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The New Scripture

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Abstract: Three lesson outlines for Relief Society that focus on the prophecies concerning the Book of Mormon, its guardian messenger and his mission, the Urim and Thummim, and the method of translation.

Guide Lessons for March

LESSON I

Theology and Testimony

(First Week in March)

THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES
(CONTINUED)

THE NEW SCRIPTURE

1. *Some prophecies concerning it:*

1. "Truth shall spring out of the earth"—so wrote the inspired psalmist more than twenty-five centuries ago. (Psalms 85:11.)

2. The ancient Prophet Ezekiel was commanded to foreshadow the preparation of a companion volume for the bible. (Ezekiel 37:15-21.) Back, far back before the Christian era, or even in the Mosaic dispensation the Lord declared to the Seer sold into Egypt that Judah and Joseph should have separate records, each of which should verify the truth of the other, "unto the confounding of false doctrines, and to laying down of contentions, and establishing peace." (II Nephi 3:12.)

3. God showed the book to Nephi before it was written. (I Nephi 13:38-40.)

II. *The Book of Gold:*

"The Golden Bible"—this nick-name given to the Book of Mormon has in it more than the scoffers ever dreamed of. The volume is doubly golden: (1) it was carved on metal plates, having the appearance of gold. ("Testimony of Eight Witnesses—Book of Mormon.) It is an abridgment from plates of brass, and of ore, and of gold. (See *Brief Analysis of Book of Mormon*, 1920 edition.) "The Plates were not pure gold, the plates of Nephi were made of ore, and Mormon also mentions ore as the material of which his plates were made. (I Nephi, 19:1, Mormon 8:5, Mosiah 28-11.) ("The ore,—possibly a copper alloy'. (From *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 43, Sjodahl.) (2) The contents are golden truths, everlasting truths, truths most precious. (Jacob 1:2.)

The new scripture was verily a bible—a book of fifteen books. (See names and order of books in Book of Mormon, 1920 edition.) The record contained the doctrines and doings of three minor gospel dispensations, the Jareditic, the Nephitic, and the Messianic dispensations on this continent, and the story of two civili-

zations, the Nephites and the Jaredites on the land choice above all other lands—America. This scripture which had silently slumbered in the ground for more than twenty centuries is to “speak out of the ground;” through its coming forth, a long, long silence is to be broken; it is to speak for men long since dead, and for the living God; it is to come forth by a miracle, and go forth as a new witness for God, for the regeneration of a dwindled race and the enlightenment of a world. (See D. and C. 3:16-20.)

III. *The Guardian Messenger:*

Who he was: He was the last custodian of the record, and in the 421st year, A. D., he wrote the final chapter which, because of the promise it makes to the reader, is really a preface to the volume, a guide to the student. He was, after death, a spirit held in high esteem by the Savior, spoken of as an angel of authority by the Lord. (See D. and C. 27:5.) And although he lived on the earth long after the resurrection of Jesus, yet Moroni was evidently a resurrected being when he came to Joseph the Seer. (D. and C. 129.)

“Question 4: How, and where did you obtain the Book of Mormon?”

“Answer: Moroni, the person who deposited the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated, in a hill in Manchester, Ontario county, New York, being *dead and raised again* therefrom, appeared unto me, and told me where they were; and gave me directions how to obtain them. I obtained them and the Urim and Thummim with them, by the means of which I translated the plates; and thus came the Book of Mormon.” (From the *Elders’ Journal*, Joseph Smith, Jr., editor, Far West, Mo., July, 1838.)

2. *His Special Mission:* His was the special mission to prepare Joseph for the possession of the plates and deliver them to the seer with the Urim and Thummim and the breast plate, and assist in protecting them, receive them back into his own custody after the translation was finished, and evidently show the plates to three witnesses and testify to the divinity of the translation, and then become again the custodian of them. Some day, when knowledge covers the earth, they may be shown as material evidence of the blindness of those whose spiritual sight was blinded by bias, prejudice, and skepticism. See Testimony of the Witnesses, Book of Mormon.)

3. *His Masterly Management:* Moroni, a messenger from God. What he did was more than marvelous, more than wonderful. It was work known as miracles. By his extended quotations to Joseph, Moroni gave evidence of being a student. His method of teaching and training marked him as an educator. He instructed when interest was intense. He reviewed; four times he

went over the first lesson. He encouraged; he warned; he trained for responsibility by a series of tests; he rewarded by aiding in achievement of success; he punished by withdrawal of privileges. His requirements were of a character-developing nature; they called for both discipline in resistance and development in achievement. Joseph was not even to think of making money out of the book or the plates. He was not to show them except by permission, but he was to protect them, translate them and publish their contents.

The mission of this mighty messenger is celebrated in song and statue. Few hymns are more often sung by the Latter-day Saints than the one beginning: "An angel from on high, the long, long silence broke." And the tower of the great granite temple which was forty years in building is surmounted by a gold-plated figure in the attitude of blowing a trumpet, and, when the stranger asks, "Whom does the statue represent?" to his question the answer is: "The Angel Moroni."

Special References for Supplemental Study:

1. Book of Mormon II Nephi:29.
2. *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, chapter 1, Sjodahl.

Questions and Problems

1. Quote or read the prophecy which to your mind most unmistakably refers to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.
2. Why is the Book of Mormon a miracle?
3. Wherein is the Book of Mormon really a bible?
4. Why may III Nephi, chapters 11-30 inclusive, be fittingly called the "Fifth Gospel?"
5. What is there in the last chapter of the Book of Mormon that suggests the propriety of reading the chapter before reading the book?
6. What is there in the life and special mission of Moroni that justifies the belief in either special or continuous resurrections?
7. What are the evidences that the Angel Moroni was a student?
8. Wherein was Moroni a great teacher and character trainer?
9. What long, long silence was broken by the mission of Moroni?
10. What does the trumpet being blown by the Angel Moroni represent?
11. For the awakening of whom are the trumpet sounds especially directed?
12. Wherein were the works of the Angel Moroni miracles, that is, more than wonderful, more than marvelous?