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## The Most Important Message

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**Abstract:** This article is a reprint of a conference talk by LeGrand Richards. The Book of Mormon is tangible evidence that the angel Moroni came to visit the earth with the greatest message possible: that Jesus is the Christ. The author states that some prophecies and statements found in the Bible can only be understood by the added information found in the Book of Mormon.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE

LeGrand Richards

of the Council of the Twelve

As we have listened to the announcements made by our worthy President in the various meetings of this conference as to the extent to which the proceedings of the conference are being broadcast into the various missions and nations of the earth, we are impressed with the privilege we have of living in this day and age when the Lord is doing so much to cut his work short in righteousness. We were told in the newspaper the other night that there would be a possible potential listening audience of ninety million people to our conference. Some of us are old enough to have participated from this pulpit when we did not even have a public address system, when some of the brethren with weak voices could hardly be heard under the gallery. Just think of the difference!

Well, there are other developments in this world in the day in which we are living that are even more important than these physical advancements, and that is the spiritual advancement that has come through the restoration of the gospel in our day, the committing to this earth, according to the words of Isaiah, of "a marvellous work and a wonder." (Isa. 29:14.) The Lord said he would set his hand to do it in our time. There is a reported statement made by one of our nationally well-known commentators a few years ago in which he said that he had been asked what message could be broadcast to the world that would be considered to be of greater importance than any other. He said that after giving the matter consideration he decided that to be able to say to the world that a man who had lived here upon this earth and had died had returned again with a message from God would be the greatest message that could be broadcast to the world.

I believe that, and that is the message of this Church, and that is why we are a great missionary Church. If we have a message to broadcast to the world, it should be something that the world is not already in possession of, or else there would be no reason for the Lord sending one back to this earth who had already lived upon the earth and died in order that he might bring back a message.

As you brethren and sisters know, that messenger that I refer to now was Moroni, who lived upon this land of America as a prophet of God some four hundred years after the birth of the Savior, who was the custodian of the records that had been kept of a people over a thousand year period; and he hid them away, according to the command of the Lord and brought those records back to the earth in this day and

time and delivered them to the Prophet Joseph Smith.

The world doesn't change much. History repeats itself. Jesus said in his day that they decorated the graves of the dead prophets, but they rejected the living prophets. We have a precedent in the Bible of a man who had lived upon the earth and died and returned again with a message from God, and when a man returns with a message from God, he has to deliver that message to someone whom God directs should receive it, and that individual would be none other than a prophet of God. As Amos said:

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7.)

Then you remember that when John the Revelator was banished upon the Isle of Patmos, the Lord sent his angel who showed John the whole history of the world from the time there was war in heaven and a third of the hosts of heaven were cast out, up to the final winding up scenes when there should be a new heaven and a new earth. He saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and they were judged according to the things that were written in the books, according to their works.

When the angel had showed John all these things, he fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who said: "... See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." (Rev. 22:9.)

He was but a fellowservant of the brethren of the prophets, which means he was an individual who had lived upon this earth and was sent back with a message from God.

In that same sense the Lord sent Moroni back. He did not come of his own accord. If Moroni's coming and what he brought were recorded in the Bible, the Christian world would be willing to accept it, but because it comes from a new prophet in our day and time, they are slow as they were in the days of the Savior in accepting the words of the living prophets.

One of the most tangible evidences that Moroni actually did come and visit the Prophet Joseph is the Book of Mormon and its translation and what it has contributed to the world. As I understand the Book of Mormon—and by the way, I think Brother Kimball gave us a marvelous description of it in his talk yesterday, and what it has to contribute to the world—as I think of that, I think it is an evidence that proves that the story told by Joseph Smith that Moroni did bring the plates is a tangi-

ble evidence that the world has to reckon with in order to be able to account for that book.

We are told in the scriptures—you remember the words of Jesus on the way to Emmaus as he talked with his disciples. He said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken": (Luke 24:25.) And then beginning with Moses and the prophets, he showed them how in all things the prophets had testified of him. Peter tells us he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures (*Ibid.*, 24:45) and you remember what Peter said:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:19-21.)

As I understand the Book of Mormon and its teachings and the prophecies of the Bible, I think there are prophecies in the Bible that no man in our day can explain properly and intelligently without the information contained in the Book of Mormon. This is a new witness from God for our day, for the conversion of the Jew and the gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the very Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. (See Book of Mormon title page.)

So in the Book of Mormon we have information that gives us to understand statements in the Bible which we could not understand without the information contained in the Book of Mormon. I will give you a few illustrations of what I mean.

