

Podcast Episode 59: Nephi, Part 2

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: It's not appropriate that someone should collect money from the flock nor lord it over the flock. Priestcraft is one of those toxic failures of the last-day Gentiles that we have to guard against it appearing among us as well. Nephi wrote:

For...the time speedily shall come that all churches which are built up to get gain, and all those who are built up to get power over the flesh, and those [that] are built up to become popular in the eyes of the world, and those who seek the lusts of the flesh and [of] the things of the world, and to do all manner of iniquity; yea, in fine, all those who belong to the kingdom of the devil are they who need fear, and tremble, and quake; they are those who must be brought low in the dust; they are those who must be consumed as stubble; and this is according to the words of the prophet. (1 Nephi 22:15; see also 1 Nephi 7:5 RE)

Nephi supplies us with a definition of priestcraft: *He commandeth that there shall be no priestcraft, 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* (2 Nephi 26:29, emphasis added; see also 2 Nephi 11:17 RE).

The difference between persuasion and contention: Persuasion largely does not happen because you overcome the resistance with argument and contention. Persuasion comes by opening up an idea and letting it enter into the heart of the man or the woman, and then letting God take over and get the growth inside them. But *contention is not of me, but is of the Devil, who is the father of contention; ...stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another, but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away* (3 Nephi 11:29-30; see also 3 Nephi 5:8 RE).

So He's saying, "Don't contend, don't make people mad, don't confront them; take a step back from that, and I'll tell you what my doctrine is." And then: *This is my doctrine...I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me* (3 Nephi 11:32; see also 3 Nephi 5:9 RE). Every bit of that is internal to the proselyte. Every bit of that.

Preach, teach, exhort, expound, contend, bitch them into conversion—you've ignored what His doctrine is. It's internal to them. It goes on with Him and them. We facilitate, but He's the one that ultimately becomes the object of their worship, the object of their adoration. It's like God lights a candle inside of you. You can hold the candle up, and you can give people light, but if they don't get their own candle, get their own flame, they're still dead. They aren't alive.

There's this description that's given in 1 Nephi 14, beginning at verse 12:

And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw. (See also 1 Nephi 3:28 RE)

I mean, we're not going to get 15 million people. But it's not necessary that we get 15 million people; it's only necessary that the invitation be extended. If the invitation is extended and if the hearts of people respond, there is a resilience, there is a power; there is something inside of them that cannot be broken. And we're not looking for anything other than the few.

The scriptures do not foretell any great numbers will repent. Christ said: *I will take you one of a city and two of a family and I will bring you to Zion* (Jeremiah 3:14; see also Jeremiah 2:3 RE)—too few, perhaps, to impress the world, but the Lord does not view things as do men. The Lord describes those who respond to His invitation as His elect. He explained: *[Mine] elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts* (D&C 29:7; see also T&C 9:3).

Nephi foresaw how few believers there would be in the last days.

He beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw. (1 Nephi 14:12; see also 1 Nephi 3:28 RE)

The Lord requires us to invite the world to repent but not to expect large numbers to do so. Numbers matter to man, but the hearts of men matter to the Lord. It is the quality of

conversion, not the quantity. He always spoke of having few sheep. Of the likely billions living at the time of Enoch, only some few thousand were saved—and only eight by Noah. The end times will be like those days.

Now, I need to address the subject of what is appropriate to be explained and what is appropriate not to be explained. Why does the Book of Mormon draw lines and say, "At this point in the record it's not permitted for me to cover this. I was about to write this, but I'm forbidden from doing so." Or Nephi saying, "I was about to give you the rest of this story, but the Lord said, 'You can't do that.'"

