

THE  
**WITNESS**

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The Book of Mormon Foundation



And now my sons, remember,  
**remember** that it is upon  
the rock of our Redeemer,  
who is **Christ, the Son of God,**  
that ye must build  
your **foundation.**





# THE WITNESS

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Cover Photo Courtesy of Dale Godfrey  
(Helaman 2:74 RLDS) [Helaman 5:12 LDS]

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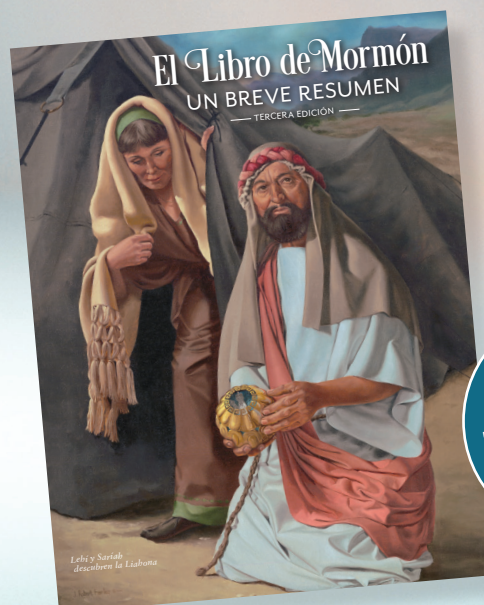
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## FROM THE Board

We feel it's important to keep our readers informed regarding board changes and the status of our projects. For many years, our board has been staffed with less than its nine member capacity. We are pleased to announce the addition of two new board members. Dennis Heater, from Oak Grove Restoration Branch, and Lorrie Look, from South Chrysler Restoration Branch, were recently elected. This filled the board for the first time in many years. Dennis previously served on our Advisory Board. Lorrie currently directs the annual Book of Mormon Day for Kids and has served in that important role since 2010.

There are also significant updates on three BMF projects. The Spanish Book of Mormon Overview is in the final stages of edit and layout. It should be sent to the printer in the near future and available soon afterwards. The Book of Mormon Maps project is being developed with a target date for release in 2018. The Book of Mormon Study Guide project is being researched and developed by Karen Bates, who serves on our research staff. It's a long term project and the largest of the projects currently being developed. These projects require substantial funds, so we encourage our supporters to prayerfully consider the ongoing need for financial support. As always, thank you for your continued prayers and support.



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# MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

by Steven L. Olsen

The present study explores the concept of memory in the text of the Book of Mormon. The study is divided into three parts:

1. Vocabulary. It traces the use of the term *remember* and its variants—for example, *remembering*, *remembered*, *remembrance*, and so on—and considers the connotations of these terms within specific literary contexts and patterns.
2. Narrative contents. It examines how the word *remember* informs and integrates the historical narrative, thus helping to define and express Nephite historical consciousness.
3. Records preservation. It illustrates how traditions of managing the Nephite archive enlarge and refine this concept of memory.



*Lehi with the Brass Plates.*  
Illustration by Joseph Brickey

The overall thesis of this study is that the Book of Mormon concept of memory is more than a cognitive awareness of the past. Rather, it represents a special kind of historical consciousness—one that is fundamental to the identity of a covenant people of God. Readers familiar with *Zakhor*, Yosef Yerushalmi's classic study of Jewish concepts of memory, will see many similarities with the present study of the Book of Mormon, particularly during the period of biblical Judaism: the role of memory in historiography, covenant ideology, and the formation and preservation of cultural identity.<sup>1</sup> These similarities derive primarily from the fact that the Book of Mormon has its roots in biblical Judaism. Hence, its writers were steeped in and consciously preserved or rejected elements of this literary culture in their own record keeping. [see 1 Nephi 1:1-2; 13:23-28; 14:23; 2 Nephi 25:1-6; 29:3-14 LDS] (1 Nephi 1-1, 3:160-171, 3:243-245; 2 Nephi 11:1-10; 12:45-74 RLDS)

## VOCABULARY

As the prophet Moroni closes the record of the Nephites, he declares how all mankind may receive a divine witness of its truthfulness. Contemporary Latter-day Saints call this passage Moroni's challenge, which is usually cited as follows:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

[Moroni 10:4-5 LDS/RLDS]

Many church members may not realize that Moroni's challenge actually begins in the preceding verse:

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall read these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

[Moroni 10:3 LDS/RLDS]

The more complete citation suggests that remembering is an essential component of spiritual conversion.



