We're part of a process that began a long time ago and is going on still. You read (what is it, Genesis chapter 49?) the patriarchal blessings of the various patriarchs, you look at the lives of those men in the flesh—we're just reenacting them on a grander scale and with more of us, to be sure, but the patterns are there.

The records of the prophets are not just history. As the Book of Mormon demonstrates very ably, it's not history—it's highly edited, very limited, highly selected. At one point, they estimate less than one percent of their history even gets alluded to—material that has been selected on account of prophetic foreknowledge of our circumstance. And so it constitutes not merely a history, but a prophetic pattern in which they try to get us to see the process that we ought to be reenacting in our lives to do the things that they did that brought them to know the Lord.

Nephi couldn't have been more plain if he had said, "Here's my guidebook. Here's my rule book. Here's my pattern recognition sequence. You go and do likewise." He's trying to get us to get our hands around, as Joseph Smith put it, the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ involves the path to and through the veil into the presence of God, becoming joint heir, becoming a son of God.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith page 375, he refers to (and I don't have a copy of it with me, but I think I can quote it) "sons of God who exalt themselves to be God even before they were born, and all can cry Abba, Father." Joseph wanted us to take the religion that he restored to the earth rather seriously and to search into and contemplate both the heavens and the darkest abyss.

As Nephi paraphrased Isaiah in the concluding chapter of Nephi's use of Isaiah in his material, he left out a phrase that appears in Isaiah 29, and I believe he did it very wittingly. I believe he did it so that as you look at the material, you'll ask yourself, "Why did he leave that out?" And you'll think about the omission: *And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed* (Isaiah 29:11). He left out "the vision of all" (see also T&C Appendix, "A Prophet's Prerogative"). Well, you're talking about Zion here, yesterday and today, and as is usual any time you get to a substantive topic that's worth paying a lot of

attention to, the Book of Mormon has something to say. In fact, while it doesn't comment at extraordinary length, the substance of what it has to say on this subject is really quite startling.

I think anyone who is unwilling to entertain a thoroughgoing examination of the life and the ministry of Joseph Smith is demonstrating fear, which is the opposite of love. We don't have details about the life of Moses. We don't have details about the life of Peter. We have an extraordinarily limited vantage point from which to examine either one of them. We don't have much in the way of detail about the life of Nephi. In fact, everything that we have about him is autobiographical. Therefore, to some extent, Nephi is going to tell us a narrative about himself that doesn't give a full and fair and impartial accounting of why it was his brothers continually found themselves not persuaded by the message that Nephi was delivering.

I understand there are those who are hard-hearted, and I understand there are those who resent and envy the younger brother when the younger brother supplants the older brother—particularly when the supplanting takes place very early on in a difficult life's journey, when he returns with the emblems of kingship, with the possession of the sword of Laban, with the brass plates, with all of the indicia that he's the leader. And then during the trek in the wilderness, he actually assumes the role. And by the time they get to the coast now, he is the one (and not his father) to whom the revelation is coming about the construction of the boat. And so the supplanting has been complete by the time they get to the coast. And when Lehi dies in the new world, you've now taken off the one governing, rallying point, and the rebellion is in full swing. But what might have been done in the way of a list of legitimate criticisms of Nephi by Laman and Lemuel, if we were willing to hear their side of the story? We don't know; we don't have that.

Joseph Smith, as they're translating the Book of Mormon, encounters the topic of baptism; and he goes, and he inquires, and John the Baptist appears to him. And it's translating the Book of Mormon that is the trigger for the inquiry. He translates the Jacob chapter 2 material. Now, keep in mind, he began with the record of Lehi, abridged by Mormon, and he went all the way through 116 pages, at which point he entrusted Martin Harris. The 116 pages were lost, and Joseph commenced the translation (from the point that it stopped after the 116 pages) to the end. And when he got to the end, then he was told, "Go back and take the small plates of Nephi that had been included for a wise purpose, and translate them." So he translated the small plates of Nephi, in which we find from 1 Nephi to the Words of Mormon. Therefore, in translation, you pick up after that period—King Mosiah, King Benjamin, to the end of the Book of Mormon, and then you move to the beginning of 1 Nephi.

