

**LESSON 37**  
**“We Thank Thee, O God, For a Prophet”**  
**Our Heritage, page 131**

**OVERVIEW:**

Our need for a living prophet. The roles of our living prophet. Heeding the words of our living prophet. Latter-day prophets' example of Christlike love. The prophet will never lead us astray.

**SCRIPTURES:**

SECTION 21

*Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Fayette, New York, April 6, 1830. HC 1: 74—79. This revelation was given at the organization of the Church, on the date named, in the home of Peter Whitmer, Sen. Six men, who had previously been baptized, participated. (There were about 60 people in attendance at this meeting.) By unanimous vote these persons expressed their desire and determination to organize, according to the commandment of God; see Section 20. They also voted to accept and sustain Joseph Smith, Jun., and Oliver Cowdery as the presiding officers of the Church. With the laying on of hands, Joseph then ordained Oliver an elder of the Church; and Oliver similarly ordained Joseph. After administration of the sacrament, Joseph and Oliver laid hands upon the participants individually, for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost and for the confirmation of each as a member of the Church. (This is the first revelation given to the Church.)*

*1—3, Joseph Smith is called to be a seer, translator, prophet, apostle, and elder; 4—8, His word shall guide the cause of Zion; 9—12, The saints shall believe his words as he speaks by the Comforter.*

1 BEHOLD, there shall be a <sup>a</sup>record kept among you; and in it thou shalt be called a <sup>b</sup>seer. (In Old Testament times a prophet was called a seer, from the Hebrew re'eh, meaning "one who sees" (1 Samuel 9:9 (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to <sup>a</sup>enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the <sup>b</sup>seer: for he that is now called a <sup>c</sup>Prophet was beforetime called a <sup>d</sup>Seer.)). Contextually this definition carried the idea of seeing that which was hidden to others. The Hebrew hozen, meaning "one who sees a vision," was also translated "seer." Among Book of Mormon peoples a prophet was understood to be a man "chosen of God" to speak his words (Helaman 9:16 And now it came to pass that the judges did expound the matter unto the people, and did cry out against Nephi, saying: Behold, we know that this Nephi must have agreed with some one to slay the judge, and then he might declare it unto us, that he might convert us unto his faith, that he might raise himself to be a great man, chosen of God, and a prophet.; Alma 5:11 Behold, I can tell you—did not my father Alma believe in the words which were delivered by the <sup>a</sup>mouth of Abinadi? And was he not a holy prophet? Did he not speak the words of God, and my father Alma believe them?). He was one to whom God had given great power and authority (Helaman 11:18 And behold, the people did rejoice and glorify God, and the whole face of the land was filled with rejoicing; and they did no more seek to destroy Nephi, but they did esteem him as a <sup>a</sup>great prophet, and a man of God, having great power and authority given unto him from God.) to act in his name (Alma 19:4 And she said unto him: The <sup>a</sup>servants of my husband have made it known unto me that thou art a <sup>b</sup>prophet of a holy God, and that thou hast <sup>c</sup>power to do many mighty works in his name;). The Book of Mormon makes a clear distinction between a seer and a prophet. Ammon declares a seer to be greater than a prophet. By way of explanation he states: "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" (Mosiah 8:16-17: 16 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. 17 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.). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 174-75) a translator (Joseph finished translating the Book of Mormon, now he is starting to translate the Bible. Joseph was the only latter-day prophet to be sustained as a translator.), a prophet, (Defining the office and call of a prophet, Anthony W. Ivins explained, "A careful study of the etymology of the word and of the lives, works and character of the prophets of old makes clear the fact that a prophet was, and is, one called to act as God's messenger. He is to teach men the character of God, and define and make known to the people, his will. He is to denounce sin, and declare the punishment of transgression. He is to be above all else a preacher of righteousness, and when the people depart from the path which he has marked out for them to follow, is to call them back to the true faith. He is an interpreter of the scripture, and declares its meaning and application. When future events are to be declared he predicts them, but his direct, and most important calling is to be a forth-teller, or director of present policy, rather than a foreteller of that which is to come" (Conference Report, October 1925, 20). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 175) an <sup>c</sup>apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of your Lord Jesus Christ, (Every latter-day prophet serves at the will of the Father and the grace of Jesus Christ.)

2 Being <sup>a</sup>inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation thereof, and to <sup>b</sup>build it up unto the most holy faith.

3 Which <sup>a</sup>church was <sup>b</sup>organized and established in the year of your Lord eighteen hundred and thirty, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month which is called April.

