

OUR FUTURE IS OUR PAST

BY A. SCOTT RODERICK

Independently Published

Copyright © 2019 by A. Scott Roderick
All rights reserved under International and Pan-American
Copyright Conventions.
ISBN: 9781790466221

First Edition

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	5
I. A BASIC PREMISE	7
1. ONE ETERNAL ROUND	8
2. THE PREMISE APPLIED	8
II. CLARIFYING TERMINOLOGY	11
III. PART 1: THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST	13
1. PRESENTING THE FRAMEWORK	13
A. ISRAEL'S OPPORTUNITY AND REJECTION	14
B. THE CLOSE OF ONE DISPENSATION MARKED THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER	20
C. SUMMARY OF THE FIRST HALF	22
2. THE DOCTRINE; HOW IT'S LOST	24
A. THE GREATER PRIESTHOOD: THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST	27
B. CHRIST REAFFIRMS HIS DOCTRINE TO THE NEPHITES	29
3. KEY PLAYERS	35
A. JOHN THE BAPTIST	35
B. JESUS CHRIST	44
C. SUMMARY	53
IV. PART 2: THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST	55
1. EVENTS FROM THE FIRST HALF REPEATED IN THE SECOND	55
2. MODERN-DAY COUNTERPART TO JOHN THE BAPTIST	61
A. THE LATTER-DAY ELIAS	61
V. THE PROPHECY OF MOSES AND THE FULFILLMENT OF JOHN'S MISSION	95
VI. THE PROPHETIC NARRATIVE	107
1. THE ROOT OF JESSE—ISAIAH 11:10; D&C 113:5-6	109
2. DAVID THE KING—EZEKIEL 37:24-25	118
A. THE STICK OF JOSEPH	121
B. KING BENJAMIN AS A TYPE FOR KING DAVID	128
3. ONE MIGHTY AMONG THE SEED OF JOSEPH—2 NEPHI 3:24	138

4. ONE MIGHTY AND STRONG—D&C 85:7.....	143
A. <i>SET IN ORDER THE HOUSE OF GOD.</i>	144
B. <i>HIS BOWELS SHALL BE A FOUNTAIN OF TRUTH.</i>	158
C. <i>ETERNAL WORDS.</i>	161
D. <i>CLOTHED WITH LIGHT FOR A COVERING.</i>	161
E. <i>SCEPTER OF POWER.</i>	164
5. THE SERVANT—3 NEPHI 21:9-11.	168
A. THE GENTILES' REACTION TO FURTHER LIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE	170
B. THE EFFECTS OF THE GREAT AND ABOMINABLE CHURCH ON MODERN CHRISTIANITY	178
C. THE GENTILES' STUMBLING BLOCKS.	179
D. THE LORD'S PLAN TO RESTORE DOCTRINAL PURITY	181
E. HOW THE SERVANT BRINGS TO LIGHT THE WORDS OF CHRIST	185
F. NEPHI'S EXPLANATION OF THE MOSES PROPHECY	188
6. SUMMARY OF THE PROPHETIC NARRATIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF JOHN THE BELOVED'S MISSION.....	193
VII. THE GREATEST OBSTACLE TO THE GENTILES.	195
VIII. PROPHETIC WARNINGS FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON.	199
IX. CONSEQUENCES OF THE GENTILE REJECTION.....	205
CONCLUSION.....	217

INTRODUCTION

In the distant future, we will look back on mortality and learn that God set truth before us in advance if we asked and searched diligently. Had we been inquisitive like Nephi,¹ we might learn it is possible to know most of what we face before it occurs.

Time, asking, searching and prayer has led me to conclude that God is everything we consider Him to be: just, merciful, kind, patient and especially loving. He enlightens and guides those who confess their ignorance and seek His guidance.²

Over thirty years ago, my attention turned to prophecy and how it might become understandable to my wife and children. My studies showed that reoccurring words and phrases were keys to unlocking the words of the prophetic fathers; they are common threads woven through different books of scripture and prophetic narratives. I have written much by way of prophecy, but believe there remains an immediate need to understand the context of our day. God is moving his work forward and has given tools to recognize the signs in our times. This book is a starting point to understanding what God is telling us about our day through his

¹ “I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men.” (1 Nephi 10:17)

² “Let him that is ignorant learn wisdom by humbling himself and calling upon the Lord his God, that his eyes may be opened that he may see, and his ears opened that he may hear; For my Spirit is sent forth into the world to enlighten the humble and contrite, and to the condemnation of the ungodly.” (D&C 136:32-33)

prophets. For simplicity, the analysis hinges on two prophecies, but the themes are embedded throughout scripture.

Before exploring the prophecies, it is important to establish a premise from the scriptures about how the Lord orchestrates and explains His plan.

I. A BASIC PREMISE

1. *NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN.*

From the book of Ecclesiastes, several verses suggest history repeats itself:

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and *there is no new thing under the sun*. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? *It hath been already of old time, which was before us.* (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10, emphasis added)

The Lord shows us his pattern in things that have been, because they become examples of things which shall be. Though mankind views itself as innovative, original and creative, the Lord challenges that assumption by stating that which was done by mankind is also that which shall be done; we are predictable beings. Given a prescribed set of conditions, man reacts in redundant patterns. Consequently, man will never surprise God because He knows mankind's response given any set of circumstances. The outcomes are not preordained, only foreknown. There is literally, "*nothing new under the sun*" when God's knowledge of man is considered.

1. *ONE ETERNAL ROUND.*

In contemplating if the Lord's plan calls for man to act in repetitious patterns, it may be important to think about an oft repeated phrase, "his paths are straight and narrow and his course is one eternal round."³ From a practical application, how might the Lord's path be straight and still remain "one eternal round?" It suggests there really is nothing new under the sun and God has been observing the same pattern in different cycles for eons of time.

From these passages the conclusion may be affirmed that history repeats itself. Therefore, if we want to know what occurs in the future, it would be wise to consider past events as a template of the future.

2. *THE PREMISE APPLIED.*

With this understanding, Christ's explanation regarding the writings of Isaiah is clear.

And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah. For surely he spake as touching all things concerning my people which *are of the house of Israel*; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also *to the Gentiles*. And *all things*

³ 1 Nephi 10:19; Alma 7:20; Alma 37:12; D&C 3:2; D&C 35:1.

that he spake have been and shall be, even according to the words which he spake” (3 Nephi 23:1-3, emphasis added).

After commanding survivors in Bountiful to search the words of Isaiah, the resurrected Lord explains that Isaiah spoke of all things relating to Israel. The Savior adds a curious twist by stating because Isaiah writes about all things relating to Israel, he must therefore speak to the Gentiles.

Why does Isaiah’s all-encompassing knowledge of Israel apply to the Gentiles? Consider the Savior’s explanation: “And all things that he spake *have been and shall be*, even according to the words which he spake.”⁴

In the Lord’s explanation of Isaiah’s writings, Jesus links the prophetic destiny of two groups of people; Israel and the Gentiles become central topics for Isaiah.

⁴ 3 Nephi 23:3, emphasis added.

II. CLARIFYING TERMINOLOGY

One reason a connection between Israel and the Gentiles is overlooked is because some prophecies refer to the Gentiles in differing terms. The prophecies of Joseph who was sold into Egypt and Ezekiel treat Joseph's name as a synonym for Gentiles.⁵ Why is Joseph's name a substitute for Gentiles?

After Joseph was sold into Egypt, the daughter of the Egyptian high priest became his wife. Their offspring, Ephraim and Manasseh were the offspring of a mixed marriage. From Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh receive the heritage and promises of Israel.⁶ From their mother, Asenath, the sons inherit a Gentile lineage. Israelites viewed mixed marriages unfavorably and considered the offspring of blended marriages Gentiles. Consequently, prophecies referring to the pair, Israel and the Gentiles, or Israel and Joseph, likely refer to the same people. Through Joseph's lineage the blessings of Israel extend to all Gentiles.⁷ When reading prophecies with references to Joseph and the Gentiles—yet to be fulfilled—they frequently refer to the same people.

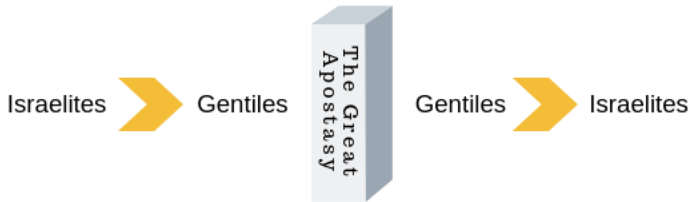
⁵ The Joseph Smith Translation ("JST") of Genesis 50, 2 Nephi 3, and Ezekiel 37 all describe the work of the Gentiles in terms of Joseph or the seer of his loins.

⁶ Genesis 41:51-52.

⁷ "...I have obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of my loins, the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my loins; and unto thee, whom my father Jacob hath named Israel, a prophet...." (JST Genesis 50:24)

"And it shall come to pass, that if the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day that he shall manifest himself unto them in word, and also in power, in very deed, unto the taking away of their stumbling blocks—And harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God, they shall be numbered among the seed of thy father; yea, they shall be numbered among the house of Israel...." (1 Nephi 14:1-2)

III. PART 1: THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST



1. PRESENTING THE FRAMEWORK.

An oft repeated prophecy is summarized as “The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.” Yet another example of how scriptures establish a pattern, this prophecy predicts how the right to the covenant has been—and will be—offered through the generations.

When Christ taught Isaiah’s prophecies to the Nephites, he speaks as though Isaiah’s warnings were directed at both the Israelites and the Gentiles. Therefore, this prophecy is not only drawing a parallel between the Israelites’ right to the covenant and that of the gentiles, but also acts as a warning to modern gentiles that their fate will mirror that of early Jews.

Joseph confirms this belief in a letter to the editor written to N.C. Saxton, wherein he states that this prophecy is the template by which God covenants with his people.

The letter stated that Christ proposed to make a covenant with them, but Israel rejected Him. Thus, “[the] covenant has never been established with the house of Israel,

nor with the house of Judah, for it requires two parties to make a covenant, and those two parties must be agreed, or no covenant can be made.”⁸

A. ISRAEL’S OPPORTUNITY AND REJECTION.

In order to understand what this prophecy means for our day, it’s important to investigate the history of ‘the first’ covenant people, the Israelites.

When God offered to renew his covenant with Israel they were at Sinai, following their Egyptian exodus.⁹ After Israel’s covenant rejection at Sinai, the Lord withdrew Moses and the greater priesthood from Israel.¹⁰ They continued under the Aaronic Covenant until the days of John the Baptist.¹¹

In the aftermath of Israel’s covenant rejection, they began to incorporate false traditions into their pattern of

⁸ *The Covenant with Israel*, Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (“TPJS”), 14.

⁹ Moses plainly taught the children of Israel the covenant of the greater priesthood and sought diligently to sanctify them to see the face of God. (D&C 84:23) The greater priesthood “administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.” (D&C 84:19-22) However, the people rejected the covenant and “hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory.” (D&C 84:24)

¹⁰ “Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also.” (D&C 84:25)

¹¹ “And the lesser priesthood continued... with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb.” (D&C 84:26-27)

worship and replaced the scriptures with the writings and interpretations of academics. The original doctrine became overshadowed by alterations imposed by man and became lost or unrecognizable. The Lord sent John the Baptist to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews and restore truth in the attempt to renew His covenant offer to Israel.¹²

Regarding John the Baptist's role in wresting the kingdom from the Jews, Joseph Smith said,

John [the Baptist], at that time, was the only legal administrator in the affairs of the kingdom there was then on the earth, and holding the keys of power. The Jews had to obey his instructions or be damned, by their own law; and Christ Himself fulfilled all righteousness in becoming obedient to the law which he had given to Moses on the mount, and thereby magnified it and made it honorable, instead of destroying it. *The son of Zacharias wrested the keys, the kingdom, the power, the glory from the Jews, by the holy anointing and decree of heaven. (The Greatness and Mission of John the Baptist, TPJS., 276, emphasis added.)*

¹² “For [John] was baptized while he was yet in his childhood, and was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old unto this power, *to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews*, and *to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord*, in whose hand is given all power.” (D&C 84:28, emphasis added)

From the time of Moses to the appearance of John the Baptist, Israel was scattered throughout the earth and the primary survivors from the twelve tribes were Jews. When John the Baptist arrived, he laid claim to the kingdom of the Jews by virtue of both his birthright—as the only son and heir of Zacharias, an Aaronic high priest—and the holy anointing and decree of heaven.

When John accomplished his mission, he prepared the way for the Messiah and a new dispensation. To fully understand the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, I refer to an account of John the Beloved/Revelator that recently came to light as promised.¹³

What follows is an explanation of the mission John the Baptist was sent by heaven to fulfill.

There was a man sent from God and his name was John. This man was sent as a witness so that he might testify and identify the Light to give everyone a reason to believe through the Messiah. He, John, was not the Light, but he was sent by heaven as a witness to testify of the Light, *and to end the dispensation of Moses, and baptize to begin a new dispensation.*¹⁴

Three valuable elements are gleaned from this passage: John the Baptist's mission was to (1) end the dispensation of Moses,

¹³ “And it shall come to pass, that if you are faithful you shall receive the fulness of the record of John.” (D&C 93:18)

¹⁴ *The Testimony of St. John*, Denver Snuffer, 1, <http://denversnuffer.net/resources/The-Testimony-of-St-John.pdf>, emphasis added. Visit denversnuffer.com for the history of how the record has come to light.

(2) testify of the Messiah, and (3) introduce a new dispensation by baptizing in preparation and anticipation of the Savior's ministry. The new Melchizedek High Priest [Jesus] is likened unto Moses, in that He sought to restore the keys of the higher priesthood and re-introduce mankind to the presence of God as Moses did at Sinai.¹⁵ This is illustrated in an exchange between Jesus and Nicodemus in the new Testimony of John the Beloved.

“There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, who was in darkness and came to visit with Jesus. He sought wisdom from Jesus and said, Enlightened heavenly guide, some of us know you have descended from the High Council of Heaven because signs confirm you have authority from God. Jesus answered and said to him, *In the name of Father Ahman I testify there is a new dispensation begun. You must accept the ordinances of this new Light or you cannot hope to progress to know God.* Nicodemus said to him, If I believe this, can I ascend in this life, or will it be accomplished only in the afterlife? Jesus answered, in the name of Father Ahman I say to you, *except you receive the ordinance of baptism to join the new dispensation, and*

¹⁵ “And the Lord will surely prepare a way for his people, unto the fulfilling of the words of Moses, which he spake, saying: A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, *like unto me*; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that all those who will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people.” (D&C 84:19-26; see also 1 Nephi 22:20, emphasis added)

thereby forsake your sins and receive forgiveness and an outpouring of the Spirit, you will not ascend to God's presence in this life or the life to come. All who are devoted to the ambitions of the flesh remain imprisoned by the flesh, and those who are born anew through the ordinances, receive the Spirit of Truth, and are able to know the record of heaven by the Spirit of Truth. Do not question if what I say is true because the Spirit of Truth confers light, knowledge, and understanding of the mysteries of heaven within every soul who receives it. Nicodemus replied to him, why is this not widely known? Jesus answered, *Why does a member of the Sanhedrin not recognize that a new dispensation has begun?* In the name of Father Ahman I confirm what was told by John the Baptist and I have begun a work that comes from heaven. But you who lead Israel fight against it and you refuse to humble yourselves. If I offered you a position of respect and authority, as you now hold, you would believe. But because I testify only of heavenly things that require faith and sacrifice, you refuse to believe? I tell you, if you want to ascend to the Heavenly Council, *you must first acknowledge and give heed to the messengers sent by them.*"¹⁶

¹⁶ *The Testimony of St. John*, 4.

There are notable points from this exchange. Nicodemus was no common Jew. He was both a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling class in the Jewish faith. Nicodemus acknowledged he and a few others realized Jesus had authority from heaven because of signs they observed. Nicodemus asked the question all Christianity should ponder. “If I believe this, can I ascend in this life, or will it be accomplished only in the afterlife?”

Jesus responds with a warning: “Except you receive the ordinance of baptism to join the new dispensation, and thereby forsake your sins and receive forgiveness and an outpouring of the Spirit, you will not ascend to God’s presence in this life or the life to come..., and those who are born anew through the ordinances, receive the Spirit of Truth, and are able to know the record of heaven by the Spirit of Truth.”¹⁷

A great obstacle for the Jewish faith was Jesus had no formal standing in the hierarchy of the Jewish religion. The Jews failed to recognize the new dispensation introduced by the Savior because of His lack of formal standing. The Jews would not accept the Spirit of Truth because it didn’t come through conventional channels of authority.

John the Baptist was less a problem for the Jews because they recognized John’s authority and birthright from his father Zacharias, the Aaronic high priest. They accepted John the Baptist, but not his testimony that Jesus was the Son of God and a new Melchizedek High Priest.

¹⁷ Christ is the Spirit of Truth; *see* D&C 93:26.

John the Baptist closed the dispensation that began with Moses and prepared the way for a new Melchizedek High Priest, the Son of God.¹⁸ Jesus linked the ordinance of baptism with the new dispensation and warned Nicodemus if he failed to acknowledge God's servants, he would neither ascend to God's presence in this life or the next.

The events relating to the transition from Moses' dispensation to John the Baptist and Jesus are a type for a future transition from the Gentiles to Israel in the last days. The new dispensation began with a new Melchizedek High Priest [Jesus] complying with the old [John the Baptist] Aaronic covenant of vicarious representation then introducing the covenant of the higher priesthood so man could unlock keys to the mysteries of godliness and the opportunity to represent themselves before the Lord at the veil.¹⁹ Like their fathers at Sinai, the Jews rejected Jesus and the new dispensation. Their rejection culminated in the crucifixion of the Son of God and the Lord's rejection of Israel as a covenant people.

B. THE CLOSE OF ONE DISPENSATION MARKED THE BEGINNING OF ANOTHER.

Following the death of Jesus, Peter is given a vision commanding him to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and offer them a covenant with God.²⁰ According to

¹⁸ Hebrews 7:17-28.

¹⁹ The higher covenants and temple ceremony point to this ultimate end. Moses plainly taught his people so they might be prepared to "behold the face of God." (D&C 84:19-26, especially 23)

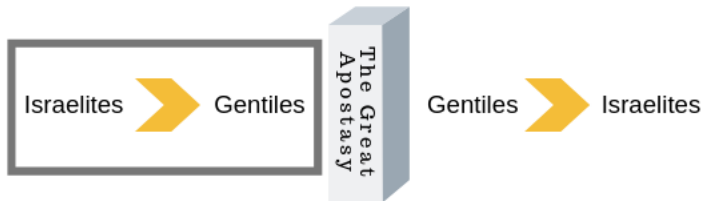
²⁰ Acts 10.

Joseph Smith, the Gentiles were more receptive to God's covenant than the Jews.

Thus after the chosen family had rejected Christ and His proposals, the heralds of salvation said to them, "Lo we turn unto the Gentiles"; *and the Gentiles received the covenant, and were grafted in from whence the chosen family were broken off*; but the Gentiles have not continued in the goodness of God, but have departed from the faith that was once delivered to the Saints, *and have broken the covenant in which their fathers were established*. (TPJS., p.15, emphasis added)

Joseph Smith makes the distinction that the Gentiles, unlike Israel, did receive the covenant. For a time, the Gentiles in Peter's day received the covenant and were grafted into Israel. However, The Gentiles' posterity fell into apostasy.

C. *SUMMARY OF THE FIRST HALF.*



Having covered the covenant transition between the dispensation of Moses and the new dispensation introduced by Jesus, we now organize what has been considered in the first half of the prophetic timeline but prior to the Great Apostasy:

Israel:

1. The covenant trial period begins with Moses.²¹
2. Moses introduced Israel to the “greater priesthood.”²²
3. The Israelites reject the higher covenant, closing the door to receiving keys, ordinances, and the power of godliness necessary to return to God’s presence.²³
4. The dispensation continued through observance of the Law of Moses.
5. Moses combined ancient scripture with contemporary revelations received by him for an expanding body of scripture expanding mankind’s knowledge of God. In effect, correcting redactions, fallacies and false traditions added by man.

²¹ D&C 84:25.

²² D&C 84:19-26.

²³ *Id.*

Gentiles:

1. Though Israel rejected the Lord's covenant through Moses, God made a provision by covenant with Joseph of Egypt, including a covenant path for the Gentiles and a remnant of Joseph's descendants. From Joseph's seed a righteous branch arises (JST Genesis 50:24). The Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 14:1-2) and Joseph Smith explain the righteous branch includes a few Gentiles who repent and obtain a covenant with God (TPJS., p.15).

When God offers a blessing or knowledge to a man, and he refuses to receive it, he will be damned. The Israelites prayed that God would speak to Moses and not to them; in consequence of which he cursed them with a carnal law. (TPJS., p.322)

As a consequence of Israel's covenant rejection, Joseph Smith stated a covenant was never established with Israel or the house of Judah.

This covenant has never been established with the house of Israel, nor with the house of Judah, for it requires two parties to make a covenant, and those two parties must be agreed, or no covenant can be made. (TPJS., p.14, emphasis added)

Israel rejected the Lord's offer of covenant and the Lord removed Moses and the greater priesthood, replacing it with an Aaronic, preparatory gospel. (D&C 84:26-28)

Moses becomes the type or pattern for all dispensational heads. They introduce the "greater priesthood" to their people and seek to sanctify them in preparation for the higher covenant and self-representation in the presence of God. Revelation continues growing, expounding and correcting misunderstandings and false traditions that corrupt existing scripture; contemporary revelation corrects and replaces unauthorized interpolations of men.²⁴ If history repeats itself, each dispensation head follows this pattern and may be identified by the presence of these attributes and characteristics. Further, the rejection of the greater light brought by righteous servants allows scribes and Pharisees to fill the vacuum.

2. *THE DOCTRINE; HOW IT'S LOST.*

Having covered the framework, we ask what God's purposes are as he moves in circles? The pattern is centered on what was given, what was lost, and how it is renewed. To understand what is at stake, consider the teachings that were first given to Israel, then to the Gentiles. The Book of Mormon

²⁴ It seems doctrine quickly devolves in the absence of the dispensational head. "The earlier *prophetic* religion of the Old Testament was brought to a close by the Deuteronomists, and a priestly, *controlled* religion substituted thereafter. In the Old Testament faith, the heavens had been opened and the canon of scripture grew. The priests closed the canon, then altered it to eliminate what they thought were objectionable ideas, centering worship in the cultic practices of the Temple of Jerusalem." (Denver Snuffer, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, 487, emphasis added)

sheds great insight into what Moses taught to sanctify his people; there is only one doctrine and it is preached throughout all dispensations of this Earth. When comparing the simplicity of the Book of Mormon's teachings on the mysteries of godliness, it is evident how far Israel slipped from the truth.

Following the Lord's withdrawal of Moses and the greater priesthood, a lesser, Aaronic covenant was given and inspired men continued leading Israel for a season through vicarious representation before the Lord. In time, a transition occurred where inspired leadership withdrew. They were replaced by scholars and academics whom people grew to rely upon for instruction and leadership. New revelation expounding and expanding the body of revealed truth gradually withdrew and was replaced by the philosophies of men mingled with existing scripture. In turn, the original teachings God revealed through the dispensational head became corrupted by uninspired interpretations. When John the Baptist and Jesus appeared, the doctrine of Christ had been both added to and taken from. Inspired instruction became convoluted to the point John the Baptist had to wrest the kingdom of God from the Jews and lay the foundation for a new dispensation, both correcting and restoring much of what was lost. In an exchange with the Jews, Jesus said:

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.... Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me:

for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (John 5:39, 45-47)

The primary body of scripture for the Jews were five books of Moses. The Jews acknowledged writings of other prophets, but Moses' writings are pre-eminent among Jewish scholars with later prophets considered secondary in importance to Moses' body of work.

Following His crucifixion, the resurrected Lord instructed His disciples as they ate broiled fish and honeycomb. In that exchange, the Lord opened the scriptures to their understanding.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. (Luke 24:44-45)

For the Savior's disciples to understand the scriptures it was necessary for Christ to open their understanding. Ponder the purpose of Moses revealing the greater priesthood to the Israelites.²⁵ What the Lord does is, by definition, introducing his disciples to the "greater priesthood," because they were, at

²⁵ D&C 84:19-22.

that time, standing in the presence of God receiving the mysteries of the kingdom—including knowledge of God directly from Him.

A. *THE GREATER PRIESTHOOD: THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.*

Despite Israel's failure, the Book of Mormon provides evidence the Doctrine of Christ survived among some believers after Moses was removed from Israel. Consider the teachings of Nephi roughly 700 years after Moses.

For my soul delighteth in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding.

Wherefore, I would that ye should remember that I have spoken unto you concerning the prophet which the Lord showed unto me, that should baptize the Lamb of God, which should take away the sins of the world.

And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water, to fulfil all righteousness, *O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water.*

And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did

fulfil all righteousness in being baptized by water?

Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he sheweth unto the children of men that, according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments.

Wherefore, after he was baptized with water the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove.

And again, it sheweth unto the children of men the straitness of the path and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them.

And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?

And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son.

And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that 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 your 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. (2 Nephi 31:3-13, emphasis added)

Close to six hundred years before the birth of Christ, the teachings of Nephi are evidence the Doctrine of Christ taught by Moses survived among the Nephites. The Doctrine of Christ was transcendent in its importance to Nephi so he closed his record with the exposition of this doctrine.

B. CHRIST REAFFIRMS HIS DOCTRINE TO THE NEPHITES.

Going through the account of Christ's ministry to the Nephites, we may safely presume the Gospel taught by Nephi and Christ was the same which Moses followed as he sought diligently to sanctify his people.²⁶ The Doctrine of Christ was simply and succinctly taught to the saints at Bountiful.

²⁶ D&C 84:23; "Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown

And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe me.

And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.

And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost. . . , Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the

unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost. *And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate....*" (2 Nephi 31:17-18, emphasis added) There is only one gate and the way is straight and narrow. Moses would have taught this plainly to the children of Israel.

same cometh of evil, and is built upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them.