When you walk through the lives of all these men whose lives have some import— Even Nephi's brother, Jacob, who was ordained by Nephi, talks about his ordination by his brother and then later confirms, "I got my errand from the Lord" (see Jacob 1:4 RE). There's a difference between the invite that is extended by ordination and the blessing that comes when the authority is conferred, when the power is conferred. And you're seeing that dichotomy, because *Enoch was twenty-five years old when he was ordained under the hand of Adam, and he was sixty-five and Adam blessed him. And he saw the Lord, and he walked with him, and was before his face continually; and he walked with God three hundred and sixty-five years, making him four hundred and thirty years old when he was translated* (T&C 154:15).

We have a tendency, all of us, to take concepts or pictures or ideas and to put them in our heads and then to rely upon those pictures as we go forward learning new things—the object being to fit what we learn that is new into the framework of what we already know, or we are already familiar with. That can be handicapping.

In the 28th chapter of 2 Nephi, Nephi cautioned us about permitting what he calls *the traditions of men* to override what he calls *the whisperings of the spirit*. And he suggests that you run into mistakes, you run into errors—some of them terrible errors—when you permit those traditions or those pictures that you already have inside your head to be the framework from which you reconstruct new information that you learn. It's hard to do so, but when it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ, you would be best advised to start with a blank slate and to allow it to inform you as if you're hearing it for the first time, because those words in scripture don't necessarily mean what the picture in your head suggests that they mean.

Our Savior was, and is, first and foremost a teacher. *By His knowledge*, Isaiah and Nephi wrote, *[he] shall justify many* (Isaiah 19:2 RE; Mosiah 8:4 RE)—by His knowledge. He possesses things which we do not yet comprehend. He possesses things which He would like us *to* comprehend. How then are we to comprehend the things which only He can teach? By permitting Him to do so, by coming to Him.

1 Nephi 13—there's a series of verses in there that's giving the prophetic foreshadowing, the foretelling of what was going to happen when the gentiles became the inheritors of this land. And beginning at verse 12: *And I looked and [I] beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by...many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.*

There's your answer to the question of whether people got the Holy Ghost without the laying on of hands. At some point, I mean, Columbus was inspired by... Well, anyway...

It came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters (vs. 13). So it wasn't just Columbus; it was your own ancestors who were wrought upon by the Holy Ghost to come and occupy this land.

Even though two of my ancestors were children in the Liverpool area who accepted a free afternoon boat ride from a captain who was loading the boat up with children, and then proceeded to sail from Liverpool to the United States—well, to the colonies—where he sold the children off as indentured servants. And one of those was a boy, and another one was a girl who were sold to the same family as indentured servants. And when they worked their way through the indentured servitude and they were free, they married one another. And so I guess the Spirit works directly on some and through captains on others. In any event...

And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise; and I beheld the wrath of God, that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles and were smitten. And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceedingly fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain (vs. 14-15) —

Which tells you that what he's talking about is the ones who were the designated inheritors match a specific description and fit within a certain ethnicity called "gentile."

And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them. And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them. And I beheld that the power of God was with them, and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle. And I... beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations. (vs. 16-19; see also 1 Nephi 3:20 RE)

Well, you'd have to know a lot about our early history to know just how very true that is. Sometime you ought to look into the battle of New York and how Washington managed to escape. And he was the last one to leave that morning. He wanted all of the troops

withdrawn before he would leave and enter the boat himself. But for the intervening fog bank, the American Revolution would've ended that day. The hand of God was throughout it. In fact, Washington talked about the hand of Providence ruling throughout.