4 Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give <sup>a</sup>heed unto all his words and <sup>b</sup>commandments which he shall give unto you as he receiveth them, walking in all <sup>c</sup>holiness before me; (Heed the prophet's words as well as the commandments he will give us.)

5 For his <sup>a</sup>word ye shall receive, as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith. (It is not to be expected that the wisdom in the direction given by our prophets will always be immediately apparent. Faith must always be a part of the life of the Latter-day Saint. President Harold B. Lee explained this principle: "There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. . . . It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory' (D&C 21:6)" (Conference Report, October 1970, 152). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 178)

6 For by doing these things the <sup>a</sup>gates of hell shall not prevail against you; (Anthon H. Lund: The Lord, in comforting the saints, told them that if they would listen to his counsel, the gates of hell should not have power over them, and this promise is the same to you and to me inasmuch as we listen to the counsels of inspired men. As I understand that expression, "the gates of hell," it means those things which lead to hell, in fact, are the entrances to it. How many things are there that lead to those gates? How many things we have to be warned against and which we have to watch out for, because if we yield to them, they will lead us to the gates of hell! Let us each and every one examine ourselves and know well the path in which we are walking and avoid everything that we know is wrong, and forbidden by the Lord, well knowing that if we yield to such we have not the promise that the gates of hell shall not have power over us; on the other hand, if we perform our duty, live according to the testimony which God has given us, we need not fear, for he will lead us in the paths of righteousness that lead to eternal

life. (CR, April 1913, pp. 10-11.) yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of <sup>b</sup>darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to <sup>c</sup>shake for your <sup>d</sup>good, and his name's <sup>e</sup>glory. (Joseph opened the gates of hell so that the work for the dead could be done. Those gates will stay open until everyone has had the opportunity to be baptized by proxy in the temples of God. The gates are open so that missionary work can occur.)

7 For thus saith the Lord God: Him (Joseph Smith) have I inspired to move the cause of <sup>a</sup>Zion in mighty power for good, and his diligence I know, and his prayers I have heard. (In verse 7 the word him refers to Joseph Smith, but this verse also applies to anyone else who is given the keys to lead the Church. For the Saints in 1830 Joseph Smith was the prophet whom God inspired to move the cause of Zion. For the Saints in 1860, the one called "to move the cause of Zion" was Brigham Young. For the Saints in the year 2000, the one who had this calling was Gordon B. Hinckley. Student Manual, p. 45. Delbert L. Stapely: I bear witness to you, my brothers and sisters, that God sustains him, and no one else in the world today but him, because he has the holy calling of prophet, seer, and revelator, representing the Lord upon the earth in our time. He only has the right to revelation for the people of the Church, and if all people would understand that they would not be tossed about by those who would seek to divert their minds from the Church and its glorious principles... They will be fortified against false teachers and anti-Christ, and we do have them among us. CR, Oct 1953, p. 70. Harold B. Lee: We are not dependent only upon the revelations given in the past as contained in our standard works—as wonderful as they are—but we have a mouthpiece to whom God does reveal and is revealing His mind and will. God will never permit him to lead us astray. As has been said, God would remove him out of his place if he should attempt to do it. You have no concern. Let the management and government of God, then, be with the Lord. Do not try to find fault with the management and affairs that pertain to Him alone and by revelation through His prophet—His living prophet, His seer, and His revelator. The Place of the Living Prophet, 8 July 1964, p. 16)

8 Yea, his weeping for Zion I have seen, and I will cause that he shall mourn for her no longer; for his days of rejoicing are come unto the <sup>a</sup>remission of his sins, and the manifestations of my blessings upon his works.

9 For, behold, I will <sup>a</sup>ble<sup>s</sup>s all those who labor in my vineyard with a mighty blessing, and they shall believe on his words. (This phrase constitutes the test of discipleship for a Latter-day Saint. Elder Bruce R. McConkie stated it thus, "The test of discipleship is how totally and completely and fully we believe the word that was revealed through Joseph Smith, and how effectively we echo or proclaim that word to the world" ("This Generation," 7). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 178) which are given him through me by the <sup>b</sup>Com<sup>f</sup>orter, which <sup>c</sup>man<sup>f</sup>ifesteth that Jesus was <sup>d</sup>cruc<sup>f</sup>ified by <sup>e</sup>sin<sup>f</sup>ful men for the sins of the <sup>f</sup>world, yea, for the remission of sins unto the <sup>e</sup>con<sup>f</sup>trite heart.