Therefore, go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth. (3 Nephi 11:33-35, 39-41, emphasis added)

The doctrine Christ declared to “all the ends of the earth” is the same doctrine taught to Israel. Would there be any other way Israel could be sanctified? Is there any other “rock” Israel could build upon to receive the greater priesthood? Was Alma, who obeyed the law of Moses, not practicing the Doctrine of Christ when he said:

Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another; yea, will ye persist in the persecution of your brethren, who humble themselves and do walk after the holy order of God, wherewith they have been brought into this church, *having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and they do bring forth works which are meet for repentance.* (Alma 5:54, emphasis added)

From the time of Moses, the doctrine of Christ was taught in plain simplicity. Believe in Christ, repent, be baptized, receive the baptism by fire and the Holy Ghost. That’s it. God is

merciful. He made the requirements for salvation profoundly simple so people could understand and receive it.

From the mortal perspective, those who understand and teach complex principles are considered intelligent and of superior intellect. God manifests His superior intelligence by making complex subjects simple to understand. Perhaps that is why the Savior admonishes us to become as a little child. “And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things.” (3 Nephi 11:37) Repent and be humble and in humility, become inquisitive like a little child.

And the remission of sins bringeth meekness,
and lowliness of heart; and because of
meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the
visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter
filleteth with hope and perfect love, which love
endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end
shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with
God. (Moroni 8:26)

Meekness and lowliness of heart invite the Holy Ghost or “Comforter.” It fills the heart with hope and perfect love and endures through diligence to prayer. This is the mystery of godliness, or in other words, the way a natural man is transformed to possess the attributes of God.²⁷

It is evident Moses taught the children of Israel the Doctrine of Christ before the Lord removed him and the greater

²⁷ D&C 84:21.

priesthood. What did Israel do with the Doctrine of Christ in the interim between Moses and John the Baptist?

In the absence of continuing revelation, the natural course, was for the mysteries of God to erode and become corrupted by the philosophies of men. This is a natural consequence to the fall of Adam. Alma explained this principle in the Book of Mormon.

And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portions of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell. (Alma 12:9-11)

There are no spiritual plateaus when it comes to God's mysteries. God's mysteries are truth and if you search diligently for truth, your understanding grows brighter until the perfect day.²⁸ If you neglect searching for truth and ignore or reject it when truth is plainly manifest, truth withdraws and you are condemned.²⁹ Joseph Smith reaffirmed this principle during his ministry:

If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God, or possess the principles which God possesses, for if we are not drawing towards God in principle, we are going from Him and drawing towards the devil. (TPJS., p.216; see also D&C 84:45-51)

In the absence of a dispensational head and the greater priesthood, the once chosen people are left to interpret God's revelations in a state of corruption and perpetual decline. They become susceptible to men ignorantly claiming to understand and lead; therefore, both are deceived. Compare the circumstances that followed Moses departure to a parlor game of doctrinal "telephone."³⁰ Moses begins the circle by teaching the Doctrine of Christ. As Christ's doctrine passes from one

²⁸ "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light growth brighter and brighter until the perfect day." (D&C 50:24)

²⁹ "Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifest unto them, and they receive not the light." (D&C 93:31-32)

³⁰ In this game people sit in a circle and whisper a short message from one to another. Invariably, the message is distorted from the original.

generation to the next, parts are left out while contemporary interpretations deviate and expand the original message. Eventually, all that remains is convoluted, corrupt doctrine that no longer leads souls to Christ, but perverts why Christ is even mentioned in doctrine.

Layers upon layers of rabbinical interpretation replaced original dispensational precepts. When John the Baptist appears, the Jews (in the absence of revelation) substitute scholarly instruction, rabbinical interpretation, and endless repetition of altered ordinances as a substitute for divinely sanctioned instruction and worship. The Jews studied scripture diligently; still, the doctrine was convoluted to a degree the Jews failed to recognize their Messiah. What remained had little relevance to the salvation of man.

3. ***KEY PLAYERS.***

It was stated earlier that the second half of the prophecy mirrors the first. It is necessary to understand the functions of John the Baptist and Christ during the time of covenant transition, because similar figureheads will appear in the second half. You must understand the roles to have eyes to see it play out in modern days.

A. *JOHN THE BAPTIST.*

i. *Wresting the kingdom from the Jews.*

God offered Israel the fulness of His blessings at Sinai. After their rejection and in His wrath, God gave Israel a “lesser

priesthood,” a priesthood that held keys to receiving angels and the preparatory gospel.³¹ A period of time followed where Israel had the chance to let the symbols of the preparatory gospel orient their hearts back to Jesus Christ. John the Baptist rose up in the priestly class as a direct condemnation of their authority and apostasy; he obtained a connection with heaven despite the false traditions of his people. He began preparations for introducing a new dispensation. Only the penitent saw God working through small and simple means to prepare the way for something much greater.

The preparatory gospel shared elements of the “greater priesthood” but keys to the knowledge of God were withheld from the group collectively. God’s knowledge was only to be obtained individually and directly from heaven.³²

Which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments, which the Lord in his wrath caused to continue with the house of Aaron among the children of Israel until John, whom God raised up, being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb.
(D&C 84:27)

³¹D&C 84:26.

³² “And thus, [Melchizedek] having been approved of God, he was ordained an high priest after the order of the covenant which God made with Enoch, It being after the order of the Son of God; which order came, not by man, nor the will of man; neither by father nor mother; neither by beginning of days nor end of years; but of God; And *it was delivered unto men by the calling of his own voice, according to his own will*, unto as many as believed on his name” (JST Genesis 14:27-29, emphasis added).

The lesser law was given “in His wrath” because Israel’s rejection of the greater covenant was an act of rebellion and apostasy. Israel was offered the knowledge of God and restoration to His presence. Israel’s rejection was an affront to God because it lacked appreciation for the greatness of His sacrificial gift and terrible price paid by Jesus Christ. To spurn God’s offer of the greatest gift³³ and disrespect the sacrifice of the Son of God is ample justification for His wrath.

One facet of John the Baptist’s mission was to wrest the kingdom from the Jews as a consequence of their rebellion.

For he (John the Baptist) was baptized while he was yet in his childhood, and was ordained by the angel of God at the time he was eight days old *unto this power, to overthrow the kingdom of the Jews*, and to make straight the way of the Lord before the face of his people, to prepare them for the coming of the Lord, in whose hand is given all power. (D&C 84:28, emphasis added)

Several questions are raised by the Lord’s explanation. To begin, why must John the Baptist overthrow the kingdom of the Jews and how was John to accomplish this task?

There were abundant reasons the kingdom of the Jews must be overthrown. One answer was the corruption of the doctrine; their religion was both “more and less” than the gospel Moses taught in their day. When religion fails to lead

³³ “And, if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life, which gift is the greatest of all the gifts of God.” (D&C 14:7)

souls to Christ their focus turns away from Him toward institutional loyalty and vain repetition. They become “as salt that lost its savor.” “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.” (Matthew 5:13)

Religious observance for the Jews lapsed into rote obedience to altered ordinances and false traditions. The Jews believed their religiosity was sufficient to claim heaven’s blessing. They believed strict adherence to the Law of Moses and conformity to rabbinical instruction was sufficient to save. Regarding the Jews who ruled Jerusalem, Isaiah said:

Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves. (Isaiah 28:14-15)

Lies became a refuge and cover for the Jews, a false shield from the consequences of their disobedience. They embellished, then embraced rabbinical teachings as a substitute for revealed truth taught by Moses. Self-deception was the root of their false sense of security.

God, cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.³⁴ He cannot be complicit with falsehood among His people. Israel was meant to be a light to the world. When wickedness pollutes His kingdom, the Lord is obligated to act.³⁵ This is why the Jews had to be overthrown by John the Baptist. Overthrowing the Jews religious kingdom was preparation for the ministry of Jesus Christ, renewal of the greater priesthood and introduction of a new dispensation.

How the Jews were overthrown by the Baptist is an interesting question. It shows how the Lord works within the structure both to salvation and to damnation. Joseph Smith explained John the Baptist's wresting the kingdom from the Jews.

John, at the time, was the only legal administrator in the affairs of the kingdom there was then on the earth, and holding the keys of power. The Jews had to obey his instruction or be damned, by their own law; and Christ Himself fulfilled all righteousness in becoming obedient to the law which he had given to Moses on the mount, and thereby magnified it and made it honorable, instead of destroying it. The son of Zacharias wrested the keys, the kingdom, the power, the glory from the Jews, *by the holy anointing and decree of heaven*, and these three reasons constitute him

³⁴ D&C 1:31.

³⁵ See D&C 84:59.

the greatest prophet born of a woman. (TPJS.,
p.276)

Since David, the Jews were covenant stewards of God's kingdom.³⁶ Wresting the kingdom of God from self-serving leaders was not unprecedented. Saul was removed as king of Israel when he disobeyed the Lord's directions to destroy the Amalekites and their livestock. Additionally, Saul overstepped his bounds when he offered sacrifice to the Lord in Samuel's absence.³⁷

When Saul forfeited his right to reign over Israel, the overthrow occurred when Samuel anointed David.³⁸ There were no armies to compel Saul. With David's anointing, the Spirit of the Lord rested upon David as it withdrew from Saul. From that time forward, David was rightful heir to the throne of Israel.

Moses was also removed as leader of Israel. Not for his disobedience but for Israel's rejection of the greater priesthood and the Lord's covenant. The Lord's removal of authority occurs more frequently than not. The Lord replaces leadership of His people when leaders or the people violate rules of priesthood protocol.

Behold, there are *many called*, but *few are chosen*. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of

³⁶ See 1 Samuel 16:13.

³⁷ 1 Samuel 16.

³⁸ "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed [David] in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." (1 Samuel 16:13-14)

this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson—That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood and authority of that man. . . , No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile. (D&C 121:34-37, 41-42, emphasis added)

In addition to these rules of conduct, one lesson must be learned by those acting in God's priesthood. The lesson is: "the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness." (D&C 121:36) It is a clear principle. But how

often do we find righteousness coupled with authority in God's kingdom? "We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of *almost all men*, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion." (D&C 121:39, emphasis added)

Based on *the Lord's experience*, it is the nature and disposition of *almost all men*, as soon as they get a little authority—as they suppose—they *immediately* exercise unrighteous dominion. The Lord's experience tells us that unrighteous dominion among those called by Him is common and leads to significant turnover in the leadership of His kingdom. Given those odds, the likelihood the Lord will remove a man from a position of leadership is something shy of 100%, if His experience is taken literally. That is not to say they lose their position immediately. Saul remained king over Israel for some time after David's anointing. What Saul did lose was his authority to act in God's name and receive His direction. The same was true when John the Baptist wrested the kingdom from the Jews. The presiding priests remained in power, not abandoning their office when John the Baptist appeared.

ii. *Preparing the Way Before the Lord.*

Besides wresting the kingdom from the Jews, John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord's ministry by baptizing the Son of God. John the Baptist's preparation before the Lord's advent should be understood in the context of priesthood. The greater priesthood allowed individuals to

represent themselves personally before the Lord. Under the Aaronic covenant, Israel was collectively represented by the Aaronic high priest who entered the temple's "holy place" to offer sacrifice for his personal sins and the sins of Israel.³⁹

From the time of Moses until John the Baptist the Jews failed to observe either the lesser or greater priesthood covenants. John the Baptist was sent to teach observance of the lesser covenant in preparation for the greater covenant introduced by Jesus.

The contrast between John the Baptist's mission and the Savior's ministry is explained in the recently published Testimony of St. John.

A controversy arose between traditionalist Jews and John's followers about authority to baptize. The traditionalists hoped to have John denounce Jesus baptizing. They went to John, hoping to turn his answer against Jesus. They asked John, The man you baptized beyond Jordan now is also baptizing and drawing away people to follow him, but he has not been given authority by us or by you.

John answered and said, *Authority comes from heaven, to both him and to me.* I told you I am not Messiah, but I have been sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. I am only a guest at another man's wedding, and not the groom. But I rejoice to be in the groom's

³⁹ Exodus 28:30, 38.

company. Jesus is the groom. He is the one whose mission is the more important. He must increase, but I must decrease. *I have come to end an era in Israel, but he has come to begin another.* He descended from heaven to serve here, and all of us need to acknowledge him—I *not only refuse to deny his authority, I confirm it.* (The Testimony of John, p.5, emphasis added)

In John's discussion with traditionalist Jews, he informs them that authority is not conferred by man or institution but heaven. As "a guest at another man's wedding," John the Baptist prepared the way⁴⁰ for the ministry of the Savior.

B. *JESUS CHRIST.*

i. *Opening a New Dispensation with His Doctrine.*

Included in John's ministry was closing the era or dispensation that began with Moses so the Savior could introduce a new dispensation. Jesus said to a group of Pharisees:

Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The law and

⁴⁰ See D&C 84:26-28.

the prophets *were until John*: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. (Luke 16:15-16, emphasis added)

Jesus confirms to the Pharisees that the law of Moses and the Aaronic covenant continued to John (the Baptist). Jesus offered the Jews of His day a final opportunity to receive the greater priesthood covenant. Introduction of the greater priesthood marked the beginning of a new dispensation.

In His private conversation with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Sanhedrin, Jesus introduced the higher gospel. Their conversation is recorded in the Testimony of St. John.

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, *who was in darkness* and came to visit with Jesus. He sought wisdom from Jesus and said, Enlightened heavenly guide, some of us know you have descended from the High Council of Heaven because signs confirm you have authority from God. Jesus answered and said to him, In the name of Father Ahman I testify *there is a new dispensation begun*. You must accept the ordinances of this new Light or you cannot hope to progress to know God.

Nicodemus said to him, If I believe this, can I ascend in this life, or will it be accomplished only in the afterlife? Jesus

answered, In the name of Father Ahman I say to you, Except you receive the ordinance of baptism to join the new dispensation, and thereby forsake your sins and receive forgiveness and an outpouring of the Spirit, you will not ascend to God's presence in this life or the life to come. All who are devoted to the ambitions of the flesh remain imprisoned by the flesh, and those who are born anew through the ordinances, receive the Spirit of Truth, and are able to know the record of heaven by the Spirit of Truth. Do not question if what I say is true because the Spirit of Truth confers light, knowledge, and understanding of the mysteries of heaven within every soul who receives it.

Nicodemus replied to him, Why is this not widely known? Jesus answered, Why does a member of the Sanhedrin not recognize that a new dispensation has begun? In the name of Father Ahman I confirm what was told by John the Baptist and I have begun a work that comes from heaven. But you who lead Israel fight against it and you refuse to humble yourselves. If I offered you a position of respect and authority, as you now hold, you would believe. But because I testify only of heavenly things that require faith and sacrifice, you refuse to believe? I tell you, *if you want to ascend to the Heavenly Council, you must first acknowledge and give heed to the messengers sent by them.*

You can refuse to believe, but you will see in me a sign and remember this saying: When Moses nailed a brass serpent upon a pole in the wilderness, he prophesied of me. And I shall also be nailed upon a tree, and those who believe on me will receive deliverance through my sacrifice, even as Israel was delivered by looking with faith at Moses' serpent. (The Testimony of St. John, p.4, emphasis added)

The question at the heart of Nicodemus' inquiry is the question of how he might ascend to the "Heavenly Council" and God's presence. Ironically, this is what Moses plainly taught the children of Israel when he attempted to sanctify them at Mt. Sinai.⁴¹ The greater priesthood held the keys to receive the knowledge of God and the holy ordinances associated with the power of godliness. As a Pharisee, Nicodemus was familiar with the teachings of Moses. He had an understanding of those teachings and the necessity of sanctification to prepare for entrance in God's presence. Expanding his understanding was the purpose of his visit with Jesus.

Nicodemus was no common Jew. A member of the Sanhedrin, he belonged to the supreme council or court in his municipality. To qualify for the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus had to be a Chief Priest, scribe, or elder in the religious institution of the Jews. If history repeats itself it is important to note the attitudes and temperament of prominent religious leaders among the Jews. They become a type for the religious

⁴¹ D&C 84:19-23.

establishment among the Gentiles when the Gentiles first receive the covenant. Prevailing religious authorities among the Gentiles, like the Jews, have some knowledge but remain in darkness, like Nicodemus. Few of them are inquisitive like Nicodemus. Most are immersed in the religious tradition of their day.

Jesus exposes the ignorance of Nicodemus and the Sanhedrin when Nicodemus asks, “Why is this not widely known?” To which Jesus counters Nicodemus with a question of His own. “Why does a member of the Sanhedrin not recognize that a new dispensation has begun?” Why indeed?

Though Nicodemus spent a lifetime studying the Jewish faith, he remained in darkness. In fact, he acknowledges his ignorance by asking questions that someone familiar with Moses’ doctrine would know. “If I believe this, can I ascend in this life, or will it be accomplished only in the afterlife?” This member of the ruling class of Israel questions whether God can be known in mortality or if He is only known in the next life.

Jesus responds to Nicodemus’s question by explaining to him the same Doctrine of Christ He later taught the Nephites.⁴²

Except you receive the ordinance of baptism (3 Ne 11:33-34) to join the new dispensation, and thereby forsake your sins and receive forgiveness (*Id.* at 37) and an outpouring of the Spirit (*Id.* at 35), you will not ascend to God’s presence in this life or the life to come. . . , and

⁴² 3 Nephi 11:32-40.

those who are born anew through the ordinances, receive the Spirit of Truth, and are able to know the record of heaven by the Spirit of Truth. Do not question if what I say is true because the Spirit of Truth confers light, knowledge, and understanding of the mysteries of heaven within every soul who receives it. (Testimony of John, p.4; *see also* 3 Nephi 11:36)

“How does one ascend to heaven?” This is the question every follower of Christ should ask. In response Jesus says, be baptized and join His new dispensation. This is how you forsake your sins, receive forgiveness and have an outpouring of the “Spirit of Truth.”⁴³ Encompassed in the Doctrine of Christ is “the way”⁴⁴ to obtain the greater priesthood, greater knowledge, become born of the Spirit and transformed into the image and attributes of God. This is the mystery of godliness.

What stands in the way of Nicodemus embracing the greater gospel Jesus offers is the same impediment for the Gentiles.

But you who lead Israel fight against it and you refuse to humble yourselves. If I offered you a position of respect and authority, as you now hold, you would believe. But because I testify only of heavenly things that require faith and sacrifice, you refuse to believe? I tell you, if

⁴³ Christ is the Spirit of Truth; *see* D&C 93:26.

⁴⁴ John 14:6.

you want to ascend to the Heavenly Council,
*you must first acknowledge and give heed to
 the messengers sent by them.* (Testimony of
 John, p.4, emphasis added)

Nicodemus was faced with losing his standing and authority among his peers if he accepted Christ's invitation. To follow Jesus means a devotion to him over all else.⁴⁵ A modern-day equivalent of Nicodemus is an Apostle walking away from his position to follow a "messenger from the Heavenly Counsel." But Christ was concerned for his soul, not the stir it created among the Jewish faith.

Before Gethsemane, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, Jesus declared, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). Part of Christ's work was to put in place a plan of succession when He finished His labors on earth. The dispensation Jesus introduced in mortality continued after His resurrection for a time. Peter was given the keys to continue the dispensation our Lord began.

Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?
 And they said, Some say that thou art John the
 Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or
 one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But
 whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter
 answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of
 the living God. And Jesus answered and said

⁴⁵ See Matthew 4:18-20. Straightway the Apostles left their nets and followed him.

unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: And whatsoever thou hast bound on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. (Matthew 16:13-21)

Jesus gave the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” to Peter to become the standard bearer for the new dispensation and greater covenant following the Jews’ rejection and execution of Jesus. The dispensation was built upon the foundation of revelation Peter relied upon to discern Jesus was the Son of God. If it was led by revelation the gates of hell could not prevail against it.

Of the Savior’s ministry to the Jews, Joseph Smith wrote, “Christ in the days of His flesh, proposed to make a covenant with them, but they rejected Him and His proposals,

and in consequence thereof, they were broken off, and no covenant was made with them at that time.” (TPJS., pp.14-15)

The crucifixion of the Son of God is the consummate act of rebellion against the Godhead. For a time, the Apostles continued preaching to Jews until their opportunity passed. Joseph Smith continues his commentary explaining the covenant transition from the Jews to the Gentiles.

Thus after this chosen family had rejected Christ and His proposals, the heralds of salvation said to them, “Lo we turn unto the Gentiles”; and *the Gentiles received the covenant*, and were grafted in from whence the chosen family were broken off; but the Gentiles have not continued in the goodness of God, but have departed from the faith that was once delivered to the Saints, and have broken the covenant in which their fathers were established; and have become high-minded and have not feared.” (TPJS., p.15, emphasis added)

The Gentiles received the greater covenant and were grafted in where Israel was cut off. The Gentiles honored the covenant for a time but eventually disregarded their fathers’ covenant with God.

The time the Gentiles first received the covenant to the time their posterity rejected the covenant marked the conclusion of the first half of the “first shall be last prophecy.”

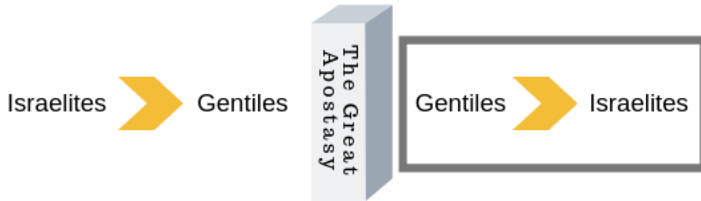
C. *SUMMARY.*

John the Baptist accomplished a peaceful Coup D'état through the ministrations of heaven. Though he was taught Jewish tradition, he established his personal connection with God. He prepared the way for Christ's ministry by condemning wicked traditions of their day and baptizing unto the new dispensation.

Christ opened the new dispensation by preaching a better way. For the humble, His teachings enlighten, nourish and exalt.

This completes the first half of the "first shall be last prophecy." We now examine how the first half of this prophecy is mirrored in the second half.

IV. PART 2: THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST



1. EVENTS FROM THE FIRST HALF REPEATED IN THE SECOND.

The second half of the “First Shall be Last” prophecy begins when Joseph Smith introduces the Restoration. His experience parallels that of Moses. While the following elements are present with all dispensational heads, each dispensational head is granted some latitude in how their dispensation is organized.

When God delivers a dispensation of the gospel to the earth, the head of that dispensation is granted the right and privilege of organizing the dispensation. As they organize their dispensation according to righteous principles and receive God’s approval of the pattern, the dispensation is established and remains in effect until apostasy necessitates another restoration.

Adam was given the first dispensation, and he patterned it after the order of Heaven. Abraham was also given a dispensation, which he patterned after Adam's dispensation. Moses was given a dispensation, but established a different pattern for the children of Israel according to the hardness of their hearts, which dispensation John the Baptist brought to a lawful close. Jesus Christ began a new dispensation, which he patterned in a manner to reflect Abraham's family, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob mirrored in Peter, James and John, the twelve tribes led by twelve sons of Jacob reflected by the twelve disciples, the seventy children of Jacob who entered Egypt at the time of father Joseph reflected by the seventy, and thus Christ used His right to honor the family of Abraham. Joseph Smith Jr. was given a dispensation, which he organized to honor the pattern Christ established. Such is the right and privilege granted to those who stand at the head of dispensations of the gospel. (*Teachings and Commandments*, section 154, verses 1-7, emphasis added)⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See, *Teachings and Commandments*, section 154, at scriptures.info for an elaboration on the role of dispensation heads as explained by Michael Hamill and Denver Snuffer. No dispensation has successfully established a Zion community absent the dispensation head. In every example discussed, the people who survived dispensation heads never successfully preserved the ordinances and organizational structure that led to Zion. The two successful examples of Enoch and Melchizedek did so in the single

While there is variation in how the dispensation head chooses to organize their dispensation, there remain four elements present in Moses' mortal ministry that should be repeated in the life and ministry of Joseph Smith as the dispensational head.

The four elements are:

Moses

1. This prophecy begins with Moses as the dispensational head (D&C 84:25).
2. Moses introduced Israel to the "greater priesthood" (D&C 84:19-26)
3. Israel refused the covenant, Moses and the greater priesthood are removed and replaced with the Aaronic, preparatory gospel (D&C 84:26-28). When Moses was removed, his dispensation continued through observance of the Law of Moses (see D&C 84:27-28).
4. Moses combined ancient scripture with contemporary revelations received by him for an expanding body of scripture. This increased mankind's knowledge of God, correcting fallacies and false traditions introduced by man.

Joseph Smith

1. Joseph Smith was a dispensational head. (D&C 112:30-32)
2. Joseph Smith introduced the "greater priesthood." (D&C 107:1-8, 121:34-41, Alma 13)

generation the dispensational head lived. There are no examples of any people establishing Zion in the absence of the dispensation head.

3. After Joseph Smith introduced the greater priesthood it was rejected by the church in the same manner Israel rejected the greater priesthood in the days of Moses at Sinai. (D&C 124:28, 31-35, 46-48) If the greater priesthood was withdrawn when Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred, then it follows the church was left with some form of lesser law. Nauvoo was to the Gentiles what Sinai was to Israel.⁴⁷ History is repeated.

⁴⁷ In section 130 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord declares the following: "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessings from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." (D&C 130:20-21) Whether you accept the church narrative that Peter, James and John gave priesthood keys to Joseph Smith or the Melchizedek Priesthood was given to Joseph Smith by the voice of God in Father Whitmer's chamber (see D&C 128:21), one thing is certain. Sometime prior to October 27, 1838 the Lord removed from the saints (not Joseph Smith) the fullness of the priesthood. The restoration of the fullness of the priesthood was linked to completing the temple in Nauvoo. The commandment was to build the temple. The blessing for obedience to the commandment was the restoration of the priesthood in full, plus attendant blessings. (see D&C 124:28) Among the blessings upon the saints if the temple was completed were consequences if they did not. Among those consequences was a warning the saints would be rejected as a church with their dead. (see D&C 124:32) Some may argue or offer justifications why the Lord would wink and nod at the saints failure to complete the Nauvoo Temple. (see D&C 124:31) But the Lord provided the criteria by which the church's efforts could be measured. If the people were obedient to the Lord and His appointed servants the saints "shall not be moved out of their place." (D&C 124:45) If the saints remained in Nauvoo, the Lord accepted the efforts of the Latter-day Saints. If they were moved out of their place, the Lord rejected their efforts. Given the Lord's criteria, the saints were driven out from Nauvoo and suffered incredible hardship during their westward migration. In the same revelation the Lord pronounced curses upon the saints who failed to obey God's commands in Nauvoo. "And it shall come to pass that if you build a house unto my name, and do not do the things that I say, I will not perform the oath which I make unto you, neither fulfil the promises which ye expect at my hands, saith the Lord. For instead of blessings, ye, by your own works, bring cursings, wrath, indignation, and judgments upon your heads, by your follies, and by all your abominations, which you practice before me, saith the Lord." (D&C 124:47-

4. Joseph Smith combined ancient scripture in the Holy Bible with the Book of Mormon, and contemporary revelations received by him for an expanding body of scripture. Like Moses, the new scripture expanded mankind's knowledge of God and corrected fallacies and false traditions spread throughout the Great Apostasy. Through Joseph Smith the Lord revealed a portion of the Book of Mormon, restored new versions of the Old and New Testaments, and accumulated a body of revelations canonized as the Doctrine & Covenants and Pearl of Great Price.

