



Purposes of The Book of Mormon

By Lyle L. Smith

Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile . . . and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations (Title Page of The Book of Mormon).

A few months ago, while visiting the Saints in Taiwan, I was invited to teach a class about The Book of Mormon. While trying to decide what topic to cover, I reviewed the material I had with me, which was simply my copy of the book. Through the years, in the former “empty pages,” I have kept a small concordance. One of the topics listed is “purposes.” I thought this would be a good place to begin, and as I felt I should be as straightforward as possible, I would use as much as practicable the words found in the book itself.

The following is a result of that class. The purposes presented below begin with the words of Nephi and continue in chronological sequence. I do not claim that these are the only references to the purposes of the book. I highly recommend that each do his or her own study.

The words following in bold type are my paraphrases of the verses, yet I have tried to use the original verbiage as much as possible. Following that, not in bold type, is my commentary. I suggest the reader look up the references in his or her own copy and mark them for future study.

Purpose “A”

The fullness of my intent is that I may persuade men to come unto God and be saved (1 Nephi 2:3-5).

It is probably not by chance that Nephi starts with the most far-reaching purpose

of The Book of Mormon. Like the Bible, The Book of Mormon is a record of a small segment of the house of Israel. None would say the Bible is only for the Jews, but rather all men. Likewise the Nephite record’s basic purpose is to bring **all** men unto Christ and to be saved.

Purpose “B”

To convince the Gentiles, Lamanites and the Jews that the records of the twelve apostles are true. To make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them, and to make known to all kindreds, tongues and peoples, that the Lamb of God is the son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world. That all men must come unto him or they cannot be saved (1 Nephi 3:190-194).

As stated in the purpose above, the intent or purpose is very broad: it is to make known to all kindreds, tongues, and peoples that Christ is the son of God and the Savior of the world. Nephi also gives a more particular purpose here by saying that their writings are to convince the remnant of Nephi’s seed that the record of the prophets and twelve apostles (the Bible) is true. It should be noted that only in the past few years has the Bible been translated into the last of the major Maya languages. How could The Book of Mormon fulfill its purpose when the Maya—who primarily speak Mayan dialects, not Spanish—did not yet have the Bible in their own language?

Purpose “C”

The Book of Mormon shall be given to the Jews who shall be scattered among all nations to convince them of the true Messiah, who was rejected by them, and

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*And at that day
shall the remnant
of our seed
know that they are
of the house of Israel,
and that they are
the covenant people
of the Lord
(1 Nephi 4:17).*

2 *glyph* notes

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that according to the words of the prophets, and also the word of the angel of God, his name shall be Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Also they wrote the record to persuade their children and brethren to believe in Christ and be reconciled to God. That their children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins and look forward to that life which is in Christ (2 Nephi 11:25-36; 43-51).

This purpose is specifically to the Jews—those that rejected Christ—that they can be convinced to not look for another Messiah. It further adds that Nephi's children and brethren need to believe in Christ and look forward to life in him.

Purpose "D"

That the Lord may prove unto many, that he is the same yesterday, today and forever ... (2 Nephi 12:62).

The Lord does not change. What he says in one era applies to all eras. Remember the words of Jacob. He said polygamy is an abomination in the sight of the Lord, yet in the 1840s there were those who proclaimed the practice to be of God. Think also of the lack of evidence in the Scriptures to support women functioning in the role of priesthood, yet we see that position in the Community of Christ today. Consider the independent Restoration branches, each going its own way, yet again and again the Lord has told us to be one or we are not his. Examine the promises of evolution in the guise of science which promulgates that the world becomes better and better versus Mathew chapter 13 which teaches about the last great gathering of the righteous and the burning of the wicked. Do we believe that

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the Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever?

Purpose "E"

Words which we have written upon metal plates which will give our children and brethren a small degree of knowledge concerning us, that they may know that we knew of Christ and had a hope of his glory (Jacob 3:1-5).

Jacob indicates in these verses that the record keepers write on metal plates in order that the record will last so that future generations will know or come to know about their forefathers. How many who have done genealogy research have wished their forefathers had kept such a record?! This reminds us of the 24 gold plates (a miniscule abridgement of the Jaredite record), the small plates of Nephi, the large plates of Nephi, and the Brass Plates. We are thankful that the record keepers knew that to assure preservation of their history they must write on metal plates.

Purpose "F"

That our genealogy may be kept, for the intent of being of benefit to our brethren, the Lamanites (Jarom 1:1-2).