Then we have Jacob's teaching in 2 Nephi 10. And Jacob—the one that Nephi thought so much of as a teacher that he gave chapters of his own writing over to his younger brother, Jacob— Jacob, teaching in chapter 10 beginning at verse 10, says:

But behold, this land, said God, shall be a land of thine inheritance, and the Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land. And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations. And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God. For he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish, for I, the Lord, the king of heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them forever, that hear my words. (see also 2 Nephi 7:2 RE)

Joseph said, "Knowledge saves a man; and in the world of spirits no man can be exalted but by knowledge" (*TPJS* p. 357). He also said in another talk:

When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step-by-step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel— you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It's not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave. (*TPJS*, p. 348)

Now, if you go back and you reread that quote, and you comprehend that it is possible to pass through the veil before you leave here, "it will be a great while after you pass through the veil before you will have learned them. It's not all to be comprehended in this world" — you begin to say, "Ah, I think I understand why, after 40 years of reflection, Nephi commented about how it was his constant meditation to think upon the things which he had seen and heard. And knowledge obtained from heaven is dynamic.

Another place, Joseph said:

A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, for if does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge, and consequently more power than many men who are

on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God. (TPJS, p. 217)

The fact of the matter is that Nephi did not compose what he composed until about 40 years after the event, because it was time and distance and reflection that gave him the ability to put into words the truth of what it was he experienced.

In fact, it's really sort of an interesting study. If you take and you look at what the Lord does in 3 Nephi, He has this agenda that He's been assigned by the Father, and Christ discharges the agenda. And He goes through, and as you read the chapters in 3 Nephi, it's really structured; it's really orderly. And then He announces, "Now I've finished what the Father told me to deliver to you," and He just begins to talk. And as He begins to talk, what unfolds is non-chronological; it's topical, but it's past, present, and future. His thoughts are not like our thoughts; they aren't. They're nonlinear. And sometimes, it's not easy.

We are so situated that we have the inability to do two things at once. No matter who you are, you are only doing one thing at a time. Your entire life you are either focusing on one thing or on something else. And whatever it is upon which you dwell, that's what you've chosen. Hence the saying: *Let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God* (T&C 139:6).

Is the power of godliness related to that? Is the power of godliness related to the presence of God? Well, the Book of Mormon continually declares that to be the case. And anyone that suggests otherwise is flatly contradicting the message of the Book of Mormon. It is all about the ascent back to the presence of God. Testimony after testimony, experience after experience— that's what the Book of Mormon stands for. That is the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. You encounter it almost immediately in the first chapter when Lehi rises up; and you encounter it in Nephi; and you encounter it in Jacob; and you encounter it in Enos and in Alma and in Mosiah. You just continually get the same message.

Let's go to 2 Nephi chapter 30. I want to remind you that it is knowledge which defines the millennial glory of man. Begin at verse 8 of 2 Nephi chapter 30:

And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth. And with righteousness shall the Lord God judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. For the time speedily cometh that the Lord God shall cause a great division among the people, and the

wicked will he destroy; and he will spare his people, yea, even if it so be that he must destroy the wicked by fire. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. And then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling, together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put forth his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (see also 2 Nephi 12:13 RE)

Would you like to stand in that day? Would you like to survive that burning which is to come? Then the way to obtain that—and the means to preserve yourself through that—is to obtain that knowledge which saves.

Why is it possible? Beginning at verse 16:

Wherefore, the things of all nations shall be made known; yea, all things shall be made known unto the children of men. There is nothing which is secret save it shall be revealed; there is no work of darkness save it shall be made manifest in the light; and there is nothing which is sealed upon the earth save it shall be loosed. Wherefore, all things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed; and Satan shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time. And now, my beloved brethren, I make an end of my sayings (see also 2 Nephi 12:13 RE)

Why is it possible for such things to be revealed in that day? Why do *they* have such faith? What must *you* do in order to qualify to be among *them*? Does anyone other than you have the ability to prepare you? This is your dispensation. This. What are you going to do with it?