Comparing the mission and ministry of Moses to Joseph Smith, we see a pattern in the lives of these dispensation heads. Both performed restorative functions to prepare and sanctify their respective people for greater knowledge, a covenant with God, and returning to God's presence in mortality.

The similarities in their missions are likely the reason Joseph of Egypt associates Moses and Joseph Smith in his deathbed prophecy to his brethren.

A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who
shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.
Thus saith the Lord God of my fathers unto me,
A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of

48) Like ancient Israel at Sinai, the Latter-day Saints lost their dispensation head and were driven into the wilderness. Because the temple was never completed, though dedicated, a fullness of the priesthood was never restored and will not be until the Gentile dispensation concludes.

thy loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren. And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers; and he shall do whatsoever work I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he shall be great like unto him whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt; for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called Moses. And by this name he shall know that he is of thy house; for he shall be nursed by the king's daughter, and shall be called her son... And that seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise I give unto you; for I will remember you from generation to generation; and *his name shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his father; and he shall be like unto you*; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand shall bring my people unto salvation. (JST Genesis 50:26-29, 33, emphasis added)

Joseph of Egypt went so far as to say that Joseph Smith would be “*likened*” unto Moses. The comparison between Joseph Smith and Moses was continued by the Lord in a revelation in

the Doctrine and Covenants. “But behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for *he receiveth them even as Moses.*” (D&C 28:2, emphasis added)

Though four similarities have been pointed out, there are other similarities, like the wilderness experience of Israel and the saints being driven from Nauvoo. There are also geographical similarities. Both Israel and the latter-day saints have separate versions of the Dead Sea and the Jordan River.

In our day, the “First Shall be Last” prophecy is more than three quarters fulfilled. That is historical fact. We know about Moses and Israel’s history. We know about what happened to John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. We know about the life and ministry of Joseph Smith. Because Joseph Smith’s experience so closely mirrors that of Moses. How high is the probability the last quarter of the “First Shall be Last” prophecy will vary from the pattern established in the first three quarters of the prophecy?

2. MODERN-DAY COUNTERPART TO JOHN THE BAPTIST.

A. THE LATTER-DAY ELIAS.

If you are persuaded that history repeats itself in the “First Shall be Last” prophecy, then one should look for another Elias to appear at the end of the Gentile dispensation. Like John the Baptist, the latter-day Elias will “*wrest the*

kingdom” away from the modern Gentile equivalent of the apostate Jewish faith.

“The son of Zacharias [John the Baptist] wrested the keys, the kingdom of power, the glory from the Jews, by the holy anointing and decree of heaven” (TPJS., p.276). The kingdom of God on earth was controlled by Jews. It was that kingdom John the Baptist wrested control of. Not in a physical sense based on compulsion, but in the spiritual sense through appointment and anointing from God.

The latter-day Elias has a different preparatory function than John the Baptist. John the Baptist explained the distinction between the two Elias figures who prepare the way for a greater work.

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him; Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not that he was Elias; but confessed, saying; I am not the Christ. And they asked him, saying; How then art thou Elias? And he said, *I am not that Elias who was to restore all things*. And they asked him saying, Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? That we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as saith the prophet Esaias. (JST John 1:20-24, emphasis added)

John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of Jesus. That preparation included elevated teachings to the Jews preparing them for the advent of the Savior. In addition to preparing the remnant of Israel, it was also John the Baptist's mission to baptize the Son of God.

The mission of the latter-day Elias is to "restore all things". We know from the Joseph Smith Translation of John that another "Elias" is to be expected in the last days. Joseph Smith affirmed that belief.

What I want to impress upon your minds is the difference of power in the different parts of the Priesthood, so that when any man comes among you, saying, "I have the spirit of Elias" you can know whether he be true or false; for any man that comes, having the spirit and power of Elias, he will not transcend his bounds. John did not transcend his bounds, but faithfully performed that part belonging to his office; and every portion of the great building should be prepared right and assigned to its proper place; and it is *necessary to know who holds the keys of power, and who does not, or we may be likely to be deceived*. That person who holds the keys of Elias hath a preparatory work..., This is Elias spoken of in the last days, and here is the rock upon which many split, thinking the time was past in the days of John and Christ, and no more to be. But the spirit of Elias was revealed to me, and I know it is true;

therefore I speak with boldness, for I know
 verily my doctrine is true. (TPJS., pp.336–37,
 emphasis added)

In addition to explaining the mission and power of Elias, Joseph Smith cautioned the people that it was “*necessary*” for them to understand the spirit of Elias or they might be deceived when someone claims this authority. Couple those words of caution with Joseph’s declaration they are mistaken to believe the spirit of Elias only applies to John the Baptist and Christ. There remains another Elias who restores all things.

Among the many revelations given Joseph Smith is the identity of the modern Elias. Section seventy-seven of the Doctrine and Covenants reveals the identity of the last Elias.

Q . What are we to understand by the angel
 ascending from the east, Revelation 7th chapter
 and 2nd verse.

A . We are to understand that the angel
 ascending from the east is he to whom is given
 the seal of the living God over the twelve tribes
 of Israel; wherefore, he crieth unto the four
 angels having the everlasting gospel saying:
 Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees,
 till we have sealed the servants of our God in
 their foreheads. And if you will receive it, *this*
is Elias which was to come to gather together
the tribes of Israel and restore all things.
 (D&C 77:9, emphasis added)

In addition to restoring all things, Elias (with his accompanying four angels) seal the servants of God in their foreheads and gather Israel.⁴⁸ The following revelation addresses the identity of the Elias who restores all things:

Q. What are we to understand by the little book which was eaten by John, as mentioned in the 10th chapter of Revelation?

A . We are to understand that it was a mission, and an ordinance, for him [John the Beloved] to gather the tribes of Israel; behold, *this is Elias, who, as it is written, must come and restore all things.* (D&C 77:14, emphasis added)

John the Beloved is the Elias that arrives when the Gentile dispensation of Joseph Smith concludes. John the Baptist, as the forerunner Elias, ended the dispensation of Moses. John the Beloved, the second Elias ends the dispensation of the Gentiles that began with Joseph Smith. The mission of the two Elias's follow the same pattern when the recent revelation of John the Beloved's testimony is considered.

And I, John [the Beloved], bear record, and lo the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon Him in the form of a dove and remained upon Him. There came a voice out of heaven saying: You are my Beloved Son, this

⁴⁸ D&C 77:9.

day I have begotten you; *for I was there with John the Baptist when he baptized Jesus.* (The Testimony of John, p.32, emphasis added)

John the Beloved bears witness he was present when John the Baptist baptized Jesus. It makes sense that the Beloved was a disciple of the Baptist to receive mentoring and witness the undertakings of the first Elias.

i. *Nephi's Witness of John the Beloved.*

Like John the Beloved, Nephi was shown a vision of the end of the world. Nephi saw John the Beloved and was commanded to let John write the conclusion of the vision. Nephi was shown John the Beloved by an angel and told the following:

And I looked and beheld a man and he was dressed in a white robe. And the angel said unto me: Behold one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Behold, he shall see and write the remainder of these things; yea, and also many things which have been. And he shall also write concerning the end of the world. Wherefore, the things which he shall write are just and true; and behold they are written in the book which thou beheld proceeding out of the mouth of the Jew; and at the time they proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, or, at the time the book proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew,

the things which were written were plain and pure, and most precious and easy to the understanding of all men. And behold, the things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write are many things which thou hast seen; and behold, the remainder shalt thou see. But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them. And also *others who have been, to them hath he shown all things and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity, according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel.* And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel. (1 Nephi 14:19-27, emphasis added)

From the angel's explanation to Nephi we learn the following about John the Beloved:

1. John the Beloved was one of the original apostles of Jesus Christ.
2. John was commissioned by Christ to include the end of Nephi's vision, (including the end of the world) in John's record.
3. John the Beloved's account of the vision was included in the Bible when the record was plain, pure, most

precious and easily understood *by all men*, Jew and Gentile alike. Though John's account was easily understood when originally added to the Bible, it would not remain that way. This was explained by the angel to Nephi earlier in the revelation. (see 1 Nephi 13:23-29)

4. John the Beloved writes everything Nephi will see but Nephi is forbidden from explaining. As the second Elias, the Beloved's responsibility is to gather Israel and restore all things, including the plain and precious things redacted from the Bible. How would John accomplish this task? The angel explains to Nephi that others are shown these things by John the Beloved and commanded to write them and John seals them up *in their purity* and he preserves them until they are revealed in the due time of the Lord to the house of Israel. The sealed records held by John reveal the truth which is in the Lamb and restores Israel and all who receive these revelations.⁴⁹ It follows when hidden truth comes to light, error, darkness and deception are dispelled.

ii. *The Due Time of the Lord.*

The "due time of the Lord" is when the second Elias, John the Beloved, restores all things by bringing to light sealed records in their purity. Nephi shared his understanding of the

⁴⁹ 1 Nephi 13:32-42.

latter-day conditions of both the Jews and the Gentiles when that day comes.

But, behold, *in the last days, or in the days of the Gentiles*— [at the conclusion of Joseph Smith's dispensation] yea, behold all the nations of the Gentiles and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land and those who shall be upon other lands, yea, even upon all the lands of the earth, behold, they will be drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations—And when that day shall come they shall be visited of the Lord of Hosts, with thunder and with earthquakes, and with a great noise, and with storm, and with tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire. And all the nations that fight against Zion, and that distress her shall be as a dream of a night vision; yea, it shall be unto them, even as unto a hungry man which dreameth, and behold he eateth but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or like unto a thirsty man which dreameth, and behold he drinketh but he awaketh and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite; yea, even so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against Mount Zion. For behold, all ye that doeth iniquity, stay yourselves and wonder, for ye shall cry out, and cry; yea, ye shall be drunken but not with wine, ye shall stagger but not with strong drink. For behold, the Lord hath

poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep.
For behold, *ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected the prophets; and your rulers, and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquity.* (2 Nephi 27:1-5, emphasis added)

All the world, both Jew and Gentile, both in the America's and elsewhere are drunken with iniquity and abomination in the days of the Gentiles. The veil of wickedness covering all people must be removed if any are to be saved.⁵⁰ To awaken mankind from their deep sleep, a portion of a sealed book is delivered to the Gentiles while the majority of the record is withheld. The Lord revealed to Nephi:

Because of the things which are sealed up, the things which are sealed shall not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people. Wherefore the book shall be kept from them. (2 Nephi 27:8).

The sealed record is delivered to a man “and he shall deliver the words of the book, which are the words of those who have slumbered in the dust, and he shall deliver these words unto another; But the words which are sealed he shall not deliver, neither shall he deliver the book.” (2 Nephi 27:9-10)

The sealed record was given to Joseph Smith. However, only a portion of the record was given to Joseph for

⁵⁰ 2 Nephi 27:5.

the Gentiles as a test to see if they are worthy to receive the greater portion of the record.

But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people. And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken. And when they shall have received this, *which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith*, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them. And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation. (3 Nephi 26:7-10, emphasis added)

In a time when both Jews and Gentiles are in darkness because of wickedness and abomination, the Lord gives a portion of the sealed record to a man who translates it and brings the “lesser portion” to the Gentiles. The lesser portion is a test to see if the Gentiles willingly receive new light and knowledge. This is the beginning of the days of the Gentiles or the Gentile dispensation introduced by Joseph Smith. The Lord intended the lesser portion of the Book of Mormon to be a test for the Gentiles. If they embrace the lesser portion, the greater portion

would be given them at a later time. Joseph Smith spoke of this later time when he said:

But I beg leave to say unto you, brethren, that ignorance, superstition and bigotry placing itself where it ought not, is oftentimes in the way of the prosperity of this Church; like the torrent of rain from the mountains, that floods the most pure and crystal stream with mire, and dirt, and filthiness, and obscures everything that was clear before, and all rushes along in one general deluge; but time weathers tide; and notwithstanding we are rolled in the mire of the flood for the time being [in Joseph Smith's time], *the next surge* peradventure, as time rolls on, may bring to us the fountain as clear as crystal, and as pure as snow; while the filthiness, flood-wood and rubbish is left and purged out by the way. (TPJS., p.138, emphasis added)

The Restoration of the Gospel and introduction of the times of the Gentiles failed in remedying the ignorance, superstition and bigotry limiting the prosperity of the Church.

“Wherefore, because of the things which are sealed up the things which are sealed shall not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people. Wherefore the book shall be kept from them” (2 Nephi 27:8).

Joseph knew his day was mired in the flood but gave words of encouragement pointing to a future day when a “fountain as clear as crystal and as pure as snow” would purge away filthiness, flood-wood and rubbish to reveal the truth. The fountain analogy is appropriate, because Joseph Smith looked forward to a day when greater clarity comes from additional revelations to be given to the Gentiles. As we saw in Christ’s day, it was the challenge of accepting new light which differentiates between the disciple of Christ and traditional Jews. The same is true when Gentiles are given new revelation that purges false conclusions and teachings. The test is repeated for the Gentiles. Will the Gentiles be open to greater revelation or will their devotion to established light and knowledge exclude them from true discipleship of Christ. It will not be God’s decision but self-selection to Gentiles given the greater light.

Though different descriptions abound, it is important to understand the underlying functions of these events. We saw that the restoration of all things coincide with the due time of the Lord. Perhaps the “next surge” is describing the same events.

... For the book shall be sealed by the power of God, and the revelation which was sealed shall be kept in the book *until the own due time of the Lord*, that they may come forth; for behold, they reveal all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof. And the day cometh that the words of the book which were

sealed shall be read upon the house tops; and they shall be read by the power of Christ; and all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been among the children of men, and which ever will be even unto the end of the earth... Touch not the things which are sealed, for I will bring them forth *in mine own due time*; for I will show unto the children of men that I am able to do mine own work. (2 Nephi 27:10-11, 21, emphasis added)

The “due time of the Lord” is the time when the sealed records are unsealed and “read from the rooftops” for the world to hear. This day is spoken of in Ether when the writings of John the Beloved again are called to attention.

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

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

Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from

you—yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.

And then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people.

Remember, when ye see these things, ye shall know that the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed.” (Ether 4:13-16, emphasis added)

John the Beloved is the Elias responsible for restoring all truth from the beginning of the world to the end. He is responsible for sealing and unsealing hidden records in his keeping. The records remain sealed until the Lord declares His “own due time” has arrived. The flood imagery used by Joseph Smith describes how the blindness of man remains until the Lord allows John the Beloved to unseal the records and disclose truth hidden for centuries, if not millennia.

iii. How John the Beloved’s Translated Condition Influences His Mission.

John the Beloved is a “translated being.” This condition transcends mortality but defers the effects of death and resurrection to a later time. When Peter asked Christ what was to happen to John the Beloved, the Savior gave the following explanation: “Yea, he has undertaken a greater work; therefore

I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel; he shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth.” (D&C 7:6)

From the Doctrine and Covenants we learn that John would not suffer death as the other apostles. Because of his desire to continue working for the salvation of mortal man, the Lord granted John his desire to continue as a ministering angel, ministering to mortals who are “heirs of salvation”.

Three Nephite disciples shared John’s desire and the Lord fulfilled their hope as well. The Book of Mormon provides greater insight into changes occurring in the transition from mortality to a translated state. Explaining the change to the three Nephite disciples, Jesus taught:

And he said unto them: Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the things which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me. Therefore, more blessed are ye, for ye shall never taste of death; but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory with the powers of heaven. And ye shall never endure the pains of death; but when I shall come in my glory ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality; and then shall ye be blessed in the kingdom of my Father. And again, ye shall not have pain while

ye shall dwell in the flesh, neither sorrow save it be for the sins of the world; and all this will I do because of the thing which ye have desired that ye might bring the souls of men unto me, while the world shall stand . . . , And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he touched every one of them with his finger *save it were the three who were to tarry*, and then he departed. And behold, the heavens were opened, and they were caught up into heaven, and saw and heard unspeakable things. And it was forbidden them that they should utter; neither was it given unto them power that they could utter the things which they saw and heard; And whether they were in the body or out of the body, they could not tell; for it did seem unto them like a transfiguration of them, that they were changed from this body of flesh into an immortal state, *that they could behold the things of God*. But it came to pass that they did again minister upon the face of the earth; nevertheless they did not minister of the things which they had heard and seen, because of the commandment which was given them in heaven . . . , And now behold, as I spake concerning those whom the Lord hath chosen, yea, even three who were caught up into the heavens, that I knew not whether they were cleansed from mortality to immortality—But behold, since I wrote, I have inquired of the

Lord, and he hath made it manifest unto me that there must needs be a change wrought upon their bodies, or else it needs be that they must taste of death; Therefore, that they might not taste of death there was a change wrought upon their bodies, that they might not suffer pain nor sorrow save it were for the sins of the world. Now this change was not equal to that which shall take place at the last day; but there was a change wrought upon them, insomuch that Satan could have no power over them, that he could not tempt them; and they were sanctified in the flesh, that they were holy, and that the powers of the earth could not hold them. And in this state they were to remain until the judgment day of Christ; and at that day they were to receive a greater change, and to be received into the kingdom of the Father to go no more out, but to dwell with God eternally in the heavens. (3 Nephi 28:6-9, 12-18, 36-40, emphasis added)

John the Baptist was a mortal man who suffered the limitations of mortality. John the Beloved, as a translated being possesses attributes and powers not available to John the Baptist in his mortal ministry. Because of the Beloved's heavenly endowment at the time of his translation, John had restrictions placed upon him as a ministering angel. Consequently, John the Beloved does not perform the tasks associated with his mission of restoring all things and gathering Israel personally. Though

John the Beloved has Melchizedek powers, as a ministering angel⁵¹ he must accomplish his mission by directing mortals identified as “heirs of salvation” to carry out the work of salvation on earth.

Denver Snuffer provides the following explanation of parameters set to the ministry of John the Beloved as well as other translated beings:

There will be an opening of the pillar of heaven to prepare the way for the Lord’s return. The opening at this end is going to be handled by someone who has remained behind [John the Beloved],⁵² and the opening at the far end is going to be the one to whom the assignment was given to open the way for His return; Elijah, the one who was promised.⁵³ I want to be really clear. I don’t expect either of those individuals to have any public ministry again.⁵⁴ They will have a role in Zion, and those who dwell in Zion are going to have some contact with them. The three Nephites are a great example. They, like John, were given a similar ministry to remain around and administer until the end of the earth. And they did minister. Two of the people to whom they ministered were Mormon and Moroni.⁵⁵ They, like

⁵¹ D&C 13; Moroni 7:29-32.

⁵² D&C 7:3.

⁵³ Malachi 4:5-6.

⁵⁴ D&C 7:6.

⁵⁵ Mormon 8:10-11.

ministering angels,⁵⁶ ministered to Mormon who in turn ministered to the public. They ministered to Moroni and kept his hope up in the waning days of that dispensation. But they did not minister publicly. *John will have a role, but the work of Zion is the work of flesh and blood.* (*Zion Will Come*, Denver Snuffer, 4-10-16 Moab, Utah, p. 16, emphasis added)

John the Beloved plays a role in gathering Israel and establishing Zion, but that role does not include a public ministry. Moroni in the Book of Mormon explains the mission of angels like John the Beloved who minister to mortals on earth.

For behold, they [angels] are subject unto him [Christ], to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, *by declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.* And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men

⁵⁶ D&C 130:50.

may have faith in Christ that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men. (Moroni 7:30-32, emphasis added)

John the Beloved, the second Elias, will not minister publicly but has a limited audience receiving instruction from him. The words he ministers to “heirs of salvation” are words given directly to him from the Savior.⁵⁷ The “chosen vessels” receiving direction from John bear the testimony given them to whomever God directs to hear it. King Benjamin’s sermon at the temple exemplifies this process.⁵⁸

The work of ministering angels is described as calling men to repentance and fulfilling and doing the “work of the covenants of the Father.” It is important to note the work they do directly relates to fulfilling covenants made by “the Father.”

iv. The Work of the Father in the Last Days.

The establishment of Zion in the last days is not man’s work, but the Father’s work. In 3 Nephi 21 our Lord teaches Nephite survivors to watch for a sign “the Father” has commenced His work of fulfilling His covenant with Israel.

⁵⁷ See 2 Nephi 32:3.

⁵⁸ See Mosiah 3:2. King Benjamin received the words of Christ through an angelic appearance on the eve of his sermon. The impact of the words delivered from God was to cause the people to be born anew.

And when these things come to pass that thy seed shall begin to know these things—*it shall be a sign unto them that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced* unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 21:7, emphasis added)

When descendants of Lehi's remnant begin to know the contents of the Book of Mormon and specifically the words of Christ given to ancient Nephites, it is a sign the Father commenced His work fulfilling His covenant with Israel. How is the work accomplished?

John the Beloved, as the second Elias restores all things and gathers Israel.⁵⁹ His mission triggers a series of events following the pattern outlined earlier. When descendants of Lehi's remnant begin knowing the contents of the Book of Mormon it is a sign the Father commenced His work. Since the Father's covenant work is performed through the ministry of angels and John the Beloved, as a ministering angel is commissioned to restore all things and gather Israel,⁶⁰ the remnant will know simultaneously John the Beloved has begun his work. How does John perform his mission? "*By declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him.*"⁶¹ After John declares the words of Christ to a servant, the servant delivers the words of Christ to the Gentiles.

⁵⁹ D&C 77: 9, 14.

⁶⁰ D&C 77:14.

⁶¹ Moroni 7:31.

For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them those who will not believe, *although a man shall declare it unto them*. But behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him, for I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. Therefore it shall come to pass that whosoever will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ, which *the Father shall cause him to bring forth unto the Gentiles*, and shall give unto him power that he shall bring them forth unto the Gentiles, (it shall be done even as Moses said) they shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant. (3 Nephi 21:9-11, emphasis added)

The work performed is the Father's work.⁶² Moroni says the Father's work is completed by ministering angels like John the Beloved. Angels impart the words of Christ to "chosen

⁶² In 3 Nephi 21:9 it is Father who commissions the servant in bringing forth the words of Christ. The work is described as "Great and Marvelous" when the servant delivers the Savior's words even though some will not believe them. In verse 10 we learn the servant will not be hurt but he will be marred by his detractors and in healing the servant the Lord proves that His wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.

vessels.”⁶³ who are “heirs of salvation.”⁶⁴ In this example a mortal servant brings to light the words of Christ to the Gentiles.⁶⁵ If the servant strictly follows the instructions of the angel, the servant is in effect, an extension of the angel.⁶⁶ The words of Christ contain new information enlightening those

⁶³ Moroni 7:31.

⁶⁴ D&C 7:6.

⁶⁵ 3 Nephi 21:9-11.

⁶⁶ This principle applies when King Benjamin is given a message from an angel to deliver to his people. “And the things which I shall tell you are made known unto me by an angel of God. And he said unto me: Awake; and I awoke, and behold he stood before me.” (Mosiah 3:2) “And now I have spoken the words which the Lord God hath commanded me. And thus saith the Lord: They shall stand as a bright testimony against this people, at the judgment day; whereof they shall be judged, every man according to his works, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.” (Mosiah 3:23-24) “And now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made an end of speaking the words which had been delivered unto him by the angel of the Lord, that he cast his eyes round about on the multitude and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.” (Mosiah 4:1) Anyone acting under the inspiration of the Spirit of God speaks the words of Christ and therefore qualifies as one of His angels. “Do you not remember that I said unto you that after ye had received the Holy Ghost ye could speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the Holy Ghost? Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore I said unto you feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.” (2 Nephi 32:2-3) Finally, in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord said, “What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” D&C 1:38)

who receive it.⁶⁷ This falls under the stewardship of John the Beloved as the Elias who “restores all things.”⁶⁸

The work of the Father is both “great” and “marvelous” but there will be those who will not believe the words of Christ though a man declares His words to the Gentiles. Unbelievers will likely be a large number of Gentiles⁶⁹ while the remnant of Lehi’s seed recognizes and embraces the revelations of Christ from His servant. Those who receive the Savior’s words from the servant are numbered with the Lord’s covenant people, Israel. The people who reject His words are “cut-off” from Israel in fulfillment of Moses’s prophecy.

v. *Wresting Away the Kingdom From the Gentiles.*

John the Baptist and Jesus Christ played key roles in closing Moses’s dispensation, while simultaneously introducing a new dispensation. From the “The Testimony of St. John”:

⁶⁷ When the servant delivers the words of Christ they reveal knowledge that is not known and revolutionary to those who hear him. They contain greater light and knowledge and contemporaries of the servant are forced to choose how they react to greater knowledge. Nephi saw in vision the Gentiles of the latter-days and pronounced a wo upon those who refuse to receive new knowledge. “Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough! For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.” (2 Nephi 28:29-30)

⁶⁸ D&C 77:14.

⁶⁹ D&C 45:28-30.

There was a man sent from God and his name was John [the Baptist]. This man was sent as a witness so that *he might testify and identify the Light* to give everyone a reason to believe through the Messiah. He, John, was not that Light, but he was sent by heaven as a witness to testify of the Light, and *to end the dispensation of Moses, and baptize to begin a new dispensation.* (“*The Testimony of St. John*”, p.1, *emphasis added*)

John the Baptist’s role as Elias encompassed the responsibility of closing the dispensation of Moses. After closing Moses’ dispensation, John the Baptist baptized people in preparation for the new dispensation introduced by Christ.

