

Come, Follow Me Class Insights 6 (Doctrine and Covenants 10 – 11; Feb. 1-7)

I'm Taylor, and I'm Tyler.

This is Book of Mormon Central's Come Follow Me Insights. Today, Doctrine and Covenants sections 10 through 11.

As we jump into this scripture block today, I want to give you a big-picture, symbolic overview of what we're going to be covering. This is a variation on a pre-mortal theme. What you have is God, who establishes his work, who sets things up, who prepares a plan for us to be able to progress to become like him, where he can empower agency. In the process, we have opposition. So, Satan fights against everything that God prepares, trying to destroy or overthrow his work. And his work is “to bring to pass the immortality and [the] eternal life of man”, and of all of us (Moses 1:39).

So, it's fascinating in these sections to watch what Satan does to try to thwart God, this being who knows everything, who is not bound by time, who has all power, and all love, and all glory, how Satan tries to destroy that. And in the process, some pretty bad things happen, and you think, oh no, this doesn't look good. But at the end of the day, God says, now we're going to proceed with the plan in an even better way than you thought before.

So, we've seen this pattern in heaven at the instigation of the war in heaven, we saw it in the Garden of Eden, we saw it throughout the mortal ministry of Jesus, we've seen it in the lives and the ministries of prophets and saints throughout the ages where Satan fights against the work of God, but in the process, God's work always prevails and goes forth according to His plan, not according to the devil's efforts. Now, to clarify, Satan may win an occasional battle here or there along the way. But God wins the war every time, the overall war.

Let's jump in: section 10. If you look at the section heading, it says that it was a revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1828. That's when it seems to begin, but it's spread out over a longer period of time as this revelation unfolds, because as you'll remember, this section, section 10, goes hand in hand with section 3, with the losing of the 116 pages of manuscript from the Book of Mormon translation that Martin Harris assisted in bringing forth, and then subsequently lost.

Notice verse 1: “Now, behold, I say unto you, that because you delivered up those writings which you had power given unto you to translate by the means of the Urim and Thummim, into the hands of a wicked man, you have lost them.” It's interesting to see how God refers to this phrase, “a wicked man”, throughout section 10. Interesting, because Martin Harris is still going to become one of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. He's still going to finance the publication of the Book of Mormon. It's interesting because the Lord seems to be using the term here “wicked man” to imply somebody who is doing what he wants to do, rather than what God wants to do, trying to thwart the work from moving forth. Now, notice the effect that that had on Joseph. Verse 2: “And you also lost your gift at the same time, and your mind became darkened.”

Brothers and sisters, every time when we go against whatever it was that God has decreed, or laid forth for us to do, anytime we go against that and think we're smarter, or we have a better

idea, or a better plan to move forward, it causes this “stupor of thought”; our mind becomes darkened (Doctrine and Covenants 9:9, 10:2). We don't have the capacity to carry forth our work like God has the capacity carrying forth his work.

So, notice the contrast: verse 3 opens with the word “nevertheless”. Remember, “nevertheless” puts a greater emphasis on what's to come, not on what came right before? So, here's this mind-darkening example in verse 2, but in spite of that, look at what gets greater emphasis. Verse 3: “...it is now restored unto you again; therefore, see that you are faithful and continue on unto the finishing of the remainder of the work of translation as you have begun.” I love that. That God puts the “nevertheless” emphasis, always-the-greater emphasis on basically saying, Joseph, I forgive you. Learn from that mistake, learn from that struggle that you faced, and move on. Go forward. Build up the work, build up the kingdom with faithfulness to my commandments, and in this covenant connection that I have with you.

Look at verse 4: “Do not run faster or labor more than you have strength and means provided to enable you to translate; but be diligent unto the end.” Do you get the sense that Joseph has been a little anxious, maybe a little impatient with himself in the timing, trying to translate the work at a faster speed than maybe God had intended for him to have to translate it? He's saying, just don't run faster than you have strength. Means will be provided for you to do the translation. Little does Joseph know, at this phase, that the Lord has been preparing Oliver Cowdery to come down very soon and become his scribe, late in the spring of 1829, to do the bulk of the remaining translation work.