Lineage is an important concept in The Book of Mormon. In the book of Ether, the Brother of Jared was the first great prophet and Jared's son became the first king. In a curious reversal, a Brother of Jared's descendant was the last king and Jared's descendant was the last prophet. Mormon, the abridger of The Book of Mormon, tells us that he is named after the land of Mormon and was a pure descendant of Lehi.

Purpose "G"

Witnesses that Christ will take upon him the pains and sicknesses of his people, and he will take upon him death that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people. That he suffers according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people and blot out their transgressions, according to the power of his deliverance (Alma 5:18-23).

In my copy of The Book of Mormon, I have written in the margin "Why Christ." This is a very powerful witness of what Christ has done for us.

Purpose "H"

The Plates of Brass will be preserved to enlarge the memory of the people and convince many of the error of their ways and be brought to the knowledge of God,

unto the salvation of their souls (Alma 17: 37-40; 48-50).

This is not so much a purpose for The Book of Mormon, but for the Plates of Brass, although quotes from the Plates of Brass were inserted in The Book of Mormon. This is a statement of purpose for a separate set of plates, those started by Moses and brought to the Promised Land by Lehi. The basic purpose is the same as The Book of Mormon—to bring people to the knowledge of God and to be saved.

Purpose "I"

And as surely as the Lord liveth will he gather in from the four quarters of the earth all the remnant of the seed of Jacob who are scattered abroad upon all the face of the earth; and they shall know their Redeemer, who is Jesus Christ, the Son of God (3 Nephi 2:104-109).

It is sometimes difficult for us to envision how the ten and a half tribes of Israel who were scattered to the four quarters of the world will be a blessing to the world. This gives us warning and knowledge of what will yet take place in their great gathering in the latter days. What a grand and glorious time is ahead of us, if we obey the Lord.

Purpose "J"

The plates of Nephi will be preserved because they contain the more part of the things which Jesus taught the people (3 Nephi 12:1-2).

The words of Jesus are most important to us. They bring us to eternal life with him. Think how fortunate and blessed we are to have three witnesses of the words of Jesus, i.e. the Bible, The Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants.

Purpose "K"

The Book of Mormon is written to all the ends of the earth as well as to the twelve tribes of Israel that all may know they must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, yea every soul who belongs to the whole human family of Adam and to be judged of their works, whether they be good or evil, and to be judged whether they believed the Gospel of Christ. And, that the Jews shall have another witness that Jesus is the Christ, the very God (Mormon 1:82-89).

What more can be added to these words? They speak for themselves.

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Purpose "L"

These things are written to the remnant of the house of Jacob (Israel), to come forth in His [God's] own due time, and to go to the unbelieving of the Jews, that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And also that the seed of this people (the Lamanites) may more fully believe His gospel, which will come to them from the Gentiles (Mormon 2:39-43).

This purpose is specifically to the Lamanites and the Jews. Let's not forget that The Book of Mormon is primarily a religious history of Lehi's family. Its importance to the descendants of Lehi should never be underestimated.

Purpose "M"

The Book of Mormon is written to the remnant of the house of Israel with the intent that they should believe the record which shall come unto the Gentiles from the Jews [the Bible], as well as The Book of Mormon, and if it so be that they believe in Christ and are baptized, first with water then with fire and the Holy Ghost, following the example of the Savior as he hath commanded, it shall be well with them in the day of judgment (Mormon 3:30-33).

The purpose here is almost identical with Purpose "B", except that it is only to the house of Israel. It is written so that they will believe the Bible as well as The Book of Mormon, and come unto Christ and be saved. Nephi at the beginning of the book and Mormon at the end present these thoughts.

Purpose "N"

Covenant (the following bullet points are actual quotes)

- And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord (1 Nephi 4:17); which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham, saying, in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed (1 Nephi 4:29).
- 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 (2 Nephi 12:77).

- Yea, come and go forth, and shew unto your God that ye are willing to repent of your sins, and enter into a covenant with him to keep his commandments, and witness it unto him this day, by going into the waters of baptism (Alma 5:27).
- And I will gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then will I fulfill the covenant which the father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel (3 Nephi 7:29).
- And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and will bring my gospel unto them (3 Nephi 7:36).
- And behold ye are the children of the prophets; and ye are of the house of Israel; and ye are of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed, shall all they kindreds of the earth be blessed (3 Nephi 9:63).
- And now behold, I say unto you, that when the Lord shall see fit, in his wisdom, that these sayings shall come unto the Gentiles, according to his word, then ye may know that the covenant which the father hath made with the children of Israel, concerning their restoration to the lands of their inheritance, is already beginning to be fulfilled (3 Nephi 54).
- And again, if ye, by the grace of God, are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father, unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy without spot (Moroni 10:30).