Jesus answered, In the name of Father Ahman I say to you, *Except you receive the ordinance of baptism to join the new dispensation,* and thereby forsake your sins and receive forgiveness and an outpouring of the Spirit, you will not ascend to God’s presence in this life or the life to come. (*The Testimony of St. John*, p.4, *emphasis added*)

If John the Baptist closed the dispensation of Moses, John the Beloved is similarly responsible for closing the Gentile dispensation that began with Joseph Smith. Closing the dispensation of Moses was “wresting the kingdom” away from the Jews. “The son of Zacharias wrested the keys, the kingdom,

the power, the glory from the Jews.”⁷⁰ How did John the Baptist wrest the keys, kingdom, power and glory from the Jews? “By the holy anointing and decree of heaven.”⁷¹

John the Beloved has no public ministry in the last days. As John the Baptist “wrested the kingdom” from the Jews and gained control of the kingdom of God on earth, so John the Beloved as the second Elias oversees the wresting of the kingdom from the Gentiles who control it when the Gentile fullness is complete. Since John the Beloved has no public ministry among men in the last days, the wresting of the kingdom falls upon the shoulders of an “heir of salvation” to whom John the Beloved ministers to. This heir’s mission would be consistent with that of John the Beloved in wresting away the kingdom and restoring all things.

In 2017, “The Testimony of St. John” was introduced and added to newly restored scriptures. The new version of St. John’s gospel came to light by revelation. It is not a work product of mortal man but given by divine direction to Denver Snuffer, Jr.. Few details about how it came to light are given. However, John the Beloved’s role as steward over inspired writings suggests he is the likely source for the content. Nephi testified that John the Beloved maintains records, showing all things to mortals, who write the revelation and return their record to John until “the own due time of the Lord.”⁷² In line with Nephi’s instruction about John’s mission, it would not be

⁷⁰ TPJS., p.276.

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² “And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity, according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel.” (1 Nephi 14:25-27)

a leap to assume the source of “The Testimony of St. John” is John the Beloved himself. This is a demonstrable link between the missions of John the Beloved and Denver Snuffer.

As to the issue of how the kingdom is “wrested” from the Gentiles, see the following account. It is another indication that Denver Snuffer is being directed to fulfill the mission of John; through him, John is wresting away the kingdom from the Gentiles. Keep in mind how John the Baptist wrested the kingdom from the Jews in comparison to the following account:

On the evening of May 1, 2014, the Lord gave me further light and knowledge about His work in His vineyard. The Lord is in control over the church, men and all things. When He undertakes to accomplish something, “there is nothing that the Lord God shall take in His heart to do, but what He will do it.”⁷³ Often the means used by the Lord to accomplish His “strange act,” and perform His “strange work,”⁷⁴ are very small indeed. “Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that very small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise. And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the

⁷³ Abraham 5.

⁷⁴ D&C 101:95.

Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.⁷⁵ The [LDS] Church has Doctrine & Covenants 121, verses 36 to 40 to warn it about abusing His authority. There is an “amen” or end to authority when control, compulsion, and dominion are exercised in any degree of unrighteousness. Therefore, when using authority, great care must be taken. In any case, the Church was careless. Therefore, those involved, are now left to kick against the pricks, to persecute the Saints and to fight against God. D&C Section 121 is a warning to church leaders. It is addressing the powerful, not the powerless. It is addressing those who occupy the seats of authority over others. Only those who claim the right to control, compel, and exercise dominion, are warned against persecuting the saints, who believe the religion and practice it as I did from the time of my conversion. My excommunication was an abuse of authority. Therefore, as soon as the decision was made, the Lord terminated the priesthood authority of the Stake Presidency and every member of the High Council who sustained this decision, which was unanimous. Thereafter, I appealed to the First Presidency, outlining the involvement of the Twelve and the Seventy.

⁷⁵ Alma 37:6.

The appeal gave notice to them all. The appeal was summarily denied. Last general conference [April 5, 2014], the entire First Presidency, the Twelve, the Seventy, and all other general authorities and auxiliaries, voted to sustain those who abused their authority in casting me out of the Church. *At that moment, the Lord ended all claims of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to claim it is led by the priesthood.* They have not practiced what He requires. The Lord has brought about His purposes. This has been in His heart all along. He has chosen to use small means to accomplish it, but He always uses the smallest of means to fulfill His purposes. None of this was my doing. The Lord's strange act was not, could not, be planned by me; was not, could not, have been controlled by me. It was not anticipated by me, or even understood by me, until after the Lord had accomplished His will, and made it apparent to me on the evening of May 1, 2014. He alone has done this. He is the author of all of this. (Denver Snuffer, *40 years of Mormonism*, Lecture 10, emphasis added)

John the Baptist wrested the kingdom from the Jews by the holy anointing and decree of heaven. The kingdom of God among the Gentiles was taken from them when they exercised their priesthood un-righteously, by excommunicating Denver

Snuffer from the Church without just cause.⁷⁶ They exercised control, compulsion and dominion over a man called of God to serve and the Lord pronounced an “amen” to their priesthood and authority.⁷⁷ In effect, the kingdom of God was wrested from the Gentile Church in much the same manner as John the Baptist and the foundation laid for a new dispensation introduced by a servant of God.

The foundation is therefore laid to join a new dispensation by baptism for those desiring to covenant with the Lord and be joined with His people, Israel. This is consistent with the teachings of the Savior to Nicodemus in The Testimony of St. John.

vi. *Moroni’s Perspective on the Mission of John as the Second Elias.*

John the Baptist and Jesus were transitional figures when the Lord’s covenant moved from Israel to the Gentiles. In other words, the covenant moved from the first (Israel) to the last (Gentiles). The second half of the prophecy is also transitional between the Gentiles (first) and Israel (last). It

⁷⁶ The charges leveled against Denver Snuffer were in regards to his attempt to write an account of church history—Passing the Heavenly Gift—which was consistent to original sources and a series of lectures he was planning to deliver the following year. Even assuming the doctrine contained was erroneous, we have Joseph Smith’s teaching that a man should not be excommunicated for a difference in beliefs. When Elder Brown was summoned to the High Council on trial, Joseph stated, “I did not like the old man being called up for erring in doctrine. It looks too much like the Methodist, and not like the Latter-day Saints. Methodists have creeds *which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please.* It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine.” (TPJS, P.288, emphasis added)

⁷⁷ D&C 121:37.

shows there are transitional figures who facilitate the second-half covenant transition similarly to the work of John the Baptist and Jesus. John the Beloved is the Elias who God ordains to oversee His work.

A mission of this magnitude was foreseen by many prophets. Differences in perception of events creates expanding dimensions to the studious reader; each brings a unique testimony of the work of the Lord. A greater picture emerges unraveling how much the Lord has revealed about His work in the latter days.

A key role in the transition from the Gentiles to Israel will be the revelation of sealed records. John the Beloved is the second Elias who oversees hidden records and is responsible for restoring all things.⁷⁸

Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief. Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief. Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, *then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from*

⁷⁸ D&C 77:14.

you— yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel. And then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written *by my servant John [the Beloved]* be unfolded in the eyes of all the people.

Remember, when ye see these things, ye shall know that the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed. Therefore, when ye shall receive this record ye may know that the work of the Father has commenced upon all the face of the land. Therefore, repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and believe in my gospel, and be baptized in my name; for he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned; and signs shall follow them that believe in my name. (Ether 4:13-18, emphasis added)

The Lord's promise to both the Gentiles and Israel comes when they shed their unbelief and call upon the Father with a broken heart and contrite spirit. The revelations given to John the Beloved are brought out of darkness to dispel unbelief, wickedness, and hardness of heart. Since John the Beloved acts as steward over hidden records until the "due time of the Lord," John will minister to an heir of salvation delivering to and instructing him to introduce them to the Gentiles and then

Israel (following the Gentile rejection).⁷⁹ The records come to both groups but only those who shed their unbelief, wickedness, and hardness of heart benefit from the revelation.⁸⁰

Though the Gentiles are given the opportunity to receive the sealed portions of the sacred records, it is presumptuous to assume many Gentiles accept the writings.

In a revelation given to Joseph Smith, the Lord foretells how the Gentiles receive the fulness of His gospel when it is given to them.

And when the times of the Gentiles is come in,
a light shall break forth among them that sit in
darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my
gospel; But they [the Gentiles] receive it not;
*for they perceive not the light, and they turn
their hearts from me because of the precepts of
men.* And in that generation shall the times of
the Gentiles be fulfilled. (D&C 45:28-30,
emphasis added)

Just as Israel rejected the Lord's covenant at Sinai, the last time the Lord brings a fulness of His gospel to the Gentiles, the Gentiles will not receive it because they "perceive not the light" contained in the records of John the Beloved and they are blinded by uninspired precepts of men.

⁷⁹ "And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel; But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men. And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (D&C 45:28-30)

⁸⁰ 1 Nephi 13:39-41.

**V. THE PROPHECY OF MOSES AND THE
FULFILLMENT OF JOHN'S MISSION.**

John the Beloved's public ministry in mortality is complete. After his translation, his angelic ministry turned to "heirs of salvation"⁸¹ and "chosen vessels."⁸² When stating John the Beloved is steward over the hidden records, one need not assume all records are in his possession. Records will come from diverse sources finding their way to an heir of salvation chosen by God. The servant translates the records and reveals them to his audience. The type for the servant is king Mosiah who exemplifies how the Lord brings hidden records to light. In response to the question, "Knowest thou of any one that can translate?" Ammon provides the following description of king Mosiah.

Now Ammon said unto him: I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God. And the things are called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish. *And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called seer.* And behold, the king of the people who are in the land of Zarahemla is the man that is commanded to do these things,

⁸¹ D&C 7:6.

⁸² Moroni 7:30-31.

and who has this high gift from God. And the king said that a seer is greater than a prophet. And Ammon said that *a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God.* But a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known. Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he cometh a great benefit to his fellow beings. (Mosiah 8:13-18, emphasis added)

John the Beloved should be viewed as the administrator who coordinates events in the last days. For example, John the Beloved is one of four angels counseled not to hurt the earth nor the trees until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.⁸³ And it is John the Beloved whom John the Baptist

⁸³ "...the angel ascending from the east is he to whom is given the seal of the living God over the twelve tribes of Israel; wherefore, he crieth unto the four angels having the everlasting gospel, saying: Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And, if you will receive it, this

says Peter, James, and John directed John the Baptist's work when ordaining Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Aaronic Priesthood.⁸⁴ Peter and James are mentioned but they (Peter and James) were directed by Christ to minister for John the Beloved and collectively they are given power and keys of the ministry until the Savior comes again.⁸⁵

The servant of Christ brings forth the words of Christ to introduce a new dispensation and restore truth hidden for generations. The work of restoring all things and gathering Israel are the purview of John the Beloved who directs the efforts of the mortal servant by angelic ministration. The second-half transition of the "First Shall be Last" prophecy becomes a springboard for the prophecy of Moses—concluding the Gentile opportunity and transferring the covenant to Israel. The resurrected Lord identifies the servant spoken of by Moses as Himself. Further scriptural investigation suggests it is not the Lord who personally fulfills the Moses prophecy but His servant. Jesus said to the Nephites:

Behold, *I am he of whom Moses spake*, saying:
A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up
unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him
shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall
say unto you. And it shall come to pass that
every soul who will not hear that prophet shall

is Elias which was to come to gather together the tribes of Israel and restore all things." (D&C 77:9)

⁸⁴ D&C 7:5-7; JS-History 1:72.

⁸⁵ "And I will make thee to minister *for him* and for thy brother James; and unto you three I will give this power and the keys of this ministry until I come." (D&C 7:7, emphasis added)

be cut off from among the people. (3 Nephi 20:23, emphasis added)

Taken literally, Jesus proclaims that He is the individual who fulfills the Moses prophecy. However, as Christ continues in the following chapter, he describes the actual fulfillment of the Moses prophecy as a servant declaring His words to the Gentiles.

For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be great and marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them those who will not believe it, *although a man shall declare it unto them*. But behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, although he shall be marred because of them. Yet I will heal him, for I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. Therefore it shall come to pass that whosoever will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ, which *the Father shall cause him to bring forth unto the Gentiles*, and shall give unto him power that he shall bring them forth unto the Gentiles, (it shall be done even as Moses said) they [the Gentiles] shall be cut off from among my people. (3 Nephi 21:9-11, emphasis added)

Verse eleven in 3 Nephi 21 states it is not the Savior who fulfills the prophecy of Moses but a servant of Christ declaring the words of Christ.⁸⁶ Anyone who rejects the words of Christ from the servant is cut off from His people, Israel.

This may feel like scriptural sleight of hand, throwing readers off the path. But the Lord makes provision for this outcome in His revelation to Joseph Smith in the first section of the Doctrine & Covenants.

And the arm of the Lord shall be revealed; and the day cometh that they who *will not hear the voice of the Lord*, neither *the voice of his servants*, neither *give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles* shall be cut off from among the people. (D&C 1:14, emphasis added)

In this passage the Lord broadens the interpretation of the Moses Prophecy, adding the voices of his servants and the words of the apostles and prophets to His voice as people that represent “His voice” speaking on His behalf. Those who reject their words are cut off from Israel.

⁸⁶ With the repetitive nature of history, it is not uncommon that prophecy can be applicable to multiple persons at different ages of the world. Take, for example, the Savior’s comment on the applicability of the writings of Isaiah. “And now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah. For surely he spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles. And *all things that he spake have been and shall be*, even according to the words which he spake.” (3 Nephi 23:1-3) Isaiah’s writing are equally applicable in his day and ours.

Offering further clarity to the interpretation of the Moses Prophecy are the Lord's words near the conclusion of the same revelation.

What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken,
and I excuse not myself; and though the
heavens and the earth pass away, my word
shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled,
*whether by mine own voice or by the voice of
my servants, it is the same.* (D&C 1:38,
emphasis added)

This revelation broadens the interpretation of the Moses prophecy and paves the way for a servant of Christ to fulfill the prophecy of Moses. According to 3 Nephi 21, the fulfillment comes when the servant brings forth the words of Christ.

*A. JUST AS CHRIST OPENED A NEW DISPENSATION, SO SHALL THE
SERVANT UNDER JOHN'S MINISTRATIONS.*

In 3 Nephi 20, the Lord identified himself as the prophet who fulfills the Moses prophecy. Throughout chapter 20 the Lord uses quotations from Old Testament prophecies to describe future events. Of special note is a Messianic quote from Isaiah our Lord uses to describe himself in chapter 20 of 3 Nephi, and then applies it to the servant in 3 Nephi 21.

Behold, my servant shall deal prudently; he
shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.
As many were astonished at thee—*his visage*

was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men— So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. Verily, verily, I say unto you, *all these things shall surely come*, even as the Father hath commanded me. Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people be fulfilled; and then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people, and it shall be the land of their inheritances. (3 Nephi 20:43-46, emphasis added)

This Savior is quoting Isaiah 52:13-15. You will see italicized phrases appear again in 3 Nephi 21:8-10, where the Lord applies the same prophecy to His servant who brings forth the words of Christ. Beginning with verse 7 of 3 Nephi 21:

And when these things come to pass that thy seed shall begin to know these things—it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel. And when that day shall come to pass that *kings shall shut their mouths; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they*

consider. For in that day, for my sake shall the Father work a work, which shall be a great and a marvelous work among them; and there shall be among them those who will not believe it, although a man shall declare it unto them. But behold, the life of my servant shall be in my hand; therefore they shall not hurt him, *although he shall be marred because of them.* Yet I will heal him, for I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil. Therefore it shall come to pass that whosoever will not believe in my words, who am Jesus Christ, which the Father shall cause him to bring forth unto the Gentiles, and shall give unto him power that he shall bring them forth unto the Gentiles, (it shall be done even as Moses said) they shall be cut off from among my people who are of the covenant. (3 Nephi 21:7-11, emphasis added)

In this passage the Savior points to a time when the remnant of Lehi's seed begin to know these things, the prophecy from Isaiah is fulfilled and "kings shall shut their mouths for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."⁸⁷ The Savior does not fulfill this prophecy, but a servant of Christ brings forth His words by the Father's power and delivers them to the Gentiles. Included in the Gentiles are people of the highest political

⁸⁷ Isaiah 52:13-15.

standing portrayed as “kings.” It may also refer to the faithful who become priests and kings to God.

The fate of the servant follows the pattern Jesus gave His disciples during His mortal ministry.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But *all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.* (John 15:20-21, emphasis added)

The servant delivers the words of Christ to the Gentiles by the Father's power and like Christ, the servant, and all true disciples, suffer for it. However, unlike Christ, the servant does not suffer more than any man, including death but is healed by the Lord he serves.

It is a common belief the servant is Joseph Smith but that is a factual impossibility. The events described here close the Gentile dispensation as they prepare for the transition to Israel and the final dispensation. Joseph Smith introduced the Gentile dispensation and died prior to its conclusion. Historically, Joseph Smith was martyred and was not delivered, while the servant will only be marred. The servant is a separate figure that closes the Gentile dispensation introduced by Joseph Smith. Though the servant is not identified, the efforts of the servant are described in section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants: “And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a

light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel.”⁸⁸

Several questions for consideration are, why are the Gentiles sitting in darkness after the gospel was introduced by Joseph Smith at the beginning of the dispensation? What portion of the gospel did the Gentiles have prior to a “fulness” of the gospel that breaks forth at the end of the Gentile dispensation? If the Gentiles are in darkness after Joseph Smith’s earthly ministry, what occurred following Joseph’s death?

Answers to these questions support the notion the Gentiles reprised Israel’s rejection when Israel was offered the higher covenant. Just as the Gentile response mirrors Israel’s response, so do consequences for the Gentile rejection repeat Israel’s suffering for their rebellion against God.

But they [Gentiles] receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me *because of the precepts of men*. And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be men standing in that generation, that shall not pass until they shall see an overflowing scourge; for a desolating sickness shall cover the land. (D&C 45:29-31, emphasis added)

The Jews “perceived not the light” while Jesus walked among them. Primarily due to their reliance on those of high station

⁸⁸ D&C 45:28.

and education in the Jewish religion. They presumed their leaders would recognize and inform them of their Messiah's coming. They [the Gentiles] "receive not the light" because "they perceive not the light" due to the precepts of men.⁸⁹ The precepts of men are teachings and traditions that gradually replace or dilute God's original commandments established by dispensational heads—in this instance, Joseph Smith. In the situations of Israel and the Gentiles, it is false teachings which permeate their worship and blinded the Jews to recognizing the work God was doing. Still, there are many which believe that Zion prospereth, so all is well.⁹⁰ The duty devolves on every person to throw off false traditions and perceive the light breaking forth. Otherwise, they will be sifted out as a new dispensation begins.

⁸⁹ D&C 45:29.

⁹⁰ 2 Nephi 28:21. The Book of Mormon was not written to those who would not read it. The prophets of its pages speak to the latter-day believers. It is a fallacy to believe that its references to the Gentiles, highlighting their weaknesses, are references limited to those who have not been baptized. Consider Joseph Smith's words in the dedicatory prayer at Kirtland: "Now these words, O Lord, we have spoken before thee, concerning the revelations and commandments which thou hast given unto *us, who are identified with the Gentiles.*" (D&C 109:60) The prophetic warning against believing that "all is well in Zion" should be a cause for much reflection and introspection.

VI. THE PROPHETIC NARRATIVE.

Now that the pattern has been reviewed, there is more detail to analyze the prophecy of Moses. The mission of John the Beloved in the last days has two objectives: He does the Father's work of restoring all things and gathering Israel.⁹¹ The role of the servant mirrors John's objectives, because the servant is the mortal conduit through which John the Beloved accomplishes his mission. To add additional dimension to our understanding we will analyze the words of prophets who saw individuals fulfilling the work of restoration and gathering. The result is a more complete picture of John the Beloved's mission working in concert with the servant.

Five descriptions follow. Some might question whether each reference describes five different individuals or there exists the possibility of harmonizing the various accounts into one prophetic servant. Throughout these prophetic testimonies the Lord's message does not change. The primary content is the same. What changes is the prophetic lens through which revelation is viewed. The perspective of each prophetic writer is shaped by numerous factors—like life experience or the nature of their inquiry. Each prophet arrives at his visionary moment from a diverse and unique background. The observations differ, but they are not contradictory. The Holy Spirit may call attention to specific elements relevant to their respective testimonies or personal missions, but they are left alone to explain their experience through inspired metaphors and understanding.

⁹¹ D&C 77:14.

Prophetic accounts are similar to multiple witnesses to an auto accident. Four witnesses might provide four different perspectives to the same accident. Like an investigating officer, the reader of prophecy must thoroughly examine the testimony of each witness, assemble a body of facts, and reconstruct the event with available information.

Lehi recorded his account of a vision of the Tree of Life. After sharing his account of the dream with his family, his son, Nephi desired to see the dream and asked the Lord to reveal it to him. The two individual accounts are recorded from different perspectives. Lehi's version is written from the perspective of a participant, while Nephi's version is from an elevated overview. The difference in perspective is demonstrated in Nephi's explanation of the dream to his brothers. "And I said unto them that the water which my father saw was filthiness; *and so much was his mind swallowed up in other things that he beheld not the filthiness of the water.*" (1 Nephi 15:27, emphasis added) Lehi's dream contained so much content it was difficult for Lehi to observe every detail. Vantage point played a role. Lehi was in the midst of the dream as a participant, while Nephi observed the dream from above. Elevation gave Nephi the advantage when observing and explaining details of Lehi's dream.

When considering the following five prophetic accounts keep in mind all of these men are viewing future events from unique perspectives. Like Lehi, their minds may have been "swallowed up" in the details they recorded to the extent they failed to record relevant details. The sole exception would be the Savior's account. He alone has a comprehensive knowledge of all events with editorial rights.

1. *THE ROOT OF JESSE—ISAIAH 11:10; D&C 113:5-6.*

The “root of Jesse” appears in the 11th chapter of Isaiah, 10th verse. He is relevant to the mission of John the Beloved due to the Lord’s description of him in the 113th section of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Behold, thus saith the Lord, it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, *for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.* (D&C 113:6, emphasis added)

The Root of Jesse from Isaiah 11:10 obtains his priesthood by right and holds keys to establish God’s kingdom, presumably Zion. His mission includes raising an ensign to which Israel will gather.⁹² When the Root of Jesse appears⁹³ the Lord “sets his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people.”⁹⁴ Nephi’s brother Jacob explains the meaning of this phrase.

⁹² D&C 113:6. The ensign is a reference to a military banner which is raised for troops to rally.

⁹³ “In that day...” is a phrase Isaiah uses to signal the reader that he is talking about the last days. (Isaiah 11:10-11) Use of this phrase links the appearance of the “root of Jesse” to the last time the Lord sends his servants out to “nourish and prune his vineyard.”

⁹⁴ Isaiah 11:11.

And the day that he shall set his hand again the second time to recover his people, is the day, yea, even the last time, that *the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard; and after that the end soon cometh.* (Jacob 6:2, emphasis added)

The Lord does not set His hand again the second time to gather Israel until the Root of Jesse appears to exercise keys to establish God's kingdom on earth. Earth must be prepared for a union between God's earthly kingdom and His kingdom in heaven. Zion will not appear until the Root of Jesse, under John the Beloved's direction, is empowered by the Lord. The power enables the Root of Jesse and those ministering with him to nourish and prune the Lord's vineyard. How does the nourishing and pruning take place? Nourishing is the restoration of truth that gives life to the tree and pruning is the cutting-off and removal that occurs when revelation or truth is not accepted.

The process of nourishing and pruning the Lord's vineyard for the last time is explained near the conclusion of Jacob's Allegory of the Olive Tree.

And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard sent his servant; and the servant went and did as the Lord had commanded him, and brought other servants; and they were few. And the Lord of the vineyard said unto them: Go to, and labor in the vineyard, with your might. For behold, *this is the last time that I shall nourish*

my vineyard; for the end is nigh at hand, and the season speedily cometh; and if ye labor with your might with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come. And it came to pass that the servants did go and labor with their mights; and *the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them;* and they did obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard in all things. And there began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard; and the natural branches began to grow and thrive exceedingly; and the wild branches began to be plucked off and to be cast away; and *they did keep the root and the top thereof equal, according to the strength thereof.* And thus they labored, with all diligence, according to the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard, even until the bad had been cast away out of the vineyard, and the Lord had preserved unto himself that the trees had become again the natural fruit; *and they became like unto one body; and the fruits were equal;* and the Lord of the vineyard had preserved unto himself the natural fruit, which was most precious unto him from the beginning. And it came to pass that when the Lord of the vineyard saw that his fruit was good, and that his vineyard was no more corrupt, he called up his servants, and said unto them: Behold, for this last time have we

nourished my vineyard; and thou beholdest that I have done according to my will; and I have preserved the natural fruit, that it is good, even like as it was in the beginning. And blessed art thou; for because ye have been diligent in laboring with me in my vineyard, and have kept my commandments, and have brought unto me again the natural fruit, that my vineyard is no more corrupted, and the bad is cast away, behold ye shall have joy with me because of the fruit of my vineyard. (Jacob 5:70-75, emphasis added)

In Jacob's explanation of when the Lord "sets his hand again the second time," Jacob declares it is the "last time the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard." The excerpt from the Allegory of the Olive Tree unfolds with the Lord of the vineyard commissioning his "servant" to go and bring "other servants." In obedience to the Lord's command, he gathers other servants but their numbers are few. It is common sense that "many hands make burdens light." In this instance the number of servants are inconsequential because those few servants find success because the Lord of the vineyard works with them and He is capable of accomplishing His work without anyone.

The Lord sends His servants into the vineyard to labor with their might. This is the final time the vineyard will be nourished and pruned. Thereafter the Lord's work in this vineyard "speedily" comes to an end.

Diligent labor and obedience to God's commandments "in all things" brings "natural fruit." The natural fruit is fruit that is "meet for my Father's kingdom"⁹⁵ and the branches of the natural tree "thrive exceedingly" while the "wild branches" are plucked off and cast away.