And then you get the famous verse 5: “Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work”, at which point the Savior transitions, in section 10, into this section where he's describing to Joseph, he's revealing to Joseph from a heavenly perspective: let me describe to you exactly what Satan did, and is trying to do, with those pages of scripture. And Satan thinks he has won a big victory here, but I'm going to show you that the wisdom of God is much greater than the craftiness and the deceptiveness of Satan to try to overthrow the work, because God's in charge (Doctrine and Covenants 10:43). This is His work. Remember, in the Book of Mormon, 2nd Nephi 27, he's going to say on two occasions in that section, I am able to do mine own work (2 Nephi 27:20-21). And I think that's what we have going on here, is God reminding us: I got this. “I am able to do mine own work” (2 Nephi 27:20-21). I can do this.

So, here's the cunning plan, okay? Look at verse 10: “...Satan hath put it into their hearts...” these people who got hold of the manuscript, “...to alter the words which you have caused to be written, or which you have translated, which have gone out of your hands.” And then once they've altered them, they're going to look for you to retranslate them, so then they can publish, side-by-side with your retranslation, their altered words and say, see, he's not a prophet. This work is a fraud from the get-go.

Some of you are probably thinking to yourself, wait a minute. How could a group of people honestly think to themselves, let's take these manuscript pages, and alter it, and then publish it in hopes that he retranslates again like he had here, so that we can show that he's a fraud? What rational human being would do that without stopping to say, wait a minute, we're the ones being the fraud here, because he just translated it again? Why would you do that? The simple answer is

that one of the techniques, or tactics, of Satan is to get people to lie in order to overcome somebody else's perceived lies. It's this idea of the ends justify the means; it's okay for us to be deceptive, because this person is being deceptive, and this person is trying to lead people astray, perhaps even by the power of the devil. Oh, the irony is thick here as they are being inspired by the devil to do this while claiming that somebody else is doing what they're doing by the power of the devil, not terribly unlike what some of the chief priests of the people are going to say to Jesus in the New Testament: well, you're performing these miracles by the power of the devil. So, they're going to feel like anything they say or do against him is completely justified, because this guy is clearly of the devil. Yes, the irony is thick as it unfolds here.

Let's focus on two things here, for just a moment. Let's talk a bit about Satan, and who he thinks he is but who he truly is, and the word "destroy". There are actually three of these verses, like verses 6, 7, 8, and 9, as the word "destroy" shows up quite a bit. Let's begin first with the word "Satan". "Satan" is a Hebrew word that just literally means "adversary". The "ver" in here actually means "to turn". So, he's actually trying to turn us away from God. In fact, the word "verse" comes from the same word, because in the ancient past, when they would write, they would write this way, and then they would turn and go this way, and so you'd be turning as you'd read from line to line. So, the word "ver" is "to turn". So, the adversary is trying to turn us away from God.

But also, as you think about a legal context, the adversary is the one who brings the lawsuit and the accusation. Okay. So, Satan is trying to accuse us, trying to get us in trouble with the law. I love this. God is the Judge. He also is our Advocate, and he is the law. So, let's imagine for a moment, Jesus, who's given his life away for us. He has purchased us with His blood. He is the law, he is the advocate, he is the Judge. What chance does this adversary have of convincing the Judge, who also is our Advocate, and the law, that somehow, we should be turned away, towards him? Satan cannot win. The cards are stacked in our favor, totally.

Now, in our modern day, in a democratic world, we actually have separate people in each of these categories, and sometimes this comes into conflict. There is no conflict with God. He is everything here, and so if we choose Jesus Christ -- and the sacrament is our opportunity on a weekly basis to declare that we have chosen Jesus -- the adversary has no power. He cannot turn us aside. We will always win.