The word covenant appears 91 times in The Book of Mormon. There are good covenants and bad covenants. It appears that the basic reason for covenant with the house of Israel is so that **they can be a blessing to all the kindreds of the earth**—that all men, through Christ, may become holy without spot.

It is faith strengthening to see that throughout more than one thousand years of history, the purposes in The Book of Mormon are consistent. All agree with Nephi when he gave the fullness of his intent as being to invite all to come unto God and be saved. I am thankful that we

have The Book of Mormon which chronicles the history of a remnant of the house of Israel, yet applies to all men everywhere. The exciting task of the last great gathering and the establishment of Zion is before us. Surely the stage is set to fulfill the covenant with Abraham which says, "in thy seed, shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

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Heritage with Promise: A Testimony

By Tricia Hallier

As part of exploring my family's Native American and Hawaiian heritage, I decided to try to discover what it means for me to be a modern-day Lamanite converted to the truth of the gospel. Is there a specific calling for me? How should I live my life? As a starting place, I used my concordance to find references concerning the descendants of the Lamanites. The first reference I found was on the title page of *The Book of Mormon*. One of the purposes of the record and the first one listed is to show the remnant of the house of Israel the great things God did for their fathers, and to bring to them the knowledge of the covenants of the Lord (title page of *The Book of Mormon*, vs. 6).

Moroni exhorts the descendants of the Lamanites to:

- a. Remember the mercy of God
- b. Receive and ponder these things
- c. Ask God if they are true
- d. Deny not the power of God
- e. Deny not the gifts of God
- f. Remember that they come from Christ
- g. Remember that He is the same yesterday, today and forever
- h. Remember that all these spiritual gifts will never be done away with except through man's unbelief
- i. Have faith, hope and charity, so that you can be saved in the kingdom of God
(Moroni 10:3-14)

Nephi tells us that when *The Book of Mormon* is had among the Gentiles and preached to the "remnant of our seed" (the Lamanites) that:

- a. They will be restored to the knowledge of their fathers
- b. They will be restored to the knowledge of Jesus Christ had among their fathers
- c. They will rejoice
- d. Their scales of darkness will fall from their eyes
- e. They will become a white and delightful people
(2 Nephi 12:81-84)

kept the commandment of having only one wife that they would one day be a blessed people (Jacob 2:56).

Nephi, explaining the words of his father to his brothers, says that the remnant of the house of Israel will in the latter days:

- a. Know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord
- b. Come to a knowledge of their forefathers
- c. Come to a knowledge of their Redeemer, the gospel of their Redeemer, and the points of its doctrine, that they may know how to come unto Him and be saved.
- d. Rejoice and give praise to God
- e. Receive strength and nourishment from the true vine
- f. Come into the true fold of God
- g. Be remembered by the house of Israel
(1 Nephi 4:16-24)

After reading a part of what the Nephite writers had to say about the descendants of the Lamanites, I turned to the stories of the Lamanites themselves. Throughout their history there were periods of time when a generation would "come to a knowledge of their forefathers" and "remember the mercy of God," just as Nephi and Moroni prophesied that their descendants would. One famous example is that of the Anti-Nephi-Lehis, or the people of Ammon. Without going into their incredible story, some aspects of their lives and their faith are listed below.

- Their hearts were changed, and they had no more desire to do evil.
- Many saw and conversed with angels who told them things of God and righteousness.
- They were baptized, they became righteous, and they established a church.
- The Spirit of God was poured out upon them.
- King Lamoni had a desire that his father would also be converted.
(Alma 12:176-181)
- They assembled together in synagogues to be taught.

they were zealous for keeping the commandments of God.
(Alma 13:24-29)

