

Come Follow Me Insights (Doctrine and Covenants, sections 3 -5; Jan 18-24)

I'm Taylor.

And I'm Tyler.

This is Book of Mormon Central Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 3, 4 and 5.

Has there ever been a time in your life when you have given into what could be called peer pressure? When you have done something that you probably knew you shouldn't do but you did it anyway because of this outside influence coming in? That's basically what's happening as we open our lesson today and get ready to discuss section 3 of the Doctrine and Covenants.

Now, with this particular section, there is a lot of material in the historical side of the story line that sets the stage for helping us understand and find meaning in section 3. So, let's just go back and very, very quickly catch us up to speed on what led to section 3 coming about.

Remember, Joseph Smith has married Emma Hale. Then, on September 22, 1827, Emma went with him to the Hill Cumorah and he was able to get the plates out of the hill, finally, after multiple years of going on that same date and being tutored and taught and trained by Moroni. He now gets the plates out. Thus, begins this long process of discovery.

Joseph holds plates. They're written in reformed Egyptian. He has no way of being able to translate them when he first gets them out. He also gets the Urim and Thummim. You'll notice that in those early days he's making copies of the characters off of the plates. He's even putting pieces of paper and making scratchings to get the engravings to show up on paper. He's exploring them. But he's not actively translating them. He doesn't seem to know how yet.

And you'll notice Martin Harris, a local farmer, owns quite a bit of land. He's very rich. He's well respected in the community. He is made aware of what's going on, and he believes in this work, and he wants to see before he believes. It seems to be one of the things that Martin is going to deal with repeatedly in this story, is he wants a little more evidence before he's willing to jump in.

So, we don't know exactly how this happens, but Joseph records some of the characters off of the plates onto a piece of paper, then he also records what he thinks is a translation. So, in order to validate or verify this translation process that Joseph is starting to experiment with, and we don't know whether he did it intentionally, or whether the Lord just put some English text in the Urim and Thummim as he's written some of the characters off the plates; we don't have all of the details of this. But what ends up happening is Martin takes this transcript, this piece of paper with some of the Egyptian characters, along with an English translation, and he heads east to some of the experts at some of the universities at the time.

So, he's going to meet with the two prominent ones, Samuel Latham Mitchell and Charles Anthon. And that's where you get that great story of Charles Anthon saying, yes, this is a good translation, bring the book to me and I'll translate it. And Martin says, well, part of it is sealed. And he says, I can't read a sealed book, and then he asks him where Joseph got the book, and he tells him that the angel had manifested it to him, and then he rips up the certificate that he had written.

But that was enough for Martin. Martin now had that testimony, that witness, so to speak, that hey, this is good. He goes back home, and thus begins the translation process of the small plates. Emma had done a lot of scribing work for Joseph early on, and now Martin picks up there. We have 116 pages. This is the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon, volume 1, part 1. So, there are two of them, one of two.

So, these are the size of the pages that have been written. You have 116. Martin has been down in Harmony, Pennsylvania, today called Oakland, Pennsylvania for enough time that his wife, Lucy, is concerned that Joseph is swindling her husband out of money, wasting his time, and is going to destroy his character in the process.

Martin asks Joseph, he loves the work that they've been doing and he says, can I take these 116 pages home to show Lucy that what we've been doing is the work of God, and to share these stories with her and with some of the other family members back home in Palmyra?

Joseph goes to the Lord and asks that question. And most of you are aware of this story that the Lord, through the Urim and Thummim, says no, don't let him take the manuscript. So, he comes back and he says to Martin, no, the answer is no. At which point, Martin, this gentleman who is a man of means and wealth and influence, he's older than Joseph, he says to this young prophet, I've got to be able to take them home in order to be able to help finance, and to be able to continue, this work. Go and ask the Lord again. At which point Joseph did. And the answer was the same, no, don't do it.

He comes back to Martin, and Martin gives him the same response. I have got to be able to take them. I've got to be able to have evidence. I've got to be able to show them, in order for me to be able to continue with this work. At which point, Joseph goes back and asks the Lord, and the answer was basically, you're not going to take no for an answer. So, he can take them if he binds himself with an oath, and you bind yourself with an oath, that he will only show them to five specific people, and they're given by name.