Joseph, writing from Liberty Jail in a passage that belongs somewhere between Section 121 and 123 but never made its way in— I mean, if we're going to take out by fiat the Lectures on Faith, why can't we put this in, at least? Here's where we are:

the things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity— thou must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God, than

the vain imaginations of the human heart! None but fools will trifle with the souls of men. How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations—too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God. (T&C 138:18-19)

That's Joseph's lament. What are *you* doing with *your* time? What are you doing when you are called upon to teach? What are you doing when your teacher abuses yours and everyone else's time with something that is too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for those called of God? The gospel is delicious! And we ought to return to it. The glory of God is intelligence, and we are absolutely unintelligent and dumber, I might add, with our curriculum year-by-year. I don't know how we endure it, unless you, like me, bring a very good book to church with you each week.

When Nephi—2 Nephi 9:14-ish—about how the things that he had seen and heard, he constantly meditated upon that, writing some 40 years after the fact. The revelations that Joseph Smith received, including that one that he received in the sacred grove, was not all to be comprehended in the first pass through.

The things of God are of deep import. Why did God reveal what He revealed when He revealed it? Why did He reveal it in the order in which He revealed it? What was He building upon? Why, in the first revelation, did He go there? Why, in the next, did He go to that point? If you think Joseph's mind wasn't caught up in the things that he had seen and heard (just as yours should be about the things that you have seen and heard), then you need to think again, because “the things of God are of deep import; and time, and [care], and careful and solemn and ponderous thoughts” are the only way in which you, or anyone, can find them out. And that applies especially to you, because you control you. You determine how much light and truth you will receive, and it's predicated upon a law that was ordained before the foundation of the world. Any one of you can obey it. God is no respecter of persons, and you are authorized to exercise faith in Him unto salvation. *You* are authorized to exercise faith in Him, until you know Him. You are authorized to see His face and know that He is—everyone of you.

Chapter 4 of 2 Nephi talks about— This is Nephi now interjecting: *He* [that is, Joseph—verse 2 of chapter 4—He, Joseph of Egypt] *truly prophesied concerning all his seed*. "All his seed" include not just the folks that were included in the tribe of Manasseh and (through others that joined the party) Ephraim—descendants of Joseph in the Book of Mormon—but it includes, as well, other portions of the tribe of Joseph, scattered wherever

they were throughout the world, many of whom may be here among us tonight in your bloodlines.

Prophecies, as I've said before, revolve around two and primarily two events only—one being the first coming of the Lord; the other one being the coming of the Lord in judgment at the end of the world. Now there are plenty of prophecies that reckon to other events that are intermediate; however, the primary focus is the first and the second coming of the Lord:

- the vindication of the promise that the Father made in the beginning that He would redeem us all from the grave, and
- the vindication of the promise that at some point the world would come to an end as to its wickedness, and there would be peace again on the earth.

Everything revolves around those two prophetic events.

The seed that's to be preserved—and the effort that the Lord has made to try and preserve the seed that He needs to have in order to establish a population on the earth at His coming—is a topic about which Zenos prophesied, an allegory that was picked up by Jacob; and Jacob preserves it in his testament—the book of Jacob—in chapter 5.

Nephi wrote the first books in the small plates of Nephi, and in there is his testimony, is his prophecy. What he did was he adopted the words of Isaiah in order to explain what it was that he, Nephi, had seen. But he used Isaiah's words as the means to do that. And Jacob does the same thing.

Jacob says, "I want everyone to come up to the temple. I'm going to deliver to you a prophecy." And when they get there and he delivers his prophecy, he reads them the allegory that's taken from Zenos, which goes on and on about the history of God's chosen people. And when he finishes reading this lengthy chapter from Zenos, he says, "Here's the words of my prophecy, because I told you I was going to give it. Here it is, it's coming: What I just told you is true."