When Moses gave a blessing to each of the twelve sons of Israel, he gave Joseph a blessing of a new land in the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills, and in describing that land, Moses used the word "precious" five times in just a few verses in the Bible, telling what a marvelous land the Lord had for Joseph, and he would be separated from his brethren. (Deut. 33:13-17.)

I do not believe there is anyone in this world outside of this Church who can tell where that new land is and can give an account of how the Lord fulfilled the promises unto Joseph that he would be blessed in that land, even above the blessings of his fathers. Who were his fathers? Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and yet Moses promised Joseph blessings even above the blessings of



his own fathers.

Why do we know about it? Because the Book of Mormon tells us how the Lord led a group out of Jerusalem into this land of America who were descendants of Joseph, and how he fulfilled his promise and commanded that a record should be kept. It seems incredible to think of the promises made to Joseph that the Lord would not have made provision that a record should have been kept of the fulfilment of those promises, but that he did, and that record is the Book of Mormon.

There are other passages that also indicate the value of the Book of Mormon. Just to illustrate what I have in mind. I had the privilege of talking to a group of ministers just a few years ago by assignment from President McKay, and I quoted some of these scriptures. I asked them if they knew why the verses were in the Bible and if they knew of any Church in the world that did know why they were in the Bible, and the next record that I quoted was the one where Jesus said:

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." (John 10:16.)

I asked those men if they knew anything about those other sheep or the fulfilment of the promise of the Lord that he would visit them, and they would hear his voice, and there should be one fold and one shepherd. None of them could tell, and so I just turned to the Book of Mormon and showed them that when Jesus, following his crucifixion and resurrection and ascension, visited his people here in the land of America, he told them they were the other sheep of whom he spoke to his disciples in Jerusalem, and he said that never at any time did the Lord command him that he should tell his disciples in Jerusalem who the other sheep were; only that he had other sheep that were not of that fold, and them should he visit. He told them they were the other sheep. No one can answer intelligently that statement in John 10:16 without the knowledge that the Book of Mormon has brought to us.

Ezekiel was commanded by the Lord that two records should be kept, one of Judah and his followers, the house of Israel; another for Joseph and his followers, the house of Israel; and that in the days of their children, meaning coming generations, he would bring these two records together, and he would make them one in his hand. I asked these ministers if they knew anything about that record, and they did not.

I said, "Well, we know all about it," and then I showed them that that was the Book of Mormon the Lord promised.

No man can believe the Bible without knowing there is a companion record that the Lord of heaven said he would bring forth and join it with the record of Judah, which is the Bible that has remained with us, and he would make them one in his hand. (Ezekiel 37:15-20.)

You remember the words of Isaiah when he said:

"Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt! add ye year to year; let them kill sacrifices.

"Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel." (Isa. 29:1-2.)

If you will read that thoughtfully, you will know that he not only saw the destruction of Jerusalem, but he saw the destruction of another great center like unto Jerusalem. Then he adds:

"And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust." (*Ibid.*, 29:4.)

Nobody in this world could explain that intelligently or know what people Isaiah saw like unto Jerusalem without the Book of Mormon. Here is the explanation in the Book of Mormon. "After my seed and the seed of my brethren shall have dwindled in unbelief, and shall have been smitten by the Gentiles; yea, after the Lord God shall have camped against them round about, and shall have laid siege against them with a mount, and raised forts against them; and after they shall have been brought down low in the dust, even that they are not, yet the words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten.

"For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit; for the Lord God will give unto him power that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground, and their speech shall whisper out of the dust.

"For thus saith the Lord God: They shall write the things which shall be done among them, and they shall be written and sealed up in a book, and those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not have them, for they seek to destroy the things of God." (2 Nephi 26:15-17.)

How could Joseph Smith have known

these things when the Book of Mormon was published even before this Church was organized, except for the fact that the Book of Mormon is the promised record that God said he would bring forth and join to the record of Judah. How could anyone understand this prophecy of Isaiah without the explanation contained in the Book of Mormon.

There are more prophecies of the scriptures that we could not understand without the revelations of the Lord that have come to us in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon stands, after one hundred and thirty years, without any criticism as to its truth. Just think of a book of over five hundred pages being printed with a promise in it that when that book should come that if the person receiving it would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, that God would manifest the truth of it unto him by the power of the Holy Ghost. (Moro 10:4.)

Thousands and hundreds of thousands have borne testimony that God has revealed the truth of that book to them, and so it has been a tangible evidence that this messenger sent of God really came with a message from God.