Well, Martin takes the manuscript, goes home. It turns out that he shows them to other people, not just the five. He's so excited about it! And by the way, it's easy to look back in time and point a finger of scorn at Martin and I get it, what he did was not appropriate. But at the same time, what I want to say is that, how often do you and I sometimes get overzealous and excited about something, to the point where we maybe act inappropriately, or not with the greatest of wisdom

in how we proceed with sacred things, or revelations, or manifestations that God has given us? And maybe we share them a little too widely and, in the process, learn some lessons of life.

Well in the meantime, back in Harmony, Emma has now given birth to their first son. They named him Alvin, after Joseph's older brother who had passed away previously. That little baby boy died, and Emma wasn't doing well. They almost lost Emma as well.

A few weeks after the birth, Martin still hasn't returned with the manuscript, and there's no word from him, and Joseph was worried sick. Emma is worried, and she finally convinces him to leave and go back to Palmyra and see what happened. So, Joseph, keep in mind, he's about as poor as they come at this phase. They've just lost their first child, he'd just about lost his wife, he's worried sick about the 116 pages of manuscript, the only copy that Martin has taken, and he doesn't have extra money or extra means to provide for even the most basic needs of his family and of his life, but Emma convinces him to go north and see what happened.

So, he shows up in Palmyra, and word is sent to the Martin Harris farm to come and see Joseph, and Martin doesn't come for breakfast when he was supposed to be there. He delays, and this causes more anxiety and pressure for Joseph. When Martin finally shows up, he's not looking well, and he drops his utensils, and then here's the dialogue that occurs. Hyrum asks, are you sick? And Martin's reply was, "I have lost my soul! I have lost my soul." At which point Joseph jumps up and says, "[Oh] Martin, have you lost that manuscript? Have you broken your oath and brought down condemnation upon my head as well as your own?" "Yes;" Martin confessed. "It is gone, and I know not where."

After Joseph expresses some heartfelt pleas to God he says, "all is lost! What shall I do? I have sinned -- it is I who tempted the wrath of God" for asking him for that which I had no right to ask, and he wept and groaned and paced the floor. He thought he'd lost his soul. He and Martin both.

Brothers and sisters, if this was 116 pages, manuscript pages of scripture, and you can picture the feeling, the weight, the reality of what just happened. I've lost scripture that was translated by the gift and power of God. Now, you'll notice as you open up section 3 in the Doctrine and Covenants, that the location puts us where? You're down in Harmony, Pennsylvania. It gives you the date of July, 1828. This is after Joseph has returned home to Emma from Palmyra. So, he was walking in the woods near the home there when the Angel Moroni appeared to him and gave him the Urim and Thummim. At which point, he looks into the Urim and Thummim, and it's here, brothers and sisters, it's section 3. It's the first time where Joseph records the first revelation given to him.

Now we have section 1 and 2, but the first one where he physically writes it himself. He's not dictating it to a scribe or anyone else. So, let's look at this very carefully from a 10,000-foot overview of section 3, because what's happened is Joseph lost scripture, and so God is going to need to correct him. There's going to be some discipline. He's this 22-year-old poor farmer who

has been called to be a prophet and do the work of God, and yet something went wrong. He gave into peer pressure. But isn't it interesting how God takes something that looks like a tragic loss, and how God, with his infinite wisdom, can turn it into a glorious learning experience for not only the Prophet, but for all of us?

You'll notice in section 3 what's going to happen. There's this nice pattern, where God opens section 3 with declaring hope for the work moving forward, that nothing can stop the work from progressing. But then he embeds this little rebuke to Joseph. And then, in the middle section, he's going to give some hope. And then, he's going to give another rebuke, and a warning, and then he's going to finish the section with hope, and with a glorious promise.

Brothers and sisters, there's a beautiful pattern here for dealing with children, for dealing with people if you're in a leadership position, is, you sandwich any rebuke, or any correction, or any discipline neatly between hope, and expressions of love, and faith, and giving, propping up courage to move forward and not give up. And that's what we see with section 3.

Here's the grand irony for me: knowing that section 3 is our first time where Joseph, using the Urim and Thummim, is going to record a revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants. He's opening his story, so to speak. Do any of you find it odd that the Prophet would lead out by telling us his worst moments in mortality, where he felt like he had lost his soul, where all is lost? I had this great commission from God, this great calling, and now I've lost it because I gave into, what we would call today, peer pressure, or something like that? When you're trying to tell your story, and maybe convince people that you've been called of God, this is a really odd way to do it, unless it's just a simple reality, unless he's just simply telling his story the way it unfolded, and he's not trying to trick anyone, but he's just saying this is what happened. And in the process now, you and I can look back in time and say, hmm, he lost 116 pages. What was on them? What did he actually lose, and how is this not terrible?