- They were commanded by their king to not harm the missionaries but let them teach where they pleased so that:
 - a. The word of God could go forth throughout the land without obstruction
 - b. His people might be convinced of the wickedness of their traditions
 - c. They might be convinced that they were all brethren
 - d. They might be convinced that they should not murder, plunder, steal, commit adultery, or any kind of wickedness
- Those who were converted never fell away because they became a righteous people.
- They laid down their weapons of their rebellion and did not fight against God or their brethren.
- They chose a new name for themselves to distinguish themselves from their wicked brethren.
- They began to be industrious, to be friendly with the Nephites and to open a correspondence with them and the curse of God did not follow them any more.
- They would rather give up their own lives than kill a person, even in self defense.
- They would rather give than take away, and would labor rather than be idle.
- They would rather die than commit sin.
- They were righteous and walked in the ways of God, observed to keep His commandments, and kept the law of Moses.
- They looked forward to the coming of Christ, understanding that the law of Moses was a type for Christ and that they must keep the outward performances until He was revealed to them, also that salvation came not by the law

Jacob foresees that because the Lamanites

• They gave heed to the word of God and

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Heritage with Promise

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of Moses but that the law of Moses served to strengthen their faith.

- They retained a hope through faith unto eternal salvation and relied on the spirit of prophecy.
- They had even more love for their brethren than the Nephites. (Alma 14:2-120)
- They were numbered among the church of God.
- They were distinguished by others for their zeal towards God and their

uprightness towards men, they were perfectly honest and upright in all things, and they were firm in their faith in Christ until the end.

- They did not fear death in the least because of their hope in and views of God and the resurrection.
- They were a zealous and beloved people and were highly favored of the Lord. (Alma 15:30-35)
- When an evil man came preaching false doctrine, they would not listen but turned him out of their land. (Alma 16:20-22)

Alma 14:55 tells us that out of the 1005 Anti-Nephi-Lehis that were slain by their brethren, there was not a wicked man among them! I concluded that the calling of the Lamanites, both in times of old and today, is no less and no more than that of every member of the house of Israel, both those by birth and those adopted in: to embrace the truth of the gospel wholeheartedly, to enter into God's church, and to live each and every day in total surrender to His will.

the Joy line as shared with Joy Muir

Cumorah Testimony

By Kevin Brown, Part 2.

On April 6 of this year, four members of our expedition team went to Hill Cumorah in prayer and fasting, asking for guidance and direction. After a couple rounds of prayer, we were meditating when Neil asked if we were ready to leave. I said that I wasn't and that I was supposed to dig. I began to dig, right where I was sitting, with much fervor and conviction. I started to find pieces of pottery and then, about five inches down, I found a tablet made of grey shale, about 15 inches long and 12 inches wide, with markings on it. I told the group that the markings were writing, more specifically, Ogam. That comment was unusual for me because there are only a handful of people in the world that know what Ogam is; I was not one of them. I then took the tablet and headed down the mountain, making my way through the jungle, alone. As I came closer to the end of the jungle, I came to a place where the sun shone through. I immediately stopped, as the Holy Spirit overpowered me, so much so that I doubled over and began crying. The love of the Lord was pressed upon me, bringing me words to give to some of the group members. It seemed that at every turn in the path where the sun penetrated, the Spirit overcame me, giving me new insights and revelation. By the time I reached the clearing, I felt so unworthy, and was so humbled that the Lord would use me, that tears were constant as I wrote in

my journal of the things that were pressed upon my heart.

That night, I gave our devotions and said the words that the Lord would have me say, and then I gave the tablet to Neil. As it turns out, there are at least two forms of writing on the tablet: ancient Chinese Ideograms and Married Ogam. The Chinese has been deciphered by archaeologists, and both Ideograms say "Proclaim." The married Ogam is going to take more time, as we have to have three independent linguistics experts, epigraphers, decipher it into ancient Hebrew. We have received a partial translation however. An expert who has been translating the Ogam called Neil recently. Neil asked him what he had deciphered so far and the expert said that the translations didn't make sense to him. Neil asked him to share what he had found anyway and the expert said that it seemed to say "God absolve the sins of us, the twenty four." Neil responded, "It makes perfect sense to me. You're on the right track." Since then, the tablet has been studied even further and more text was found. The new transliteration has been finished and sent to the epigrapher, who was excited to receive it and wanted a replica of the tablet to study closer. We hope to have a finished translation by the middle of March.

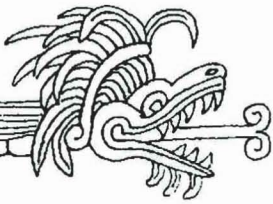
A replica of the tablet, which we are now calling the Proclamation Tablet, was shipped to Berlin, Germany. It will be in a museum on display for six months where potentially thousands will see the tablet and with it, all the deciphered translations.