10 Wherefore it behooveth me that he should be <sup>a</sup>ordained by you, Oliver Cowdery mine apostle;

11 This being an ordinance unto you, that you are an elder under his hand, he being the <sup>a</sup>first unto you, that you might be an elder unto this church of Christ, bearing my name— (Anthon H. Lund: Joseph had informed the little flock that gathered there when the Church was organized of what the Lord commanded, and it was proposed to them that Joseph Smith be the first Elder of the Church, and Oliver the second. Then Joseph ordained Oliver and Oliver ordained Joseph to the office of an Elder. This was not bestowing the Melchizedek Priesthood on either of them. They held that before. It had been conferred upon them by Peter, James and John. [Sec. 27:12-13.] It was not given to them by the authority of those present. The Lord had revealed to them, through his servant, and had conferred upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood, but there was no Church organized as yet, and hence there were no officers needed in the Church, but when the Church was organized, on April the 6th, 1830, then it was necessary that men should fill official positions in the Church, and do this by the consent of those over whom they were to exercise authority. As yet, the office of a High Priest had not been given, but Elders had been voted for, and had been ordained, and they took charge of the meeting. (CR, April 1913, pp. 9-10.))

12 And the first <sup>a</sup>preacher (Oliver was the first authorized person to give a public discourse in this last dispensation.) of this church unto the church, and before the world, yea, before the Gentiles; yea, and thus saith the Lord God, lo, lo! to the <sup>b</sup>Jews also. Amen.

D&C 43: 1 O HEARKEN, ye elders of my church, and give ear to the words which I shall speak unto you.

2 For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a <sup>a</sup>law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and <sup>b</sup>revelations from my hand.

3 And this ye shall know assuredly—that there is <sup>a</sup>none other appointed unto you to receive <sup>b</sup>commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he <sup>c</sup>abide in me. (The words "none other" exclude any pretenders or deceivers that might seek to lead the Saints astray. The Lord avoids confusion in his kingdom by appointing one individual, the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to receive revelations and commandments for the Church. Even though other members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of Twelve Apostles are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, they are under the direction of the president of the Church. In his instructions on the priesthood, Joseph Smith explained, "And again, the duty of the President of the office of the High Priesthood is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses" (D&C 107:91), who was the spokesman for God to ancient Israel. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 325)

4 But verily, verily, I say unto you, that <sup>a</sup>none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead. (Had the responsibility of being the Lord's mouthpiece been taken from the Prophet Joseph Smith, the last authorized act he would be called on to perform would have been to confer the keys of the kingdom on another. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 326)

5 And this shall be a law unto you, that ye <sup>a</sup>receive not the <sup>b</sup>teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments;

6 And this I give unto you that you may not be <sup>a</sup>deceived, that you may know they are not of me. (During his mortal ministry the Savior warned his disciples: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). The sanctimonious cloak of "the kiss of charity" hid the true intentions of Mrs. Hubble. Likewise, over the many years since this revelation was given, others have clothed themselves in apparel of various deceptive colors and styles. Some wear the claim of special manifestations or commissions that authorize them to perpetuate plural marriage. Others attire themselves in beguiling raiment of a commission from Enoch to set up the united order; power to translate the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon; scholarly insight to tell the "true Mormon history;" visions that reveal the feminine identity of the Holy Ghost; keys to gather the Saints to Zion; near-death experiences that make known the previously unrevealed mysteries of the post-mortalspirit world; and a host of other distractions to the true issue at hand. The Lord warned of their deception. Let this simple truth ring in the ears of all Saints: They are deceivers and are not authorized to give commandments or revelations to the Church nor to any individual member who seeks to follow the truth of the restored gospel! Deception can be avoided by following this law as revealed by the Lord to the Church, for "whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived" (Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:37). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 326)

7 For verily I say unto you, that he that is <sup>a</sup>ordained of me shall come in at the <sup>b</sup>gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those <sup>c</sup>revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed. ("He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold," the Savior taught, "but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep" (John 10:1-2). True servants of the Lord will always be known to the Church, having been called, sustained by the voice of the Church, and properly ordained. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 326. Joseph F. Smith: It is not my business nor that of any other individual to rise up as a