Now let's talk about the word "destroy" for just a few minutes. It's an interesting word. It literally means to "strew things around". So, imagine a building, that gets -- all the pieces of the building get strewn around. In the kingdom of God, God is building the kingdom, and he's putting structure into his work. In fact, the word "instruction", or "instructor", comes from the same word. In fact, so does the word "instrument". It's the same root word. So, let's take a look at this. What's the work of Satan? To strew everything around, to just throw it out so it's all organized. God's work, that we see all the way back in Genesis, where he organizes instead of destroys, God's purpose is to bring structure and order. In fact, the ordinances bring order to the world. God's ordinances reveal his orderliness. So, he gives us instruction through the law. He sends us instructors: prophets and apostles, and he provides instruments of salvation. Consider: we talked about the ordinances, or the scriptures. All of these words of structure are found here are also related to the word "strew" right there, but Satan's work is to do the opposite of God's work. And as we noticed, and we talked about, Satan cannot win. He cannot win against God, because we

have everything with God. He is our law; he is our Advocate, and our Judge, and he will be a very merciful judge. Though just, he will be merciful and grant us everything that we have access to, because of the merits of his Son.

Isn't it fascinating to notice, then, like Taylor is saying, Satan's efforts to destroy all of these things? Satan hates scripture, and he does everything he can to destroy it, to wrest it, to twist it, to repurpose it. He hates the people whom God has chosen to be his mouthpiece, to spread the word. So, what does Satan do? He puts on them his own attributes. They're lying. They're deceiving. They're trying to build up their own kingdom, all these claims that the devil makes against God's servants through the ages. And he does everything he can to keep people in ignorance, with avoiding study and learning from your faith and from learning from other people teaching.

Notice, to clarify this, look at verse 19. This is what these men who have changed the writings on those 116 pages said: "Therefore we will destroy him, and also the work; and we will do this that we may not be ashamed in the end, and that we may get glory of the world" (Doctrine and Covenants 10:19). Fascinating. They thought, we're going to become famous. We're going to get the glory of the world; we're going to destroy this work that's of the devil, so to speak.

Look at verse 20: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that Satan has great hold upon their hearts; he stirreth them up to iniquity against that which is good; And their hearts are corrupt, and full of wickedness and abominations; and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; therefore, they will not ask of me." In other words, these people doing this, they're not praying and asking God, 'what should we do with these words?' They love the darkness more than light.

And then the Savior gives Joseph this little caveat after discussing all of the plans that have been laid by the devil to trap these men, and in the process, to try to trap Joseph. Look at verse 27: "And thus he [Satan] goeth up and down, to and fro in the earth, seeking to destroy the souls of men." Very reminiscent of a verse in the Old Testament that shares a similar concept here.

Look at verse 28: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, wo be unto him that lieth to deceive because he supposeth that another lieth to deceive, for such are not exempt from the justice of God." In other words, Jesus is teaching a principle here: that you don't return contention with contention, darkness with darkness, lying with lies, or violence with violence. It's not his gospel. His gospel is to do good to those who "despitefully use you", to be kind and pray for those who are persecuting, within reason. Now, that doesn't apply to somebody who's being abused, but you understand that the principle here is Satan is going to try to use these techniques to destroy us, and we shouldn't use devilish techniques to push back the kingdom of darkness, and the kingdom of the devil. We should use heavenly techniques.

Look at verse 33, to finish off this section of reviewing the devil's tactics: "Thus Satan thinketh to overpower your testimony in this generation, that the work may not come forth in this generation." So just like in the Sacred Grove, when Satan sought to overpower Joseph and prevent this Restoration from even beginning, now he's trying to do it with the coming forth of the scriptures. And he's going to seek to do it with the coming forth of the Church, and with the coming forth of the priesthood, and the coming forth of spreading the gathering of Israel through

missionary work. Satan's there at every one of these junctures, doing everything he can to stop the work from progressing in this generation. And I love the fact that -- what Taylor pointed out: God's work isn't going to be stopped.

In the process, I might be stopped if I choose not to align my will and my heart with him. I can come to naught, but the work of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independently of all these efforts that the devil and the earth may throw at, or against, the work.

Now, clarification: look at verse 34. This is beautiful. He says: "Behold, here is wisdom, and because I show unto you wisdom, and give you commandments concerning these things, what you shall do, show it not unto the world until you have accomplished the work of translation" (Doctrine and Covenants 10:34). Joseph, don't make this work widely known. I'm going to show you some wisdom, but you're going to keep this kind of closely guarded. Oh, and by the way, you'll notice that once the translation process begins, Joseph has learned a lot about the powers of godliness, and the powers of darkness. He's experienced a lot of opposition, as this work has progressed.