I am still amazed that the Holy Spirit compelled me to dig, with my bare hands, below the cave we have been trying to get into for years, and under the very spot I had chosen to sit for our prayers. I have no doubt that because of the way the tablet was given to us, it is meant to be a gift to the world from God. With that gift comes a message that I am to tell anyone who will listen. I am to tell the church, and the world, that "It has started." Specifically that the coming forth of the plates and the establishment of Zion has started.

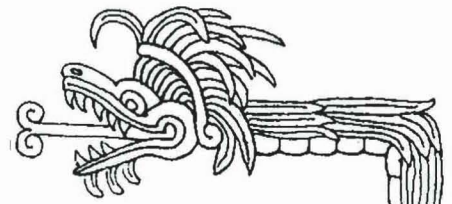
Section 140 of the Doctrine and Covenants says that "Zionic conditions are no further away nor any closer than the spiritual condition of My people justifies, but My word shall not fail, neither will My promises, for the foundation of the Lord standeth sure." He calls us to be a better people, to be a beacon of light to the lost. If we don't start living that now, then when?

So, what were the last twenty four thinking in their final moments? They were thinking as true disciples of Christ—not of retribution or justice [or even survival], but of repentance and forgiveness. On the sacred, holy mountain of the Lord, they buried their last testimony, for us.

Kevin and his wife, Sue, attend the Buckner Community of Christ Church in Buckner, Missouri.



Memories from Mesoamerica



Guatemala and Honduras, 2005

By Melvin E. Quick

I went to Guatemala and Honduras February 12 - 21, 2005. We flew to Guatemala City. After landing we boarded a 30-passenger bus. As there were 27 of us, the bus was filled. Our entire luggage was loaded onto a small pickup. It was dark before we arrived at the Hotel Jungle Lodge in the Petén area of Guatemala. We got the keys to our rooms, and I was happy that my bed was good.

February is the dry season, and the temperature was about 70 degrees. The lodge where we stayed was outside of the park at Tikal. We got up, ate breakfast, packed our backpacks and walked to Temples 1 and 2, and the ball court. As we walked to the site, which was mostly uphill, there were some who traveled slower than the others. Here, and throughout the entire trip, those who were more able helped those who just needed an arm of support or a hand up.

I met the head waiter at the hotel restaurant. His name was Henri. He could speak some English, so Henri and I had a good time and visited at breakfast and supper. Henri told me how much he loved his country. So I told Henri that I knew of a book that told what had happened in his country and why this land was the way it was. He said to me he would like to have this book. Joyce Heide had brought some Spanish Book of Mormons with her for the purpose of handing them out whenever she felt lead. That is where I got the books to pass out, plus some pam-

phlets that Pat Beebe had brought. I found Joyce, got some books from her and some pamphlets from Pat to pass on to Henri. I gave Henri one book; however, his cousin took it and began reading it. I told Henri I would get another one for him. There was also a lady bookkeeper at the restaurant and she wanted a book also. What a marvelous joy that was for me.

My roommate was Roger Graybill from Independence, Missouri. Wherever we went from one hotel to another, we passed out the Spanish Book of Mormons. When we got to Copan, Honduras, we found that there was little English spoken there. On this trip we were blessed because there were several people traveling with us who spoke and understood Spanish. When I felt impressed to speak about The Book of Mormon to certain people, I would find one of our group who spoke Spanish to speak to them to see if they wanted a copy of The Book of Mormon. Lyle and Sherrie Smith, Aaron and Sallie Presler, and Ann Brown were the ones I would find to help me communicate with those who worked at this hotel.

While touring the Copan site, and as I was filming away with my video camera, I saw a young family in the courtyard, which was about sixty feet below me. There was a father, mother, young boy of six, and his sister who was three years old. I was drawn to this family, so when I got down to the courtyard, I went to them. They were speaking English. I spoke to them telling them my name, and they told me theirs. They went their way and I went my way. That afternoon after we returned to the hotel, again, I was filming. I came up to the swimming pool and someone called out my name. I turned and there was that family swimming. I visited with them for awhile. I left and went about filming the mountains, flowers and the countryside. Later as I walked through the door of the restaurant for supper, I heard my name again. I looked over and there was the same family once again. I sat down for a moment and talked with them. I told them I thought it was nice

to see a young family together enjoying these sites. The father said he wanted to teach his children while they were young.