Well, let me show you something. If you go to the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon and you go to page 117. You can zoom in here so you can see this. On page 117 of the printer's manuscript, right here at the top, you'll notice on line three there, it says, "the Book of Mosiah chapter", and then you'll notice there, it's got three Roman numerals, III. But the second and the third I are crossed out, leaving it as the Book of Mosiah chapter 1, instead of what it was originally. They've crossed these out, so it leaves it as chapter 1.

Brothers and sisters, what you have in the Book of Mormon today, starting with the Book of Mosiah chapter 1, is really the original Mosiah chapter 3 from the original manuscript, and the printer's manuscript reveals this. What you now have is, if you go to our Book of Mormon and open up to the English page 145, where it says the Book of Mosiah, you'll notice that there's no book heading. It's the only major book in the Book of Mormon, multichapter book, that doesn't have a book intro, a book heading. All of the other ones have those.

It's also the only book in the Book of Mormon to begin with a guy whose name isn't at the top of the book. This isn't the book of Benjamin, and yet the book of Mosiah begins with Benjamin. In other words, the book of Mosiah originally would have started with Benjamin's father, Mosiah the 1st, because what you have is King Mosiah, whose son is Benjamin, whose son is Mosiah the 2nd. So, what we get in the Book of Mormon today, starting in page 145, is it picks up the story of King Benjamin most of the way through his reign as a king. What we're missing is all of this, Mosiah the 1st's writings, and the beginning of Benjamin's ministry, and we're missing the book heading to Mosiah.

Apparently, this is all part of the lost 116 pages which starts with the Book of Lehi. So, look at what we've lost. Mormon has abridged, Mormon went to a lot of work reading. If you look at our conceptual drawings of Mormon's cave, if you look here at this large collection of the plates of Nephi, Mormon has read all of the records, from Lehi all the way down through Mosiah the 1st, and he's abridged them. He's written the record onto the Plates of Mormon. He went to a lot of effort to get us to this point, and we're going to lose Mormon's abridgment of the Book of Lehi all the way down to this point.

Now, do any of you find it odd that back in 2nd Nephi, when Nephi tells you once they got to the promised land, he made plates and he recorded all of the history? And then, after he had done that, the Lord said, now make a second record, a smaller record. Only record the things of your soul, the spiritual stuff. Can you picture Nephi saying, well, that makes no sense, I've already recorded all this? Why should I do it again? So, God asks him to do a second version, but keep it smaller, and simpler, and more focused on spiritual things.

Years and years later, centuries later, when Mormon is going through these records that you see on the screen again of the large plates of Nephi, he tells you that he was searching among the records, and he found a small set of plates, this little teeny record in comparison to the large collection of plates. And he read through it, and he said, wow! These things please me. This is the record of the prophets from Nephi, including some of the words of Jacob. And he said, I don't know why, this is for a wise purpose in the Lord, but I'm going to include this with my record. And so he puts it on with his plates, even though he has already abridged this whole history. He finds that small set of plates and he says, okay, I'm going to include those with my plates as well, but they cover the same time period.

But you'll notice, brothers and sisters, in 1st Nephi through Omni, there's no abridgment from Mormon. He's not telling you any story in 1st Nephi through Omni. It's all, "I Nephi", "I Jacob", "I Jarom", "I Enos", so on and so forth. All these prophets are speaking in first person. Mormon didn't abridge it. He just stuck it on with his plates. Interesting.

Nephi got to write a whole bunch of scripture that would never go live. Mormon got to abridge, and work on reading records and abridging them, and it never went live. Joseph Smith got to experience translating scripture, a lot of it, 116 pages, but it's never going to go live. And now we lose all of those prophets' efforts. And God says, oh, that wise purpose that Mormon didn't

know why he was including it, and Nephi didn't know why he had to write a second record, I know why: because we knew that we were going to lose this.

And isn't it interesting that it looks like a tragedy? But in reality, what we get instead is probably a better version of what we would have had in the first place, which is Mormon's abridgment of all of these people, but now we get this first-person account that covers mostly the same. It covers the same time period, but we don't get a lot of stories here. So, we're missing those.