There is a very good reason why information gets withheld (there's actually more than one, but there's one that ought to be front and center): the more information that becomes available that ought to be held in sacred solitude, the more you equip the pretenders and the deceivers to improve their false act—the more equipment you hand to them with which to develop an illusion and a mirage that will deceive and take people from the Lord. But more importantly, when you get to the end of the actual process of what the Lord was teaching to the Nephites, there is power in the government of God that when it got hijacked in the beginning, by the time you get down to the time of Noah, the earth was so corrupted, Lucifer (or Satan) has this great chain on the earth. He's chained the earth, and he's looking up at heaven—this is in the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price (see Moses 7:26; see also Genesis 4:15 RE)—He's got the whole earth wrapped in a chain, and he's looking up at heaven, and he's laughing. How did he manage to get the whole earth bound down into a great chain? He did so by imitating the government of Adam. He did so by binding together, in a false way, things that God would put together in a Godly way.

Right now the struggle—the struggle on this earth—is over the agency of man. I don't care if you're looking at economic difficulties, governmental difficulties, business, religion, society, entertainment— It's all about destroying the agency of man. In order to prevent Zion, the adversary knows he has now but a little time. The only way to make sure that it doesn't spill out and accomplish the objective that God wants it to accomplish is by curtailing the ability of people to choose. Take away the right to say, the right to speak, the right to preach—take away and categorize, or if you can, criminalize. And if you can't do that, then simply murder in order to prevent the agency of man. Because men must, women must, come willingly to the Lord, have to voluntarily accept the invitation from Him. Compulsory means cannot be used. Everywhere you look right now, the struggle is over the agency of men. And some things are absolutely essential and needful, more than the mysteries of God. Right now what is most important is to preach the Doctrine of Christ and baptize people so that we at least have someone living at the Lord's return.

Nephi was told recovering the scriptures for his people was essential, otherwise they would dwindle and perish in unbelief. When the record that Nephi was able to obtain on the brass plates was studied, it included an account of the creation—Adam and Eve—and God's dealings with mankind down to the time of Lehi, including their genealogy and prophecies of Joseph of Egypt.

When Christ visited with the Nephites, He asked them to bring to Him their scriptural record so that He could review it. He reviewed the things that they brought that constituted their scriptures, and He commanded them to fix omissions that had been made in the record. Christ then dictated two chapters of additional scripture to be added to the Nephite record. Only then did He expound all things to them using the scriptures.

When it comes to scripture, corruption happens, and each new dispensation is responsible for fixing the canon of scripture to reclaim truths, to correct errors, and to adopt guiding principles applicable to their day. Again, remember the statement Joseph Smith made at the conference: "God had often sealed up the heavens because of covetousness in the church. Said the Lord would cut his work short in righteousness and except the church receive the fullness of the scriptures that they would yet fall" (*Joseph Smith Papers*, "Documents," Vol. 2: July 1831-January 1833, p. 85).

Sustaining is planned to happen at the next conference, after a chance has passed for review of the material. This is necessary for the Gentiles to claim they have accepted a covenant and the law.

For behold, I say unto you, [that] as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord, and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off. For the Lord covenanteth with none [such] save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel....For the time speedily cometh that the Lord...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.

That's in 2 Nephi 30 (see also 2 Nephi 12:11,13 RE).

Zion will include people who are willing to receive revelations from God and obey commandments. God does this to bless His people.

Blessed are they whose feet stand upon the land of Zion, who have obeyed my gospel, for they shall receive for their reward the good things of the earth, and it shall bring

forth in its strength. And they shall also be crowned with blessings from above, yea, and with commandments not a few, and with revelations in their time, they that are faithful and diligent before me.

That's from Doctrine and Covenants Section 59 (see also T&C 46:1).

If you want Zion, you'd necessarily must want commandments. And you must necessarily be willing to receive revelations. And you must set aside your covetousness and receive the fullness of the scriptures if you plan to not fall. Remember that there are more scriptures that are coming. 2 Nephi 29:11-13 tell us that there are records that are out there that have been kept by yet other parts of the ten tribes that are yet to be gathered in. The Book of Mormon itself has significant omissions that are intended to come forth at some future date. But the record that has been given is given to test and to try the people to see if they will accept it.