When I was in the mission field, I read an article that appeared under the Associated Press of a man who came to California by the name of William A. Kennedy from Lima, Peru. He was gathering money to set up an institute or college there to study the history of the early inhabitants of the land of South America, including the Mayan and the Inca civilizations, and he had the promise when matched by the small Americas of some thirty million dollars, and President Hoover had agreed to serve on that board. I never heard of what became of it, but the statement went further to say that within ten years that amount would increase to seventy million dollars.

Just think of their being willing to spend seventy million dollars to learn something of the history of the early inhabitants of America, when we could give them a copy of the Book of Mormon for fifty cents, and if they did not have the fifty cents, we would give it to them for nothing, because it would not only tell about the artifacts they are finding as they dig into the depths of the earth, but it contains the words of the holy prophets and the promise of the Lord to this land, which is a land choice above all other lands, the promise that the Christ should be the God of this land, that he would fight the battles of this land, that the New Jerusalem would be built upon this land, and they will not get that when they will have spent



their seventy million dollars.

Just think of what the Lord has given us in this record to show us the things that he has in mind to accomplish. We have many other testimonies of men as to the value of the Book of Mormon.

I bear you my witness that I know

## SOME RAIN MUST FALL

*Henry D. Taylor*

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

When the Psalmist was meditating upon the beauties of creation, he exclaimed with awe and amazement:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

"Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet": (Psalm 8:3-6.)

How comforting it is to note the esteem and concern the Lord has for his children.

What is man? As Latter-day Saints we believe that man is the spiritual offspring of God our Heavenly Father, created in his image and after his likeness. We further believe that man once dwelt in the presence of deity and came from a heavenly home to this earth.

The poet Wordsworth, in a flash of inspiration, referred to this transition when he penned these beautiful lines:

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,

that book is true. Sister Richards and I read it last year as the priesthood were asked to do, and we would keep saying as we would read, "Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that wonderful? How could Joseph Smith at his age have written anything like that except by the in-

But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home":

In that far distant past when plans for the creation of the earth were discussed, it was proposed that those who would be privileged to come here to inhabit the earth must be tested and tried to prove whether they would do all things that the Lord would command them to do. The faithful were to "... have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever." (See Abraham 3:25-26.)

It is our conviction that we were present at that great council and had a voice in the decisions that were made. The Lord once asked the Prophet Job some pertinent questions pertaining to those important events, when he inquired: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . ."

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4, 7.)

Because of faithfulness in that former estate, we have been born into this world, blessed with mortal bodies which house eternal spirits. Here we have opportunities to grow, progress, and gain experience in mortal and earthly things.

The divinely inspired Declaration of Independence proclaims that every citizen of this glorious country is entitled to enjoy "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

The attainment of happiness has become a desired goal of most individuals; but there are those who oftentimes mistake

spiration of the Almighty?"

It reminded us of when we attended a course given by Dr. Widtsoe here some time ago in the Barratt Hall on the Doctrine and Covenants. He had Sister Inez Witbeck read. He would say, "Now read section so-and-so," and

pleasure for happiness, not realizing that pleasure can be of a temporary or passing nature only, while happiness and joy are permanent and enduring.

An ancient prophet declared: "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25.)

As man travels down the pathway of this mortal life, trusting that his course will be such as to produce joy and happiness, he becomes aware of many obstacles in the road that interfere with his progress. The Lord designed this to be so, for he did not intend that this earthly existence should be easy. Adam was advised: "... cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. . . ." (Gen. 3:17-19.)

The pathway was to be strewn with temptations and trials. Man was also to know good and evil and be allowed his free agency in choosing between the two. He was to learn the law of opposites: that there is sorrow as there is joy, pain as contrasted to pleasure, sickness as opposed to health; he was to taste the bitter as well as the sweet.

From this testing process would come benefits, for the Lord has promised "... after much tribulation come the blessings." The poet Kilmer has expressed the same thought in the words:

## "TO FILL THE WHOLE EARTH"

*Franklin D. Richards*

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

My dear brothers and sisters: I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with me as I speak to you today.

Throughout history the Lord has revealed his will to mankind through his prophets. In 1831 in a revelation given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord promised that the fulness of his gospel would be restored and that the voice of warning should be unto all people; that his Church would be established and that power would be given to his

servants to bring it forth out of obscurity and out of darkness; that his disciples should go forth and that none should stay them—all of this to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man which is the work and glory of God. (See D&C 1.)