Metaphorically the allegory refers to branches being pruned and nourished but the literal interpretation applies to the Lord's process of gathering Israel prior to the end of wickedness.⁹⁶ Nourishing Israel is to increase truth on earth and pruning occurs as people reject the Lord's new revelation of truth.⁹⁷ Those who repent and receive the few servants who respond to the call of the Lord's servant (possibly the "root of Jesse") and accept the Lord's commission to labor diligently in His vineyard and keep His commandments are those who find success gathering the Lord's people who repent and turn to God.

By the time the natural branches "thrive exceedingly" the Gentiles who reject the Lord's servant will be as Moses said, "cut off from among my people who are of the covenant."⁹⁸ The cutting off includes both Gentiles and Israelites who refuse to repent.

And now behold, my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you; for I, Nephi, would not suffer that ye should suppose that ye are more

⁹⁵ D&C 84:58.

⁹⁶ JST Matthew 1:55.

⁹⁷ 1 Nephi 10:14; 1 Nephi 13:38-39; 2 Nephi 30:4-10; Mosiah 3:20-21; Alma 13:21-26; Alma 37:14-20; 3 Nephi 27:25-26; Helaman 3:13-16; Ether 4:15-16; Moses 7:62; Ezekiel 47; Isaiah 21:9 & 44:3.

⁹⁸ 3 Nephi 21:11.

righteous than the Gentiles shall be. *For behold, except ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall all likewise perish*; and because of the words which have been spoken ye need not suppose that the Gentiles are utterly destroyed. 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 save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel.* (2 Nephi 30:1-2, emphasis added)

Nephi cautions his contemporaries as well as Israel who gathers in the last days not to presume the Gentiles will be “utterly destroyed.” His warning about the Gentiles was precipitated by the Lord’s following declaration:

Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts! For notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, *they will deny me*; nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will repent and come unto me; for mine arm is lengthened out all the day long, saith the Lord God of Hosts. (2 Nephi 28:32, emphasis added)

This regrettable outcome for the Gentiles is confirmed in a revelation to Joseph Smith.

But they [Gentiles] receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men. And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (D&C 45:29-30)

We know from the Lord's statement the Gentiles will generally reject Him. In contrast, we know from Jacob's Allegory of the Olive Tree that the "natural fruit" or Israel begin to "thrive exceedingly." The difference between the Gentiles and Israel is the covenant transition from the Gentiles to Israel. The root of Jesse heads the new dispensation and his presence concludes the Gentile opportunity while initiating the opening of the "second" covenant opportunity for Israel. Nephi explains events associated with this prophecy.

And now, I would prophesy somewhat more concerning the Jews and the Gentiles. For after the book of which I have spoken shall come forth, and be written unto the Gentiles, and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed. And then shall the remnant of our seed know concerning us, how that we came out from Jerusalem, and that they are descendants of the Jews. And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the

knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers. And then shall they rejoice; for they shall know that it is a blessing unto them from the hand of God; and *their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes*; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a pure and a delightsome people. And it shall come to pass that the Jews which are scattered also shall begin to believe in Christ; and they shall begin to gather in upon the face of the land; and as many as shall believe in Christ shall also become a delightsome people. 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. (2 Nephi 30:3-10, emphasis added)

Returning to Isaiah, he concludes chapter 11 reasserting that history is repeating itself when he writes: “And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.”⁹⁹

Isaiah likens these events to the past when a highway through the Red Sea was established and Israel escaped Egyptian bondage.¹⁰⁰ In this example Isaiah uses Assyria to describe the captors/persecutors of the Lord’s people in the last days.¹⁰¹ The literal fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy is reaffirmed by modern revelation when the Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that “an highway shall be cast up in the midst of the great deep” (D&C 133:27) as it was when the children of Israel escaped from Egyptian bondage.

The role played by the “root of Jesse” incorporates many elements of Israel’s past, as evidenced by Isaiah’s reliance on Israel’s history as a type for Israel’s future gathering. A knowledge of Israel’s history combined with modern revelation links many events together “in that day” or the last days. An ensign is raised for Israel to rally to. That ensign must include a light breaking forth in darkness to the Gentiles.¹⁰² When the Gentiles receive the light they reject it while the remnant of Israel accepts and embraces it.¹⁰³ This is the nourishing and pruning of the Lord’s vineyard.¹⁰⁴ Israel accepts the greater light and scales of darkness and deceit are

⁹⁹ Isaiah 11:16.

¹⁰⁰ Exodus 13:18.

¹⁰¹ Isaiah 8:6-8.

¹⁰² D&C 45:28-30.

¹⁰³ 3 Nephi 21:7.

¹⁰⁴ Jacob 5:70-72.

removed from their eyes when the “fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”¹⁰⁵ The greater light is the ensign and comes through the “root of Jesse,” working under the direction of John the Beloved who is a ministering angel.¹⁰⁶ In concert with John the Beloved, the “root of Jesse” is the heir of salvation whom John the Beloved directs to bring about the gathering of Israel and the restoration of all things.¹⁰⁷

2. *DAVID THE KING—EZEKIEL 37:24-25.*

Ezekiel 37 is most notable for its reference to the “sticks” of Judah and Joseph, combining in “one” in the Lord’s hand.¹⁰⁸ Generally, less attention is paid to the verses following the union between the records of Joseph and Judah. Events that follow the union of records foretell how Israel is gathered in the last days.

And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen [Gentiles], whither they be gone, *and will gather them on every side*, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; *and one king shall be king to them all*: and they

¹⁰⁵ Romans 11:25.

¹⁰⁶ D&C 7:6.

¹⁰⁷ D&C 77:14.

¹⁰⁸ Ezekiel 37:15-19.

shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwellingplaces, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And *David my servant shall be king over them*; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: *and my servant David shall be their prince for ever.* (Ezekiel 37:20-25)

When the Lord gathers Israel from among the Gentiles He leads them to lands of their inheritance and places over them a king whom the Lord declares is “David”. In the description of David in Ezekiel 37 there are similarities in the verses with the “root of Jesse” as well as the following prophecies. For example, Ezekiel 37 talks of the sticks of Judah and Joseph being combined into one. The lineage of the “root of Jesse” is both Jesse and Joseph like the “sticks” in Ezekiel 37.¹⁰⁹ Not

¹⁰⁹ “What is the root of Jesse spoken of in the 10th verse of the 11th chapter? Behold, thus saith the Lord, *it is a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph*, unto whom

only does it typify literal records of Jesse and Joseph, but metaphorically implies a reunion occurs between the two tribes, Joseph and Jesse. Jesse is the father of David who was king over ancient Israel. The “root of Jesse” is a descendant from the lines of Jesse and Joseph, the lineages represented in the “sticks” in Ezekiel 37. From an interpretative perspective, the fulfillment of this prophecy is not limited to the records of Joseph and Judah combining in one. It becomes a metaphor representing the joining together the descendants of Joseph and the Jews which points to the gathering of Israel. The Lord’s offer of covenant to the Gentiles is extended through the tribe of Joseph.¹¹⁰ Thereafter a remnant of Gentiles join with descendants of Joseph to gather the tribes of Israel.¹¹¹ The Book of Mormon frequently uses the tribe of Judah or the “Jews” as a synonym referring to all tribes of Israel.¹¹² With that precedent established, reference to the “sticks” of Joseph and Judah extend beyond the literal interpretation of the records being combined to embody the literal gathering of Israel. The Gentiles are offered the covenant first, then Joseph and Judah, who encompass all tribes, when Israel receives the Lord’s offer of covenant for their second time.

David in prophecies from Ezekiel 37:24-25 and other Old Testament chapters share similarities with John the Beloved’s mission of restoring all things and gathering Israel.¹¹³ David does not appear until after the “stick of

rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.” (D&C 113:5-6, emphasis added)

¹¹⁰ 1 Nephi 13:32-39, 14:5-14.

¹¹¹ 3 Nephi 21:22-29.

¹¹² 2 Nephi 9:1-2; 2 Nephi 25:1-4; 2 Nephi 27:1.

¹¹³ D&C 77:14.

Ephraim”, a record of Joseph is joined with the “stick of Judah”, or the Bible. When the two records are combined they become “one in thine hand” or the Gentiles hand. This occurs when the Gentiles receive the first iteration of the Book of Mormon and combine it with the Bible. Prior to the “sticks” of Joseph and Judah being combined a restorative effort must take place to return what was lost from both records, when the record of Judah comes into the hands of the great abominable church¹¹⁴ and the lesser portion of the Book of Mormon is joined together with the sealed portions of the same record.

A. *THE STICK OF JOSEPH.*

In Ezekiel 37, one may ask why does the Lord make a distinction to the stick of Joseph by referring to it as the “stick of Ephraim?” The reason may be two records are involved in the record of Joseph. The “stick of Ephraim” is the record first given to the Gentiles through the mission and ministry of Joseph Smith. It is a “lesser portion” of the original record.¹¹⁵ The Savior taught Nephite survivors about a preparatory version of the record of Joseph initially given to the Gentiles as a test.

And these things have I written, *which are a lesser part* of the things which he taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, *from the Gentiles*, according to the

¹¹⁴ 1 Nephi 13:26-32.

¹¹⁵ 3 Nephi 26:8-10.

words which Jesus hath spoken. And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them. And if it so be that they will not believe these things then shall the greater things be withheld from them, *unto their condemnation*. (3 Nephi 26:8-10, emphasis added)

The “stick of Ephraim” first given to the Gentiles is the lesser portion of the record of Joseph. It is a test of faith for those who receive it. The Lord pronounced a condemnation on the gentile church for treating it lightly.¹¹⁶ To restore what was withheld by the Lord in the Book of Mormon, and removed or altered by the great and abominable church from the Bible, greater light must break forth to all mankind.¹¹⁷ The light breaks forth in an effort to deliver the Gentiles after they are condemned for treating lightly the persons, events, and content surrounding the introduction of the Book of Mormon.

And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received—*Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the*

¹¹⁶ D&C 84 54-58.

¹¹⁷ D&C 45:28-30.

children of Zion, even all. And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written—That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father’s kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion. For shall the children of the kingdom pollute my holy land? Verily, I say unto you, Nay. (D&C 84:54-59, emphasis added)

In 1832 the Lord condemned the Gentiles, specifically the “children of Zion” for their vanity and unbelief because the “stick of Ephraim” or “lesser part” given to them was treated lightly. More importantly, they failed to bring forth fruit meet for the Father’s kingdom. The only fruit meet for the Father’s kingdom are people who qualify to live in Zion, God’s kingdom on earth.

Some believe the jury is still out on the fate of the Gentiles, but nearly two hundred years have passed since the Book of Mormon was given to the Gentiles and there has been little or no progress toward establishing Zion. Unfortunately, the Gentiles still labor under the lesser portion of the Book of Mormon (the “stick of Ephraim”) rather than obtaining more. It should be a wake-up call to all who believe all is still well in

Zion.¹¹⁸ Because fruit “meet for the Father’s kingdom” has not been produced, Ezekiel’s account states the Lord takes possession of the sticks and makes them one in His hand.

And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, *I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim*, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be *one in mine hand*. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and *one king shall be king to them all*: and they shall no more be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all. (Ezekiel 37:18-22, emphasis added)

In verse 17 of Ezekiel 37 the Lord says the sticks of Judah and Ephraim become “one in thine hand”. In verse 19 the Lord

¹¹⁸ 2 Nephi 28:21.

declares He will take the stick of Joseph from Ephraim's hands. There appears to be a transfer taking place from Ephraim to the Lord. The Lord removes the stick of Joseph from Ephraim and combines it with the stick of Judah and the two sticks become "one in mine hand" or the Lord's hand.¹¹⁹

Removing the stick from Ephraim may point to the time the Gentiles carry the lesser portion of the stick of Joseph and the stick of Judah, first to descendants of Lehi and then assist Lehi's seed in carrying them to all tribes of Israel.

And these things have I written, *which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people*; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, *from the Gentiles*, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken. (3 Nephi 26:8, emphasis added)

After the record is taken *from the Gentiles*—not by the Gentiles—and carried to Lehi's descendants the record becomes one in the Lord's hand and the time arrives for the Lord to "set his hand again a second time" and gather Israel.¹²⁰ With the gathering comes the reign of one king over a consolidated kingdom of Israel. Israel is restored and a king named David reigns over all her tribes. This scenario is consistent with Joseph Smith's teachings on the subject:

¹¹⁹ Ezekiel 37:19.

¹²⁰ Jacob 6:2.

Although David was a king, he never did obtain the spirit and power of Elijah and the fullness of the Priesthood; and the Priesthood that he received and the throne and kingdom of David is to be taken from him [David] and *given to another by the name of David in the last days, raised up out of his lineage.* (TPJS., p.339, emphasis added)

Joseph Smith's commentary is consistent with Ezekiel's prophecy. There will be a Davidic king from David's lineage who sits on the throne of Israel in the last days. Along with Joseph Smith's support of Ezekiel's prophecy of a latter-day David are his comments written to editor N.C. Saxton.

Christ, in the days of His flesh, proposed to *make a covenant with them* [Israel], but they rejected Him and His proposals, and in consequence thereof, they were broken off, and *no covenant was made with them at that time.* But their unbelief has not rendered the promise of God of none effect: no, for there was *another day limited in David, which was the day of His power; and then His people, Israel,* should be a willing people;—and He would write His law in their hearts, and print it in their thoughts; their sins and their iniquities He would remember no more. (TPJS., pp. 14-15, emphasis added)

According to Joseph Smith, the time when Israel establishes a covenant with God is “another day limited in David,” that is, like the “Root of Jesse” a day of the Lord’s power. Ezekiel prophesies of Israel’s future covenant of peace after David is established on Israel’s throne. “Moreover *I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them*: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.” (Ezekiel 37:26, emphasis added)

The everlasting covenant of peace Ezekiel refers to is a covenant transition led by David in verse 24 and 25. In verse 24, David is proclaimed “*king*” over Israel. However, David’s title is changed in verse 25 when the Lord declares, “. . . , my servant David shall be their *prince for ever*.” David’s title as “king” is both temporal and temporary. Consider the possibility the title of king is Aaronic and the title “prince for ever” is Melchizedek. “Prince” is used in Abraham’s description of the priesthood he sought.

And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, *a prince of peace*, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of

God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest,
 holding the right belonging to the fathers.
 (Abraham 1:2, emphasis added)

The covenant Ezekiel said would be established between the Lord and David is referred to as a “covenant of peace.” The title of king David in chapter 37 is “prince for ever,” a title continuing for an endless duration.

Melchizedek achieved righteousness among his people and was given the title: Prince of Peace.¹²¹ Salem was a Zion society translated into heaven with the city of Enoch. Ezekiel foretells a similar outcome when latter-day David and his people enter a covenant of peace with the Lord in preparation for Zion on earth. Rather than translating Zion and removing her from earth, the kingdom of God in heaven is joined with the kingdom of God on earth. The type for this covenant transition is king Benjamin and his people in the Book of Mormon.¹²²

B. *KING BENJAMIN AS A TYPE FOR KING DAVID.*

King Benjamin delivered to his people words given him by an angel. The people fell to the earth and cried:

O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of
 Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our
 sins and our hearts may be purified; for we
 believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who

¹²¹ JST Genesis 14:33.

¹²² Mosiah 3-5.

created heaven and earth and all things; who shall come down among the children of men. And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words *the Spirit of the Lord came upon them and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins and having peace of conscience because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ* who should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken to them. (Mosiah 4:2-3, emphasis added)

After witnessing his people repent and receive a remission of their sins, king Benjamin explains to the people how their repentance and remission of sins endowed them with “the knowledge of the goodness of God.”¹²³

For behold, if the knowledge of the goodness of God at this time has awakened you to a sense of your nothingness, and your worthless and fallen state—I say unto you, if ye have come to a knowledge of the goodness of God and his matchless power, and his wisdom, and his patience, and his long-suffering towards the children of men; and also, the atonement which has been prepared from the foundation of the world, that thereby salvation might come to him that should put his trust in the Lord, and

¹²³ Mosiah 4:5.

should be diligent in keeping his commandments, and continue in the faith even unto the end of his life, I mean the life of the mortal body—I say, *that this is the man who receiveth salvation, through the atonement* which was prepared from the foundation of the world for all mankind, which ever were since the fall of Adam, or who are, or who ever shall be, even unto the end of the world. And *this is the means whereby salvation cometh*. And there is none other salvation save this which hath been spoken of; neither are there any conditions whereby man can be saved except the conditions which I have told you. (Mosiah 4:5-8, emphasis added)

King Benjamin attributes their miraculous change to the Atonement of Jesus Christ and their reception of “the knowledge of the goodness of God.” The knowledge of God’s goodness is the first endowment of knowledge given to those who repent and receive a remission of sins. It is the first step on the path to the “greater priesthood,” which holds “the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.”¹²⁴

This righteous king explained to his people the “doctrine of Christ.”¹²⁵ They had been baptized and participated in temple worship associated with the Law of Moses.¹²⁶ Their

¹²⁴ D&C 84:19

¹²⁵ 3 Nephi 11:30-40.

¹²⁶ Mosiah 1:18.

contrition and repentance brought about a spiritual rebirth, giving them the Holy Ghost¹²⁷ or the “mind of the Father.”¹²⁸

The extent of their access to the knowledge of God was not limited to an understanding His goodness. After king Benjamin witnessed their repentance and remission of sins, he asked if they believed his teachings regarding the Atonement of Jesus Christ. Their response revealed that God endowed them with a more expansive access to His knowledge that accompanied their spiritual rebirth.

And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea,
we believe all the words which thou hast
spoken to us; and also, we know of their surety
and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord

¹²⁷ 3 Nephi 9:20.

¹²⁸ Joseph Smith, *Lectures on Faith*, Lecture 5 ¶2. Concerning the “Mind of the Father,” the Lectures on Faith may seem inconsistent with modern Latter-Day Saint teachings on the nature of the godhead. They were originally created as a manual to develop the priesthood holders of the School of the Prophets. Joseph Smith spent extensive time editing them leading up to the publishing of the original 1835 Doctrine and Covenants and they comprised the “doctrine” in that book. It was accepted as binding scripture in a vote of the general assembly of the church on August 17, 1835. Joseph signed the preface which stated that, “We are to be called to answer to every principle advanced.” *Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations, Vol. 2*, beginning on page 311. It’s clear that Joseph stood by the content of the Lectures on Faith. Despite their prophetic beginning and formal acceptance, they have been criticized by Apostles of the Latter-Day Saints for being incomplete or “never [being] presented to nor accepted by the church as being otherwise than theological lectures or lessons.” Bruce R. McConkie, “*The Lord God of Joseph Smith*,” BYU Speeches, 1972. They were later removed from the Doctrine and Covenants, without a membership vote, by a committee led by James E. Talmage. Acceptance or rejection of these prophetic writings lead to very different understandings of the Godhead and the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

Because Joseph Smith states in the Lectures that true faith can only be exercised under a correct understanding of the nature of God, your decision to accept or reject them as doctrine deserves careful time and consideration.

Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come; and were it expedient, we could *prophesy of all things*. And it is the faith which we have had on the things which our king has spoken unto us *that has brought us to this great knowledge*¹²⁹, whereby we do rejoice with such exceedingly great joy. (Mosiah 5:2-4, emphasis added)

The people of king Benjamin hearkened to the words of the angel and attained a “broken heart and contrite spirit,”¹³⁰ they repented of their sins and pled for forgiveness through the

¹²⁹ “The glory of God is intelligence, or, light and truth.” (D&C 93:36) God’s glory is intelligence or light, truth, Spirit or knowledge. When God grants access to His knowledge through the keys of the “greater priesthood” He is sharing His “glory” or knowledge with them. “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come.” (D&C 130:18-19) “That which is of God is light; [glory] and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day.” (D&C 50:24) “We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at that point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him.” (TPJS., p.51)

¹³⁰ 3 Nephi 9:20.

Atonement of Christ. As a consequence of their repentance their sins were remitted and they had “no more disposition to do evil but to do good continually.”¹³¹

Having experienced a spiritual rebirth, the people express their willingness to enter a covenant with God.

And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God *to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us*, all the remainder of our days, that we may not bring upon ourselves a never-ending torment, as has been spoken of by the angel, that we may not drink out of the cup of the wrath of God. (Mosiah 5:5, emphasis added)

Their willingness to covenant is important because, as Joseph Smith said, “it requires two parties to make a covenant, and those two parties must be agreed, or no covenant can be made.”¹³² When one of those two parties is God, the covenant becomes eternal in nature and may not be broken by God.¹³³ God will never break His covenant. If man violates the terms of the covenant, their breach of covenant carries severe consequences like “partaking of the cup of the wrath of God.”¹³⁴ For that reason, only God can make a covenant with man. Man cannot covenant with God unless an invitation from

¹³¹ Mosiah 5:2.

¹³² TPJS., p.14.

¹³³ “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.” (D&C 82:10); *see also* D&C 84:39-40.

¹³⁴ Mosiah 5:5.

God is offered. The seriousness of the consequences for broken covenants is due to the depth and magnitude of the blessing offered.

And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; *for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name*; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.

(Mosiah 5:7, emphasis added)

For the people of king Benjamin, the process of spiritual rebirth is both a preparation and right of adoption into the family of God. It is only possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It is the purest form for Israel, or the family of God.

The apostle Paul wrote to the Roman saints about the significance of this adoptive covenant and its attendant blessings.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also

glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory [intelligence, knowledge, etc.,] which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:14-18)

What then does it mean to become joint-heirs with Christ?

And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him, and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son [Abba, Father!]. And I, John, bear record that he received a fulness of the glory (light, truth, and knowledge), of the Father. *And he received all power, both in heaven and earth*, and the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him. . . . I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, *that you may come unto the Father in my name and in due time receive of his fulness*. (D&C 93:15-17, 19, emphasis added)

John records that Christ received a “fulness of the glory of the Father.” This included all power both in heaven and earth. In addition to having all power both in heaven and earth, John recorded that “the glory of the Father was with him, for he dwelt in him.” John

explains that all men have the privilege of coming to the Father and in due time, receive his fulness.

In a revelation to Joseph Smith, the Savior provided a detailed explanation of what these blessings entail.

He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all. Wherefore, *he is possessor of all things*; for all things are subject unto him, both in heaven and on the earth, the life and the light, the Spirit and power, *sent forth by the will of the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son*. But no man is possessor of all things except he be purified and cleansed from all sin. And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. (D&C 50:26-29, emphasis added)

With this explanation it is clear the angel of God led king Benjamin and his people through a process with broader implications than what is portrayed in this account.

Considering the account of king Benjamin and his people as a type for David in Ezekiel 37 the two accounts should be viewed as similar—particularly when we read in verse 26 of Ezekiel: “Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.” Like David in Ezekiel, Mormon writes,

“Wherefore, with the help of these, [prophets] king Benjamin, by laboring with all the might of his body and the faculty of his soul, and also the prophets, *did once more establish peace in the land*,”¹³⁵ following the pattern described by both Joseph Smith and Ezekiel.

It appears especially relevant when we read in verse 25 that “David shall be their prince forever,” or for an endless/eternal duration.

To add validity to viewing king Benjamin and his people as a type for Ezekiel 37, it should not be overlooked that king Benjamin was a descendant of Joseph¹³⁶ and he and his people became united with the Mulekites or the people of Mulek, the only surviving heir to the throne of Zedekiah, king of Judah.¹³⁷ Further, king Benjamin received his message from an angelic ministrant who was apparently overseeing his mission. This replicates John the Beloved, as a ministering angel and Elias figure will do in the last days.

When Mosiah arrived in Zarahemla and met the Mulekites, he found in them a Godless people who corrupted the original language and were in need of a restorative effort to bring them to Christ.¹³⁸ King Benjamin delivered the words of the angel to the combined people of Mosiah and Mulek, the event becomes the culmination of combining the people of Joseph with the people of Judah (or Jesse). The elements of kingship/birthright are present in the lineages of Judah and Joseph.

¹³⁵ Words of Mormon 1:18; Mosiah 1:1.

¹³⁶ Alma 10:3.

¹³⁷ Helaman 6:10.

¹³⁸ Omni 1:17.

The corruption of Israel is a type found in the conditions of the Mulekites while knowledge and restoration are evident in the example of king Benjamin and his people. The example of the union between king Benjamin's people and the Mulekites becomes a type for the day when Joseph and Judah are united by a latter-day king David.

As we saw with John the Beloved directing the servant, central to the prophecies of David and the root of Jesse is the gathering of Israel. Further, David and the root of Jesse appear engaged in bringing further light to the scene like the servant.¹³⁹ A new theme of kingship emerges in both examples—Jesse being the lineage of the two great temporal and spiritual kings, David and Jesus.

3. *ONE MIGHTY AMONG THE SEED OF JOSEPH—2 NEPHI 3:24.*

In 2 Nephi 3, Lehi quotes the prophecy of Joseph who was sold into Egypt.¹⁴⁰ This was done when giving his [Lehi's] son, Joseph, his patriarchal blessing. Near the end of the blessing Lehi closes his discussion about Joseph of Egypt's prophecy and directly addresses Joseph [his son] about one who will be among his seed in the last days. He foretells the presence of an individual referred to as "one mighty" and explains the role of this prophetic figure in fulfilling the Lord's covenant made with Joseph of Egypt. Regarding his son Joseph, and his posterity, Lehi declares:

¹³⁹ 3 Nephi 21:9-11.

¹⁴⁰ The prophecy was restored through Joseph Smith in JST Genesis 50.

Wherefore, because of this covenant thou art blessed; for thy seed shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book. And there shall rise up one mighty among them, who shall do much good, *both in word and in deed*, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith, to work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, *unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of my brethren*. (2 Nephi 3:23-24, emphasis added)

As the “root of Jesse” raises an ensign and gather’s Israel, the “one mighty” among the seed of Joseph, Lehi’s son, brings to pass “much restoration” to Israel [Jesse] and the seed of his brethren [Joseph]. Associated with John the Beloved’s mission of restoring all things, the “one mighty” among the seed of Lehi’s son has the necessary attributes to assist in carrying out that role. He is noted for doing “much good” in word [teaching, scripture, revelation] and in deed [righteous acts/example], and he is an instrument in the hands of God, has a divine commission with exceeding faith who works mighty wonders¹⁴¹ from Christ and he speaks the words of Christ.¹⁴² The one mighty has exceeding faith to work mighty wonders¹⁴³ in

¹⁴¹ “Wonders” in a scriptural context is first used by the Lord to refer to miraculous judgments the Lord poured out upon Egypt [Israel’s captors] through Moses. (See Exodus 3:20)

¹⁴² D&C 1:38.