Mormonism announced in its founding book of scripture that it is an incomplete, markedly unfinished religion, searching for more truth to achieve its destiny. The completion is to be accomplished primarily by two means: restoring lost scripture and continuing revelation. But even the concept of "continuing revelation" has been institutionally curtailed. The only institutionally authorized source for revelation is a single leader.

Of all faiths, Mormonism has the greatest canonical incentive to search for and embrace truth known to others. The keystone of Mormonism is the Book of Mormon. That book alerts its readers that there are many others from vastly different places with vastly different scriptures who are, nonetheless, Christ's sheep. Book of Mormon readers are expected to search for, welcome, and learn from them. In contrast, institutional Mormonism of all stripes confine trustworthy new religious ideas to their authorized leaders.

Early in the text we learn that our faith, like our scriptures, is unfinished and to anticipate a flood of additional sacred texts to help remove our ignorance. The portion of the Book of Mormon translated by Joseph Smith is carefully censored, with its greatest content withheld.

2 Nephi 29:11-12 states: *For I command all men, both in the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak [to] them...* (see also 2 Nephi 12:10 RE). Obviously, the Gods of Mormonism view Their role as all-inclusive. The entire world and all mankind belong to Them. Their global audience has received and recorded sacred words directly from the Gods' *one* mouth. We

have no way to define the extent to which that has happened. Nor do we have any concept of the number of sacred records that exist somewhere among unknown others, nor any idea what truths they were given that we lack.

Mormonism cannot, or at least should not, consider itself the exclusive possessor of *the* sacred canon or that there is only one canon containing God's teachings—the Gods' teachings. There are words from heaven spread throughout our world by deliberate planting of the Gods.

Continuing: *For out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written* (2 Nephi 29:11; see also 2 Nephi 12:10 RE). These books hold terrible importance for Mormons because we are going to be judged by the Gods based on a comparison between our "works" and "that which is written." With such a warning, we Mormons ought to be humble about our claims to know more than other faiths. We should be modest in thinking we are especially graced by the Gods' words and should be anxious to scour the globe to discover the sacred texts of other cultures. In humility, we should invite *them* to share the truths they value most with *us* because we have shown that we will respect what they regard as sacred.

To clarify this further, the record continues: *For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it* (2 Nephi 29:12; see also 2 Nephi 12:10 RE). So far, this describes a welcome Judeo-Christian boundary because the ancient Israelites are the backbone of God's dealings with mankind. The lost ten tribes continue to compose scripture, and their records will, in time, be recovered.

This passage continues by including yet others who are disconnected from any disclosed connection to Israel: *And I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it* (2 Nephi 29:12; see also 2 Nephi 12:10 RE). Who? When? And what was said?

The Book of Mormon foretold how the Gentiles would react to new scripture:

Many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible....Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible....Because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever. Wherefore, because...ye have a

Bible ye need not suppose that it contains all my words; neither need ye suppose that I have not caused more to be written. (2 Nephi 29:3,6,10; see also 2 Nephi 12:8-10 RE)

The Book of Mormon gives an extended description of Mary, the Mother of God. In the original translation text, the words "Mother of God" were used, but that was changed by Joseph Smith in 1837 to "Mother of the Son of God." Here is how it reads following that change:

And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white. And it came to pass that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou? And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins. And he said unto me: Knowest thou the condescension of God? And I said unto him: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things. And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the Mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for [a] space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw? And I answered him, saying: Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things. And he spake unto me, saying: Yea, and the most joyous to the soul. (1 Nephi 11:13-23; see also 1 Nephi 3:8-9 RE)

Most who read this passage interpret the condescension reference solely as Christ's. They view it as Christ alone who descended by being born of Mary here in mortality. However, when leading up to the angel's question—*Knowest thou the condescension of God?*—the text focuses exclusively on Mary. When the angel clarified the "condescension," he again focused, primarily, on Mary and, secondarily, on Her Son. The angel explained:

*Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the **Mother of the Son of God**, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that **she** was carried away in the Spirit; and after **she** had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and **beheld the virgin** again, bearing a child **in her arms**. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God. (1 Nephi 11:18-21, emphasis added; see also 1 Nephi 3:8-9 RE)*

Who would you reasonably expect to be the woman chosen before the world was organized to become the mortal Mother of the Lord? Who would you expect Heavenly Father would want to bear His child, if not His Spouse? Together, God the Father and Mary can be acknowledged as the Parents of Christ. The scriptures shift the focus of the "condescension" from Christ to His Mother and then back to Her Son—the seed of the woman.