And that's Jacob's testimony. Jacob adopts the words of Zenos in order to bear testimony of the things which he, Jacob, had been taught by the Lord when the Lord spoke to him face-to-face. Jacob didn't invent a new allegory. Jacob didn't invent a new narrative; he didn't invent a new story; and he didn't invent new scriptures. He simply took the words of prophets that went before and he said, "Here they are. The words of my prophecy are: They are true." Nephi had done the same thing. Jacob does the same thing. And so in Nephi, Jacob saw the example which he chose to follow.

For God, having sworn unto Enoch and unto his seed, with an oath by Himself, that everyone being ordained after this order and calling, should have power, by faith, to break mountains, to divide the seas, to dry up waters, to turn them out of their course, to put at defiance the armies of nations, to divide the earth, to break every band, to stand in the presence of God [now take that impressive list of things, and read it in light of this] to do all things according to His will, according to His command: subdue principalities and powers, and this by the will of the Son of God, [which] was from before the foundation of the world. (Genesis 7:19 RE)

See, such persons holding such power are not freelancing. And in fact, evidence of the possession of this power does not come as a consequence of someone displaying every one of these things, but if they display *any* one of these things— For example: Nephi, when he was bound in the desert and left to die by his brothers, broke every band that bound him, having been strengthened by God. And that same Nephi, bound to the mast when the storm came that threatened the survival of the ship, not only could not break the band, but when they finally got around to relieving him, he said his hands were much swollen, as a consequence of the trauma that he'd suffered. Nephi, who had power given to him by God to break the bands that would've cost him his life, was left subject to the bands because it was not according to the Father's will or the word of the Son when he was bound to the mast. And so, had Nephi called upon that power and not suffered, Nephi would've been offending, and not conforming, to the will of God, and he would have had to suffer some loss.

If you go to Moses chapter 1 beginning at verse 1:

The words of God, which he spake unto Moses at a time when Moses was caught up into an exceedingly high mountain, And he saw God face to face, and he talked with him, and the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure his presence. And God spake unto Moses, saying: Behold, I am the Lord God Almighty [threefold, three titles] and Endless is my name; for I am without beginning of days or end of years; and is not this endless? And, behold, thou art my son. (see also Genesis 1:1 RE)

And so he was ordained by man, and he was ordained by heaven.

You can see it in the case of Jacob (we'll look at that, and then we'll stop). Jacob— Go to 2 Nephi 5:26: *And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did consecrate Jacob and Joseph, that they should be priests and teachers over the land of my people (see also 2 Nephi 4:5 RE). And if you go to Jacob chapter 1, and you look at verse 17 of Jacob chapter 1, you see Jacob saying: Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first*

obtained mine errand from the Lord (see also Jacob 1:4 RE), because Jacob didn't go out and commence a ministry of teaching, even to his own people over whom he had been consecrated as a priest, until he had first obtained that second ordination.

So what kind of person receives that ordination? I'm going back to the Joseph Smith Translation of Genesis chapter 14. This is the kind of person: *Melchizedek was a man of faith who wrought righteousness* (see also Genesis 7:18 RE). You have to have faith. You have to wrought (or perform) righteousness, which is not the same thing as virtue. Virtue can be offended by righteousness. Virtue would never kill, okay? It just never would. But it is righteous in the case of Nephi, at the command of God, to slay Laban.

Moses saw Zion. If you go to Moses 1:8 it tells you that: *And it came to pass that Moses looked, and beheld the world upon which he was created; and Moses beheld the world and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are, and which were created; of the same he greatly marveled and wondered* (see also Genesis 1:2 RE).