And you'll notice that he's learned some practical things too. Never again is Joseph going to be stuck with just one copy of the translation. You'll notice, from here on out, you're going to have an original manuscript, and then you're going to have a printer's manuscript. You're going to have a backup. You're going to have a second copy, right there, so that you're never stuck with only one version, like we had with the 116 lost pages.

Look at verse 35: "Marvel not that I said unto you: Here is wisdom, show it not unto the world -- for I said, show it not unto the world, that you may be preserved." Joseph, I'm giving you this direction that you may be preserved.

Now let's pick this up in verse 38: "...now, verily I say unto you, that an account of those things that you have written, which have gone out of your hands, is engraven upon the plates of Nephi;". You'll notice we have the plates that he's been translating from that are called the plates of Mormon. These are the plates of Mormon. Somewhere between a half to two-thirds of those plates are sealed. We don't even get to translate those; they are sealed for a later time. So, all you get, and we're told that they are about six inches by six inches by eight inches, roughly, give or take an inch; you get a little bit of variance in people's judgment of how big they are. But that's all you get. So, a half to two-thirds are sealed, we're only translating somewhere between two to three inches worth of the stack of plates total, including the 116 lost pages.

So, these are referred to as the plates of Mormon, and now what is Joseph being told? You're going to engrave those things which are upon the plates of Nephi. Notice verse 39: "Yea, and you remember it was said in those writings that a more particular account was given of these things upon the plates of Nephi." Verse 40: "...now, because the account which is engraven upon the plates of Nephi is more particular concerning the things which, in my wisdom, I would bring to the knowledge of the people in this account -- Therefore, you shall translate the engravings which are on the plates of Nephi, down even till you come to the reign of king Benjamin, or until you come to that which you have translated, which you have retained;" (Doctrine and Covenants 10:40-41).

Now let's make something very clear here. It seems, probably, that we have, on this set of plates, you have a small collection of plates, called the plates of Nephi. They're not exactly the plates of Mormon. They're not written by Mormon. Interesting. Let's go back. Let's get context here. Open up your Book of Mormon to 1st Nephi chapter 1. 1st Nephi chapter 1, way back at the beginning on the plates of Nephi, verse 17. Here's Nephi, saying: "But I shall make an account of my proceedings in my days. Behold, I make an abridgement of the record of my father, upon plates which I have made with mine own hands; wherefore, after I have abridged the record of my father then will I make an account of mine own life" (1 Nephi 1:17).

So, you have the book of Lehi, the record of Lehi, and Nephi just told you, before I give you my own life, I'm going to give you an abridgement of the writings of my father, Lehi. You can see the abridgment that Nephi makes in 1st Nephi chapters 1 through 9. This is 1st Nephi chapters 1 through 9. That is Nephi abridging the book of Lehi.

Look at the very last verse of chapter 9 in 1st Nephi. At the very, very bottom line, it says: "And thus it is. Amen" (1 Nephi 9:6). There's a closure here. There's an ending point, "...thus it is. Amen" (1 Nephi 9:6). Now, check out chapter 10, verse 1: "And now I, Nephi, proceed to give an account upon these plates of my proceedings, and my reign and ministry; wherefore, to proceed with mine account, I must speak somewhat of the things of my father, and also of my brethren." So, now he's no longer in abridgement mode. He's now giving you his own story, moving forward. Interesting.

Now, to make sense of what's going on here, you have to throw one more piece of information onto the board. Go over to 2nd Nephi chapter 5. Look at verse 27. So here we are, 2nd Nephi chapter 5, starting in verse 27: "...it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness. And thirty years had passed away from the time we left Jerusalem." Okay, so it's been thirty years since we left the home in Jerusalem. "And I, Nephi, had kept the records upon my plates, which I had made, of my people thus far. And it came to pass that the Lord God said unto me: Make other plates; and thou shalt engraven many things upon them which are good in my sight, for the profit of thy people" (2 Nephi 5:30).

Brothers and sisters what you have here is, it's been thirty years. We've been in the Americas for over twenty years, at this point. And Nephi has already established a large collection of plates, the large plates of Nephi, and now the Lord, after thirty year -- he's done all of this work -- God says, Nephi, make another record, but this one's going to be small, okay? Much smaller than what you've already done, and you're only going to include on those plates the things of your soul, the things of deep spiritual import, not all of the other details that you put on the first set.