I guess what I'm saying brothers and sisters, if God goes to that great of effort to make sure that what was lost isn't permanently lost, but there's a beautiful replacement for it that's possibly even better than the original, if he'll do that with a book, I'm convinced that he'll do that with the children of God; that he'll bring things into your life, he'll prepare you today. He'll ask you to do some things this week, or this month, or this year, that make no sense to you. You're going to say things like Nephi, well I've already done that record, or like Mormon, but I've already included those time periods in my abridgment. I don't need to put this on. It's a duplicate, it's not necessary.

God knows what he's doing with scriptures over millennia spanning thousands of years. God knows what he's doing spanning days, months, weeks, and years in our life. And so, don't be shocked when he has you doing things that, for the present moment, make no sense to you. It comes down to this idea of, you trust him enough to obey and move forward.

Now, with that foundation, Joseph, in the woods in Harmony, Pennsylvania, with Angel Moroni giving him back the Urim and Thummim, gets this revelation. Look at the very first thing that comes out of this revelation. Knowing the history, knowing the setup to this: "The works, and the designs, and the purposes of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught" (Doctrine and Covenants 3:1).

Brothers and sisters, that is so true for Joseph, and for the scriptures coming forth, and for the unfolding of the Restoration of the Gospel. But it's also true in your life, if you allow him to be your God, and then you choose to be his son or his daughter, his people, and seek his will. Notice verse 2: "For God doth not walk in crooked paths, neither doth he turn to the right hand nor the to the left, neither doth he vary from that which he hath said, therefore his paths are straight, and his course is one eternal round. Remember, remember that it is not the work of God that is frustrated, but the work of men;".

So, here's this effort by the adversary to destroy the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. You'll notice he tried to destroy Joseph in the First Vision before that happened. He's now trying to destroy the efforts to bring forth the plates, and once the plates come forth, and nobody can take them from him, and Joseph figures out how this translation process works, so once we get it translated, now Satan tries to destroy the manuscript. And it looks like oh, he finally succeeded when it turns out, no, God saw this three thousand years in advance, and is setting everything in order, way, way back in the early 550 BC time period, to put things in place so that Satan can't

destroy the work, and that man can't frustrate the things of God. Now you'll notice that's the hope, that's the foundation for testimony.

Look at verse 4: "For although a man may have many revelations, and have power to do many mighty works, yet if he boasts in his own strength, and sets at naught the counsels of God, and follows after the dictates of his own will and carnal desires, he must fall and incur the vengeance of a just God upon him." Do you notice anything about the pronouns here? Here you have the Savior speaking to Joseph Smith through the words of the Urim and Thummim, speaking in third person about a man. He's not looking directly at Joseph saying you, you, you. He's speaking indirectly, but you better believe that Joseph is getting this message, this rebuke loud and clear, piercing him to the heart. He tells him that, you were entrusted with these things, you were given commandments, but verse 6: "And behold, how oft you have transgressed the commandments and the laws of God, and have gone on in the persuasions of men."

Brothers and sisters, Joseph is going to learn some valuable lessons early on as a prophet through this experience, to the point where later on in his life, there are going to be people giving him all kinds of pressure to do things. You're going to notice that Joseph increasingly pays less attention to what the world would counsel him to do, and goes more fully to, Lord, what would thou have me do? That will I do. He learns some valuable lessons, which might be a lesson for you and me.

Perhaps when you've struggled personally in your own life, perhaps it's not quite the tragic failure that you had before supposed, as long as you learn from it. If you appropriately repent, humble yourself, go to God, plead for forgiveness, and not just forgiveness, but to plead for wisdom, to learn from those experiences so that you don't have to keep repeating the same struggles through life.

We've talked about how there's a pattern of hope, rebuke, hope, rebuke, and hope. Let's read some of those hope passages. God knows this, he cares deeply about our growth and progress in becoming like him. The reason he said to Joseph Smith, and we can apply this to our own lives, he tells us, particularly verse 10: "But remember, God is merciful." Because we can know that, look at the next phrase. As we remember that God is merciful, that should lead you, induce you, encourage you to do what? "...repent of that which thou hast done which is contrary to the commandment which I gave you, and thou art still chosen, and art again called to the work" (Doctrine and Covenants 3:10).

All of us have been called to the work of God. All of us fail from time to time. All of us can think of times where we did not measure up to our own expectations, or that which God has for us. Let's go back to the beginning of this verse. I love this phrase: "But remember, God is merciful" (Doctrine and Covenants 3:10). And as you think back in your life, you can see the many times where God's mercy has been with you, and you are still chosen to do the work. The only way to lose your chosen-ness is to walk away from God, to choose to not remember, to choose to forget his mercy. It's impossible to lose your chosen-ness if you remember God.