revelator, as a prophet, as a seer, as an inspired man, to give revelation for the guidance of the Church, or to assume to dictate to the presiding authorities of the Church in any part of the world, much less in the midst of Zion, where the organizations of the Priesthood are about perfect, where everything is complete even to the organization of a branch. It is the right of individuals to be inspired and to receive manifestations of the Holy Spirit for their personal guidance, to strengthen their faith, and to encourage them in works of righteousness, in being faithful and observing and keeping the commandments which God has given unto them; it is the privilege of every man and woman to receive revelation to this end, but not further. The moment an individual rises up assuming the right to control and to dictate or to sit in judgment on his brethren, especially upon those who preside, he should be promptly checked, or discord, division and confusion would be the result. Every man and woman in this Church should know better than to yield to such a spirit; the moment that such a feeling presents itself to them they should rebuke it, as it is in direct antagonism to the order of the Priesthood, and to the spirit and genius of this work. We can accept nothing as authoritative but that which comes directly through the appointed channel, the constituted organizations of the Priesthood, which is the channel that God has appointed through which to make known His mind and will to the world. the moment that individuals look to any other source, that moment they throw themselves open to the seductive influences of Satan, and render themselves liable to become servants of the devil; they lose sight of the true order through which the blessings of the Priesthood are to be enjoyed; they step outside of the pale of the kingdom of God, and are on dangerous ground. Whenever you see a man rise up claiming to have received direct revelation from the Lord to the Church, independent of the order and channel of the Priesthood, you may set him down as an impostor. JD, 24:188-90. Joseph Fielding Smith: We frequently hear discussions in our classes and between brethren to the effect that any man could be called, if the authorities should choose him, to preside over the Church and that it is not the fixed order to take the senior apostle to preside, and any member of that quorum could be appointed. The fact is that the senior apostle automatically becomes the presiding officer of the Church on the death of the President. If some other man were to be chosen, then the senior would have to receive the revelation setting himself aside. President John Taylor has made this very plain. (See "Succession in the Priesthood," chapter 17, The Gospel Kingdom.) Says President Taylor, speaking of the time following President Young's death: "I occupied the senior position in the quorum, and occupying that position which was thoroughly understood by the quorum of the twelve, on the death of President Young, as the twelve assumed the presidency, and I was their president, it placed me in a position of president of the Church, or, as expressed in our conference meeting: 'As president of the quorum of the twelve apostles, as one of the twelve apostles, and of the presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.' In this manner, also, was President Brigham Young sustained at the general conference held in Nauvoo, in October following the martyrdom of the Prophet Joseph Smith." (Gospel Kingdom, p. 192.) The counselors in the presidency cease to be counselors when the President dies and take their regular place among their brethren. (CHMR, 1947, 1:173.)

Articles of Faith 9 - We believe all that God has <sup>a</sup>revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet <sup>b</sup>reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. (Bruce R. McConkie: There is so much that we do not know—more, in fact, than all the understanding that now is ours. We know but little about God and his glory and the laws by which he created worlds without number. What do we know about the sidereal heavens and the endless galaxies spinning through boundless space? Our knowledge of the creation of even this little dot of dust known as planet earth is so slight that we can scarcely envision its place in the eternal orbits and its relationship to the endless worlds that roll everlastingly forth from the Creator's hand. What of life in all its forms and varieties, on this and other worlds, and in the realm of the spirit and of mortality? We have only a bare outline of our birth as spirits; of the life we then lived, its length, and the nature of our premortal tests; and of our associations there and the affinities we had one for another. What do we know of life in the Edenic