You'll notice verse 32: "...I engraved that which is pleasing unto God. And if my people are pleased with the things of God they will be pleased with mine engravings which are upon these plates. And if my people desire to know the more particular part of the history of my people", if you want all the grimy details, "they must search mine other plates" (2 Nephi 5:32-33). Oh, and by the way, verse 34: "And it sufficeth me to say that forty years had passed away, and we had already had wars and contentions."

So, from verse 28 to 34, you get a ten-year span from thirty years to forty years out from Jerusalem. It makes it sound like, in that ten years, Nephi has gone back, and he's telling his

story again the second time, but he's leaving out most of the detail that is the history of the people, and he's giving you stuff which is pleasing unto the Lord. And the fascinating thing is, God isn't telling him why. He's just telling him he needs to do it, and Nephi, being Mr. "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded," he's just doing it (1 Nephi 3:7). He doesn't understand why.

Now, isn't it fascinating that the large plates, they are the record, they become the record of the kings, the history, the official record of the nation of Nephites, passed down through a kingly, or royal, line. And it gets big, the king's record is going to be large. There's going to be a big collection of plates included in that, and it's going to proliferate out and get big, whereas this smaller record is the record of prophets passed from Nephi, who was a king, passed this down to the kings. But he passed this one down to his brother Jacob, and then on to Enos, Jarom, Omni, until we get to the very end of this really small record, and Amaleki, the prophet there in Omni, says, I don't have any posterity to pass these on to. So, I'm going to give them over to the king at the time. His name is Benjamin. King Benjamin's got lots of records. He'll know how to keep these safe, and they're full. It's all done.

So, into this huge repository of the big collection of plates, called the plates of Nephi, goes this small account that is so small and simple that it would be really easy to completely overlook and ignore, and not even notice, quite frankly, among the record of kings and the history of the people. And it gets stuck in the repository, it seems, and perhaps forgotten for a long time, until Mormon comes along. And if you turn over to Words of Mormon -- go to Words of Mormon chapter 1, verse 3. Here's Mormon, in the 4th century AD, so we're almost a thousand years after Nephi made this second copy, notice what he says.

Verse 3: "...now, I speak somewhat concerning that which I have written; for after I had made an abridgment from the plates of Nephi, down to the reign of this king Benjamin, of whom Amaleki spake, I searched among the records which had been delivered into my hands, and I found these plates, which contained this small account of the prophets, from Jacob down to the reign of this King Benjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi."

Brothers and sisters, you've got this huge collection of plates, with all the large plates of Nephi, and he's at the point where he's already abridged the whole story, from Lehi, all the way down to King Benjamin on the large, kingly record. And at that point, as he's searching among the plates in King Benjamin's reign, lo and behold, he finds this small collection, which is exactly where King Benjamin would have put it in with the records of the kings that he is making at the time. And Mormon pulls out this small record, and he reads it, and he says, wow, this is really good stuff. But he's already abridged the entire record from Lehi down to this time from the bigger plates. So here he is. Here's Mormon, in the 4th century AD, holding this small collection, having either read through it in great detail, or at least enough to know this is amazing.

Look at what he says in verse 6: "...behold, I shall take these plates, which contain these prophesyings and revelations, and put them with the remainder of my record, for they are choice unto me; and I know they will be choice unto my brethren." Now, look at the reason he gives for why he's doing this. Verse 7: "...I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me. And now, I do not know all things; but

the Lord knoweth all things which are to come; wherefore, he worketh in me to do according to his will.”

Brothers and sisters, what we have here is, in 1828 Joseph and Martin losing 116 pages that represents Mormon's abridgment of the book of Lehi, all the way down to halfway through the reign of King Benjamin. We lost all of that abridgment in 1828. God knew that was going to happen, so what does he do in 560 BC? He goes to Nephi and says, I need you to make a second record. And what does he do with Mormon in the 4th century AD? He has him find this small record of the prophets that's all in first person. There's no abridgment on the small plates. Everything in 1st Nephi through Omni is I Nephi, I Jacob, I Enos, I Jarom. It's not, and it came to pass that Nephi did this, and Jarom went here, and Amaleki said this. It's all first person. Mormon didn't abridge it. He just took it, and he included it with his record in some way, shape, or form.