In the Book of Mormon, the importance of remembering relative to obtaining a divine witness is understood not only by the last Nephite prophet but also by disciples of Christ from earlier times as well. For example, in order to convince his unbelieving brothers that God can also lead their family to a promised land, Nephi declares how God had guided Moses and the children of Israel from Egypt to the Holy Land. [1 Nephi 17:23-55 LDS] (1 Nephi 5:103-167 RLDS) Although Nephi recognizes that only a small portion of his family's experiences can be preserved on plates, he indicates that the sacred sealed portion of the Nephite record will "reveal all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof." [2 Nephi 27:10 LDS] (2 Nephi 11:129-130 RLDS) Several centuries later, in order to revitalize the church of Christ among the Nephites, Alma the Younger reminds church members that a merciful God had delivered their fathers from captivity. [Alma 5:1-13 LDS] (Alma 3:1-26 RLDS) When the four sons of King Mosiah introduce the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Lamanites, the missionaries begin their formal instruction by rehearsing the things of God from the creation to the present day. [Alma 18:36-40; 22:12-14 LDS] (Alma 12:114-121; 13:44-47 RLDS) The grandest example of Moroni's model of conversion comes from Christ himself. During his post-resurrection ministry to the Nephites, he "did expound all things unto them, both great and small... even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory... even unto the great and last day." [3 Nephi 26:1-4; see also 23:14 LDS] (3 Nephi 11:32; see also 10:22 RLDS) Nephite prophets from Nephi to Moroni recognize that gaining and retaining a

proper understanding of the past are essential in coming to know the things of God.

The verb *remember*, along with its variants, appears some 220 times in the Book of Mormon, making it one of the most frequently used verbs in the entire text.<sup>2</sup> Frequency, however, is just one indicator of significance. Another is the specific literary contexts in which this constellation of related words appears. The imperative form of the verb regularly appears in sermons, exhortations, prophecies and spiritual counsel. For example, Nephi repeats the term eight times as he closes his sacred record with his testimony. [2 Nephi 29 LDS] (2 Nephi 12:42-74 RLDS) The term also appears eight times in Jacob's brief but masterful discourse on the atonement of Christ. [2 Nephi 9 LDS] (2 Nephi 6:1-106 RLDS) Benjamin uses the term nine times in his grand valedictory address. [Mosiah 2-5 LDS] (Mosiah 1-33 RLDS) Alma repeats the term multiple times while renewing the church among the Nephites and again while exhorting his sons to faithfulness at the end of his own life. [Alma 5-7; 34-42 LDS] (Alma 3:1 to 5-44; 16:201 to 19:117 RLDS) Alma's son Helaman repeatedly emphasizes the concept in his final instructions to his own sons. [Helaman 5:6-12 LDS] (Helaman 2:67-75 RLDS) Christ also repeats the term numerous times to the Nephites during his ministry. [3 Nephi 13-29 LDS] (3 Nephi 5:93 to 13:62 RLDS) In short, religious leaders from the Book of Mormon exhort their followers to *remember* as much as to *obey*, *repent*, *pray*, and *worship*.

In these contexts, *remember* appears not only frequently but also at the spiritual apex of the exhortation: "O remember, remember that these things are true" [Mosiah 2:41 LDS] (Mosiah 1:88-91 RLDS); "And now, O man, remember, and perish not" [Mosiah 4:30 LDS] (Mosiah 2:49-50 RLDS); and "O remember, remember, my sons... yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world." [Helaman 5:9 LDS] (Helaman 2:71 RLDS) These uses imply that the term *remember* connotes more than cognitive awareness of the past. Indeed, it is associated with spiritual maturity and is an essential component of righteousness.

*Christ in America.*  
Illustration by Joseph Brickey





The following uses of the term expand its connotations by characterizing how God remembers divine promises relative to his covenant people.

When that day cometh... that they no more turn aside their hearts against the Holy One of Israel, then will he remember the covenants which he made to their fathers. Yea, then will he remember the isles of the sea; yea, and all the people who are of the house of Israel, will I gather in, saith the Lord... from the four quarters of the earth.

[1 Nephi 19:15-16 LDS]  
(1Nephi 5:253-255 RLDS)

But behold, there shall be many—at that day when I shall proceed to do a marvelous work among them, that I may remember my covenants which I have made unto the children of men, that I may set my hand again the second time to recover my people, which are of the house of Israel; And also, that I may remember the promises which I have made unto thee, Nephi, and also unto thy father, that I would remember your seed.

[2 Nephi 29:1-2 LDS]  
(2 Nephi 12:42-44 RLDS)

And I will show unto thee, O house of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you; but I will remember my covenant unto you, O house of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fullness of my gospel.

[3 Nephi 16:12 LDS]  
(3 Nephi 7:37 RLDS)

And after they have been driven and scattered by the Gentiles, behold, then will the Lord remember the covenant which he made unto Abraham and unto all the house of Israel. And also the Lord will remember the prayers of the righteous, which have been put up into him for them.

[Mormon 5:20-21 LDS]  
(Mormon 2:49-50 RLDS)

And as the Lord liveth he will remember the covenant which he hath made with [the house of Israel].