It's actually— It's amusing to me when I encounter Moses dealing with what he just told you about in one verse. Nephi made a valiant effort to hint around it, and then he defaulted back to the words of Isaiah to try and convey what it was that he saw. Isaiah made an enormous effort to put into epic poetry what it was he saw. And Moses, when he's given that same opportunity, his response in his record is that he *beheld the world and the ends thereof, and all the children of men which are, and which were created*. Well put, Moses. I get why you did it that way. Another one of the prophets: *[I] saw and [I] heard much* (1 Nephi 1:3 RE). I get why they do that, and there's a reason for that.

Turn to 2 Nephi chapter 10 beginning at verse 11:

And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land who shall raise up unto the gentiles, and I will fortify this land against all other nations. And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith [the Lord], for he that raiseth up a king against me shall perish. For I the Lord, the King of Heaven, will be their king, and I will be a light unto them for ever that hear my words. (see also 2 Nephi 7:2 RE)

We, if we're going to have Zion, must reject even the idea of a king. I know that embedded in the doctrine of the Restoration is the notion that we're going to become "Kings and Queens, Priests and Priestesses." I want to suggest to you when Christ said, *My kingdom is not of this world* (John 10:7 RE) and He gird himself with a towel and He knelt down and He washed the feet of those that He was ministering to, that implicit within that is the kind of

conduct that the real King—and those who are His kings and priests—put on display. If He said, *My kingdom is not of this world*, here He came merely to be a servant. How much more should we gratefully look at the opportunity to kneel and to serve, rather than to say, "I want the chief seats;" rather than to say, "I want to be upheld and sustained and lauded and praised; and if you can, would you mind throwing a big musical celebration my next birthday?" Christ is our only King, and His kingdom is not of this world (see John 18:36). He said: *If I...have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example...The servant is not greater than his lord....* That is John 13:14,16 (see also John 9:3 RE).

The twin of kingship is priestcraft. In 2 Nephi 26:29— By the way, the denunciation of kingship came from the same prophet who denounces priestcraft; he hit them both! 2 Nephi 26:29: *He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion* (see also 2 Nephi 11:17 RE).

Do you lay on hands? Yes, I would follow everything that has been given to this point. We're "adding to"—we're not throwing away. We're trying to preserve, and we're trying to return, and we're trying to renew. We are not trying to tread under our feet anything that is useful, laudable, worthy, desirable, or that came down from the Restoration. It is not God's purpose to abandon the Restoration, but it is His purpose to preserve it.

There are changes presently underway that are going to jar the LDS community more and more in the coming years. If you are not prepared to preserve what has been given, everything will be lost in what will soon happen. It's necessary that there be someone who seeks for some community that tries to preserve, in its purity, what is rapidly becoming, at an accelerating pace, more and more corrupted. It has to be preserved.

Every one of you have some issue that you would say to yourself, "If 'this,' then I would no longer follow." All of the "if this's" are in the wings. Inexorably, they are coming. It has to be preserved, and it has to be preserved in a manner in which it can remain pure.

In modern revelation, once again the Lord clarified in D&C 10:67-68 exactly what He said to the Nephites. *Behold this is my doctrine: Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me. Therefore he is not of my church* (JSH 10:21 RE).

So, if the LDS Church chooses to do more or chooses to do less (and they are choosing to do both), then His church will consist of those who choose instead to do what He says. It's what He said to the Nephites; it's what He said in modern revelation. It is exactly the same.

Not only does it appear there, as if that were not enough witnesses, Nephi taught it, as well. In 2 Nephi he explained the doctrine of Christ. 2 Nephi chapter 31, beginning at verse 5, he talks about the need of baptism. The Lamb of God being holy, He needed to be baptized; therefore, don't we, likewise, need to be baptized? And then after baptism:

If ye shall follow the Son with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ by baptism — yea, by following your Lord and Savior down into the water according to his word — behold, then shall ye receive the holy ghost. Yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the holy ghost, and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel. But behold, my beloved brethren, thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying, After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments by the baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the holy ghost, and can speak with a new tongue — yea, even with the tongue of angels — and after this should deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not known me. And I heard a voice from the Father saying, Yea, the words of my beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. And now my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved. (see also 2 Nephi 13:2-3 RE)

Then He goes on to talk about all the way through *the way; there is none other way nor name given under Heaven...this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy ghost, which is one God without end. Amen (ibid).*

It was what the doctrine of Christ consisted of at the time of Nephi. It was what the doctrine of Christ consisted of at the the time of the Restoration. It was what the Lord taught in His own voice to the Nephites in 3 Nephi. That is the doctrine.