We'll point this out: when you partake of the sacrament on a weekly basis, what are you declaring? That you will always remember God. Every week you have an opportunity both to declare, I choose to remember you, and to be taught and reminded. His spirit will always be with you; therefore, you are chosen to be part of the work. So, we encourage you, as you look to these verses, to remember in hope what God will do for you.

So, how often do you hear the word repent, or the command to repent, or the word repentance, and instantly think of this negative experience, this sorrowful experience, this painful experience? Brothers and sisters, our prophets and apostles and leaders of the Church have reminded us that repentance is not a sorrowful thing. Yes, it hurts. There's some godly sorrow involved, but that's the reality of this whole repentance process. It's better to suffer in humility for a short, small moment now, than to persist in pride, in our carnal nature and not repent, not go through that painful, soul-changing process of turning away from the flesh, turning away from the mortal desires, appetites, and passions that maybe are not helping to exalt us someday, and turning our focus and our attention to God. That's painful. A natural man and a natural woman doesn't like doing that, but it's better to have that small moment of repentance and turning now, with glorious promise of God's mercy coming as a result forever, rather than the opposite, which is live without the godly sorrow now, but with major regrets and major sorrow for long term.

Notice after propping him back up, then another rebuke. Verse 11: "Except thou do this, thou shalt be delivered up and become as other men, and have no more gift." In other words, Joseph, this gift that was given to you, it is a gift, and it can be taken away. Don't think it was you who did this, this translation gift. It was given by God. Verse 13 says: "Who has set at naught the counsels of God, and has broken the most sacred promises which were made before God, and has depended upon his own judgment and boasted in his own strength. And this is the reason that thou hast lost thy privileges for a season."

Now, after this rebuke that he just gave, you'll notice verse 16: "Nevertheless," despite of all of that, put greater emphasis here, "my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people."

To provide some context for the ending of section 3, let's return to the title page of the Book of Mormon, written by Moroni, where he declares the purpose of the Book of Mormon, and then we'll tie it in to what God reveals to Joseph Smith through the Urim and Thummim here in section 3. Let me go to the second paragraph of the title page. God says the Book of Mormon was recorded "to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers;" (Book of Mormon Title Page, paragraph 2). And this book, the Book of Mormon was also, written "that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever" (Book of Mormon Title Page, paragraph 2).

So, we have talked in a variety of lessons about God's covenants. There are many covenants, but some of the most significant, maybe one of the most significant, is the Abrahamic Covenant. If

you go back to Genesis chapter 12, 1 through 3, where God promised to Abraham and his posterity and to all the earth, through the family of Abraham, posterity, property, priesthood and prosperity.

So, let's look at how God, at the end of section 3, ties this together, or reminds people: this is his work. He has made an eternal covenant to do these things, and has chosen the family of Abraham to make these covenants accessible to all. And let's read about this. We're going to jump down to verse 19: "And for this very purpose are these plates preserved," referring to the Book of Mormon, "which contain these records--" the records of God's covenantal dealings with the inhabitants of the new world, "--that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled which he made to his people;". God will not break his word. Therefore, he will do his work, and no one can stop him from doing it. Sure, there might be hiccups along the way, but he has prepared in advance a way that he can always fulfill his eternal, covenantal obligations to his children.

Verse 20: "And that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved. Amen."

One of the reasons the Book of Mormon was preserved was as an act of charity, and as an act of covenantal obligation on the part of God to deliver to the children of Abraham, a remnant, even the Lamanites, the covenantal promises that their forefathers had once had, but had rejected. But God, in his covenantal mercy, had promised that each succeeding generation of Abraham's children would be granted and gifted the opportunity to know of his promises to them, that they are freely offered, and all we need to do is to repent to receive them. That is one of the key reasons why the Book of Mormon was preserved, and why section 3 was given to remind Joseph Smith: God has a purpose of preserving and blessing the house of Israel, or the children of Abraham, and thereby, the entire world. And now the Book of Mormon is going out to the whole world, which is in partial fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham, all the way back to Genesis chapter 12 verse 1 through 3, where God says: "...in thee [and in thy seed] shall all the families of the earth be blessed." And so, the coming forth of the Book of Mormon is, in part, a fulfillment of a promise that was made anciently nearly four thousand years ago.