paradise, of the fall of man and all forms of life, and even of the earth itself? And what of the nations of men both before the flood and since the day those earth-covering waters swept over the highest peaks and immersed the earth according to the baptismal similitude? How did the various nations come into being, and why the differences in physical characteristics? What also of the sheep of the Lord's pastures in days gone by? When they come to light, what will we find in the writings of Joseph the son of Jacob, of Gad the seer in Israel, of Zenos, Zenock, Neum, and Ezias, all of whom were Israelitish prophets? Do the Brass Plates contain the writings of other prophets than these, writings that are yet to come forth? Did Adam and Seth, Enos and Cainan, Mahalaleel and Jared, Lamech and Noah—all of whom had patriarchal stature before the flood—write the mind and will of the Lord in their days? We assume they did, and if so, such will surely be revealed in due course. And what of Jethro, Caleb, Elihu, Jeremy, Gad, and Esaias of Abraham's day, through all of whom the holy priesthood descended—who are they, what peoples did they minister among, and what records have they left? And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, than whom there has scarcely been a more righteous man on earth, what of him and his writings and the people whom he guided to translation so that they were taken up into heaven without tasting death—what of Enoch and all his people? And, for that matter, there is John the Revelator and also the Three Nephites, all living on earth until the Second Coming—where are they, with whom do they labor, and why are they so appointed? Do we know so much as a thousandth part of the doings and sayings of our Lord among the Jews? Or among the Nephites? We know nothing as yet of his ministry to the lost tribes of the house of Israel. Ought not all these things to come forth for our edification and enlightenment? And what else is there in the way of lost scripture, the existence of which has not even crossed our minds? We can think also of the Second Coming, life during the Millennial era, what is going on in paradise and hell, the nature and manner of the resurrection, life in the kingdoms of glory, and ten thousand times ten thousand other things, all of which are so little known by us mortals. Would it violate some great and eternal purpose for us to learn all things as rapidly as we are able to receive added light and knowledge from the Source of Truth? We rejoice in the revelations that have come since March 1, 1842, when the Prophet sent forth the word in the Articles of Faith, including the pronouncement that more things were yet to be revealed. Since that day the wondrous concepts in sections 130 and 131 of the Doctrine and Covenants have come to us; also the great truths relative to salvation for the dead in sections 127, 128, and 138; and more recently, as announced on June 8, 1978, the heaven-sent word that the holy priesthood, celestial marriage, and all of the blessings of the gospel are now to go to all men, without reference to race or culture. That the receipt of this revelation on priesthood is one of the signs of the times is now apparent to all. And what has been revealed—in all fields—is but prelude to what yet shall come forth, for the voice of God shall never cease to speak, and the words that fall from his lips are endless. How soul-satisfying it is to know that we stand on the threshold of the house of revelation and that that which is yet to come will know no bounds. It will include the restoration of all that has ever been revealed in any dispensation of the past and also "knowledge . . . that has not been revealed since the world was until now; which our forefathers have awaited with anxious expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their glory." All of the hopes and yearnings and desires of all the holy prophets will find fruition in the coming day; all of their prophecies will be fulfilled, and they will join with mortals in the great winding-up scenes yet to be enacted. We look forward to the future with joy; it will be "a time to come in the which nothing shall be withheld, whether there be one God or many gods, they shall be manifest. All thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, shall be revealed and set forth upon all who have endured valiantly for the gospel of Jesus Christ. And also, if there be bounds set to the heavens or to the seas, or to the dry land, or to the sun, moon, or stars—all the times of their revolutions, all the appointed days, months, and years, and all the days of their days, months, and years, and all their glories, laws, and set times, shall be revealed in the days of the dispensation of the fulness of times—according to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his

eternal presence and into his immortal rest." (D&C 121:26-32.) How wondrous it is to know that "when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things—things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof—things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven." (D&C 101:32-34.) Fools say, "Revelation has ceased, and the canon of scripture is full." The saints of God testify, "Revelation has scarcely begun; and if we are true and faithful, we shall receive revelation upon revelation until we know all things and therefore become like Him from whom revelation comes." Articles of Faith, p. 483-86)

Our Heritage, p. 131: Regarding President Spencer W. Kimball: An incident that was typical of his concern for all people occurred in a crowded airport where a young mother, stranded by bad weather, stood in line after line with her two-year-old daughter, trying to get a flight to her destination. She was two months pregnant and under doctor's orders not to carry her young child, who was exhausted and hungry. No one offered to help, although several people made critical comments about her crying child. Then, the woman later reported:

"Someone came towards us and with a kindly smile said, 'Is there something I could do to help you?' With a grateful sigh I accepted his offer. He lifted my sobbing little daughter from the cold floor and lovingly held her to him while he patted her gently on the back. He asked if she could chew a piece of gum. When she was settled down, he carried her with him and said something kindly to the others in the line ahead of me, about how I needed their help. They seemed to agree and then he went up to the ticket counter [at the front of the line] and made arrangements with the clerk for me to be put on a flight leaving shortly. He walked with us to a bench, where we chatted a moment, until he was assured that I would be fine. He went on his way. About a week later I saw a picture of Apostle Spencer W. Kimball and recognized him as the stranger in the airport."

For some months before his death, President Kimball suffered with severe health problems, but he was always an example of patience, long-suffering, and diligence in the face of trial. He died on 5 November 1985, after serving as President of the Church for 12 years.

Mosiah 8: 13 Now Ammon said unto him: I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can <sup>a</sup>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 <sup>b</sup>interpreters, (The interpreters are the Urim and Thummim that the Lord had given to the brother of Jared (Ether 3:23; 4:5). The brother of Jared wrote his vision of the inhabitants of the earth in the Jaredite form of the Adamic language. The Lord knew that no subsequent people would be able to interpret this language without divine help. The Urim and Thummim were designed just for a seer like Mosiah to use to translate the record. Apparently, Mosiah had received the interpreters which were had by the kings. His grandfather (also named Mosiah) had used them to interpret the large stone of the Jaredites (Omni 1:20). The term used when describing translation with the Urim and Thummim is 'by the gift and power of God.' This is the way we describe the translation of the Book of Mormon, by the gift and power of God (Moroni's Title Page). This same Urim and Thummim spoken of in Mosiah 8:13 is the Urim and Thummim that was buried with the gold plates. It was the tool which Joseph Smith used to translate the Book of Mormon—especially early on. He described them as follows, there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim—deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted "seers" in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book. (JS-H 1:35). This Urim and Thummim was taken with the plates by Moroni after Joseph was done translating. There was at least one more Urim and Thummim because Abraham had one (Abr 3:1) and Moses had one that was placed in the