Lectures on Faith describe Christ as the prototype of the saved man (see Lectures on Faith 7:9). Lecture seven focuses attention on Christ as the Savior and Redeemer. But the Lecture extends the requirement met by Jesus Christ to also apply for every saved man. In other words, for any man to be saved, they must attain to the resurrection, like Christ. Shifting attention for a moment from Jesus Christ as our Redeemer and Savior to His Mother, we could acknowledge Her as the prototype of the saved woman. In other words, we could consider what She did a divine pattern to be followed by women.

When a female deity has been worshiped in past cultures, more often than not the result is a gradual degeneration into fertility cults and sexual excesses. Ritual prostitution was often practiced by ancients who believed in a Divine Mother. Even Israel fell into sexual deviancy as part of their worship of a female god.

At a pivotal time for ancient Israel, Jeremiah condemned worship of *the queen of heaven* (Jeremiah 44:17; see also Jeremiah 16:15 RE). Because some scholars want a divine female to be authentic, Jeremiah's condemnation is considered problematic. His words can be interpreted to denounce altogether a female god. In part because of this, in current scholarship Jeremiah has become a controversial figure—even his existence is now questioned.

Margaret Barker recently wrote the following:

This assumes that a person of that name existed, since scholars cannot begin to agree if Jeremiah even existed, nor on the process by which the present texts of Jeremiah were formed. Many have resorted to other ways of dealing with the text. A recent volume on the latest trends in Jeremiah studies was introduced thus: "Jeremiah is an intractable riddle. ...Taken together, the essays in this volume press for an end to 'innocent' readings of Jeremiah. ...And the turn to Jeremiah as a social semiotic discourse presses for an end to 'innocent biblical theology readings that have companioned historical-critical orthodoxy in one fashion or another.' No help there in our quest for reconstructing what happened in the time of Josiah!" (Qtd. in

Barker, Margaret. *The Mother of the Lord*. Vol. 1: The Lady in the Temple. London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2012. Quoting A.R.P. Diamond, K.M. O'Connor and L. Stulman, editors. *Troubling Jeremiah*. Introduction, pp. 15,32. Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2001)

But **we** know Jeremiah was real, and he was a prophet, because Nephi mentions him in his description of what had been preserved on the brass plates of Laban. The description includes the following:

And also a record of the Jews from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah. And also the prophecies of the holy prophets, from the beginning, even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah; and also many prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah. (1 Nephi 5:12-13; see also 1 Nephi 1:22 RE)

The Book of Mormon confirms Jeremiah's existence and status as a prophet. We can accept him today, even if scholars doubt. Revelation remains more reliable than mere scholarship and opinion.

Joseph Smith, in retelling the story when the angel (correctly identified as Nephi by Joseph; incorrectly identified by everyone else as Moroni)—and by the way, before the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon saw the plates shown them by the angel (and they never identified the name of that angel—they referred to him as "an angel"; so the three witnesses never weigh in on the identity), David Whitmer's mother encountered the angel, and she identifies him with the same name that Joseph Smith identifies him with—Nephi.