Now if you or somebody that you know has served a mission, chances are pretty good that they will be very familiar with D&C section 4. Now, back when I served my mission every single district meeting, every zone conference, every meeting at the MTC always began with everybody standing up and reciting Doctrine and Covenants section 4 in its entirety, all seven verses from start to finish.

There's an interesting thing to consider here. We use it, and rightly so, we use it as a missionary scripture because of what it's talking about here, but look very carefully at the intro and the origin of this section. Look at the date in the heading. Who's receiving it? You'll notice the church isn't even established yet and won't be for more than a year at this point in early 1829.

Like Tyler, I came to love this scripture as a missionary, and I remember struggling as a young missionary to memorize all of this, and it's only been recently listening to our Church History scholars like Steve Harper where he really focused on some of the details surrounding this section. It's significant that it is given individually to Joseph Smith, Senior. Yes, we can liken this to ourselves; we can liken this to the work that we all should be engaged in where the field is ripe, white ready to harvest. But this is given to one man, Joseph Smith, Senior, a farmer sometimes, depending on how the weather was going.

What I love about this is when Jesus was on the earth, he called four simple fishermen in the Galilee and he asked them to become fishers of men. And here in our modern-day restoration, he goes to poor, simple farmers, and to this one particular farmer, he tells him to be a farmer of men. I like how the God of the universe knows each of us individually, and will contextualize his message to suit our circumstances.

So, whether you're a farmer, or have any other skill set, God invites you to the work. And I suppose he could use any kind of metaphor to take your skills, and your talents, and dreams, and passions in the service of God's work.

So, you'll notice in section 4 verse 1, it says: "Now behold, a marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men." Just as a little note here, the word *marvelous*: we often use it to mean oh, wonderful. The reality is, the root of *marvelous* is *marvel*, which means it defies logical explanation. We marvel at it. How did that happen? And so, the very first thing given to Joseph, Senior is this promise that there is going to be a work come forth that is a marvel; it can't be always explained by the wisdom of human logic and reason.

And just for some background with Joseph, Senior, he's a descendant of Congregationalists. But he has chosen to stay more aloof of the religious parties of the day, very similar, in fact, to Joseph, Junior, and he hasn't joined any of the churches. He has had multiple dreams, troubling dreams, unsettling dreams, for many years leading up to this. And in all of his dreams, it involves him working through dark and dreary kinds of wildernesses, and right as he gets to the end, or an angel in a dream will invite him into a garden, or there seems to be some resolution coming, then the dream ends, and it's left him feeling like there's something good coming in the midst of all of these struggles. And this is a guy who is not a very successful farmer. He has lost a lot of crops, either to weather, or to a con man on one occasion, with some ginseng root being shipped, and then he being lied to and losing money on that. He has lost lots and lots of opportunities to earn money as a farmer. And he's relocated his family, the frame home that he builds on the property, he loses that, a foreclosure on his mortgage, his life has been hard as he's trying to eke a living out of this frontier.

And now can you imagine how it must have felt to him to hear the words, "A marvelous work is about to come forth among the children of men" (Doctrine and Covenants 4:1). As Joseph, his son, is receiving this revelation for him and for Joseph, Senior to realize this work that's so marvelous is going to be brought forth into the world because of my son, it had to be kind of a

remarkable moment for him. Verse 2: "Therefore, O ye that embark in the service of God, see that ye serve him with all your heart, might, mind and strength..." You'll notice brothers and sisters, that in the work of the Lord, that he doesn't just want part of you. He wants all of you. He wants all aspects of our life to be devoted and dedicated to him.

The two instruments of revelation are included here, that we're going to be talking about shortly in a subsequent lesson, that our whole heart and our whole mind, our might and our strength, all of it, is devoted to the Lord and given to him. Notice verse 3: "...if ye have desires to serve God ye are called to the work;". Did you notice that? *Desires*. He didn't say if you have abilities, if you have degrees, if you have a certain pedigree, if you are a descendant of certain people, he didn't say any of that. He said if you have desires, then you are called to the work. That's what is going to get you the call.

Then verse 4: "For behold the field is white already to harvest; and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul;". As Taylor was saying earlier, what a beautiful verse to communicate very clearly with a farmer about what God intends him to do, in this metaphorical sense of thrust in your sickle to harvest this field that God, that the Son, has ripened over time.

Then notice verse 5: "And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work." Did you notice? Desires to serve God: you are called. Well, what qualifies you? That's what calls you, but what qualifies you? There's this long list, in verse 5, of things that qualify you to be able to be a sharp instrument in the hands of the Lord in harvesting the souls of men, in participating in this gathering effort: "faith, hope, charity and love with an eye single to the glory of God" (Doctrine and Covenants 4:5).