[Mormon 8:23 LDS]  
(Mormon 4:27-28 RLDS)

It is difficult to imagine an omniscient God forgetting (in the usual sense) something as vital as a covenant with or the prayers of his people. Rather, in these and related passages, *remember* carries the connotation of “restore,” “renew,” “revitalize,” or “refresh.” In each case, that which God remembers is an essential part of the identity of a people whom God distinguishes from the rest of humanity by means of a covenant and its periodic renewal.

The covenant connotation of *remember* is made explicit in the prayers offered during the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, the centerpiece of Nephite public worship. While Nephite worship services are not detailed to any great extent in the Book of Mormon, Moroni includes verbatim the prayers over the emblems of Christ’s atoning sacrifice in Moroni 4-5 [LDS/RLDS]. Each prayer divides into three parts:

1. Invocation, in which the officiator addresses “God, the Eternal Father” and states the purpose of the prayer—that is, “to bless and sanctify” the bread or wine, respectively
2. Promise, in which members of the congregation commit to certain devotional acts that are central to their identity as members of Christ’s church
3. Blessing, in which the officiator declares how God will bless members of the congregation who keep their covenantal promise—that is, “that they may always have his Spirit [i.e., the Holy Ghost] to be with them”



While the specific wording of the promise portion of each prayer is not identical, the promises themselves are the same, as expressed in the two verbs *remember* and *witness*. In partaking of the sacrament, church members promise to remember and to witness to certain eternal truths in devotion to the Savior and as evidence of their membership in his church. The precise wording of the promise portion of each prayer is as follows:

that they may eat [the bread] in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them.

[Moroni 4:3 LDS] (Moroni 4:4 RLDS)

that they may do it [i.e., drink the wine] in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember Him.<sup>3</sup>

[Moroni 5:2 LDS] (Moroni 5:3 RLDS)

That both prayers emphasize the same set of promises indicates that *remembering* and *witnessing* are key principles of personal devotion and covenant identity for members of the church of Christ.

Another literary construction of the term *remember* in the Book of Mormon is as a prelude to or component of action—for example, “remember to keep the commandments,” “remember to observe the statutes and judgments of the Lord,” and “remember to retain the name [of Christ] written always in your hearts.” [1 Nephi 15:25; Alma 46:23; Helaman 5:6; 2 Nephi 1:16; Mosiah 5:12 LDS] (1 Nephi 4:41-42; Alma 21:54-55; Helaman 2:67-68; 2 Nephi 1:30; Mosiah 3:16 RLDS) This literary pattern is not relevant to *all* possible Nephite actions, only to those connected with devotion to God, and it carries the connotation not only of cognitive recall but more importantly of spiritual commitment. Thus *remember* lies at the foundation not only of an awareness of divine truth—the role it plays in Moroni’s challenge—but also of a covenant commitment to a life of righteousness.<sup>4</sup> From this perspective,

repeated use of the term in the sacrament prayers implies that those who partake of the emblems of Christ’s atoning sacrifice acknowledge the truth of the atonement and the mission of Jesus Christ and commit to live the gospel of the Savior as they have received it.

Synonyms and antonyms of *remember* reveal related nuances of its meaning. The text contains few instances of the common English synonyms of *remember*—for example, remind, recall, recollect, and so on.<sup>5</sup> When these words do appear in the text [e.g., Enos 1:23; Alma 11:43 LDS] (e.g., Enos 1:37-40; Alma 8:100-101 RLDS), they connote simply “cognitive recall” rather than the suite of spiritual meanings of *remember* mentioned above. Thus, while *remember* has certain common synonyms in English, the specific connotations of these words in the Book of Mormon diverge from those of *remember*, which focus instead on covenant relations and spiritual devotion found in keeping commandments.

The Book of Mormon word that is the closest antonym to *remember* is *forget*. While *forget* and its variants appear far fewer times than *remember*, all usages connote a spiritual imperative similar to *remember*, and most occur within a covenant context.<sup>6</sup> The word *forget* in the Book of Mormon thus connotes “turning from,” “breaking,” “severing,” or “rejecting” rather than the more common English connotation of “putting out of mind.”

Given the covenant-based contexts for most uses of *remember*, it may be reasonable to consider the relevance of another possible antonym. While the term *dismember* itself does not appear in the Book of Mormon, a few related terms do.<sup>7</sup> For example, *cut* is used over seventy times in the text, all but nine of which are combined with *off*, as in *cut off*. Nearly all uses of this phrase occur in an explicit covenant context that implies spiritual or physical death as the ultimate consequence of breaking a covenant by not remembering.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, the term *destroy* and its variants usually connote the physical or spiritual death of those who *forget* their covenants.<sup>9</sup>

This general pattern of word usage suggests that while the connotation of “cognitive recall” exists in the Book of Mormon, it plays only a secondary or supporting role relative to the book’s lofty spiritual objectives. More to the point is that use of the term *remember*—along with its variations,



synonyms and antonyms—exhibits patterns that are consistently associated with righteousness, obedience, covenants and salvation and are regularly contrasted with evil, death and destruction. None of the over 220 uses of remember occurs in a mundane, casual, completely empirical, or purely cognitive context. Rather, they connote such meanings as “hold fast,” “commit to,” “embrace,” “keep sacred,” “restore,” “renew,” “be true to,” “gather” and “preserve.” That

this pattern is abundantly manifest throughout the Book of Mormon suggests that its principal authors intend the constellation of related terms to communicate a set of precise meanings that are central to the book’s core spiritual purposes. These terms occupy a special place in the language of the Book of Mormon, one that acknowledges the empirical past and the role of cognition in human consciousness but that focuses these capabilities on God and his eternal purposes.