¹⁴³ The Lord uses the term “wonders” to describe the curses the Lord brings upon Egypt as they hold Israel in bondage. (Exodus 3:20) For the “one mighty” to work

bringing to pass the gathering of all tribes of Israel. A work that is “great in the sight of God.”

Verse 24 states that the outcome of his ministry will be “bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren.” (2 Nephi 3:24)

Bringing to pass much restoration among Israel and the seed of Joseph perfectly aligns the One Mighty with John the Beloved’s mission of restoring all things and gathering Israel. Doing much good in word suggests he plays a revelatory role to Israel and the tribe of Joseph.

Lehi’s account has two common themes of knowledge and gathering, and adds the appearance of a prophetic figure from the tribe of Joseph. Clearly the “root of Jesse” and “David” refer to the tribe of Judah. However, the “root of Jesse” is not purely a descendant of Judah but also descends from the tribe of Joseph.¹⁴⁴ The prophecy of the “One Mighty” introduces the Joseph component described in the lineage of the “root of Jesse.” Having identified both Joseph and Judah in these prophecies supports the conclusion these prophecies refer to one individual as opposed to separate prophetic figures engaged in a similar but separate work.

The “One Mighty” fulfills a twofold mission of restoring Israel and the seed of Joseph who was sold into

mighty wonders would be for him to do works similar to what Moses did in delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage.

¹⁴⁴ Recall the root of Jesse is “a descendant of Jesse, as well as of Joseph, unto whom rightly belongs the priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom, for an ensign, and for the gathering of my people in the last days.” (D&C 113:5-6)

Egypt. His mission may be that of a spokesman for Joseph Smith.¹⁴⁵

And the Lord said unto me also: I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins; and I will make for him a spokesman. And I, behold, I will give unto him that he shall write the writing of the fruit of thy loins; *and the spokesman of thy loins shall declare it.* (2 Nephi 3:18, emphasis added)

The Lord raises up a spokesman for Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith writes the record of Joseph but the *spokesman* declares what Joseph Smith has written. Supporting this conclusion is the description Joseph of Egypt gives of the latter-day seer who comes from his loins and the ultimate effect of the seers contribution.

¹⁴⁵ Sidney Rigdon was offered the role of spokesman for Joseph Smith if he would remain with the Lord's people. (D&C 100:9, 124:103-104) Sidney was severely beaten by a mob and withdrew to find safety. The role of spokesman for Joseph Smith was unnecessary until Joseph Smith was in a position of not being able to speak for himself. That time would not come until Israel was to be gathered long after Joseph Smith's death. "And out of weakness shall he [Joseph Smith] be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days." (JST Genesis 50:32) The only way Joseph Smith's ministry could be "made strong" after his death is to have a spokesman who could expound what Joseph Smith had written. "And the Lord said unto me also: I will raise up unto the fruit of thy loins; and I will make for him a spokesman. And I, behold, I will give unto him that he shall write the writing of the fruit of thy loins; and the spokesman of thy loins shall declare it." (2 Nephi 3:18) If Joseph Smith's teachings play a role in gathering Israel, he must have spokesman who declares his teachings to those who are scattered from Israel.

Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.

And out of weakness shall he [Joseph Smith] be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days. (JST Genesis 50:31-32, emphasis added)

The description of the records of Judah and Joseph *growing together* implies a process over time where two records are intertwined to confound false doctrine, lay down contentions, establish peace among the seed of Joseph and restore his descendants to a knowledge of their fathers.

The logistics of how this work is accomplished was discussed previously in the conclusion of Jacob's Allegory of the Olive Tree. Presumably, the "one mighty" in 2 Nephi 3 would be the Lord's servant who gathers other servants.

It is important to note the similarities between the respective mission of the “root of Jesse”¹⁴⁶ and the “one mighty.” Both share the responsibility of gathering Israel.

4. *ONE MIGHTY AND STRONG—D&C 85:7.*

Section 85 of the Doctrine and Covenants refers to a servant called “one mighty and strong.” The Lord’s description of this individual is in verse 7:

And it shall come to pass that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power in his hand clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God. (D&C 85:7, emphasis added)

The prophecy of the “one mighty and strong” may be scripturally deciphered by examining what the passage says his accomplishments are and working back to the description of his attributes.

The one mighty and strong will “set in order the house of God” and “arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints.”

¹⁴⁶ D&C 113:6.

(D&C 85:7) Inheritances are what the Lord grants Israel when they receive God's covenant in Zion.

Land grants to modern Israel are described in a vision shown to Ezekiel by an angel. After David makes the transition from "king" to "prince for ever" in verses 24 and 25 of Ezekiel 37.¹⁴⁷ Land grants for Israel are assigned in chapter 48 of Ezekiel and provide a pattern for the "prince" to follow when assigning inheritances to each tribe of Israel.

A. *SET IN ORDER THE HOUSE OF GOD.*

The Lord is selective and deliberate in His use of language. By so doing, He communicates to readers both content and scriptural precedence for the subject He addresses. The phrase, "set in order the house of God" explains what the one mighty and strong will do. The Lord uses similar language in the Old Testament, establishing a link to Hezekiah and how he set in order the house of God when his reign over Israel began. Hezekiah was heir to the Davidic throne of Israel when he was twenty-five years old. He gathers Israel from a state of

¹⁴⁷ Thereafter he [David] is referred to as "the prince." Circumstantial evidence the prince in chapter 44 is David from chapter 37 are found in references to Levitical priests who minister in the temple Ezekiel is shown. "And thou shalt give to the priests the Levites that be of the seed of Zadok, which approach unto me, to minister unto me, saith the Lord God, a young bullock for a sin offering." (Ezekiel 37:19)

Two Levite priests served David during his reign, Abiathar and Zadok. Abiathar fell out of favor after David's death and Zadok continued as sole Levite high priest. In Ezekiel's vision of the temple in Zion, the seed of Zadok are types for faithful Levitical priests who minister unto the Lord in His temple. Using Zadok as a type for the Levitical high priest in Zion suggests the "prince" entering by the east gate is the latter-day David spoken of in Ezekiel 37. Using Zadok as a type for the Levitical high priest in Zion suggests the "prince" entering by the east gate is the latter-day David spoken of in Ezekiel 37.

dispersion and apostasy to reinstitute true worship in the temple of Israel's God.

And also the burnt offerings were in
abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings,
and the drink offerings for every burnt offering.
So the service of the house of the Lord was *set
in order*. And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the
people, that God had prepared the people: for
the thing was done suddenly.
(2 Chronicles 29:35-36, emphasis added)

The house of God in this example refers to the literal temple in Jerusalem. In a latter-day application it will include a literal temple, but the “house of God” is not limited to the structure itself, but refers also to the household of God or family of God that is gathered to and known as Israel.

Verses 35-36 at the end of the 29th chapter of 2 Chronicles states the outcome of Hezekiah's preparations for restoring true worship in Israel.

The story of Hezekiah is the type for the latter-day gathering of Israel and the “one mighty and strong.” There are parallels between Hezekiah's account and many of the prophecies already reviewed. The following are noteworthy examples.

Hezekiah sought to restore Israel from a state of apostasy.¹⁴⁸ It was Hezekiah's desire to remove covenant curses on Israel incurred through dishonoring their covenant with

¹⁴⁸ 2 Chronicles 29:6-7.

God.¹⁴⁹ Hezekiah desired to renew Israel's covenant with God.¹⁵⁰

With this objective in mind, Hezekiah began his restorative efforts by sanctifying the Levites so they could enter the temple and cleanse it in preparation for covenant renewal and observance.¹⁵¹ Cleansing the Levites ties this process to another prophecy the Savior restored to the Nephites in His post-resurrection ministry.

But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire and a fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; *and he shall purify the sons of Levi*, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (3 Nephi 24:2-3, emphasis added)

In the reign of king Hezekiah it was learned that Hezekiah, the king, assumed responsibility for cleansing the Levites and restoring correct temple observance. In the example of the Savior's explanation of Malachi to the Nephites the person responsible for cleansing the Levites is referred to as "the messenger of the covenant."

The manner in which Malachi's prophecy is recorded, it appears as if the "messenger of the covenant" is Christ.

¹⁴⁹ 2 Chronicles 29:8-9.

¹⁵⁰ 2 Chronicles 29:10.

¹⁵¹ 2 Chronicles 29:5, 11-19.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, *even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come*, saith the Lord of Hosts. (3 Nephi 24:1, emphasis added)

The messenger preparing the way before the Lord is a reference to John the Baptist. Following John the Baptist's ministry, the Savior came to His temple. He was a messenger of the covenant when he delivered the second invitation to the Jews to enter a Melchizedek covenant relationship with God. One could contend that Jesus' life and ministry was indeed a refiner's fire and fuller's soap for Israel.

Where these conclusions begin to stray is when it comes to purifying the Levites as gold and silver so they can offer an offering to the Lord in righteousness and Judah and Jerusalem become "pleasant" unto the Lord as they were in former years. Those outcomes were not present during the earthly ministry of Jesus.

It is more likely the Lord did come during His mortal ministry and will come to His temple suddenly at the end of the world. It may be the prophecy in Malachi is applied in the same manner the Lord used the prophecy of Moses in 3 Nephi chapters 20 and 21. In 3 Nephi 20 the Lord declares He is the prophet Moses spoke of.¹⁵² In the following chapter the Moses prophecy is fulfilled by the servant who brings forth the words of Christ before those who reject the Lord's words are "cut off

¹⁵² 3 Nephi 20:23.

from among the people [Israel].”¹⁵³ The “cutting off” is another way of describing the “refiner’s fire” and the “fuller’s soap.”

If the reader of 3 Nephi 24 was familiar with the “First Shall be Last and the Last shall be First” prophecy and the Moses prophecy they may render the interpretation different from common assumptions about the “messenger of the covenant.”

And it came to pass that he commanded them that they should write the words which the Father had given unto Malachi, which he should tell unto them. And it came to pass that after they were written he expounded them. And these are the words which he did tell unto them, saying: Thus said the Father unto Malachi—Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me¹⁵⁴ [John the Baptist, John the Beloved under Elias/Aaronic priesthood], and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, [Jesus, dispensation head under the Melchizedek priesthood,] even the messenger of the covenant, [the servant, dispensation head, under the Melchizedek priesthood] whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. (3 Nephi 24:1)

¹⁵³ 3 Nephi 21:11.

¹⁵⁴ Isaiah 40:3; JST John 1:22; D&C 77:14.

John the Baptist identified himself as the Lord's messenger sent to prepare the way for the Lord.¹⁵⁵ The Baptist also said he was not the Elias sent to restore all things.¹⁵⁶ Like Isaiah's prophecy of John the Baptist, the words "prepare the way for the Lord" points to John the Baptist and the role of an "Elias." When the word "prepare" is used it implies the presence of the Aaronic or "preparatory priesthood." Following John the Baptist's preparatory ministry which included bringing to close the dispensation of Moses, the Savior did "suddenly come to His temple" in His mortal ministry. It's important to note various meanings implied by the Lord's use of the term "suddenly."

- "Suddenly" can be rendered "surprisingly."
- "Suddenly" can be in an unexpected way.
- "Suddenly" can be "You got caught off guard. I declared what I was going to do, I did it, and you got caught off guard."¹⁵⁷

For some people, the Savior's mortal ministry came as a surprise. For others it came unexpectedly. Still, some were "caught off guard" when Christ began His mortal ministry. Each individual reacts differently when the Lord or His servants are sent with a divine mission to perform. Rarely is

¹⁵⁵ John 1:23.

¹⁵⁶ JST John 1:22.

¹⁵⁷ Denver Snuffer podcast, Prophecy, December 2, 2018.

there a Simeon,¹⁵⁸ or Anna, a prophetess¹⁵⁹ who is prepared and ready to receive the Lord and His servants.

Considering the context, Malachi's words as they relate to the second half of the "First shall be Last" prophecy, another Elias [John the Beloved] prepares the way for a servant [Melchizedek, dispensation head] who delivers the words of Christ and a new covenant that fulfills the Moses prophecy.¹⁶⁰ The new dispensation head could also be described as "the messenger of the covenant." Christ is the Savior who Atoned for the sins of all men making Him pre-eminent above all mankind. He was also a new dispensation head.

The "messenger of the covenant" cannot transcend his Lord in any way. The best the messenger can do is be an agent for delivering the words of Christ in the transitional phase where the covenant is transferred from the Gentiles to Israel. Following the role played by the messenger of the covenant, we can identify at least one link to Hezekiah and the "one mighty and strong." However the link does not appear until after the messenger performs a cleansing function as Hezekiah did when restoring temple worship. The messenger of the covenant introduces a new dispensation to replace the dispensation that began with Joseph Smith. In the second half of the "First Shall be Last" prophecy, John the Beloved fills the office of Elias that was John the Baptist's position in the first half. The servant bearing the words of Christ fills the role of dispensation head mirroring to a lesser extent the dispensation headed by Jesus. Together John the Beloved and the servant

¹⁵⁸ Luke 2:25-35.

¹⁵⁹ Luke 2:36-38.

¹⁶⁰ 3 Nephi 21:9-11.

prepare a New Jerusalem and a new temple.¹⁶¹ The Savior “suddenly” comes to His temple when a Zion people¹⁶² are prepared to bear His presence¹⁶³ and the presence of those who come with Him.¹⁶⁴ Prior to the Savior’s appearance a preparatory work must be completed to prepare mankind for the return of the Lord and His hosts.

The “messenger of the covenant” is described as a “refiner’s fire and a fuller’s soap.” Both processes involve cleansing and purifying precious metals with fire or cleaning wool with extremely harsh soap and intense scrubbing. The refiner burns away impurities in precious metal’s with fire,¹⁶⁵ while the “fuller” vigorously scrubs out impurities until they separate from the wool.¹⁶⁶

The Lord’s people, must undergo a cleansing process that “separates the wheat from the tares,” creating a division between what is harvested and stored and what is discarded and burned.

For all flesh is corrupted before me; and the
powers of darkness prevail upon the earth,
among the children of men, in the presence of
all the hosts of heaven—Which causeth silence
to reign, and all eternity is pained, and the
angels are waiting the great command to reap
down the earth, to gather the tares that they

¹⁶¹ 3 Nephi 21:23-24.

¹⁶² Moses 7:18.

¹⁶³ 3 Nephi 21:25.

¹⁶⁴ D&C 29:11, 76:66.

¹⁶⁵ 1 Nephi 22:17.

¹⁶⁶ Isaiah 1:18.

may be burned; and behold, *the enemy is combined*. (D&C 38:11-12, emphasis added)

When the “enemy” is combined they have to be combined against people who represent their opposition. Nephi was shown by an angel a latter-day division occurring among the Gentiles in the last days.

Therefore, wo be *unto the Gentiles* if it so be that they harden their hearts against the Lamb of God. For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other—*either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually*, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken. (1 Nephi 14:6-7, emphasis added)

The division Nephi was shown by the angel is a confrontation between two churches.

And it came to pass that he said unto me: Look, and behold that great and abominable church, which is the mother of abominations, whose founder is the devil. And he said unto me:

Behold *there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil*; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth. And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the whore of all the earth, and she sat upon many waters; and she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. (1 Nephi 14:9-11, emphasis added)

The fact the church of the devil has dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues and people place the odds of belonging to the church of the Lamb of God fairly low. From Nephi's vision we observe these events from God's perspective. We may think of these two groups from a mortal perspective that divides them into factions that may be religious, political and militarily. As the heavenly gaze falls upon earth they see only two churches. One is the church of the Lamb of God, the other, the church of the Devil.

When the messenger of the covenant arrives his mission is polarizing. Those belonging to the church of the devil already have "*dominion over all the earth*" and are present "*among all nations, kindreds, tongues and people.*"¹⁶⁷ God introduces a new covenant between Himself and the Lord's people, creating a division that establishes two

¹⁶⁷ 1 Nephi 14:11.

numerically unequal groups. In contrast, the church of the Lamb of God is relatively small in comparison to the church of the devil.

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 on 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, emphasis added)

To a lesser degree the two parties co-exist for a time but gradually grow to oppose one another. The spark that triggers the flare up between churches must be the “messenger of the covenant” who delivers the words of Christ and exposes abominations introduced by the “great and abominable church.”

And it came to pass that I beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth among all the nations of the Gentiles to *fight against the Lamb of God*. (1 Nephi 14:13, emphasis added)

It is no coincidence the mother of abominations marshals her forces in the Gentile nations. The covenant dispensation that started with Joseph Smith is ending and a new dispensation introduced for Israel. Circumstances at this time mirror conditions in the Savior's day. Recall, the basic premise of this book is history repeats itself and our future is discerned by our past. This makes the Lord's counsel to his ancient apostles as relevant in our day as it was in the days of His mortal ministry.

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. (John 16:1-2)

In the Savior's day, what church acted as the church of the devil, based upon His statement to the apostles? Did the Jewish Church begin in that capacity? This is not to single out or condemn the Jewish faith collectively. What was done to Christ and His disciples was done by bad actors at the head of their religion. Primarily the people with power and position were threatened by the teachings and miracles of Jesus. He was the only one demonstrating authority and divine commission from God.¹⁶⁸ The open display of God's power through the Savior threatened the power, authority, and credibility of Jewish leadership. What was true in Christ's day will be true again prior to the coming of Christ. Those who reject, persecute and kill true disciples of Christ feel justified because they do so in

¹⁶⁸ Luke 1:32, 36.

defense of their God and their faith. In the end they believe God justifies their sin in His defense. They willingly lack understanding that God can defend Himself.

In the face of increasing opposition from the church of the devil, the Lord sends His messenger of the covenant to offer His covenant to repentant Gentiles as well as Israelites willing to gather in the face of unfavorable odds and intense opposition and persecution.

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.* (1 Nephi 14:14, emphasis added)

The people of the Lamb of God are placed in two categories. One category refers to saints of the church of the Lamb and the second category refers to the covenant people of the Lord. The covenant people of the Lord are Israelites; the saints of the church of the Lamb are Gentiles through Joseph's lineage, who come to Christ, comply with His doctrine and join the new dispensation. They demonstrate a willingness to be joined with Israel [Judah] in their covenant with God.

The "power of the Lamb of God" falls upon both Israelites and Gentiles in preparation for their confrontation with the church of the devil.

After the Israelites are “armed with righteousness,” as a means of preparation, God pours out His wrath upon the church of the devil.¹⁶⁹ It isn’t until the “mother of harlots” feels God’s wrath that God simultaneously fulfills His covenant with Israel. As the Lord’s people grow in righteousness, the wicked increase their wickedness. The righteous repent, growing nearer to God and become blessed and protected. In contrast, those who do evil increase their wickedness and invoke God’s wrath upon them.

And when the day cometh that the wrath of God is poured out upon the mother of harlots, which is the great and abominable church of all the earth, whose founder is the devil, *then, at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way* [Aaronic priesthood] for the fulfilling of his covenants, [work of angels, Moroni 7:31] which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel. (1 Nephi 14:17, emphasis added)

At the very time God endows His people on earth with power, His wrath pours out upon the wicked who gather to persecute and destroy the righteous. With rising dissensions and wars and rumors of war among the wicked, the Lord begins His work to gather Israel so His covenant may be fulfilled, His people are saved and the wicked destroyed. The fruits of Joseph Smith’s ministry transitions from being weak, to becoming strong.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ 1 Nephi 14:15-16.

¹⁷⁰ JST 50:32.

The servant's role is likened unto Hezekiah's, to be "a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."¹⁷¹

The messenger of the covenant in Malachi 3 who cleans and purges the Levites appears to follow the pattern instituted by Hezekiah when he restored true worship in Israel.¹⁷² He closely resembles the "one mighty and strong" "clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth? He is well suited as the messenger of the covenant and "one mighty and strong" to "set in order the house of God?"¹⁷³

B. *HIS BOWELS SHALL BE A FOUNTAIN OF TRUTH.*

The one mighty and strong having a fountain of truth in his bowels is a descriptive metaphor. A similar metaphor was shown to Ezekiel when he saw a vision of the latter-day Zion with healing water flowing out of the threshold of the east door of the temple forming a river flowing to the Dead Sea. The East gate of the temple is significant because it is reserved for the restricted use of the Lord and the prince.¹⁷⁴

In chapter 47 of Ezekiel, water flows from beneath the threshold of the East door of the temple. Water is a metaphor symbolizing truth and the words of the Lord.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ 3 Nephi 24:3.

¹⁷² D&C 121:36; 50:26-29.

¹⁷³ D&C 85:7.

¹⁷⁴ Ezekiel 43:4; 44:2-3.

¹⁷⁵ John 4:10-14.

Afterward he [the angel] brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east. And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. (Ezekiel 47:1-2)

When Lord's voice speaks it is comparable to "a noise of many waters." It may be the Lord's literal voice or the voice of His servants for they are the same.¹⁷⁶ Water flowing beneath the East door of the temple causes fish and trees to thrive and prosper. Fish and trees are scriptural metaphors for people.¹⁷⁷ Eventually water flows from the temple into the Dead Sea and heals it. The effects of truth flowing from beneath the porch of the temple has the effect of healing all it comes in contact with.

And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, withsoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; *and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.* (Ezekiel 47:9, emphasis added)

When truth flows freely it heals all who receive it. Bruce R. McConkie provides a similar description of the benefits derived from reading the Book of Mormon.

¹⁷⁶ 3 Nephi 21:9-11; D&C 1:38.

¹⁷⁷ Mark 1:17; Isaiah 10:18-19.

Here is a man who gains a copy of this blessed book [The Book of Mormon], begins to read it, and continues until having read it all, his famished soul is filled with the bread of Life. He cannot lay it aside or ignore its teachings. *It is as though, the waters of life are flowing into the barren deserts of his soul, quenching the arid, empty feeling that theretofore separated him from his God.* (Bruce R. McConkie, “Articles of Faith,” p.414, emphasis added)

Like the words of Christ delivered by the servant, when the Lord’s glory fills the temple in Zion, truth flows out from the east entrance to heal all it comes in contact with. The vision of Zion shown to Ezekiel has similarities to Enoch’s vision of the last days.

And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and *righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect* from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my

tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, the New Jerusalem. (Moses 7:62, emphasis added)

The one mighty and strong is endowed with a fountain of truth, not of himself, but more likely because the presence and glory of the Lord fills His temple he “sets in order.”¹⁷⁸ John the Beloved is the “Elias” who “restores all things” and is the steward over the truth revealed by the one mighty and strong. Like the Lord’s voice as a sound of rushing waters, truth flows through His servant, sweeping the earth,¹⁷⁹ healing all that receive it, and preparing the posterity of God to return to His presence.

C. *ETERNAL WORDS.*

Like the servant in 3 Nephi 21, the words spoken by the one mighty and strong are not his words, but the words of the Savior.¹⁸⁰ Eternal is a name for God.¹⁸¹ When the one mighty and strong speaks, his words are not his own but the words of the Master, the “King of Kings,” the Lord he serves.

D. *CLOTHED WITH LIGHT FOR A COVERING.*

There are multiple synonyms for light in the scriptures. “For the word of the Lord is truth, and whatsoever is truth is

¹⁷⁸ 3 Nephi 21:25.

¹⁷⁹ Moses 7:62.

¹⁸⁰ 3 Nephi 21:11.

¹⁸¹ Moses 7:35.

light, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.”(D&C 84:45)

The one mighty and strong is clothed with light for a covering. Considering the synonyms for light, he is also covered with truth and Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ. In Ezekiel’s vision of Zion, the Lord enters His temple through the east door and His glory fills the temple.¹⁸² When the prince enters the east door he is exposed to the Lord’s glory filling the temple. Those privileged to stand in the Lord’s presence and behold His glory receive of His countenance and are similarly “clothed” in His light.

This brings to mind the Nephite disciples of Christ praying to Him and He blesses them. The effect of being in Christ’s presence and praying by the power of the Holy Ghost is both sanctifying and glorifying. They were endowed with the light of the Savior’s countenance.

And it came to pass that Jesus blessed them as they did pray unto him; and his countenance did smile upon them, and the light of his countenance did shine upon them, *and behold they were as white as the countenance and also the garments of Jesus*; and behold the whiteness thereof did exceed all the whiteness, yea, even there could be nothing upon earth so white as the whiteness thereof. (3 Nephi 19:25, emphasis added)

¹⁸² Ezekiel 43:4.

As they continued in fervent prayer they were cleansed and sanctified in preparation for their ministry. Not only were their bodies filled with light, but when the Lord's countenance is shared with His disciples they receive an endowment of knowledge. "And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body is filled with light *comprehendeth all things*."¹⁸³

To be clothed with light for a covering is to have an eye single to the glory of God and no darkness within you. Consider the words of the Lord in section 50 of the Doctrine and Covenants. "That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light growth brighter and brighter until the perfect day."¹⁸⁴

The "one mighty and strong" is clothed with light because his eye is single to the glory of God. He continually obeys God. He enters His Lord's presence and receives of His countenance.¹⁸⁵

The glory and countenance of the Lord are not the only way a person may be "clothed with light for a covering." If the word of the Lord is truth, light and Spirit, then a person who wears light for a covering is someone immersed in truth and Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ. A person gains light, truth and Spirit by immersing themselves in God's word. This

¹⁸³ D&C 88:67, emphasis added.

¹⁸⁴ D&C 50:24.

¹⁸⁵ "And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" (Alma 5:14)

is accomplished in degrees and is directly related to the individual's faith, humility¹⁸⁶ and diligence.¹⁸⁷

E. *SCEPTER OF POWER.*

Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines a scepter as an ensign of royalty or badge of authority.¹⁸⁸ This additionally relates to the "root of Jesse" who is given authority for raising an "ensign" and gathering Israel.¹⁸⁹ The concept of power in the economy of God is opposite of how power is perceived in the modern world. Today, power means the ability to impose your will upon others. God exercises power through patience and restraint. His dominion is not enforced but exists absent of compulsory means.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and *without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.* (D&C 121:46, emphasis added)

God's dominion flows to Him without compulsory means. His authority and power is established through truth and

¹⁸⁶ 3 Nephi 9:20.