President Russell M. Nelson, many years ago when he was an Apostle at the time in the Quorum of the Twelve, gave a great talk about what it means to have your eye single to the glory of God. And he used the example or the analogy of binoculars, that out of one eye you see one thing, and out of another eye you see something else, but to make your eyes single, that you bring those two images together. And now, what God intends for me and what I want for me now become the same thing, and it becomes three dimensional, not a two-dimensional image. Beautiful. As I swallow up my will in God's will, then I can see things more clearly the way He wants me to see them and my eye becomes single to his glory. I'm not doing it for me; I'm now doing it for Him.

And then he says in verse 6: "Remember...". So, we've been called, we've now been qualified for the work through these things, and now the things to remember as we embark in this work: "Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance...". By the way, the word *temperance*, in an 1829 context, has to do with abstaining from alcohol. Joseph, Senior, he acknowledged and admitted the fact that he had given himself to too much use of alcohol up to this time, and so it's interesting that for him, temperance is a big deal. And coming from God through his son, he's reminded of that. So, "...faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence...", and he's told that if he'll ask, he'll receive and if he

knocks that it will be opened unto him. What a beautiful message to the Prophet's father, who is struggling to figure out what God would have him do in order to help build up the kingdom in the latter days.

Okay, now we finish with section 5 for this week. In this one you have Martin Harris, who the previous year, we've lost those 116 pages, and feels very bad about that. He comes down to Harmony, and at the request of Martin, Joseph asks the Lord for some guidance and direction here. This is a very unique section, section 5, because what you have here is a man, Martin, who came to Joseph to ask this question, and Joseph asks the Lord, and in response, the Lord speaks to both of them. So, it's not Joseph talking to Martin for the Lord; it's Joseph recording the revelation. And the first part of the revelation is all directed at Joseph, and the last part is going to be mostly focused on Martin.

Now, here's the struggle Martin's facing. We've mentioned this before. Martin likes evidence. He wants to see things, and then it's this idea of, now I can believe. I want proof. I want to be able to show, I want to be able to explain in ways that people say oh, okay, I've seen, I get it. That's a big deal for Martin. So, he comes to Joseph asking for a bigger revelation before he's willing to put out more money, and more of his good name and his time and energy, in helping with this translation process as it moves forward. So, 'can you show me something bigger so that I can feel more confidence in my supporting you in this effort Joseph' is kind of the underlying story that brings on section 5.

So, in addition to the common understanding of the word *belief*, sometimes we say *faith*. In a past lesson, I talked about the etymology, or the root, of the word *believe*. It actually comes from two words and the first word is *be* and you get *believe*. And *be*, when you put it in front of a word, means fully, completely or one hundred percent. *Believe* actually is a variant of a word that we all know, the word *love*. I love the fact that a word that we use so often in a religious context when we're talking about God, *believe* is actually all about loving Him, and loving truth, but not just partly, but a hundred percent.

So, let's think about Martin Harris. God is telling Martin, I want you to fully love me, a hundred percent, all the way. When you fully love me, you will see me. Let's think back to the brother of Jared. He believed one hundred percent. He had full love, and therefore, he saw. And so, in our own lives, how far are we willing to go to show that we love God? Are we going to wait to see him, or to see evidence of him, before we choose to love him? Or are we going to choose to love him, and then see the evidence? And actually, if you look at how the scriptures have been revealed, God has already shown us, again and again, what he's done for us, that we can choose, with actually full evidence, to love him one hundred percent. John 3:16: "For God So, loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son." Jesus is the greatest example of what we can see of why we should fully love. So, when you think about believing, choose to love one hundred percent.

So, to follow up on that, you'll notice that in the Book of Mormon, in the Book of Ether, it teaches us that we shouldn't dispute because we don't see. So, it says "...dispute not because you see not, for you receive no witness until after the trial of your faith" (Ether 12:6). You have to try your faith, prove your faith, then you get the witness.

So, in matters of science, this is a great formula. But in matters of seeking heavenly truth and eternal direction, we start with belief, we start with faith. And then, after the trial of that faith, then we see the evidence; then, it flows. And that is the lesson that the Lord is going to teach Martin Harris, here in section 5. You'll notice some of the details here. Look at verse 7: "Behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe you, my servant Joseph, if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you [even the plates]." There are people who say, well if you'd just show me the golden plates, then I would believe the Book of Mormon is true. In the Joseph Smith History, he tells us that once the translation process was complete, he returned the plates to the Angel Moroni, who has them in his possession to this day, according to that text (JSH 1:60).