## NARRATIVE CONTENTS

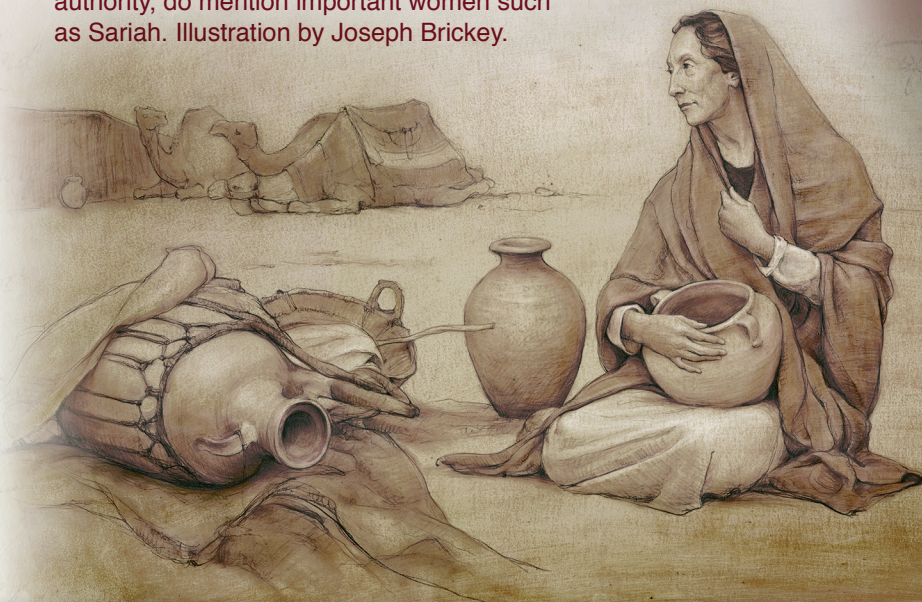
Record keeping is one of the principal duties given to the Nephites by God. On two separate occasions, the Lord commands Nephi to keep a record of his mortal ministry. [1 Nephi 19:1-5; 2 Nephi 5:28-34 LDS] (1 Nephi 5:218-228; 2 Nephi 4:44-51 RLDS) At the time that he distinguishes his followers as a separate people, Nephi identifies record keeping as one of the key measures by which they preserve their covenant-based identity. [2 Nephi 5:12 LDS] (2 Nephi 4:17 RLDS)<sup>10</sup> In addition, Nephi appears to have used his divine vision [1 Nephi 11-14 LDS] (1 Nephi 3:37-256 RLDS) as a microcosm for his own record, and Mormon seems to have used it as a pattern or framework to abridge the Nephite archives.<sup>11</sup>

On a more comprehensive level, the Nephite concept of tradition contrasts dramatically with that of related peoples.<sup>12</sup> While the Nephites maintain their traditions largely by written records compiled and preserved by supreme spiritual leaders and for covenant-based spiritual purposes, the people of Zarahemla bring no written records with them from Jerusalem and thus lose their covenant identity, even though they trace their descent from the royal lineage of the Jews and occupy the promised land for a period of time comparable to the Nephites. [Omni 1:17; Helaman 8:21 LDS] (Omni 1:28-31; Helaman 8:12 RLDS) Likewise, the Lamanites seem to have kept no written records; hence, their religious and social traditions are transmitted largely orally and are described in the Nephite record as “incorrect,” “wicked” and “abominable.” [Alma 3:8; 23:3; 37:9; Helaman 15:7; 16:20

LDS] (Alma 1:106; 14:4-6; 17:38-39 Helaman 5:95-96; 5:132-133; RLDS) By contrast, “silly” and “foolish” are the epithets used by apostate Nephites to justify their rejection of the church and gospel of Christ among the Nephites. [Alma 8:11; 21:8; 30:14-31; 31:17; compare Helaman 16:20 LDS] (Alma 6:12-13; 13:11-12; 16:15-39; 16:92-93 compare Helaman 5:132-133 RLDS) To reinforce the central role of record keeping in the preservation of Nephite covenant identity, Book of Mormon prophets specifically mention the desire of wicked Nephites and Lamanites to destroy the records of the Nephites, whom they also seek to destroy as a people. [Enos 1:14-16; Alma 14:8 LDS] (Enos 1:21-26; Alma 10:45-46 RLDS)