All the scattered remnants will be brought back again. The original unified family of God will be restored again. The Fathers will have our hearts turned to them, because in that day, once it's permitted to get that far, we will be part of that family again.

Our day is filled with darkness and deception. Our day is the day about which Nephi wrote. If you turn to 2 Nephi chapter 28, beginning halfway through verse 4: *and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance* (see 2 Nephi 12:1 RE). This is why the ordinance has to be renewed. This is why the pattern has to be followed. This is why the light has to be turned on. Because the Holy Ghost has not assisted with the kind of robust assistance that it can, if you're penitent. God cannot dwell in unclean vessels, and so He remedies that by cleaning the vessel, cleaning it in accordance with the pattern that He's given; thereby making it possible that the Holy Ghost can give to you utterance.

And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel. And they say unto the people, Hearken unto us and hear ye our precept, for behold, there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men [you can hear that every Sunday if you want but] ...Behold, hearken ye unto my precept. If they shall say there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day he is not a God of miracles; he hath done his work. (ibid)

See, God doesn't do miracles, but if there is a miracle done then that's the devil. So the only ones responsible for anything miraculous is necessarily the devil, and you're following the devil.

Yea, and there shall be many which shall say, Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Indulge yourself, you needn't be caring for the poor, you needn't be attentive to their needs, you don't need to minister to those who are in want. Eat, drink, and be merry! It is going to be well with us!

There shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die [And that's, by the way, how you get ahead—digging a pit for your neighbor]; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God (ibid). "Don't worry— there is no hell. There is no hell, no awful pit. There's just degrees of glory. Don't worry about it."

...which suffering caused myself...the greatest of all, to [shrink]...to bleed at every pore...how sore you know not, how hard to bear you know not, how exquisite you know not (T&C 4:5). There is no hell. There is no need for repentance. There is no need to come to Him to be redeemed, and to seek to remove from us the awful burden of sin.

There shall be many which shall teach after this manner false, and vain, and foolish doctrines, and shall be puffed up in their hearts, and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord (2 Nephi 12:1 RE).

How might one better "hide their counsels from the Lord" than to conceal all the money that's gathered from the tithes, all the revenues that are paid to the authorities of the Church, and even admonish the paid mission presidents that they must never disclose the revenue benefits that they are receiving? How better to hide your counsel, than to conceal it from the very sheep that are being shorn by the people who sit in positions of authority, claiming they have the right to come to the stake that I lived in, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, and to hand my membership record to the stake president and insist that there be disciplinary council held against me? (Now I know, President Hunt, that I told you I wouldn't mention that. But I have no intention from coming back again. Therefore, for us, it's over).

The Church seeks deep to hide their counsels. I participated in that conspiracy when I agreed that I would conceal that Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve came on the day that he called my new stake president and handed to him my membership record and instructed him that I was to be excommunicated. And to his credit, President Hunt took 18 months fighting that decision—because he knew I was an innocent man—before he submitted. I will no longer participate in concealing the counsels that are kept from the public! It's wrong! President Hunt shouldn't do it, Elder Ballard, Elder Russell Nelson should not do it. None of them should do it. They should come clean.

When Elder Neal Maxwell (with whom I had correspondence) died, shortly after the funeral Elder Dallin Oaks showed up at the widow's home and demanded the journals that [Maxwell] had kept—because one of conditions of the agreement that general authorities must sign is that all of their diaries become the property of the Church once they become a general authority. And Elder Oaks went and gathered back the personal diaries of Elder Maxwell, because a great deal of information about what goes on spilled out into the public when the diaries became public.