God knows what he's doing. And he knows the efforts that Satan's going to make to thwart the work, and to try to overthrow the plan, and he has things in place, thousands of years in advance in some cases. Brothers and sisters, if God will do that for scripture, don't you think he would do that for his children? Don't you think he will do that for you? Yes, Satan is fighting against you. But we have to trust that God has things in store, in place, to preserve us, to move forward, to be able to accomplish his purposes, that his kingdom will roll forth in our own life, and in our own families, according to his purposes, if we'll just trust him, and not give up, or lose hope, or lose faith and grow weary on the path.

Okay, now back to the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 10, verse 43: “I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the devil.” And then he tells Joseph: they have only got a part, or an abridgment of the account of Nephi: Mormon's abridgment. And by the way, that was Mormon's first attempt that we have record of, of abridging scripture. It was Nephi's first attempt to write scripture, and many of the kings after him who wrote, and that doesn't go live, and it was also Joseph's first attempt to translate. And so now God's saying, look at verse 45: “Behold, there are many things engraven upon the plates of Nephi...”, once again not the plates of Mormon, not Mormon's abridgment. We're back to these small plates of Nephi. “...there are many things engraven [there] which do throw greater views upon my gospel; therefore, it is wisdom in me that you should translate this first part of the engravings of Nephi, and send forth in this work” (Doctrine and Covenants 10:45). And then he says: “And, behold, all the remainder of this work does contain all those parts of my gospel which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples, desired in their prayers should come forth unto this people” (Doctrine and Covenants 10:46).

It makes you wonder, doesn't it, if Mormon read those small plates of Nephi, the record of the prophets that didn't need any abridging, it makes you wonder if as he read through the words of Nephi, on the small plates, and words of Jacob, and Enos, and those other prophets, what degree that affected him in his subsequent version, which we do get live in the Book of Mormon: the book of Mosiah, the book of Alma, Helaman, 3rd and 4th Nephi, and then the book with his own name, Mormon, where he's focusing on the points of the gospel that are the most important, as described here.

Notice if you come down to verse 52: "...now, behold, according to their faith...", speaking of these prophets in the Book of Mormon, who look down the corridor of time, pleading with God to preserve these words, "...according to their faith in their prayers will I bring this part of my gospel to the knowledge of my people. Behold, I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up." "That which they have received" could refer to the Bible. It could refer to these other teachings that have come to them, and he's saying, I'm not giving you the Book of Mormon, and I'm not giving you modern scripture, to destroy that which you have already received (Doctrine and Covenants 10:52).

I love the phrase that President Hinckley used, on multiple occasions, when referring to this kind of approach. He said our message to the world is bring all of the good that you have, and see if we can add to it. Our missionary effort is not to go out, and destroy, and tear down what people believe, in order to then teach them from the ground up. It's to find out what spiritual experiences they've already had; what connections they've already made with heaven; what powerful feelings they've already acquired by reading the scriptures, and by praying; and then assure them that we invite them to bring all of that and see if we can add to it. And President Hinckley said we're confident that we can. There's a fullness of the gospel in the Book of Mormon, and in the Doctrine and Covenants, that enhances what they already know, and love, and appreciate about that which they have already received in the Bible, and in other Christian traditions.

Notice he says in verse 54: "...I do not say this to destroy my church, but I say this to build up my church;". Remember, it's Satan who is the one who wants to destroy. It's Satan who wants to strew around, and tear up, and break up. It's God who wants to take every good foundation you have, and build on it, and increase the foundation in the process, as well.

Look at verse 55: "Therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church need not fear, for such shall inherit the kingdom of heaven." That's peculiar, knowing that this section is given between 1828 and 1829. It's interesting to see Jesus speaking about his church in the present tense. Notice again verse 55: "Therefore, whosoever belongeth to my church need not fear...". The Church of Jesus Christ isn't going to be officially organized until spring of 1830, a full year and some away from when most of this is being given. Notice he refers again to his church in verse 67: "Behold, this is my doctrine – whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church."