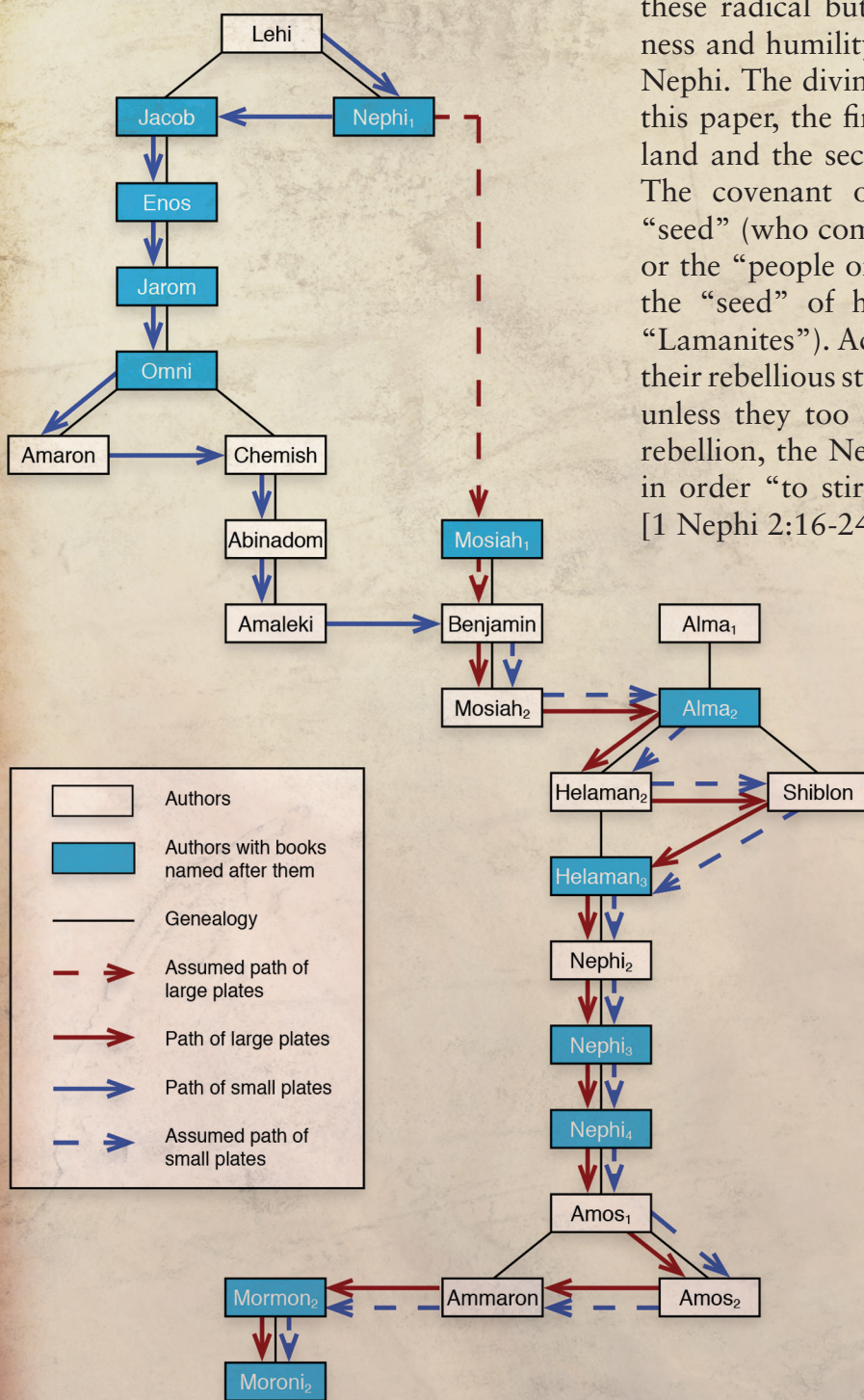
The covenant-based concept of *remember* considerably influences the historical narrative of the Book of Mormon. Nephi’s initial use of the term occurs in the context of his making sacred covenants

The records, though maintained by priesthood authority, do mention important women such as Sariah. Illustration by Joseph Brickey.