The angel who appeared to Joseph in September 1823 said:

He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God to me and that his name was Nephi, that God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues, or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people. (Joseph Smith History 3:3 RE)

In the Book of Mormon, there's an early visionary encounter before they migrate very far from Jerusalem in which Nephi is shown the whole sweep of history, and he begins to record the account of what it was he saw. And he's interrupted and told, You can't write a record of what I'm going to show you hereafter because this record is going to be entrusted to another person who is going to write it; his name is John—and the account that John

would record the Book of Mormon doesn't recite, but we can all identify it as the Book of Revelation. And so Nephi is told, Don't write about this visionary material; someone else is going to do that. So Nephi is told he cannot write that; a fuller account is going to be given by John. But Nephi is also told that this same kind of material has been shown to others.

Nephi, later—in the second book that he composes—by that time 40 years has passed from the time of the visionary encounter near Jerusalem. He's now on another continent, a new world, a promised land given to them, and he's had 40 years of reflection on what he saw and what he heard. And from that 40 years of reflection, he realizes that he can bear testimony of what he saw (without infringing upon the right of John to write the fuller account) simply by quoting Isaiah, who wrote about much of the same material. And so Nephi adopts as his text, in large measure, the text that came from Isaiah as it appeared on the brass plates—slightly different than the version that we have in our Bibles that descend from the Masoretic text—but he preserves as his testimony words that were composed by Isaiah, in the form that he had them, as his testimony.

Then as his entire account is winding down at the end of the second book that Nephi composed, he begins (at about—in the standard LDS published version, its chapter 27)—he begins to change from quoting the Isaiah text to paraphrasing the Isaiah text in order to adapt it to a very specific prophetic foretelling of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in the last days—in order to make the Isaiah text fit exactly what would be happening with the Book of Mormon coming forth. Then he gives his interpretive key from that point, explaining exactly why it was that he put those Isaiah materials in—in order to have people understand that it is his testimony of what he knows and what he was shown and to convert the language of Isaiah into the prophecy of Nephi to convey Nephi's message.

There's a bunch of scholarly effort to talk about the content of the Book of Mormon, but the Book of Mormon itself explains how the translation process was done. This is in 2 Nephi 27. Nephi has used the Isaiah material to testify about Nephi's experience. He does not have a Jewish intent, an Isaiah intent, in using Isaiah's words. Nephi has been prohibited from writing about the vision that he has had, but the angel tells him others have seen this. And so Nephi, intending to express his own testimony of what God has shown him, uses Isaiah's words to tell you Nephi's visionary experience. When he gets to chapter 27 of 2 Nephi, he begins to transition. He ceases to be directly quoting Isaiah, and he begins to paraphrase Isaiah in a transitional chapter 27 before he then gives you an explanation for why he said all of the Isaiah materials that went on before. And chapter 27 begins to be the transition from Isaiah quotes, Isaiah paraphrase, Isaiah meaning in the words of Nephi, in the experience of Nephi.

So in 27 we get to the Isaiah material where he talks about the words of a book that's going to be delivered to someone who's learned who says he can't read a sealed book. And then he's going to go from there when the learned won't do it—and God tells you how the Book of Mormon was translated: *I am able to do mine own work; wherefore, thou shalt read the words which I shall give unto thee...I will show unto the children of men that I am able to do mine own work* (2 Nephi 27:20, emphasis added; see also 2 Nephi 11:20 RE).

The translation of the Book of Mormon was not done by Joseph Smith; it was done *through* Joseph Smith. The translator of the text of the Book of Mormon was God. God told Joseph what was in the text of the Book of Mormon. You want to know who translated it? God.

Last night as I was listening to Jeff and others who spoke, one of the things that struck me is that almost all revelation—going back to the days of Adam and coming right down to today—come as a consequence of understanding scripture. That was true even of Enoch, because Enoch had a record that had been handed down from Adam. And in the case of Abraham, the records belonging to the Fathers fell into his hands, and he studied them to gain the understanding that he had. Micah quotes Isaiah. Isaiah quotes Zenos and Zenock. Jacob quotes the allegory of Zenos. Nephi quotes Isaiah. All of them study scripture in order to get an understanding. And revelation is largely based upon expanding your understanding of scripture.