It makes you wonder, doesn't it, is his church more widely defined, at certain levels, than just the organization called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which isn't going to be organized for another year? Or is he just speaking in the prophetic perfect tense of speaking of future events as if they've already happened? That's possible. Or, is it possible that something that Elder Dallin H. Oaks at the time, now President Oaks, but when he gave this talk at BYU Idaho called "Witnesses of God", he said something I think was very profound when referring back to something in the vision of Nephi, in 1 Nephi 11 through 14, where it speaks of there are only two churches, the church of the Lamb and the church of the devil. He said, the church of the Lamb is – to paraphrase him, he said it's anyone who believes in God and lives their life, to the best of their ability, according to the light and knowledge that they have received, And the church of the devil is anyone who fights against God, and a belief in God.

If that's true, now section 10 makes a lot more sense, that anyone who believes in God, who is repenting and coming to him, the same is his church. And there are degrees of the church of the

Lamb that God in heaven is willing to grant to people on the earth degrees of light, and knowledge, and truth, to the capacity that they can receive it and act on it without being condemned.

So, what is our message that might be unique among all of the churches in the world that believe in God? Our message is that we offer a fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, with his priesthood authority restored to the earth to perform ordinances that he established for salvation; these aren't man made. And to carry forth the words to every "nation, kindred, tongue, [and] people", and to gather Israel on both sides of the veil, not just through our missionary work, but through our temple and family history work, as well (Doctrine and Covenants 10:51). That's what our message to the world is. Bring all that good that you have, and see if we can add to it.

Isn't the gospel amazing? I love the Doctrine and Covenants, and I love God's plan. He just has built it out, over the centuries, with all of his prophets, and in our day, we get to see how it all is flourishing and being brought to pass. Let's return to verses 49, 50, and 51. And remember that the righteous that lived in this land before, in the Americas, prayed to have the gospel go forth. And here's what they said: "Now this is not all -- their faith in their prayers was that this gospel should be made known also, if it were possible that other nations should possess this land;" (Doctrine and Covenants 10:49). So, there are many nations now possessing the Americas. "...And thus they did leave a blessing..." again, these are the righteous prophets who lived in the ancient Americas, "...they did leave a blessing upon this land in their prayers, that whosoever should believe in this gospel in this land might have eternal life;" (Doctrine and Covenants 10:50).

The Book of Mormon came forth to share that gospel so that anybody in the Americas, and anybody in the world, who believes the gospel as revealed in the Book of Mormon, can have eternal life.

Verse 51, very interesting: "Yea, that it [the land] might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they may be." Notice it doesn't say the Book of Mormon will come forth in a free land. It says if you believe the gospel, it might be free unto the people who believe the gospel. So, if you want freedom, you live the gospel. You don't wait for freedom to bring forth the gospel; the gospel brings forth freedom. And again, this is important. Verse 51 says "...that [the land] might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, [and] people they may be" if, back in verse 50, they believe in the gospel.

So, when we want freedom in this life, we have to trust God. We have to accept the gospel as revealed, and we have to live it. We can't simply claim, I have it. I'm part of the Church; therefore, I should get all these blessings. We actually have to do something. We have to live the gospel, and then we will be free.

So, to finish up section 10, let's go back to verse 63 for a second: "...this I do that I may establish my gospel, that there may not be so much contention;". We live in a world where people are fighting over all kinds of things, all kinds of ideologies and approaches to politics, and life in general. Notice he says: "...Satan doth stir up the hearts of the people to contention concerning the points of my doctrine; and in these things they do err, for they do wrest the scriptures and do not understand them" (Doctrine and Covenants 10:63).

One of the things that he's revealing here is the same doctrine that he taught the Nephites, when they first arrived in the Americas: don't contend. He says if you contend, you are giving into the temptations of the devil, because he is the father of contention. That's not of me. Notice he then says: "[I'm going to] unfold unto them this great mystery;" verse 65: "...For, behold, I will gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if they will not harden their hearts; Yea, if they will come, they may, and partake of the waters of life freely." I love that. His message of the gospel is this open invitation, these raised wings that you can come and gather underneath his wings for protection. It's free. It's open to all; nobody is denied, and he tells you that is his doctrine.