# TRANSMISSION OF THE LARGE AND SMALL PLATES



The large and small plates were carefully preserved and passed on. The chart assumes that the book of Mosiah was named after King Benjamin's father rather than his son. Justin Kelly adapted this chart from chart 16 in John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999).

with God. In his first recorded spiritual experience, Nephi declares that the Spirit had softened his heart so that he can accept his father's dire predictions of Jerusalem's impending destruction and the resulting need for his family to flee into the wilderness. Having received this special witness, Nephi tries, but with limited success, to convince his siblings of these radical but revealed truths. Because of his faithfulness and humility in making the attempt, the Lord blesses Nephi. The divine blessings are expressed as covenants. In this paper, the first is called the covenant of the promised land and the second the covenant of the chosen people.<sup>13</sup> The covenant of the chosen people identifies Nephi's "seed" (who come to be known collectively as "Nephites" or the "people of Nephi") as a "ruler and a teacher" over the "seed" of his rebellious brothers (eventually called "Lamanites"). According to this covenant, the Lamanites in their rebellious state will have "no power" over the Nephites unless they too rebel against God. In their own state of rebellion, the Nephites will be scourged by the Lamanites in order "to stir them up in the ways of remembrance." [1 Nephi 2:16-24 LDS] (1 Nephi1:47-48 RLDS)

Nephite group identity is thus defined along two covenantal axes: horizontally vis-à-vis other persons and vertically vis-à-vis God. The covenant of the chosen people specifies that the Nephites will play contrasting roles—leader or victim—based on their faithfulness to the covenant. Thus *remembrance* is essential to both sides of the covenant of the chosen people: the Nephites must *remember*—that is, "keep sacred," "preserve," "hold fast to"—their covenant with God so that they can be divinely blessed; otherwise, they will either be scourged unto "the ways of remembrance"—that is, "spiritual renewal"—by their perpetual antagonists, the Lamanites, or *forget*, their covenant with God.

Covenant ideology in the Book of Mormon informs the historical consciousness of the Nephites and their identity as a chosen people of God. In fact, the two concepts—historical consciousness and covenant ideology—are sufficiently connected in the text to be virtually indistinguishable. In the Book of Mormon, the term



*people* is the most frequently used noun, appearing some 1,800 times.<sup>14</sup>

As *remember* is about more than the past, *people* is about more than a collection of individuals or even a society as a whole. In the Book of Mormon, the primary connotation of *people* is a group that is united, defined and governed by sacred covenants. Nephi, for example, distinguishes Nephites from Lamanites largely in terms of a covenant with God. That is, the people of Nephi are those who follow God and are thereby blessed by their faithfulness, regardless of their lineal descent. By contrast, the Lamanites are those who fight against the Nephites and are thereby cursed, regardless of their literal ancestry. As a result, Nephi typically characterizes his followers as righteous, stable, civil, delightful, pure, prosperous, powerful, hardworking, unified and happy, and the Lamanites as indolent, nomadic, savage, repulsive, wicked and ignorant of the things of God.<sup>15</sup>

Nephi's brother Jacob reinforces this covenant-based distinction. While recognizing descent as one way to distinguish social subgroups, he contrasts Nephites from Lamanites primarily in terms reminiscent of God's initial covenants with Nephi: "I shall call them Lamanites that seek to destroy the people of Nephi, and those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites, or the people of Nephi." [Jacob 1:14; see also 1 Nephi 2:21-24; Mormon 1:8 LDS] (Jacob 1:4; see also 1 Nephi 1:55-58; Mormon 1:8 RLDS) Because Nephites and Lamanites are both defined in terms of the covenant, they are each identified as a people. The house of Israel is also considered a people in this sense because of its association with God's covenant with Abraham. The rest of humanity, however, is identified as Gentiles, a term connoting undifferentiated, residual human groups. While Gentiles are occasionally called nations, kingdoms, or multitudes in the Book of Mormon, they are never referred to as a people in this covenantal sense.<sup>16</sup> Nephite prophets anticipate a time when many Gentiles will accept the Abrahamic covenant and live the gospel of Jesus Christ. According to these prophecies, they will then be included with God's covenant people and forego their Gentile identity [e.g., 1 Nephi 13; 2 Nephi 30; 3 Nephi 20-22 LDS] (e.g., 1 Nephi 3:135-200; 2 Nephi 12:75-100; 3 Nephi 9:37 to 10:25 RLDS)

Mormon adopts Nephi's and Jacob's covenant-based distinctions in his abridgment of the large plates. [see Alma 3:11 LDS] (see Alma 1:109

RLDS) Accounts of Nephite-Lamanite relations throughout the thousand-year history illustrate both aspects of this covenant pattern. As the Nephites remember their covenant, they enjoy spiritual blessings, prevail against external aggression, and succeed in converting many Lamanites to the gospel of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, whenever the Lamanites gain political, social, or military advantage, it is because the Nephites forget their covenant. However, as the Nephites are scourged in and restored to "the ways of remembrance," they regain ascendancy over their enemies and reclaim peace and protection for their society. In the end, however, the Nephites are destroyed as a people once they altogether reject the covenant, despite repeated scourging

Mormon portrays the Nephites ideally as a peace-loving, God-fearing people who are nevertheless willing to defend themselves against aggression. In general, the Nephites are also well-governed by leaders—whether king, priest, judge, or prophet—whose essential leadership quality is righteousness. Righteous leaders seek the welfare of the governed. In turn, the governed serve one another and support their leaders. Thus, for the most part, the Nephites are unified, prosperous, delightful and pure, in contrast to the Lamanites, who are ferocious, savage, aggressive, godless and prone to wickedness.