The Book of Mormon is really the keystone of the religion but also the keystone to revelation itself. It was intended to open our eyes to things that we couldn't see before. The Book of Mormon is really a giant Urim and Thummim intended for our benefit.

I was also struck by something that I went and found this morning. This is a passage in which Nephi is describing the saints at the very end, at the end of time just before the scene wraps up:

And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters. Nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw. And it came to pass that I beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together in multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb and upon the

covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth. And they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory. And it came to pass that I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon that great and abominable church, insomuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth. And as there began to be wars and rumors of wars among all the nations which belonged to the mother of abominations, the angel spake unto me, saying, Behold, the wrath of God is upon the mother of harlots, and behold, thou seest all these things. (1 Nephi 14:12-16; see also 1 Nephi 3:28-29 RE)

These words don't say that the coming conflict is against the covenant people of God or the Church of the Lamb. Nor does it say that the wrath of God consists of God picking a fight with the wicked. In the case of the wrath of God, people are stirred to anger against each other. They decide— The wicked destroy the wicked because the wicked decide that they cannot put up with peaceful coexistence anymore. Their hearts are so angry with one another that they manage to inflict violence and death and destruction upon one another.

Like the judgment that Mormon describes in Mormon 9 of the old set, God is a bystander. The wrath of God is manifest by the rejection of God and the violence that people turn upon one another. And the power of God and the glory of God—meaning the peace of God and the ability to live with one another in harmony without this raging conflict—that power is manifest among the people of God, the church of God, and the covenant people that belong to God.

So if you can maintain peaceful coexistence with one another as you worship God in the coming days, the power and glory of God will descend and be with you because you manage to extract yourself from the coming conflict, rage, hatred, polarization. And if you don't think those days are not commencing, then, well, you're not watching the news. It's just an ongoing political battle escalating continually.

Well, the Book of Mormon—this is the “Book of Mormon Covenant Conference”—the Book of Mormon tells you what it's for.

Oh, one last thought about the Church of the Lamb of God. At the time that these words were being written by Nephi—and he had seen the vision, and he's talking about what he saw—at the time that he's writing that prophecy, the earliest stages of the Nephite civilization had just begun. Nephi is still living—he has a wife; he has some children; he has brothers. The total group that are involved is not much larger than the group that we have right here today. He's looking down through history prophetically, and he's saying the saints—the covenant people of God, the people that the Lamb of God's church—that group

is few. Now if it was 16 million people scattered globally, in the reality of Nephi's context, he would not describe them as few. He's not making a comparative analysis; he's simply describing what he saw. He said they're all around the world, but there's only very few of them. Okay?

If you go to the fellowship locator, and you look at what you see among those that have identified themselves with the last-days covenant, they're all over the world, but there's really very few of them.

The foregoing are excerpts taken from:

- His talk entitled "Zion Will Come," given near Moab, UT on April 10, 2016;
- Denver's comments during an assembly on "Missionary Work" in Eden, UT on July 2, 2016;
- His conference talk entitled "The Doctrine of Christ," given in Boise, ID on September 11, 2016;
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Things to Keep Us Awake at Night," given in St. George, UT on March 19, 2017;
- His talk entitled "Other Sheep Indeed," given at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, UT on July 29, 2017;
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #2, given in Dallas, TX on October 19, 2017;
- Denver's conference talk entitled "Our Divine Parents," given in Gilbert, AZ on March 25, 2018;
- His remarks given at the Joseph Smith Restoration Conference in Boise, ID on June 24, 2018;
- The presentation of Denver's paper entitled "The Restoration's Shattered Promises and Great Hope," given at the Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City, UT on July 28, 2018;
- Denver's *Christian Reformation Lecture Series*, Talk #6, given in Sandy, Utah on September 8, 2018;
- Denver's remarks entitled "Remember the New Covenant," given at Graceland University in Lamoni, IA on November 10, 2011; and
- Denver's remarks entitled "Book of Mormon as Covenant," given at the Book of Mormon Covenant Conference in Columbia, SC on January 13, 2019.