

D&C Lesson # 4
Remember the ... Book of Mormon
JS-History 1:27-65; D&C 2, 3, 5, 10, 17, 20, 84
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration)

I. The Time for the Threshing of the Earth had come; its threshing instrument ready.

A. The Lord had prophesied of this very thing.

1. “Fear not... ye men of Israel: I will help thee... Behold, I shall make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth....” (Isaiah 41:14, 16; but see v. 8-20).

2. The **Book of Mormon was that threshing instrument** --- first of scattered Israel.

a. “For this very purpose are these plates preserved --- that the promises of the Lord that he made unto his people might be fulfilled. That [scattered Israel] might know the promises of the Lord and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and ... that through repentance they might be saved” (D&C 3:19-20).

3. But of all mankind as well.

a. “they who go forth, bearing these tidings unto the inhabitants of the earth, to them is power given to seal both on earth and in heaven, the unbelieving and the rebellious” (D&C 1:8).

b. “those who receive it in faith, and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life” (D&C 20:14).

II. The time had come even for the threshing of the Heavens.

A. Note the first words Moroni spoke to Joseph contained the following:

1. “I will reveal unto you the Priesthood... before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers.... **If it were not so the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming**” (D&C 2). (Emphasis added)

2. The promise made to the Fathers of Israel was that **their seed would be saved** in the latter-days. **Many had died** through the centuries, but through true Priesthood, all **deceased could be taught and saving work done for them by their descendants. Not one soul would be forgotten!**

III. The Lord sent His own Powerful Witness that this Reaping of the Earth was beginning.

A. After Joseph received the Plates, that night of September 22, 1827, **hundreds of people saw angels in the heavens. They appeared as soldiers, marching through the heavens, gathered for battle --- sent forth to overcome the powers of darkness which had previously reigned.**

1. One group (Mendon, New York) called out by Methodist minister John Green to see the angels included Heber C. Kimball and wife, [both recorded the event in journals]; John and Fanny Young; and many other neighbors. Some of them joined the Church after it was formed.

2. Brigham Young and wife saw the angels 45 miles to the East, in Port Byron, NY. Brigham also recorded the manifestation in his journal.

3. Aaron Munson Baldwin in St. Lawrence County, New York, told his family he had seen a great display in the heavens the evening of September 22, 1827, of armies marching and rushing into battle. [This was recorded in their family history by his son Nathan]. Aaron never joined the church. [For this account, google Aaron’s name online].

4. Patricia Giles, surprised by reading an article in the Ensign about the event, says she had “heard about the army all my life. My mother said her family talked about it. They said that

about 200 people in their area [Oswagathchee, N.Y.] watched it go across the sky....They knew nothing about Mormons. Later, my immediate family all became members.” (2)

5. Undoubtedly there were far many more viewers, just not recorded.

B. Why did these angels appear as an army?

1. **The Lord’s purpose for this vision** can be found in the writings of Alfred Edersheim, who wrote in 1874 of the blowing of the trumpet on The Day of Remembrance, [The day Joseph received the Golden Plates was the Jewish “Day of Remembrance.” (1)

Edersheim wrote the blowing of the trumpet was for **Israel to gather for battle**, but, particularly as commanded on this day, to range themselves “under His banner and before His throne, and this symbolical confession and proclamation of Him as ‘Jehovah their God’ **brought them before Him to be ‘remembered’ and ‘saved’**” (*The Temple*, 231). (Emphasis added)

2. Note **the trumpet’s call on The Day of Remembrance expressed desire “to be remembered.”**

3. **Israel had indeed been “remembered”** and were now to be regathered, as many had come to expect to occur on this very day. Not only had they been remembered, but would now be saved, for the instrument of their salvation had been given!

IV. The Lord's Hand was the Hand behind Translating the Book of Mormon (D&C 1:29).

A. President Hugh B. Brown called the translation of the Book of Mormon "superhuman." He noted the challenges in producing such a book would include among many other things:

1. Correct information on ancient inhabitants of the American continent but with no sources; over 50 chapters on War [Which must agree with military strategy and what researchers are discovering about **ancient American war** --- unique weapons they used to *throw* arrows, the usage of deep ditches, and other ways they built forts and places of retreat, etc.]; 50 chapters with visions and prophecies, which must agree with ancient prophecies [and include many new ones which are only now being fulfilled]; 70 chapters of correct doctrine and exhortation [which have to be set in such powerful words that the spirit could speak through them and change men’s lives]; ancient literary usages, some not previously known.