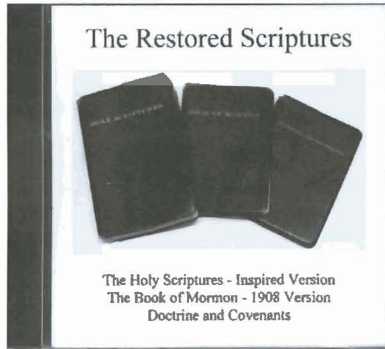
When I first met them, I felt to share about The Book of Mormon. They spoke good English and I was contemplating, where can I get an English Book of Mormon? As I was talking to them at their table, I said to the father, "So you read English?" To my surprise he said "no", but that he could read Spanish. Praise God! I shared with this family that I had a book that told about how this people got to this country, how they became a great nation, how they worshiped God, and grew to be strong. Then, they became prideful, and this is what happened to them. I said that if he wanted a copy of The Book of Mormon, I would get one for him. His answer was "yes".

I found Joyce, got a Book of Mormon, and took it to him and his family. He and his wife stood and bowed to me, and I did the same to them. They just kept thanking me for The Book of Mormon that they received. The family was from the city of Taipei in Taiwan. I don't remember their names, but I have it on video. I know that if they will read The Book of Mormon and will search for truth, they will be led where to go. I will not forget this experience as long as I live. I came from the USA, state of Missouri, went to Guatemala and then to Copan, Honduras to give The Book of Mormon to someone from Taipei, Taiwan. What a testimony to me that we can be a living testimony to all. May God's richest blessings be yours as you live and breathe the way of Christ each day.



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Sandusky, MI

*You are invited to attend
any of the calendar events.*

glyph quotes

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer with meekness and fear to every man that asketh of you a reason for the hope that is in you—1 Peter 3:15



By Larry Rowan

A priest from the Des Moines Northeast Restoration Branch was visiting friends in the Independence area in the late 1980s. He later told us that while he and his wife were sitting on Sunday morning several minutes before the service was scheduled to start, a friend of his tapped him on the shoulder and said, “It’s been made known to me that you have the message for us this hour.” He admitted to several seconds of panic before he was told it was just a joke.

We all agreed that, 1) most or all of us would have acted the same way and, 2) none of us should ever act that way. With a piece of paper, a pencil or pen and a minute or two to prepare, all of us should be able, willing and ready to stand and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ for at least half an hour.

Hymn #256 tells us “God is Marshaling His Army.” In the second verse we are told “... to be ready at a word ...” History of this nation before it was a nation, the men in the militias were prepared to answer the summons to battle with just a minute’s notice. They had their weapons, food, and clothing, all they would need, prepared, packed and stacked by the door. All they had to do was

pick up what they needed and rush out to the commons. In a cause that is of equal or greater importance, no less can, or should, be expected of us.

In April, during the gathering called by the Patriarchs, we were ready. Or were we ready? We were told to prepare. We had more than enough time to prepare. Did we put together the things we needed? Did we have them at hand, ready to pick up at a moment’s notice? Would we have done so?

On Sunday April 3, when I took my place in the east balcony of the Auditorium with the other servers, I felt that Jesus was there with us. I felt that He was watching us Wednesday night as we gathered. I felt a rising sense of something big, something important, coming closer and closer as we came together Thursday and Friday. I felt a keen sense of loss, of opportunity missed, Friday night. Did something go wrong? Or were we just not ready?

Maybe I have to temper my own expectations. What could have happened? What should have happened? What did I want to happen?

I would not have been surprised if Jesus Himself had physically appeared to us and given us a message. I would have welcomed John or one, two or all three of the Nephites bringing us God’s word. In 2 Nephi 2:44-47, we read the words of a dying Lehi: “And now behold, my son

Joseph, after this manner did my father of old (Joseph, the son of Israel) prophesy: 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 raise up one mighty among them which 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 thy brethren.”

There were some who expected this man to make himself known to us during the gathering. There were those who expected the office of Prophet, Seer and Revelator to be filled with a descendant of Joseph, Jr. None of these things happened. If we were not ready, we must become ready. If we were, we must stay ready. The promises of the Lord are sure. “But before the great day of the Lord shall come, Jacob shall flourish in the wilderness; and the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose. Zion shall flourish upon the hills, and rejoice upon the mountains, and shall be assembled together unto the place which I have appointed (D&C 49: 5a&b).

The only question is, will we be ready? Will we be part of Zion?

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