The covenant of the chosen people acknowledges that these cultural stereotypes can be reversed or contradicted altogether because they are not associated exclusively with particular descent groups. When Nephites, for example, turn from their covenants, they reject the church of Christ, undermine established governments, foment social discord and seek alliances with Lamanites in order to pursue their unrighteous objectives. [e.g., Alma 9-14, 30-35, 46-49, 51-52, 59-62; Helaman 1-2, 4, 8-9 LDS] (e.g., Alma 7:1 to 10:85, 16:1-261; 21:29-186; 23:1 to 24:49; 27:1 to 29:63; Helaman 1:1-52; 2:35-62; 3:32-111 RLDS) By contrast, when Lamanites are converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ, they exemplify qualities of godliness often to a greater degree than Nephites themselves. [e.g., Alma 25-27; Helaman 6 LDS] (e.g., Alma 14:59 to 15:35; Helaman 2:118-168 RLDS) When righteousness prevails generally, social distinctions disappear and no "manner of -ites" exists among the descendants of Lehi; they come to be known collectively as the "children of Christ." [4 Nephi



1:17; see Mosiah 5:7-6:2 LDS] (4 Nephi 1:20; see Mosiah 3:8-9 to 4:2 RLDS) However, when the spiritual utopia disintegrates, the dissenters take upon themselves the name of “Lamanites,” regardless of their actual descent lines. [4 Nephi 1:20 LDS] (4 Nephi 1:23 RLDS) Finally, the group that Mormon credits with the overthrow and eventual destruction of the entire Nephite nation is never referred to in the text as a people. Rather, they are variously called the “band,” “robbers,” or “society” of Gadianton. [Helaman 2:13-14 LDS]. (Helaman 1:51-52 RLDS)<sup>17</sup>

Virtually all uses of *remember* in the Book of Mormon can be understood in a covenant context. Obedience, righteousness, spirituality, faithfulness, holiness, protection, deliverance, salvation, as well as their negative counterparts—in short, all of the things that the Nephites are enjoined to remember—are part of the covenant ideology by which they order and make enduring sense of their lives. Remembrance, then, is not just a mnemonic

exercise for historians. It is, rather, an essential spiritual discipline that allows a covenant people to preserve their identity. Furthermore, it is not the past in general that must be remembered. It is, rather, those portions of the past that exemplify covenant identities and relationships, strengthen and expand faith in Christ, and assure salvation in the kingdom of God. For the Nephites, these values are not simply internal matters of the heart (emotions) and mind (intellect) but are also external truths manifest in the lives of a people. Thus their “ways of remembrance” can be written down and preserved in historical records.

From this perspective, the Book of Mormon is more than simply an ancient historical narrative. Its contents and structure are thoroughly informed by covenant ideology. Thus remembering the past by compiling records; preserving, studying and pondering their contents; and teaching and keeping their precepts constitutes a pattern that is implied by its authors to be a form of sacred covenant renewal.<sup>18</sup>

## RECORDS PRESERVATION

The foregoing discussion suggests that the Book of Mormon is not simply the history of an ancient community, society, family, or lineage. Rather, it is the official record of a covenant people. Nephite records not only provide an account of their sacred covenants but also are the most powerful witness to those covenants. For the Nephites, keeping records from generation to generation is a sacred duty, one that is entrusted only to Nephite spiritual leaders.

*Building the Ship in Bountiful.* Illustration by Joseph Brickey



So sacred is this archival responsibility that one Nephite holy man suggests that properly understanding the past is the special province of a “seer.” (Mosiah 8:13-19 LDS) (Mosiah 5:72-83 RLDS)

As a result, the Nephites leave no aspect of records preservation to chance. Preserving records is so vital to Nephite identity that the names, positions and spiritual roles of the successive stewards of the records, as well as the manner in which those records are preserved, constitute an important subtext of the Book of Mormon narrative. This degree of editorial transparency contrasts markedly with that of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the high degree of consistency with which Nephites preserve records throughout their thousand-year history suggests that maintaining the traditions of records preservation is as important to the Nephites as preserving the records themselves.

As Lehi’s successor, Nephi is the first prophet-king of the “people of Nephi.” [2 Nephi 5:9 LDS] (2 Nephi 4:13 RLDS) Of all his responsibilities, none receives more attention than keeper of their sacred records. He maintains two