2. In particular it must be written in a little over two months' actual writing time; **with no time for review of previous material, and done in one "draft;"** require few corrections --- just punctuation or words misspelled due to oral dictation. Truly its writing was a miracle.

V. The Lord's Hand was the Hand behind the eventual printing of the Book of Mormon

A. **The Lord provided a source to help the impoverished prophet publish it.**

1. It is a mistake to judge Martin Harris just on the loss of the 116 pages of the manuscript (D&C 3, 10). For he **became the source for publishing the Book of Mormon, in midst of many trials**. After all, he was a very wealthy and a highly respected man in the community. He also struggled with a wife who became viciously opposed to his support of the prophet.

Martin eventually gave all things up for the sake of the Book of Mormon:

(1) Paying to print it cost him his family. His wife divorced him and took half his property.

(2) Paying to print it cost *the rest* of his farm. He tried to mortgage his half, but at last was forced to sell. Miraculously he sold it for the exact amount needed.

(3) Paying to print it cost him his reputation. Once respected, he was soon labeled "crazy." And like the Smiths, Martin became the constant object of critical and even cruel comments.

B. Though Martin himself left the church for a time, he came back. On seeing Salt Lake City, he saw some of the fruits of his sacrifices: the Saints settled and out of the reach of mobs; the

beauty of the tabernacle and temple. He said, "Who would have thought that the Book of Mormon would have done all this?" Imagine what he would say today!

VI. The Lord's Hand was the Hand behind strong witnesses to the Book of Mormon (D&C 17).

A. It is initially dismaying to learn the three witnesses left the church at some time. But there are **important things to know about how they left their final witness.**

B. The final words of a dying person are so significant they are given special attention in our laws. While otherwise "hearsay," statements made by a dying person are allowed in courts because it is felt the "sense of impending death is presumed to remove all temptation to falsehood."

It is significant that each of the three witnesses took special pains to leave his dying testimony as part of his legacy to the world.

Oliver Cowdery, re-baptized, before dying, deliberately spoke to his family. **He urged their obedience to principles in the Book of Mormon,** promising he would see them in Heaven.

Martin Harris, also re-baptized, took pains to give deathbed testimony. He then testified, "...I did see the plates on which The Book of Mormon was written; I did see the angel; I did hear the voice of God; and I do know that Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God, holding the keys of the Holy Priesthood. He also said, "I tell you of these things that you may tell others that what I have said is true, and I dare not deny it; I heard the voice of God commanding me to testify to the same."

David Whitmer went even further to stress his "dying testimony." The local paper reported that in the presence of his family he asked his doctor to confirm he was in his right mind. And then he "addressed himself to all around his bedside in these words: '...I want to say to you all, the Bible and the Record of the Nephites [Book of Mormon] are true, **so you can say you have heard me bear my testimony on my deathbed.**'"

Did not the Lord inspire these three witnesses to reaffirm their testimonies of the Book of Mormon **on their deathbeds?** Thus the power of their testimonies was further heightened. **For the only thing they could have gained by such testimonies was a clear conscience before God.**

VII. The Lord's Spirit is the Voice in the Power of its word.

A. the coming forth of the Book of Mormon would have been for naught if it did not have the power to make a difference in lives. **But it can make and has made all the difference.**

It has made an enormous difference in the lives of millions, from the very beginning.

When Willard Richards received the Book of Mormon, he knew it was rejected generally as a hoax. He opened it at random, and after reading in it a bit said, "God or the devil has had a hand in that book, for man never wrote it." Then he read it through completely -- twice. It changed his life. By this time he had a strong testimony it was the work of the Lord. This feeling was so strong that he immediately began putting all his affairs in order: giving up his livelihood and ridding himself of any hindrance. He felt he must go to Kirtland, Ohio. Though it was a seven hundred miles journey, he wanted to examine the Church more thoroughly. He felt deeply that if Joseph Smith had indeed established God's true church on earth, **there would be a far greater work for him to do than selling pills all his life.** (Forace Green, comp., *Testimonies of our Leaders*, Bookcraft, 1958, 61-2). (Emphasis added)

With the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, lives everywhere began to change --- and millions continue to be changed down to modern times.

(1) See Lenet Hadley Read, “The Golden Plates and the Feast of Trumpets,” *The Ensign*, January 2000.

(2) Patricia Giles sent this information in response to a blog about the vision shared by Sherry Mills Johnson, called “Good News,” October 30, 2011.