In order for man to obtain eternal life and exaltation in God's kingdom, he must accept the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is an eternal principle. Thus we recognize that the gospel plan

has been and is for all of God's children.

However, many Christians believe that the gospel plan dates only from the Savior's ministry in the flesh, but we know that the gospel was understood by the spirits which were with our Father in heaven before the world was formed or organized.

Then on this earth the gospel was taught to Father Adam, and he taught the Lord's commandments to his chil-

then he would pause and say, "Now, you college professors and you college students, could you write anything like that?" He would say, "I wish I could," and there he had been president of two universities, but the things of God are understood by the Spirit of God,

and the testimony of those three witnesses that an angel of God came down from heaven and showed them the plates with the engravings thereon, and bore testimony that it was by the power of God, is a testimony to all the world.

That is my testimony to you here today, and I pray God to bless us all that we may realize what we have by the opening of the heavens and the restoration of the gospel, and leave you my blessing in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

"They say that life is a highway,  
And its milestones are the years;  
And now and then there is a toll gate,  
Where you buy your way with your tears.

"It's a rough road and a steep road,  
And it stretches broad and far,  
But at last it leads to a golden town  
Where the golden houses are."

Perhaps during our lives we have been, or will be, required to gaze on the face of a loved one for the last time in mortality. In this hour of sorrow, the following appropriate words of the poet might well come as a message of comfort to us:

"Be still, sad heart! and cease repining;  
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining;  
Thy fate is the common fate of all:  
Into each life some rain must fall,  
Some days must be dark and dreary."  
("The Rainy Day"—Longfellow)

The Savior had his dark and dreary days, and in Gethsemane's garden he suffered untold agony as he contemplated the events that confronted him while fulfilling his exalted mission.

We, too, will have our dark and dreary days in our search for that which brings joy and happiness. But always there is the assurance and promise that "every cloud has its silver lining."

As the Latter-day Saints toiled west-

ward across the trackless plains, leading from Nauvoo to the valleys here in the mountains, they suffered and endured many privations and hardships, but they were comforted and cheered as they sang at the close of the day these inspiring words:

"Why should we mourn or think our lot is hard?  
'Tis not so; all is right!  
Why should we think to earn a great reward,  
If we now shun the fight?

"Gird up your loins, fresh courage take,  
Our God will never us forsake.  
And soon we'll have this truth to tell—  
All is well! All is well!"

("Come, Come, Ye Saints," William Clayton.)

The gospel of Jesus Christ offers peace and comfort in times of illness, trouble, and sorrow. The Redeemer comforted his listeners with this beautiful and assuring admonition: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

"For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30.)

As we go to the house of worship each

Sabbath day and partake of the Sacrament, we covenant with our Heavenly Father that we will take upon us the name of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and by remembering him and keeping his commandments, we may always have his Spirit to be with us.

Keeping the commandments and living in harmony with the teachings of the Master will result in assurances of a righteous life, and a righteous life will bring joy and happiness to our souls. Then, even though "into each life some rain must fall," into each life also will come peace and contentment.

From what has been said, my dear brothers and sisters, we can see how interested in and concerned about life people of every age and clime have been. They have struggled to analyze it, to understand it, to evaluate it. But its full meaning and purpose and duration cannot be comprehended except through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. With the gospel to comfort, to assist, to inspire us, let us meet life head on; courageously, sincerely, and prayerfully, meet its joys, its sorrows, its rains and sunshine with full determination to keep all of God's commandments, which by so doing we know will bring us back into his presence to partake of that eternal joy he has in store for all his faithful children, for which I humbly pray, bearing you my testimony that I know that God lives, that the gospel is true, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

dren. Enoch understood the gospel, and through faithfulness the Saints of the city of Enoch were translated.

Other great men including Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, and Moses understood the gospel plan and taught it to ancient Israel.

John the Baptist opened the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time by preaching in the wilderness, and he told of the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Through the personal ministry of Jesus and his apostles, the gospel was taught and The Church of Jesus Christ established on the earth.

It is my great privilege to bear witness humbly that Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten of the Father in the flesh, our Redeemer and Savior, and the only name under heaven given among men whereby we may be saved.

A falling away from the Savior's teachings was predicted, and I testify

that this did occur. This great apostasy made necessary the restoration of the gospel plan and the authority to act in the name of God.

When Joseph Smith, the boy Prophet, went into the woods in the spring of 1820 and asked God, "Which of all the sects is right and which shall I join?" he said, "I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong—that they teach for doctrine the commandments of men, having a form