¹⁸⁷ Alma 49:30.

¹⁸⁸ Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828 – Online Edition.

¹⁸⁹ D&C 113:6.

righteousness. The foundation of His dominion is love and his kingdom comes to Him out of mutual love between Himself and His creations. “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)

Power from the worldly context is satanic. In the economy of God, enduring power is built on the foundation of truth and righteousness.

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, *only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; By kindness, and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy, and without guile*— Reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. (D&C 121:41-44, emphasis added)

Godliness is learning to deal with others through patience, persuasion, long suffering, by gentleness and meekness and love unfeigned. The description given previously is not limited to God alone but those who are born again and transformed into His sons and daughters.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ Mosiah 5:2, 7.

For the one mighty and strong to hold a scepter of power he must learn a lesson that is essential to God entrusting man with divine power.

That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that *the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness*. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man. (D&C 121:36-37, emphasis added)

The only truly powerful men are those who enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost and are given from God scepters (authority) due to their righteousness and truth. The one mighty and strong speaks eternal words or God's words,¹⁹¹ he is given light, truth, and Spirit as a covering and his bowels become a fountain of truth flowing to all who heed his message. A man with these attributes is given great privilege when it comes to priesthood power.

¹⁹¹ "Behold, I am God; Man of Holiness is my name; Man of Counsel is my name; and Endless and Eternal is my name, also." (Moses 7:35)

He that is ordained of God and sent forth, the same is appointed to be the greatest, notwithstanding he is the least and the servant of all. Wherefore, *he is possessor of all things; for all things are subject unto him, both in heaven and on the earth*, the life and the light, the Spirit and the power, sent forth by the will of the Father through Jesus Christ, his Son. But no man is possessor of all things except he be purified and cleansed from all sin. And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done. (D&C 50:26-29, emphasis added)

The privileges mentioned in the preceding verses are available to all mankind.¹⁹² What makes the one mighty and strong extraordinary is that he lives his life to claim the privileges God offers all who repent and come to Him.¹⁹³

From what is known about the mission of John the Beloved, there are many elements in the life of the one mighty and strong that intersect with John's mission of restoring all things and gathering Israel.

We see in the "One Mighty and Strong" most if not all the elements found in the previous three prophecies. He holds a scepter, like the "root of Jesse." He is clothed in light, suggesting he resides in the Lord's presence from time to time.

¹⁹² Alma 13:5.

¹⁹³ Alma 13:10-12.

He utters eternal or God's words that flow out of him like a fountain like the servant in 3 Nephi 21:9-11. By revelation he sets in order the house of God as did Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29). He organizes inheritances for the tribes of Israel who gather to him similar to David/the prince in Ezekiel 37 and 48.

5. *THE SERVANT—3 NEPHI 21:9-11.*

Christ taught the people at Bountiful that his servant would perform a “great and marvelous work” and in the same day “kings shall shut their mouths; for that which had *not been told them shall they see*; and that which they had *not heard shall they consider*.”¹⁹⁴ In that day—when the servant delivers the words of Christ to the Gentiles—kings witness what they have not been told. They hear things they had never considered. The Savior repeated Isaiah's words in describing the day when the Moses prophecy is fulfilled. The servant publishes plainly and simply undeclared words of Christ.

The content of the words of Christ are things previously unknown, even to the most informed Christians. Consider what was written about the Savior's ministry to the Nephite survivors. “And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people.”¹⁹⁵ As profound as Christ's teachings to the Nephites seem, it is only a fractional or “lesser” account of what he taught the people of Bountiful.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ 3 Nephi 21: 8-9.

¹⁹⁵ 3 Nephi 26:6.

¹⁹⁶ 3 Nephi 26:8.

If the definition of the words of Christ expands to include all writings recorded by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost,¹⁹⁷ then the number of volumes of scripture that may potentially come to light grows exponentially.

And now there are many records kept of the proceedings of this people, by many of this people, which are particular and very large, concerning them.

But behold, *a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people*, yea, the account of the Lamanites and of the Nephites, and their wars, and contentions, and dissensions, and their preaching, and their prophecies, and their shipping and their building of ships, and their building of temples, and of synagogues and their sanctuaries, and their righteousness, and their wickedness, and their murders, and their robbings, and their plundering, and all manner of abominations and whoredoms, *cannot be contained in this work*.

But behold, there are many books and many records of every kind, and they have been kept chiefly by the Nephites.

And they have been handed down from one generation to another by the Nephites, even until they have fallen into transgression and have been murdered, plundered, and hunted,

¹⁹⁷ 2 Nephi 32:2-3.

and driven forth, and slain, and scattered upon the face of the earth, and mixed with the Lamanites until they are no more called the Nephites, becoming wicked, and wild, and ferocious, yea, even becoming Lamanites. (Helaman 3:13-16, emphasis added)

Considering the number of Nephite records that Mormon, the abridger of records, referred to¹⁹⁸ it should be clear the amount of information withheld from the Gentiles is beyond comprehension.

Even John the Beloved addressed the many things done by Jesus writing, “if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.”¹⁹⁹ As the latter-day Elias, John reveals things taught by Jesus and they are written to come forward under his direction in the “due time of the Lord.”²⁰⁰

A. THE GENTILES’ REACTION TO FURTHER LIGHT AND KNOWLEDGE

There are vast numbers of volumes that could come forward, a number that dwarfs the imagination. As incomprehensible as the teachings of Jesus may be, the arrogance and ignorance of the Gentiles in believing they have sufficient knowledge is equally incomprehensible.

¹⁹⁸ Mormon 1:5.

¹⁹⁹ John 21:25.

²⁰⁰ 1 Nephi 14:26.

Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion! Wo be unto him that crieth: All is well! Yea, wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost! Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more! And in fine, wo unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God! For behold, he that is built upon the rock receiveth it with gladness; and he that is built upon a sandy foundation trembleth lest he shall fall. Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!

For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for *unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.*

Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts! For notwithstanding I shall

lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, *they will deny me*; nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will repent and come unto me; for mine arm is lengthened out all the day long, saith the Lord God of Hosts. (2 Nephi 28:24, emphasis added)

Before contemplating the substance of this passage, think about the messenger writing this warning. Nephi is a dispassionate observer with the exception he has the “pure love of Christ” in his heart²⁰¹ and in all likelihood has no disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.²⁰² With the sole exception of the Savior, the Gentiles couldn’t hope for a more compassionate, sympathetic observer to judge their condition. In the face of those considerations, Nephi sees people who are “at ease in Zion.”²⁰³ He sees complacent people convinced “All is well” because of their prosperity.²⁰⁴ Nephi sees people who deny “the power of God and the gift of the Holy Ghost!”²⁰⁵ But how does one who believes in God and the Holy Ghost have power to still deny them?

To deny God and the Holy Ghost is to lack faith in His willingness to intervene and use His power on a person’s behalf. They lack faith in the principle that the powers of heaven can be controlled or handled, as you diligently practice righteous principles.²⁰⁶

²⁰¹ 2 Nephi 33:9.

²⁰² Mosiah 5:2.

²⁰³ 2 Nephi 28:24.

²⁰⁴ 2 Nephi 28:25.

²⁰⁵ 2 Nephi 28:26.

²⁰⁶ D&C 121:36.

To deny the Holy Ghost is to fail to muster sufficient faith to prioritize and seek its influence after the pattern established by the Nephites whom Christ ministered to.

“And they did pray for that which they most desired; and *they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them.*”²⁰⁷ It is not enough to believe the Holy Ghost exists. One must understand its relevance and seek its influence:

Therefore it is given to *abide in you*; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things; which maketh alive all things, that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice and judgment. (Moses 6:61, emphasis added)

The Holy Ghost abides within us and holds the key to transforming us from a weakened state of mortality to ascending to attain the attributes of Godliness.²⁰⁸

It is not enough to believe the Holy Ghost exists. Not denying the Holy Ghost is making it your greatest desire and laying claim to this divine gift from God through faith in Christ’s ability to open this door for us.

Continuing Nephi’s observations of the latter-day Gentiles, Nephi declares a “wo” upon the Gentiles who say: “We have received, and we need no more!”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ 3 Nephi 19:9, emphasis added.

²⁰⁸ Mosiah 4:2-3, 5:2.

²⁰⁹ 2 Nephi 28:27.

Nephi sees the Gentiles are not content with rejecting more knowledge. He sees them trembling with anger “because of the truth of God.”²¹⁰ Why would Gentiles be angry unless revealed truth exposes flaws in their doctrines and traditions? In addition to distinguishing between and exposing false precepts of men from God’s revelations, revealed truth creates doubt in the minds of congregants of religious institutions.

Contrary to the Gentiles angry response, Nephi explains those who have a rock as their foundation, receive truth with gladness. Those angered by truth are built upon a sandy foundation. If Nephi’s observation is accurate, a person may discern what foundation they are built upon by their reaction to new revelation.

The Lord pronounces a “wo” upon Gentiles who resist the notion God continues giving His people additional knowledge. Alternatively, they decry new revelation by saying, “we need no more of the word of God, we have enough!”²¹¹

The Lord has always granted knowledge to mankind consistent with their desires in the attempt to elevate their minds.²¹² Line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Those who “hearken to his precepts” and

²¹⁰ 2 Nephi 28:28.

²¹¹ 2 Nephi 28:29.

²¹² “We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at the point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him. But we consider that this is a station to which no man ever arrived in a moment: he must have been instructed in the government and laws of that kingdom by proper degrees, until his mind is capable in some measure of comprehending the propriety, justice, equality, and consistency of the same.” (TPJS., p.51)

“lend an ear unto my counsel” learn wisdom. They are blessed and given more knowledge while those who say “enough” lose what they received.²¹³

At this point Nephi changes his pattern of declaring woes upon the Gentiles to announcing curses upon them. The Lord chastens the Gentiles for putting their trust in men as opposed to Him. Alternatively, Gentiles hearken to the precepts of men and in so doing, reject the word of God when it is offered to them in plainness.²¹⁴

Trusting in the arm of flesh and embracing the precepts of men *not* revealed by the power of the Holy Ghost is a serious problem for the Gentiles or it would not have caught Nephi’s attention.

The reason the precepts of men and trusting in the arm of flesh is a problem is because people often surrender to following others perceived to hold greater authority, an elevated position and greater knowledge. It is both easy and lazy to abdicate personal responsibility when you lack diligence and persistence in the search for truth. Those trusting in the arm of flesh often rush to judgment rather than objectively examine what is said by unconventional sources. To contemporary Jews, Jesus was an itinerant preacher, the son of a carpenter. In their view, it was not possible Jesus could know more than their rabbi let alone legitimately claim divinity. Even considering the possibility appeared to be an obvious decision exchanging sanity for insanity. Though His

²¹³ 2 Nephi 28:30.

²¹⁴ 2 Nephi 28:31, 32:7.

miracles were impressive and inexplicable, the Savior was dismissed as deceitful, deranged and to some, satanic.²¹⁵

It is not always the expressly narcissistic or self-promoting perpetrators of false precepts who pose a threat. Remember Lehi's dream. The man who misled Lehi was dressed in white. He had the appearance of an angel, yet never guided Lehi to the tree of Life. Lehi found the tree through exercise of his own faith and personal prayer.

The most nefarious practitioners of deceit are likely unaware, devoted and sincere. Unfortunately, they are among those most often misled. Like the Pharisees and priests in the Savior's day, the blind lead the blind. "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."²¹⁶ They are frequently obsessed with the idea the grace of Christ covers everything while ignoring Christ taught there is "the way, the truth and the life" (all singular) and "no man cometh unto the Father," but by Christ.²¹⁷ Jesus also taught:

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and *many* there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14, emphasis added)

²¹⁵ John 7:20.

²¹⁶ Matthew 15:13-14.

²¹⁷ John 14:6.

The way is strait and narrow leading to Eternal Life. The way leading to destruction is broad. Perhaps the “All is well in Zion” attitude fails to require sufficient sacrifice or obedience to God’s commandments to lead us to the “strait and narrow path” and Eternal Life.²¹⁸ Jesus warned his disciples:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore *by their fruits ye shall know them*.
(Matthew 7:15-20, emphasis added)

False prophets appear outwardly to be in “sheep’s clothing” but the Lord warns inwardly, (which is not visible or easily discerned) they are secretly “ravening wolves.” But how does the Lord say they can be exposed? “By their fruits ye shall know them.”²¹⁹

Nephi warns against the conduct and belief that “all is well in Zion.” That philosophy is a symptom of spiritual decline. This false doctrine is a fruit of false teachers

²¹⁸ D&C 130:20-21.

²¹⁹ Matthew 7:2.

attempting to pacify and lull mankind into carnal security.²²⁰ Take a moment to reflect on whether you believe Nephi saw the day of the Gentiles. His warning is clear, but many are too proud to admit the failings of the latter day Gentile generation. Many even believe all *should* be well in Zion as a sign of their transcendent righteousness. Nephi saw wolves among us, the Gentiles don't.

The Lord measures fruit by judging the righteousness of people to see if they are “meet for the Father’s kingdom.”²²¹ If the fruit is not meet for the Father’s kingdom, a scourge and judgment await “the children of Zion.”²²² History repeats itself. Just as Israel failed to receive God’s covenant in its first attempt, the scriptures confirm a similar outcome for the Gentiles. But individual failure is not a certainty. Those who receive further light and knowledge are not a threat to Zion, but become the reason Zion is established.

B. THE EFFECTS OF THE GREAT AND ABOMINABLE CHURCH ON MODERN CHRISTIANITY

In a vision about the Gentiles and the gathering of Israel, Nephi spends a significant portion of time observing the influence the great and abominable church has on modern Christianity.

The fourteenth chapter of first Nephi begins by addressing how the Lord removes stumbling blocks from latter-day Gentiles.

²²⁰ 2 Nephi 28:21.

²²¹ D&C 84:58.

²²² D&C 84:58-59.

And it shall come to pass, that if the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day that he shall manifest himself unto them in word, and also in power, in very deed, *unto the taking away of their stumbling blocks*. (1 Nephi 14:1, emphasis added)

C. THE GENTILES' STUMBLING BLOCKS.

And that great pit which hath been digged for them by that great and abominable church, which was founded by the devil and his children, *that he might lead away the souls of men down to hell*—yea, that great pit which hath been digged for the destruction of men shall be filled by those who digged it, unto their utter destruction, save it be the casting of it into that hell which hath no end. (1 Nephi 14:3, emphasis added)

The great and abominable church has “digged a pit” intended to lead Gentiles down to hell. There are a number of clues as to the nature of the pit dug by the great and abominable church. To begin with, Satan cannot force anyone to enter hell. He can only lie, deceive, entice and ensnare them into acting against their own self-interest. For men to be led into the pit, they have to believe (albeit falsely) the course they follow leads to a favorable outcome.

The question becomes, “What is the nature and composition of the pit that leads men’s souls to hell?” Nephi answers this question in the twenty-second chapter of 1 Nephi:

And the blood of that great and abominable church, which is the whore of all the earth, shall turn upon their own heads; for they shall war among themselves, and the sword of their own hands shall fall upon their own heads; and the sword of their own hands shall fall upon their own heads, and they shall be drunken with their own blood. And every nation which shall war against thee, O house of Israel, shall be turned one against another, and they shall fall into the pit which *they digged to ensnare the people of the Lord*. And all that fight against Zion shall be destroyed, and that great whore, *who perverteth the right ways of the Lord*, that great and abominable church, shall tumble to the dust and great shall be the fall of it. (1 Nephi 22:13-14, emphasis added)

The pit dug by the great and abominable church is the way modern churches pervert the “right ways” of the Lord. Teachings given through a dispensational head²²³ become perverted when he is removed. Teachings and ordinances given by the dispensation head are thereafter altered, turning away

²²³ *Teachings and Commandments*, section 154 ¶2, <http://scriptures.info/scriptures/tc/section/154>.

disciples and corrupting revelation away from the Lord's appointed course.

Christ warned of this type of practice when He declared the doctrine of Christ.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. And *whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock*; but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell stand open to receive such when the floods come and the winds beat upon them. (3 Nephi 11:39-40, emphasis added)

The great and abominable church perverts the doctrine of Christ both by adding to or redacting the teachings of the Lord and His disciples. By so doing men's souls are led to hell, it being a mental and spiritual state of remorse for incorrect, self-inflicted choices leading to a loss of blessings and opportunities both here and in the next life.

D. THE LORD'S PLAN TO RESTORE DOCTRINAL PURITY

In 3 Nephi 21:9 the Lord declares the Father begins a work among the Gentiles that is described by Jesus as "great and marvelous."

Nephi associated the Lord's removal of the Gentile stumbling blocks as "great and marvelous."

"For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other—*either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction*, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken of" (1 Nephi 14:7, emphasis added).

In Nephi's example of the "great and marvelous work," the Lamb of God performs a divisive work. His work persuades mankind to choose peace and eternal life or "blindness of their minds", leading them into captivity and destruction both temporally and spiritually.

The "great and marvelous work" in 3 Nephi 21:9, the Father does is a great and marvelous work "for my sake" or the Savior's sake. Like Nephi's explanation of the "great and marvelous work," the outcome of the work ends in division. Those who receive the words of Christ are joined with Israel and those who reject the words of Christ are "cut-off from among my people of the covenant."²²⁴

In the Savior's account in 3 Nephi 21 and Nephi's account in 1 Nephi 14:7 it appears both address how Gentile

²²⁴ 3 Nephi 21:11.

stumbling blocks are removed. Previously unknown words of Christ are revealed by the “servant” in 3 Nephi 21:11 and the truth is accepted with gladness by those built upon a rock and those who reject newly revealed truth become angry because it disrupts their current beliefs, traditions, devotions and their standing as authorities.

The extraordinary risk to the Gentiles is they reject the words of Christ from the servant before considering their content. In the mortal ministry of Jesus, those in power in the Jewish faith devote their time and effort to impeach and impugn the character of the servant to the degree their followers refuse to consider the content of the servants message.²²⁵ Primarily because the teachings failed to originate with them.

When more of Christ’s words come to light it threatens long established institutions, their precepts, and traditions. They become angry and defensive out of fear of being exposed as misleading and fraudulent.²²⁶ The strength of long held traditions and beliefs are the justification for not only anger towards truth but persecuting and executing the Son of God. In between those extremes are bearing false witness, withdrawing fellowship by excommunicating God’s servants to discredit them and persuade others to reject their message before considering the content.²²⁷ The bearer of truth is unjustly condemned to preserve the authority and wealth of those in power. They are the same people refusing the Lord’s requirement they accept newly revealed truth, confess and

²²⁵ Matthew 23:23-35.

²²⁶ 2 Nephi 28:28.

²²⁷ 3 Nephi 21:10.

forsake their sins. Vanity and devotion to power and position keeps them in denial when truth exposes their hypocrisy and corruption.²²⁸

By Nephi's account the Lord declares a "wo" upon the Gentiles but notwithstanding His declaration He extends his "arm" to them still, the Gentiles still deny Him.²²⁹

The Lord narrows the focus of His judgments by stating His judgments begin with the wicked of His own house.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face. Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation; and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord. *And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord;* First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord. (D&C 112:23-26, emphasis added)

Modern revelation is sufficiently plain in warning the latter-day Gentiles about their weakness. The Gentiles continue in "gross

²²⁸ D&C 84:54–55.

²²⁹ 2 Nephi 28:32.

darkness”, denial and complacency in the day the Lord delivers His word through His servant. That day is also day their foundation is revealed to be built upon sand. Those who reject the words of Christ from His servant lose faith when they witness the fall of the great and abominable church. Their bitterness and cynicism grow when they realize their devotions, time, wealth and talent were wasted supporting institutions offering hollow promises when the suffering of the poor and needy might have been greatly alleviated had the resources been properly channeled.

E. HOW THE SERVANT BRINGS TO LIGHT THE WORDS OF CHRIST

In 3 Nephi 21 the Lord declares He [the Lord] does a “great and marvelous work”, but some will not believe it because a man declares the words of Christ to them.²³⁰

The Book of Mormon contains accounts of several civilizations destroyed in these lands. Though civilizations and languages passed, the Lord preserves the records and puts in place provisions for translating languages and recovering knowledge presumed irretrievable.²³¹ Given the fact John the Beloved’s responsibilities include restoring all things, it is reasonable to assume among many things to be restored by John is a “seer” with “interpreters.”

And I say unto thee again: Knowest thou of any one that can translate? For I am desirous that these records should be translated into our

²³⁰ 3 Nephi 21:9.

²³¹ Enos 1:15-16.

language; for, perhaps, they will give us a knowledge of a remnant of the people who have been destroyed, from whence these records came; or, perhaps, they will give us a knowledge of this very people who have been destroyed; and I am desirous to know the cause of their destruction. Now Ammon said unto him: I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records; *for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date; and it is a gift from God.* And the things are called interpreters, and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called a seer. And behold, the king of the people who are in the land of Zarahemla is the man that is commanded to do these things, and who has this high gift from God. And the king said that a seer is greater than a prophet. And Ammon said that a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet *a man may have great power given him from God.* But a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden

things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them *which otherwise could not be known*. Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings. (Mosiah 8:12-18, emphasis added)

King Mosiah, the son of Benjamin and grandson of Mosiah is the man whom the Lord entrusted with the interpreters. It is probable all of these men had interpreters in their possession and they were likely passed from father to son. Those given this gift were called seers because of their ability to know things from the past as well as future events. To know the past, present and future is by definition to know “truth.”²³²

Consider the extraordinary amount of instruction given by the Savior in mortality. Add to it the records held by the lost tribes of Israel and various lost societies in the Book of Mormon. Then consider the civilizations who have come and gone throughout history. Many of these records are reserved to come forward in the “due time of the Lord.”²³³ This is the time when all that is sealed will be revealed. A work of that magnitude would truly be considered “great and marvelous.”

If the Book of Mormon contains types or examples of future events, the five prophecies suggest the individual described in these events is linked to royalty through thrones, scepters and other emblems of kingship. It is not coincidental that the “seer” in the Book of Mormon is also a king. It may be

²³² D&C 93:24.

²³³ 2 Nephi 27:10,21.

the “interpreters” or Urim and Thummim²³⁴ as its referred to in the Old Testament is an instrument used in the Aaronic priesthood. Perhaps it is replaced with Melchizedek Priesthood keys²³⁵ when the “king” in Ezekiel 37 transitions to “prince.”²³⁶

When the Lord brings to light the records it is logical His servant who acts as a surrogate for John the Beloved is given a Urim and Thummim and enlisted to translate the records into a common language so all may be instructed and understand.

F. NEPHI’S EXPLANATION OF THE MOSES PROPHECY

It was mentioned earlier the Moses Prophecy is fulfilled prior to the destruction of wicked.²³⁷ It was pointed out the Moses Prophecy is not fulfilled by the Savior, but by His servant who brings forth His words prior to cutting off non-believers from Israel.²³⁸

In the context of these facts, Nephi offers his explanation of what occurs when the prophecy of Moses is fulfilled.

And the Lord will surely prepare a way for his
people, unto the fulfilling of the words of
Moses, which he spake, saying: A prophet shall
the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto

²³⁴ Exodus 28:30; Leviticus 8:8; Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8; 1 Samuel 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65.

²³⁵ D&C 84:19.

²³⁶ Ezekiel 37:24-25.

²³⁷ JST Matthew 1:55.

²³⁸ 3 Nephi 21:11.

me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that all those who will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people. And now I, Nephi, declare unto you, that this prophet of whom Moses spake was the Holy One of Israel; wherefore, he shall execute judgment in righteousness. And the righteous need not fear, for they are those who shall not be confounded. But it is the kingdom of the devil, which shall be built up among the children of men, which kingdom is established among them which are in the flesh—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 who are built up to become popular in the eyes of the world, and those who seek the lusts of the flesh and 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 according to the words of the prophet. (1 Nephi 22:20-23, emphasis added)

If one were to compare 1 Nephi 14 to 1 Nephi 22 and 3 Nephi 21 it becomes apparent the three chapters discuss the same

events. In both instances Nephi uses laser-like focus in targeting churches corrupted by worldly influence that become patrons of the kingdom of the devil. Most of what Nephi sees are churches professing to represent Christ outwardly but inwardly they are “ravening wolves,”²³⁹ privately seeking the fruits of Babylon like wealth, power, popularity, gratifying the lusts of the flesh, desiring things of this world and engaging in iniquitous acts. As challenging as worldly events seem to the righteous, it is the wicked among false churches whom Nephi says should fear God’s wrath. They are the wicked consumed as stubble at the time of the Lord’s coming.

In contrast, Nephi sees the time when the Lord “speedily” leads the righteous to safe pastures.

And the time cometh speedily that the
righteous must be led up as calves of the stall,
and the Holy One of Israel must reign in
dominion, and might, and power, and great
glory. And he gathereth his children from the
four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his
sheep, and *they know him*; and there shall be
one fold and one shepherd; and *he shall feed
his sheep, and in him they shall find pasture.*
And because of the righteousness of his people,
Satan has not power; wherefore, he cannot be
loosed for the space of many years; for he hath
no power over the hearts of the people, for they
dwell in the righteousness, and the Holy One of

²³⁹ Matthew 7:15.

Israel reigneth. (1 Nephi 22:24-26, emphasis added)

If the servant in 3 Nephi 21 is David in Ezekiel 37, then the fulfillment of Nephi's prophecy also marks the time David transitions from "king"²⁴⁰ to "prince for ever."²⁴¹ This conclusion is appropriate because Nephi notes the official reign of Christ as King over His people, Israel. From that time forward only Christ stands as king and princes serve under Him. To reign over His people is to assume His rightful place as "King of Kings" while the servant transitions to a "prince for ever" to the King of Kings.²⁴²

The servant in 3 Nephi 21 is the instrument through whom God brings to light the words of Christ and extends the Lord's final invitation for all men to repent, turn to Him and be joined with Israel. Those rejecting the Lord's servant for whatever reason will be cut-off from His people. Those who recognize the Lord's voice through His servant know their Lord, are led and fed by Him in pastures prepared for the righteous.