breastplate of judgment (Ex 28:30). Bruce R. McConkie said: “The Hebrew words *urim* and *thummim*, both plural, mean lights and perfections. Presumably one of the stones is called Urim and the other Thummim. Ordinarily they are carried in a breastplate over the heart. (Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8)...President Joseph Fielding Smith, with reference to the seer stone and the Urim and Thummim, has written: ‘ We have been taught since the days of the Prophet that the Urim and Thummim were returned with the plates to the angel. We have no record of the Prophet having the Urim and Thummim after the organization of the Church.’” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 818) The Urim and Thummim delivered to Joseph Smith for use in translating the Book of Mormon was the same one the brother of Jared had. DCBM, 2:191.) and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish (A person might look into the stones and be tempted to use the revealed information unrighteously.). And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called <sup>c</sup>seer.

14 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.

15 And the king said that a <sup>a</sup>seer is greater than a prophet. (This is a question, not a statement. Ammon then states that a seer is also a prophet and a revelator. “‘A seer, ‘ wrote Elder John A. Widtsoe, ‘is one who sees with spiritual eyes. He perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. He foresees the future from the past and the present. This he does by the power of the Lord operating through him directly, or indirectly with the aid of divine instruments such as the Urim and Thummim. In short, he is one who sees, who walks in the Lord's light with open eyes.’ (Evidences and Reconciliations, p. 258.)” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, p. 192))

16 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.

17 But a seer can know of things which are past, (a seer can know the real truth) 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. (It is generally supposed that a prophet is one who prophesies, meaning one who foretells the future. In fact, one can be a prophet without doing so. The role of a prophet is to proclaim the word of God by the authority of the Holy Ghost. More specifically, a prophet is one who has and declares the testimony of Jesus (See Revelation 19:10). A prophet’s primary role is to be a forthteller rather than a foreteller. To call a man a prophet is to emphasize his role in declaring the word of God, whereas to call him a seer is to emphasize the manner in which that word was received. Thus it is properly said that a seer is greater than a prophet because all seers are prophets but not all prophets are seers. Among the special spiritual gifts granted the seer is the ability to restore, interpret, and understand the past. In so doing the seer may by the use of various interpreters translate ancient records that have been written in languages that now are otherwise indecipherable. This is what Mosiah did in translating the records of the Jaredites and what Joseph Smith did in translating the Book of Mormon. Ammon’s comments relative to a seer as translator, couched in a conversation about ancient records, were not intended to be a complete description of the seer’s role. Enoch, ‘beheld the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.’ (Moses 6:36) A seer is a visionary in the highest sense, one who can ‘see afar off.’ DCBM, 2:191-192.

18 Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings (The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, all prophets, seers and revelators. How does a seer become a great benefit to his fellow beings? By revealing God to them.).



Mosiah 13: 33 For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people? Yea, and even <sup>a</sup>all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began—have they not spoken more or less (Prophets are not equal in knowledge, power, or spiritual talents.) concerning these things? (This is the most repeated prophecy. Deuteronomy 18:18-19, Acts 3:22-23, Acts 7:37, 1 Nephi 10:4, 1 Nephi 22:20-21, 3 Nephi 21:11, JS-History 1:40, D&C 1:14, D&C 133:63)

D&C 1: 38 What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my <sup>a</sup>word shall not pass away, but shall all be <sup>b</sup>fulfilled, whether by mine own <sup>c</sup>voice or by the <sup>d</sup>voice of my <sup>e</sup>servants, it is the <sup>f</sup>same. (When a servant of the Lord speaks by the power of the Holy Ghost, it is the same as though the Lord were speaking.)

D&C 20: 21 Wherefore, the Almighty God gave his <sup>a</sup>Only Begotten Son, as it is written in those scriptures which have been given of him.