"Seeking deep to hide their counsels from the Lord, and their works shall be in the dark," is exactly what the authorities of the LDS Church now do! It is exactly a description of the hierarchy of Mormonism. Put your budgets online! Disclose your revenue! Show us what you do with the poor! Don't hide— We don't even know what revenue is!

...seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark [indeed]. And the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them. Yea, they

have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted. Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted, and their churches are lifted up; because of pride they are puffed up. They rob the poor because of their fine sanctuaries; they rob the poor because of their fine clothing; and they persecute the meek and the poor in heart, because in their pride they are puffed up. They wear stiff necks and high heads; yea, and because of pride, and wickedness, and abominations, and whoredoms, they have all gone astray save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men. (2 Nephi 12:1-2 RE)

The dedication of the first book I wrote, *The Second Comforter, Conversing with the Lord Through the Veil*, was dedicated to "the few who are the humble followers of Christ," and it cited this verse. Some people say, "Well, he was, you know, enlightened at one point, and then he fell victim to a dark and evil spirit, and now he's an apostate!" I'm closer to the Lord at this moment than I've been at any time when I was a member of the Church. I know His will more today, and I understand it better than I have ever understood it before. It is not a different spirit than the one that brought me into the Church, and it is not a different spirit than the one that animated *The Second Comforter, Conversing with the Lord Through the Veil*. At the time I wrote that, I was keenly aware of the fact that from among us, there were only a few who were the humble followers of Christ. And I understood that we were, nevertheless, led that in many instances we err.

Working within the system, I did everything I could to preserve the doctrine, to preserve the truth, to testify of Christ, to teach the precepts, to remember the covenant. I would still do that today if I were left alone by them.

Clearly, those of you who think I am a rebel don't get it. God knew exactly what He was doing. I would have taken a bullet for Spencer Kimball. I was among the most devoted of Latter-day Saints. I viewed the Church as a source that had rescued me from a life that was headed into something terrible. I had friends I grew up with who became alcoholics, drug abusers, whose lives were in tattered ruins. One of my good friends in elementary, junior high, and high school died—stopped his heart with cocaine abuse when he was 26.

The LDS Church introduced me to a form of cleanliness in living that I have nothing but high regard for. And if every one of you choose to remain active in the LDS Church while you do these other things, you won't hear me complaining or criticizing. You'll hear me praising. It's a community trying to do good. But "they are led, that in many instances *they do err*," and you should not go partake of that. Accept whatever is good, and hold onto whatever is good, but continually seek for something higher and better.

These are the kinds of precepts: "Hearken to our precept;" "hear my precept;" "hear my precept." This is where we get into all of the mischief—the precepts, if they're not true, are not worth having. And it is the doctrine, above all, that saves.

The foregoing are excerpts taken from:

- Denver's talk entitled "Christ's Discourse on the Road to Emmaus," given in Fairview UT on April 14, 2007;
- His talk given at the "Zion Symposium" in Provo, UT on February 23, 2008;
- His talk entitled "The Mission of Elijah Reconsidered," given in Spanish Fork, UT on October 14, 2011;
- A fireside talk on "The Temple," given in Ogden, UT on October 28, 2012;
- A fireside talk entitled "Constitutional Apostasy," given in Highland, UT on June 7, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #1 entitled "Be of Good Cheer," given in Boise, ID on September 10, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #3 entitled "Repentance," given in Logan, UT on September 29, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #4 entitled "Covenants," given in Centerville, UT on October 6, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #5 entitled "Priesthood," given in Orem, UT on November 2, 2013;
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #6 entitled "Zion," given in Grand Junction, CO on April 12, 2014; and
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #10 entitled "Preserving the Restoration," given in Mesa, AZ on September 9, 2014.