The summary of the servant's mission concludes in verse 11 of 3 Nephi 21:

Therefore it shall come to pass that whosoever will *not* believe *in my words, who am Jesus Christ*, which the Father shall give *him* [the servant] power that he shall bring them forth

²⁴⁰ Ezekiel 37:24.

²⁴¹ Ezekiel 37:25.

²⁴² Isaiah 43:15.

unto the Gentiles, (it shall be done even as Moses said) they shall be cut off from among my people who are of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 21:11, emphasis added)

The great and marvelous work performed by the servant reveals to the Gentiles, truth that is newly restored. Once revelations remove ignorance, individual responsibility falls on the Gentiles and they are left to accept or reject it.²⁴³ The words of Christ are the substance of the servant's message. There will be Gentiles who reject the words of Christ, because questions raised about the servant misdirect attention from his message.²⁴⁴ The Gentile rejection leads to the close of the Gentile dispensation and those Gentiles who reject the Lord's servant and the words of Christ are cut off from Israel.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ "And when the times of the Gentiles is come in, a light shall break forth among them that sit in darkness, and it shall be the fulness of my gospel; But they receive it not; for they perceive not the light, and they turn their hearts from me because of the precepts of men. And in that generation shall the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (D&C 45:28-30) Colloquially, Latter-Day Saints speak of the fulness of the Gospel in the context of what Joseph Smith restored. In context of this scripture and the preceding prophecies discussed, it is clear the servant bears a message to the Gentiles which completes that which was missing from Joseph Smith's ministry, lost, or not yet revealed and triggers the gathering of Israel.

²⁴⁴ There is a pattern in scripture where messages are rejected because of their source, rather than content. *See* Isaiah 53:2; Mosiah 11:27.

²⁴⁵ 3 Nephi 21:11.

6. SUMMARY OF THE PROPHETIC NARRATIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF JOHN THE BELOVED'S MISSION.

Restore All Things

1. Does much good in word and deed. (the One mighty—2 Nephi 3:24)
2. Mouth utters eternal words. (One mighty and strong—D&C 85:7)
3. Bowels are a fountain of truth. (One mighty and strong—D&C 85:7)
4. Brings forth and declares the words of Christ. (The servant—3 Nephi 21:9 & 11)

Gather Israel

1. Holds the keys of the kingdom for raising an ensign and gathering Israel. (Root of Jesse—D&C 113:6)
2. Israel is made one nation under one king. (David—Ezekiel 37:22, 24)
3. Israel takes over the land that was Jacob's inheritance as their eternal inheritance. (David—Ezekiel 37:25)
4. Brings to pass much restoration unto Israel and the seed of Joseph. (The one mighty—2 Nephi 3:24)
5. Holds the "scepter of power." (One mighty and strong—D&C 85:7)
6. Arrange by lot the inheritance of the saints. (One mighty and strong—D&C 85:7)
7. Brings to a close the Gentile dispensation and introduces a new dispensation for Israel. (The servant—3 Nephi 21:11)

John the Beloved is the common denominator in these five prophetic accounts. As the last Elias in the latter-days, the work of restoring all things and gathering Israel is under his direction and stewardship. As a ministering angel,²⁴⁶ John the Beloved orchestrates the Father's plan²⁴⁷ through mortal "heirs of salvation"²⁴⁸ in the cause of restoring all things and gathering Israel. Through the servant, David, John the Beloved fulfills his divine commission. A type for this prophecy is king Benjamin in the Book of Mormon. Events characterized in the cleansing and covenant of the Lord's people and their becoming sons and daughters of Christ expressly symbolize the restoration of all things and the gathering of Israel.

²⁴⁶ D&C 7:6.

²⁴⁷ 3 Nephi 21:9.

²⁴⁸ D&C 7:6.

VII. THE GREATEST OBSTACLE TO THE GENTILES.

According to section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Gentiles reject the “fulness of my gospel”²⁴⁹ “because of the precepts of men.”²⁵⁰ When someone is immersed in religious tradition it is difficult to consider any new truth that expands or corrects established beliefs. Mankind was meant to increase in light and truth.²⁵¹ Revelations of truth enlighten the mind and humble a person as they grow in understanding. In opposition to this process, Satan, the “wicked one” has two methods of removing light and truth from mankind.

“And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth *through disobedience*, from the children of men, and *because of the tradition of their fathers.*” (D&C 93:39, emphasis added)

Disobeying God’s commandments is one way the adversary removes light and truth. The more subtle method is to establish false traditions handed down from forefathers. Traditions often go unquestioned and unchallenged because the children presume their progenitors proved the traditions leaving further questioning unnecessary.

Parents have great influence and credibility with their children. False traditions established by father’s led to hundreds of years of war and bloodshed between the Lamanites

²⁴⁹ D&C 45:28-30.

²⁵⁰ D&C 45:29.

²⁵¹ D&C 50:24.

and the Nephites. Both sides were equally convinced and felt justified in supporting their cause. Traditions become established and children say, “We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!”²⁵² Not only do they believe they have enough, but if there is more to be given it must come through channels they recognize and accept. This was the mindset of the Jews in the days of Jesus.

And when [Christ] was come into the temple,
the chief priests and the elders of the people
came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By
what authority doest thou these things? and
who gave thee this authority? (Mathew 21:23)

The Jews assumed that because Jehovah had ordained their worship, He could not use other means for instruction.²⁵³ Christ’s teachings threatened their established order.

Consider an alternate example. Samuel the Lamanite was an outsider to the established Nephite religion. Despite the hierarchy with Nephi leading the church, Samuel, a Lamanite was called by God to preach to the Nephites.

And now, it came to pass that there were many
who heard the words of Samuel, the Lamanite,

²⁵² 2 Nephi 28:29.

²⁵³ “And I do this that I may prove unto many that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and that I speak forth my words *according to mine own pleasure*. And 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.” (2 Nephi 29:9, emphasis added)

which he spake upon the walls of the city. And as many as believed on his word went forth and sought for Nephi; and when they had come forth and found him they confessed unto him their sins and denied not, desiring that they might be baptized unto the Lord. (Helaman 16:1)

The humble Nephites heard truth in Samuel's message and allowed it to work in their hearts causing them to repent and be baptized. The penitent exemplified Joseph Smith's instruction that believers should accept all that God has revealed, is now revealing, and will yet reveal.²⁵⁴

God's revelations should not be perceived as a threat to the established order, even when they call upon the establishment to repent. The Jews of Christ's day could not humble themselves as did the Nephites under Samuel's declaration. Likewise, the origin of the Lord's servant becomes a likely stumbling-block for most Gentiles.

²⁵⁴ Articles of Faith, paragraph 9,

VIII. PROPHETIC WARNINGS FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON.

After hearing Lehi's dream of the Tree of Life, Nephi inquired of God requesting God reveal the dream to him. In Nephi's vision of Lehi's dream he talks of mists of darkness that are temptations of the devil that "blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they perish and are lost."²⁵⁵ Nephi was shown the vision of the Tree of Life from a different vantage point than his father. Lehi was a participant in the vision while Nephi was an observer. What is interesting is comparing how the mists of darkness spoken of by Nephi are portrayed in Lehi's dream of the Tree of Life.²⁵⁶

In the beginning of Lehi's dream he says, "methought I saw in my dream, a dark and dreary wilderness."²⁵⁷ In the dark and dreary wilderness a man in white appears. "And it came to pass that I saw a man, and he was dressed in a white robe; and he came and stood before me." (1 Nephi 8:5)

It is important to pay strict attention to the detail in Lehi's dream. There is stark contrast between the dark and dreary wilderness and a man dressed in white. In scripture, white typically symbolizes righteousness, goodness and purity. It is a vast improvement over the surroundings of a dark and dreary wilderness. It may be viewed as enticing. Because of the

²⁵⁵ 1 Nephi 12:17.

²⁵⁶ "And it came to pass that there arose a mist of darkness; yea, even an exceedingly great mist of darkness, insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost." (1 Nephi 8:23)

²⁵⁷ 1 Nephi 8:4.

“whiteness” of the man, some presume the man to be an angel. But what is the message the man in white delivers to Lehi? “And it came to pass that he spake unto me, and bade me follow him.”²⁵⁸

Lehi gave heed to the man when searching for a way out of the dark and dreary waste.²⁵⁹ After following the man for many hours through darkness, Lehi decided to take matters into hand and began praying to God “that he would have mercy on me, according to the multitudes of his tender mercies.”²⁶⁰ In response to Lehi’s prayer he is removed from the dark and dreary place into a “large and spacious field” where he partakes of the fruit of the Tree of Life.²⁶¹ Lehi was not led to the spacious field by the man in white. It was only when Lehi sought God directly that he was delivered out of the dark and dreary waste.

The outcome for Lehi’s dream is marvelous. Unfortunately, readers of Lehi’s account continue reading without contemplating the question, “Who was the man in white beckoning Lehi to follow him?” If the man in white was an angel he would have led Lehi to the Tree of Life, but he did not. He did nothing more than lead Lehi around in the dark and dreary world with no discernible benefit.

We, like Lehi follow others because we lack faith to believe God will communicate directly with us and intercede on our behalf. There are countless numbers of people who beckon others to “follow me.” The whiteness of their clothing

²⁵⁸ 1 Nephi 8:6.

²⁵⁹ 1 Nephi 8:7.

²⁶⁰ 1 Nephi 8:8.

²⁶¹ 1 Nephi 8:9-12.

may reflect the great esteem with which you hold them. It may be a father or mother, a mentor or someone you admire greatly. Regardless of whom it may be, the outcome will always be the same. They lead to nowhere and you remain in a dark and dreary world because you have no personal connection to God.

A willingness to surrender responsibility for individual salvation is as much a problem in our day as it was in Joseph Smith's day. From a journal entry we read the following account:

Pres. [Joseph] Smith rose; read the 14th chapter of Ezekiel—said the Lord had declared by the prophet that the people should each one stand for himself and depend on no man or men in that state of corruption of the Jewish church—that righteous persons could only deliver their own souls—applied it to the present state of the church of Latter-day Saints—said if the people departed from the Lord, they must fall—*that they were depending on the prophet hence were darkened in their minds from the neglect of themselves.* (*Words of Joseph Smith*, 26 May 1842, p.120, emphasis added)

Perhaps this is why the Lord included in His preface to the Doctrine and Covenants the following counsel:

The weak things of the world shall come forth
and break down the mighty and strong ones,
that man should not counsel his fellow man,

neither trust in the arm of flesh—But *that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord*, even the Savior of the world. (D&C 1:19-20, emphasis added)

When the Lord's servant arrives, he will not bid you follow him. He delivers the words of Christ and admonishes you to respond like Lehi and call upon the Lord directly. Only then can you hope to be removed from the dark and dreary waste, entering the spacious field where you partake of the fruit of the Tree of Life.

And it came to pass that I did go forth and partake of the fruit thereof; and I beheld that it was most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted. Yea, and I beheld that the fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen. And as I partook of the fruit thereof it filled my soul with exceedingly great joy; wherefore, I began to be desirous that my family should partake of it also; for *I knew that it was desirable above all other fruit* (1 Nephi 8:11-12, emphasis added).

Nephi provides the following explanation for the fruit of the Tree of Life:

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.* (1 Nephi 12:21-22, emphasis added)

IX. CONSEQUENCES OF THE GENTILE REJECTION

The 45th section of the Doctrine and Covenants speaks of the times of the Gentiles being fulfilled. In the generation the Gentiles reach their fullness the prophecy foretells the arrival of an “overflowing scourge” in the form of a “desolating sickness.”²⁶² It is important not to ignore the terms “overflowing” and “desolating.” They have a negative connotation and suggest the fulfillment of the Gentiles refers to a fulness of their iniquity, hence the negative consequences.

A central theme of this book is the concept that history repeats itself. When Israel reached their “fulness” many were scattered and destroyed by the Gentiles. The Book of Mormon describes how the Gentiles would afflict Lehi’s seed after his descendants inhabit the promised land for hundreds of years.

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. (1 Nephi 13:14, emphasis added)

The Lord’s wrath was manifest through the Gentile persecution of Lehi’s people. The Lord foretold the Gentile fullness would end with the persecution of the Gentiles by Israel.

²⁶² D&C 45:31.

And the Father hath commanded me that I should give unto you [Lehi's descendants] this land for your inheritance. And I say unto you, that *if the Gentiles do not repent after the blessing which they shall receive*, after they have scattered my people—Then shall ye [Lehi's remnant], who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, go forth among them; and ye shall be in the midst of them [the Gentiles] who shall be many; and ye shall be among them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, and as young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he goeth through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thy [Lehi's seed] hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.²⁶³ And I will gather my people together as a man gathereth his sheaves into the floor. For I will make my people [Israel] with whom the Father hath covenanted, yea, I will make thy horn iron and I will make thy hoofs brass. And *thou shalt beat in pieces many people*; and I will consecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth. And behold, I am he who doeth it. And it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that the sword of my justice shall hang over them [the Gentiles] at that day; and except they repent it

²⁶³ 3 Nephi 21:11, the Moses Prophecy fulfilled.

shall fall upon them, saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles. And it shall come to pass that *I will establish my people, O house of Israel.* (3 Nephi 20:14-21)

The Gentiles who arrived in this land became instruments of God's wrath upon Israel. Israel in turn becomes the instrument of God's wrath upon Gentiles who refuse to repent and covenant with God. The consequences are particularly dire for those who dwell in the land of Lehi's inheritance.

And the Lord would not suffer that they should stop beyond the sea in the wilderness, but he would that they should come forth even unto the land of promise, which was choice above all other lands, which *the Lord God had preserved for a righteous people.*

And he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, *should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them.* And now, we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity.

For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off. And *this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles*, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done. (Ether 2:7-12, emphasis added)

The Book of Mormon contains accounts of the Jaredites, Nephites, and Mulekites who inhabited this land for a time but were swept off when they reached a fulness of iniquity. When their wickedness reached a fulness they provoked God's wrath. From the prophecy in section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants we know "a light will break forth among those [the Gentiles] who sit in darkness. We know the Gentiles "receive it not."²⁶⁴ We know the arrival of light among those who sit in darkness is a time of judgment for the Gentiles.

Therefore, wo be unto the Gentiles if it so be that they harden their hearts against the Lamb of God. For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of

²⁶⁴ D&C 45:28-30; 2 Nephi 28:32.

God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other—either to the convincing of them [the Gentiles] unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken (1 Nephi 14:6-7, emphasis added).

The Gentiles who receive the “lesser part” of the Book of Mormon²⁶⁵ delude themselves by thinking they are chosen by God because of their prosperity,²⁶⁶ but God’s wrath falls upon them when they refuse the new light He sends them.

In his letter to N. C. Saxton, Joseph Smith alluded to the ultimate fate of the Gentiles.

[B]ut the Gentiles have not continued in the goodness of God, but have departed from the faith that was once delivered to the Saints, and have broken the covenant in which their fathers were established; and have become high-minded, and have not feared; therefore, *but few of them will be gathered with the chosen family*. Have not the pride, high-mindedness,

²⁶⁵ 3 Nephi 26:8-10.

²⁶⁶ 2 Nephi 28:21.

and unbelief of the Gentiles, provoked the Holy One of Israel to withdraw His Holy Spirit from them, and send forth His judgments to scourge them for their wickedness? This is certainly the case. . . , The plain fact is this, the power of God begins to fall upon the nations, and the light of the latter-day glory begins to break forth through the dark atmosphere of sectarian wickedness, and their iniquity rolls up into view, and the nations of the Gentiles are like the waves of the sea, casting up mire and dirt, or all in commotion, and they are hastily preparing to act the part allotted to them, when the Lord rebukes the nations, when He shall rule them [the Gentile nations] with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. The Lord declared to His servants, some eighteen months since, that He was then withdrawing His Spirit from the earth; and we can see that such is the fact, for not only the churches are dwindling away, but there are no conversions, or but very few: and this is not all, the governments of the earth are thrown into confusion and division; and Destruction, to the eye of the spiritual beholder, seems to be written by the finger of an invisible hand, in large capitals, upon almost every thing we behold. (TPJS., pp.15-16, emphasis added)

After warning the Gentiles of God's judgments to be poured out upon them, Joseph Smith offered words of counsel to the Gentiles who seek to avoid God's wrath.

And now what remains to be done, under circumstances like these? I will proceed to tell you what the Lord requires of all people, high and low, rich and poor, male and female, ministers and people, professors of religion and non-professors, in order that they may enjoy the Holy Spirit of God to a fullness, and escape the judgments of God, which are almost ready to burst upon the nations of the earth. *Repent of all your sins, and be baptized in water for the remission of them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and receive the ordinance of the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power, that ye may receive the Holy Spirit of God; and this is according to the Holy Scriptures and the Book of Mormon; and the only way that man can enter into the celestial kingdom.* These are the requirements of the new covenant, or the first principles of the Gospel of Christ. (TPJS., p.16, emphasis added)

Joseph Smith's counsel appears clear and straightforward. What makes it difficult to comply with are the same issues that complicated matters for the Jews. Joseph Smith introduced a

new dispensation to the Gentiles as did Moses to Israel. Some Gentiles embraced it by repentance and baptism. They see themselves compliant already with the counsel given by Joseph Smith. What complicates matters for the Gentiles is the problem faced by Nicodemus when he spoke with Jesus. Nicodemus failed to recognize the Savior's introduction of a new dispensation and its new requirements. Nicodemus came to Jesus believing he was compliant with the law of Moses and the Jewish traditions. What began as the Melchizedek Covenant introduced by Moses was changed to the Aaronic Covenant when the Lord removed Moses and the higher priesthood from Israel's midst.²⁶⁷ Nicodemus failed to recognize the renewal of the Melchizedek Covenant and the new dispensation introduced by Jesus. The higher covenant marked the beginning of a new dispensation and introduced the requirements of repentance and being baptized anew. Repentance and baptism is a witness to God the person joined the new dispensation. Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, failed to recognize Jesus as the head of a new dispensation as well as a Melchizedek High Priest.²⁶⁸ Is it a coincidence that John describes Nicodemus as a man "who was in darkness", the very term used by the Savior to describe the Gentiles who reject the light that breaks forth?²⁶⁹ Like Nicodemus, the latter-day Gentiles who accept Joseph Smith fail to acknowledge the loss of the Melchizedek Covenant when Joseph and Hyrum

²⁶⁷ D&C 84:25.

²⁶⁸ "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec." (Hebrews 5:8-10)

²⁶⁹ D&C 45:28.

Smith were killed.²⁷⁰ Since their deaths the Gentiles who accept the restoration through Joseph Smith refuse to acknowledge any loss of priesthood while lapsing into the Aaronic practice of vicarious representation before the Lord [“follow the prophet”]. Like the Jews and their inability to recognize Jesus and the new dispensation, the Gentiles who accept Joseph Smith refuse to acknowledge the loss of the higher covenant [from Joseph Smith] to a lesser, Aaronic covenant. The Gentiles who received Joseph Smith reject the light that breaks forth and the servant delivering the words of Christ because of their contentment with the status quo. Like Nicodemus the Lord appropriately describes them as “those who sit in darkness.”²⁷¹ Those who sit in darkness are unaware they are in the darkness and see no need for additional light.

Wo be unto him that shall say: We have
received the word of God, and we need no
more of the word of God, for we have enough.
For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give
unto the children of men line upon line, precept
upon precept, here a little and there a little; and
blessed are those who hearken unto my
precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for
they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that
receiveth I will give more; and from them that
shall say, We have enough, from them shall be
taken away even that which they have. *Cursed
is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh*

²⁷⁰ D&C 124:28.

²⁷¹ D&C 45:28.

flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost. Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts! For notwithstanding I shall lengthen out mine arm unto them from day to day, they will deny me; nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will repent and come unto me; for mine arm is lengthened out all the day long, saith the Lord God of Hosts. (2 Nephi 28:29-32, emphasis added)

The Gentiles fail to respond to the Lord's invitation to receive the new dispensation by repentance and baptism. As a consequence of their rejection of new light, the Gentiles suffer God's wrath and judgments even as they believe joining the dispensation started by Joseph Smith is sufficient. Their complacency in responding to new light condemns them even as they feel completely compliant and justified.

The Book of Mormon contains warnings to anyone who occupies this land that when they reach a fulness of iniquity they will be swept off of the land. Those warnings are specifically given to the Gentiles in the last days. Support for those warnings are the repeated incidence of genocide and fratricide found in the history of this land recorded in the Book of Mormon. Gentile complacency toward heeding those warnings may be at the center of why the Lord condemned "the whole church" for "treating lightly the things you have received."

And your minds in times past have been darkened *because of unbelief*, and because *you have treated lightly the things you have received*—Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, *even all*. And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say but to do according to that which I have written. That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom; otherwise there remaineth a scourge and judgment to be poured out upon the children of Zion. (D&C 84:54-58, emphasis added)

In this passage the Lord uses “the children of Zion” as a synonym for the church. The church/children of Zion don’t reject the Book of Mormon as a testament of Christ. Their unbelief is not due to a rejection of Joseph Smith as a dispensation head, generally. The disbelief and vanity that brings condemnation on the children of Zion is their treating lightly the warnings contained in the Book of Mormon. They fail to appreciate those warnings with the appropriate gravity they deserve, remaining under condemnation until they appreciate the seriousness of their circumstances and repent.

The earlier passages considered are evidence those warnings are every bit as serious as the warnings proclaimed by

Lehi prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. As much as the virtues of the Book of Mormon are extolled by the Gentiles who embrace it, Nephi, who saw our day observes the great fallacy among the latter-day Gentiles.

And others will he *pacify*, and *lull them away* into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil *cheateth their souls*, and *leadeth them away carefully down to hell*. (2 Nephi 28:21, emphasis added)

The “children of Zion” are likely candidates to be “pacified” and “lulled” into “carnal security” by concluding their prosperity is a sign God endorses their efforts. Prosperity is their measure for divine acceptance while the Lord measures them by how much fruit they bring forth that is “meet for the Father’s kingdom”. The fruit God seeks are sons and daughters of Christ who are worthy to dwell with Him in Zion. Contrary to the Lord’s measure of success, those who focus on prosperity and treat lightly the blessings they are given continue in unbelief. Their vanity and carnal security allow them to be carefully led down to hell by the devil and their souls cheated out of those blessings reserved for the righteous.

CONCLUSION

I make no claim to be the servant. I am not him. I have written this paper to my family, friends and anyone who may look for the servant and seek the fulness of the gospel. Preparations for Zion have begun. Time is short.

The contents of this book have been thirty years in the making. I found God in Olympia, Washington while serving as a missionary. He changed my heart and set me on a lifelong course of studying the scriptures. My friends, acquaintances, and family will attest that I was not the same person when I returned from my mission. I went from being immersed in sports to being immersed in the scriptures.

I have only one credential to offer if the content is insufficient on its merits. Prior to my 19th birthday I received my patriarchal blessing. The patriarch was an elderly man approaching his nineties I had never met. As he pronounced my patriarchal blessing he declared the following paragraph. “I bless you that you may have an increased desire to read the scriptures and that your mind may be enlightened to understand the messages to be found upon the pages of these scriptures.”

As those words came from his lips I recall thinking he didn’t know me and it would take a miracle for that to be fulfilled. To that point in life I had two weeks of seminary and never opened the scriptures. Since then I stopped counting the number of times I have read the Book of Mormon at fifty. In addition I have studied topics in the scriptures for the balance of my adult life.

I have known several true disciples of Christ. However there have been many men like Lehi's man in white beckoning others to follow them. They proclaim, "Your understanding is not correct" if it fails to align with the established narrative. Rare are the moments they impart truth, enlighten the mind, and edify the soul. My most spiritual experiences have come as I studied the scriptures.

This journey has been both frustrating and fascinating. I see evidence the Moses prophecy is being fulfilled and the scriptures testify fulfillment of this prophecy occurs at the end of the world;²⁷² it is truly extraordinary to realize we have finally arrived at this point.

The person I believe to be the servant is here, but it is not my lot to anoint God's servants. There has been more accomplished in the last three years to reclaim Joseph Smith's restoration than in the combined sum of years following his death. His scriptures have been restored in the manner originally prescribed by Joseph Smith absent the interpolations of men. A new dispensation has been declared and the invitation has gone out to all men and women to repent, be baptized and turn to God. Through the servant more light is given from the record of John the Beloved. God's servant is a fierce and fearless defender of Joseph Smith's reputation and teachings. Like Jesus, the will of the Lord's servant is to do the will of his spiritual Father, Christ. He seeks only to deliver the words of Christ and not set himself up as a light to others. He does not represent any organization or institution. He seeks no compensation. Like Jesus—who came as a lowly carpenter—

²⁷² JST Matthew 1:55.

when we shall see him, he will have no bonafides that we should respect him.²⁷³ He seeks no followers but only fellow disciples seeking Christ.

The message he brings is the same as all dispensation heads. Christ died to deliver us from death, hell, sin and the fall of Adam. For the effects of the fall to be completely repaired, man must be reintroduced into the presence of God from whence he fell. Anything less is a failure to receive all Christ's Atonement offers. It brings remorse and regret known as hell.

My greatest fear in this life is lost opportunity. I fear the other side of the veil and being confronted with the question, "Why didn't you warn me?" If you choose to ignore or reject the contents of the book, the responsibility falls where it always belongs, on you. Should we meet in the next life my response to your question will be "I tried."

A new dispensation is beginning as the Gentiles are in the process of rejecting the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.²⁷⁴ You have an invitation to repent and be baptized to join the new dispensation. Are you sufficiently humble to heed the call or are you pacified and lulled into complacency and carnal security? Nephi observed those in the last days would say, "All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well" while the devil "carefully" leads their souls to hell.²⁷⁵

God is offering to restore His covenant people, Israel. Will you accept the invitation to be part of the family of God, His sons and His daughters?²⁷⁶ The decision is yours. It is not

²⁷³ Isaiah 53:2.

²⁷⁴ D&C 45:28-30.

²⁷⁵ 2 Nephi 28:21.

²⁷⁶ Mosiah 5:7.

about me and not about the servant. It is about you and what you choose. May God bless you to choose wisely. May you choose “to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal,” rather than “the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also to destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken.”²⁷⁷

²⁷⁷ 1 Nephi 14:7.