22 He <sup>a</sup>suffered <sup>b</sup>temptations but gave no heed unto them. (Neal A. Maxwell: Though He was thus perfected in His empathy because He bore our mistakes, Jesus' own response to the common challenges of temptation that faced Him was not only uncommon, it was utterly unique. His immensely important, but simple, key was: "He suffered temptations *but gave no heed unto them.*" (D&C 20:22. Italics added.) What a grand yet practical insight! Some of us process the same temptations time and time again, letting them linger and savoring them, and thereby strengthening our impulse to sin and weakening our will to resist—rather than dispatching the temptations summarily as Jesus did when He "gave no heed." Giving no heed includes recognizing for what it is an inducement to do wrong and refusing to consider it further. There is great strength in reflexive rejection and in refusing to spend any of our time, talent, thought, or treasure in hosting a temptation, which is enlarged by any attention given to it. (We Will Prove Them Herewith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982], 43 - 44.))

23 He was <sup>a</sup>crucified, <sup>b</sup>died, and <sup>c</sup>rose again the third day;

24 And <sup>a</sup>ascended into heaven, to sit down on the right hand of the <sup>b</sup>Father, to <sup>c</sup>reign with almighty power according to the will of the Father; (The Atonement)

25 That as many as would <sup>a</sup>believe and be baptized in his holy name, and <sup>b</sup>endure in faith to the end, should be saved—

26 Not only those who believed after he came in the <sup>a</sup>meridian of time, in the <sup>b</sup>flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who <sup>c</sup>spake as they were inspired by the <sup>d</sup>gift of the Holy Ghost, who truly <sup>e</sup>testified of him in all things, should have eternal life,

D&C 43: 2 For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a <sup>a</sup>law unto my church (Section 42), through him (Joseph Smith) whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and <sup>b</sup>revelations from my hand.

3 And this ye shall know assuredly—that there is <sup>a</sup>none other appointed unto you to receive <sup>b</sup>commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he <sup>c</sup>abide in me. (The words "none other" exclude any pretenders or deceivers that might seek to lead the Saints astray. The Lord avoids confusion in his kingdom by appointing one individual, the president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to receive revelations and commandments for the Church. Even though other members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of Twelve Apostles are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, they are under the direction of the president of the Church. In his instructions on the priesthood, Joseph Smith explained, "And again, the duty of the President of the office of the High Priesthood is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses" (D&C 107:91), who was the spokesman for God to ancient Israel. Revelations of the Restoration, p. 325. Joseph F. Smith: When ever you see a man rise up

claiming to have received direct revelation from the Lord to the Church, independent of the order and channel of the Priesthood, you may set him down as an impostor. (JD, June 21, 1883, 24:188-90.)

D&C 68: 3 And this is the <sup>a</sup>ensample unto them, that they shall <sup>b</sup>speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. (Bruce R. McConkie: "those who preach by the power of the Holy Ghost use the scriptures as their basic source of knowledge and doctrine. They begin with what the Lord has before revealed to other inspired men. But it is the practice of the Lord to give added knowledge to those upon whose hearts the true meanings and intents of the scriptures have been impressed. Many great doctrinal revelations come to those who preach from the scriptures. When they are in tune with the Infinite, the Lord lets them know, first, the full and complete meaning of the scriptures they are expounding, and then he oftentimes expands their views so that new truths flood in upon them, and they learn added things that those who do not follow such a course can never know. . . . In a living, growing, divine church, new truths will come from time to time and old truths will be applied with new vigor to new situations, all under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God" (Promised Messiah, 515-16). The four elders to whom this revelation was given are simply the example of the principle that applies to "all the faithful elders of my church" (v. 7). All are to teach by the power of the Holy Ghost, all are to know by the spirit of revelation that what they are teaching is true, and all are to be enlightened by the Spirit as they teach. Joseph Smith taught that "no man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 328).)

4 And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the <sup>a</sup>Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the <sup>b</sup>power of God unto salvation. (It must be remembered that this revelation was given to four elders sent forth to teach the message of the Restoration. They did not hold the office of apostle or seventy, for these offices had not yet been restored. By the world's standard they were too young to be learned in theology, but their God loved young men who had faith. The oldest of their number was twenty-six. None of them had been a member of the Church for more than a few months. The formal instruction they had received in its doctrines and practices could be counted in hours or days at the most. Their success depended on their companionship with the Holy Spirit. The path they marked would yet be followed by countless others. Nowhere in the Bible is the spirit of revelation defined. Nowhere in that marvelous book do we find a definition of scripture. Here, with a single sentence, the Prophet sweeps away cobwebs woven of darkness and confusion that for centuries have blocked the light of heaven. Scripture is the mind of the Lord, the will of the Lord, the word of the Lord, the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation. Its source is the Holy Ghost, and all who by the laying on of hands have received the promise of the companionship of that member of the Godhead at the same time assume the obligation to witness of him and of his gospel—they are to speak scripture. "Anything spoken by the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, by the angels of heaven, or by mortal man when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, is scripture. Such spoken words are the will, mind, word, and voice of the Lord. (D. & C. 68:1-5.) "Since it is a comparatively rare thing for mortal man to hear the personal voice of Deity, or to converse with angels, it follows that most scriptural utterances are given to man by revelation from the Holy Ghost. These statements, made by the power of the Holy Spirit, consist of the identical words which the Lord himself would speak under the same circumstances. They are indeed the Lord's words because he authorizes and directs the Holy Ghost to influence and guide men in giving utterance to them. "It is by the power and guidance of the Holy Ghost—that Spirit Personage who, as a member of the Godhead, has power to speak with unerring certainty to the spirit within man—that the saints 'have the mind of Christ.' (1 Cor. 2:16.) That is, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, the saints are enabled to think what our Lord thinks, to give voice to the very words he does or would speak, and to act as he would act in the same situation. What is true of the mortal saints is also true of the heavenly saints, for 'Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ.' (2 Ne. 32:3.) "All scripture is true. It is composed wholly and solely of pure, unvarnished, irrefutable, and eternal