Now, on to section 11. When Samuel Smith had come down from Manchester, New York, down to Harmony with Oliver Cowdery, shortly thereafter, Joseph and Oliver had been visited by John the Baptist and received the Aaronic priesthood, the ability to baptize. Samuel had been baptized by Oliver. He goes home to Manchester, up by Palmyra, and he shares with the family this great news. Well, Hyrum Smith, now the oldest brother in the family because Alvin passed away, he died back in 1823 --- now Hyrum says, I want to go down. So, he left immediately to go down to Harmony, and he shows up late in May of 1829, and he is excited to assist in the work and do whatever he can.

Now you'll notice, in section 11, that verse 1 through 9 are basically, with a couple of punctuation mark changes, and a few words, two words here and there are changed, it's the identical copy to section 6, verses 1 through 9, which was given to Oliver Cowdery. So, the Lord is using very, very similar, almost identical words to Hyrum. But Hyrum gets some additional stuff that is relevant and applicable only to Hyrum, not to Oliver in that context. So, notice there's a thread here that moves through section 11. We'll pick it up in verse 6: "Now, as you have asked," Hyrum, you've asked what can I do to help? What can I do to build up the kingdom? Here's the answer: "...I say unto you, keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. Seek not for riches but for wisdom;..." (Doctrine and Covenants 11:6-7). Don't try to get rich, but try to gain wisdom. Notice verse 9: "Say nothing but repentance unto this generation. Keep my commandments, and assist to bring forth my work, according to my commandments, and you shall be blessed." Go down to verse 18: "Keep my commandments; hold your peace; appeal unto my Spirit;" Look at verse 20: "Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments, yea, with all your might, mind and strength."

Four times Hyrum is told, "keep my commandments" (Doctrine and Covenants 11:6, 9, 18, 20). We live in a world that wants things resolved very quickly, we want things given to us, we don't like pain, we don't like long process drawn out, we like what might be termed "cheap grace". You'll notice the words of Jesus, not just in the New Testament, but throughout the Doctrine and Covenants, are very focused on this long process of covenant discipleship and loyalty to him. And how do we show that loyalty? Taylor has talked about this multiple times. That loyalty, from our perspective, to keep that part of the covenant is through doing the things that have been given to us, those contractual agreements called commandments. And here Hyrum is told that four times: that is your work.

And then he follows up in 21: "Seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit and my word, yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men." I like this because it doesn't matter who you

are. It doesn't matter where you live in the world, which country or which part of the world you're in. It doesn't matter what gender, what age, what socio-economic status you have. It doesn't matter what your physical limitations or abilities may be. Every single one of us, without exception, can seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion better today than we did yesterday, and we can seek to keep his commandments with all of our might, mind, and strength better than we did yesterday (Doctrine and Covenants 11:20). This is very doable. And in the process, we are allowing the Lord to shape us through the keeping of those commandments, by swallowing up my will in his will, saying, "not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). It allows him to put us into situations, and to shape us, and to hone us down to the point where we can be used as an instrument in his hands to accomplish his purposes as he does his work. And his work is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life" of all of us in building this Zion, which is oneness and unity in this collective group (Moses 1:39).

Look in verse 26: "Therefore, treasure up in your heart until the time which is in my wisdom that you shall go forth." And that's going to probably be different for all of us, and it's not going to look the same. But if we treasure up in our heart all those things that God has given us, he will call us to do his work, and we'll do it his way.

And then he finishes in verse 28: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ; the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world." And he gives us that power to go and do his work. If you look around you, and you see efforts to thwart your progress on the covenant path, if you feel great opposition, and great temptation, recognize that's what the devil has always done against God's work, and against God's children. He's always been that adversary against us.

But in closing, I want to say there is nothing that earth and hell combined can do to thwart the power, and the glory, and the knowledge, and the love, and the wisdom, of God. This is his work, and it will move forward.

Brothers and sisters, the work of God will move forward with or without me. But I won't move forward without him. May the Lord bless all of us to seek to bring forth and establish Zion, to establish his kingdom, not just in the world, but in your own little world. Know that he lives, and know that he loves you. And we leave that with you in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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