It's as if God is saying, no, I'm not going to put these things which have been committed to you, Joseph -- I'm not going to put them in a museum on display for everybody, because there's this element of faith that God is trying, he's testing. Can you believe? Look at the fruits of what comes off of those plates. Don't look at the roots that brought forth those words, the plates themselves, as the means whereby we base our testimony.

Verse 8: "Oh, this unbelieving and stiffnecked generation -- mine anger is kindled against them." Here's a God of the universe saying, they won't trust me. They're looking at this world that they live on, and all these incredible miracles that happen every day, and we don't see them as miracles. And we don't believe in God, and we want proof. Show me, and then I'll believe.

Look at verse 10: "But this generation shall have my word through you;". They're going to have to trust that God on high is going to do his work through a poor and, at the time, seemingly insignificant farm boy, who becomes this incredible instrument in the hands of the Lord to bring forth all of these words as the Restoration unfolds over time. It's beautiful.

And then he promises him, in addition, in verse 11: "...in addition to your testimony, the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you. Yea, they shall know of a surety that these things are true..." That's interesting, knowing that Martin Harris is one of the three witnesses in the future. He is going to see things and know of a surety, and it's fascinating, when he has his experience as one of the three witnesses, he declares, I have seen, mine eyes have seen, I've seen. Now he can bear testimony with certainty. It's beautiful.

Verse 14: "...to none else will I grant this power, to receive this same testimony among this generation, in this the beginning of the rising up and the coming forth of my church out of the wilderness – clear as the moon, and fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." It was

my colleague, Dana Pike, who pointed this out to me that the Song of Solomon is quoted a couple of times, a few times, actually, in the Doctrine and Covenants. This is one of them, in verse 14, this segment about the “clear as the moon, fair as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners”, just for fun (Doctrine and Covenants 5:14).

Notice verse 16: "And behold, whosoever believeth on my words, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit; and they shall be born of me, even of water and of the Spirit--". Brothers and sisters, belief really is a choice. Faith in the Lord really is a choice that we need to make. It's not something that happens to us. It's a decision we make. It's conscious, where we say, I don't know everything, but Elder Anderson would teach us, but I know enough to be able to move forward in faith, to exercise that belief and that faith by moving forward in the covenant path of the Lord, and then I will see the evidence. And the promise is here again.

Look at verse 24: "Behold, I say unto him, ...". Now, this is speaking directly to Martin, through Joseph. "Behold, I say unto him, he exalts himself and does not humble himself sufficiently before me; but if he will bow down before me, and humble himself in mighty prayer and faith, in the sincerity of his heart, then will I grant unto him a view of the things which he desires to see...", which is to be one of those three witnesses (5:24).

Just on a personal note, Martin Harris is buried in the cemetery in Clarkston, Utah. When I was growing up every year, there was the Martin Harris pageant up there in Clarkston, in northern Cache Valley. And I have dozens of my ancestors of the Griffin line are buried in that same cemetery out there in Clarkston. I've been to Martin Harris' grave multiple times. I remember my grandma and grandpa talking about the stories that that little town of Clarkston just loved for years, where right up to his dying day, Martin Harris would share his testimony as one of the witnesses of the Book of Mormon with anyone and everyone who would listen. He was faithful to the very end to that testimony that this book is true. And even his very last words were in reference to his experience as a witness and to reestablish the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon as the word of God.

In closing today, brothers and sisters, I love the fact that you're watching the unfolding of the Restoration coming out of these humble beginnings. It's as it's coming out of the dust, like a farmer would plant seeds, that would then come out of the dust, and then it takes time, and then it has to go through a long process before you can finally harvest the crops at the end of the year, or at the end of the season. So it is with the Dispensation of Fullness of Times.

Brothers and sisters, if we're patient with God, if we trust him, and we know that the works of God cannot be frustrated, neither can they come to naught, that will allow us to thrust our sickle in with all of our might and help in this great harvesting effort called the gathering of Israel. God lives. He stands at the head of this work, and he loves you. And I leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

History of the Church, 1:55

Lucy Mack Smith, “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845,” book 7, pages 5–6; punctuation standardized.

Smith, Joseph. “History, 1838–1856, Volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834].”