truth. 'Thy word,' O God, 'is truth.' (John 17:17.) 'By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.' (Moro. 10:5.) "All scripture comes by revelation. Whenever any revealed truth is expressed in words, those words are scripture. 'The Holy Ghost is a revelator,' Joseph Smith said. 'No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations.' (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 328.) And when those revelations are either spoken or written, they are scripture. "Most scripture has been, is now, and will continue to be oral and unrecorded. Throughout the length and breadth of his earthly kingdom, the Lord's agents are frequently moved upon to speak, testify, prophesy, exhort, expound, preach, and teach by the power of the Holy Ghost. Such inspired utterances benefit and bless those who speak them and the spiritually endowed among the hearers" (McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 1:55-56). Revelations of the Restoration, p. 488-89. **"It is not to be thought that every word spoken by the General Authorities is inspired, or that they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost in everything they read and write. Now you keep that in mind. I don't care what his position is, if he writes something or speaks something that goes beyond anything that you can find in the standard church works, unless that one be the prophet, seer, and revelator—please note that one exception—you may immediately say, 'Well, that is his own idea.' And if he says something that contradicts what is found in the standard church works (I think that is why we call them 'standard'—it is the standard measure of all that men teach), you may know by that same token that it is false, regardless of the position of the man who says it."** (Harold B. Lee, ASIF, July 8, 1964, p. 11.) J. Reuben Clark: In considering the problem involved here, it should be in mind that some of the General Authorities have had assigned to them a special calling; they possess a special gift; they are sustained as prophets, seers, and revelators, which gives them a special spiritual endowment in connection with their teaching of the people. They have the right, the power, and authority to declare the mind and will of God to his people, subject to the over-all power and authority of the President of the Church. Others of the General Authorities are not given this special spiritual endowment and authority covering their teaching; they have a resulting limitation, and the resulting limitation upon their power and authority in teaching applies to every other officer and member of the Church, for none of them is spiritually endowed as a prophet, seer, and revelator. Furthermore, as just indicated, the President of the Church has a further and special spiritual endowment in this respect, for he is the prophet, seer, and revelator for the whole Church. Here we must have in mind—must know—that only the President of the Church, the Presiding High Priest, is sustained as prophet, seer, and revelator for the Church, and he alone has the right to receive revelations for the Church, either new or amendatory, or to give authoritative interpretations of scriptures that shall be binding on the Church, or change in any way the existing doctrines of the Church. He is God's sole mouthpiece on earth for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the only true Church. He alone may declare the mind and will of God to his people. No officer of any other Church in the world has this high right and lofty prerogative. So when any other person, irrespective of who he is, undertakes to do any of these things, you may know he is not "moved upon by the Holy Ghost," in so speaking unless he has special authorization from the President of the Church. [D&C 20:9-11; 90:1-4, 9, 12-16; 107:8, 65-66, 91-92; 115:19; 124:125; HC 2:477; 6:363.] (Address to Seminary and Institute Faculty, BYU, July 7, 1954.))

D&C 107: 91 And again, the duty of the President of the office of the High Priesthood is to <sup>a</sup>preside over the whole church, and to be like unto <sup>b</sup>Moses—  
92 Behold, here is wisdom; yea, to be a <sup>a</sup>seer, a <sup>b</sup>revelator, a translator, and a <sup>c</sup>prophet, having all the <sup>d</sup>gifts of God which he bestows upon the head of the church. (After Joseph Smith, all apostles were sustained as prophets, seers and revelators, but not as translators.)