sets of records, both of which are commanded of him by God but at different periods. He begins the first shortly after they have obtained the land of promise and the second after Nephi organizes his followers as a separate people a few decades later. [1 Nephi 19:1-7; 2 Nephi 5:29-34 LDS] (1 Nephi 5:218-235; 2 Nephi 4:45-51 RLDS) In short, the commencement of Nephi's two records coincides with the initial fulfillment of the two covenants by which God defines his spiritual identity—possessor of a promised land and leader of a chosen people. [see 1 Nephi 2:19-24 LDS] (see 1 Nephi 1:53-58 RLDS) During his life, Nephi becomes aware that his people will be eventually annihilated as a people. [1 Nephi 12:13-23; 2 Nephi 26:10 LDS] (1 Nephi 3:121-134; 2 Nephi 11:74-76 RLDS) Thus his record will be the principal enduring memory and tangible evidence of their existence. Nephi also learns that the record he and his successors create will be the primary means by which God fulfills his ancient covenant with Abraham in the latter days. [1 Nephi 13:13-42 LDS] (1 Nephi 3:148-200 RLDS)<sup>20</sup> As a result, Nephi invests his best efforts to record “that which is pleasing unto God” and takes great pains to instruct those who will subsequently preserve and eventually translate the records so that they can fulfill this ambitious mission. [1 Nephi 6; 2 Nephi 5:32; 25:22; 27 LDS] (1 Nephi 2:1-6; 2 Nephi 4:48-49; 11:41; 11:116-160 RLDS)

The line of successive stewards becomes an important part of the record itself and, in some cases, its primary entry of a given generation. [e.g., Omni 1:1-10 LDS] (e.g., Omni 1:1-15 RLDS) The first set of Nephite records (called the large plates of Nephi) is initially kept by the line of kings and the second (called the small plates of Nephi) by the descendants of Jacob, Nephi's brother. After nearly five centuries, the small plates are full, and the current steward, Amaleki, entrusts this record to King Benjamin, who is also the steward of the large plates at the time. [Omni 1:23-25 LDS] (Omni 1:40-45 RLDS) At the end of his eventful life, Benjamin transfers both sets of records to his son and successor, Mosiah. [Mosiah 1:10-18 LDS] (Mosiah 1:15-27 RLDS) At the dissolution of the kingship and the formation of an institutional church among the Nephites, Mosiah transfers the record-keeping function to Alma the Elder, who has been appointed “chief priest” over the church. [Mosiah 28:20 LDS] (Mosiah 13:1-2 RLDS) For the

next four centuries, both sets of records are kept by a succession of Alma's righteous descendants until Ammaron identifies a ten-year-old boy who shows promise to be the next Nephite prophet. [3 Nephi 5:20; 4 Nephi 1:48-49; Mormon 1:1-5; 8:13 LDS] (3 Nephi 2:102-103; 4 Nephi 1:57-59; Mormon 1:1-6; 4:16 RLDS) In his turn, Mormon keeps a “full account” of his own period. In addition, he is eventually directed by God to abridge all the previous contributions to the large plates. Having done so, he instructs his son Moroni to complete the Nephite record, abridge the Jaredite record, and “seal up” the collection of plates in view of their “coming forth” in the last days. [Mormon 2:18; Words of Mormon 1:1-2 LDS] (Mormon 1:45; Words of Mormon 1:1-3 RLDS)

The Book of Mormon identifies not only those who possess and compile the official Nephite archive from generation to generation but also the manner of its preservation. Instructions that accompany the transfer of records justify their preservation in terms of covenant ideology, historical consciousness, the Nephites' identity as a people, and their hope for salvation.

King Benjamin, for example, prepares his son Mosiah for the archival duty by having him “taught in all the language of his fathers,” as Lehi had previously done for Nephi, in order that he might become a man of “understanding”—that is, familiar with the prophecies that had been received and recorded by “their fathers.” Benjamin teaches his son about the plates of brass and declares that the additional records preserved by their predecessors are “true,” thus enabling the people (1) to know the “mysteries of God” and (2) to “keep the commandments of God.” Because of their care in keeping sacred records, the Nephites are able to maintain their covenant-based distinctiveness from the Lamanites. [Mosiah 1:2-7 LDS] (Mosiah 1:2-12 RLDS)

Some seventy years later and toward the end of his own life, Alma the Younger charges his son Helaman to keep sacred not only all the received records, including those of the people of Ether, but also the sacred objects associated with the records. These include (1) the stone or interpreters that bring to light “works of darkness” and “wickedness and abominations” of mankind and (2) the Liahona or compass that directs people of faith to understand and follow the will of God. Acknowledging that preserving the records may seem to some a “small



and simple” thing, Alma emphasizes that doing so is nevertheless crucial to ensure the righteousness of the people. To this end, he witnesses to his son that the Nephite records “[did enlarge] the memory of this people, yea, and convinced many of the error of their ways, and brought them to a knowledge of their God unto the salvation of their souls.” [Alma 37:8 LDS] (Alma 17:37 RLDS) He further declares that these complementary benefits of remembrance, repentance, and knowledge unto salvation will eventually extend to other peoples and to “future generations” [Alma 37:18 LDS] (Alma 17:49 RLDS) as long as the records are properly preserved. Thus Alma enjoins Helaman to continued righteousness so that he can successfully carry out this sacred archival duty and lead the people of God. [Alma 37:21-47; 45:2-17 LDS] (Alma 17:52-84; 21:3-19 RLDS)

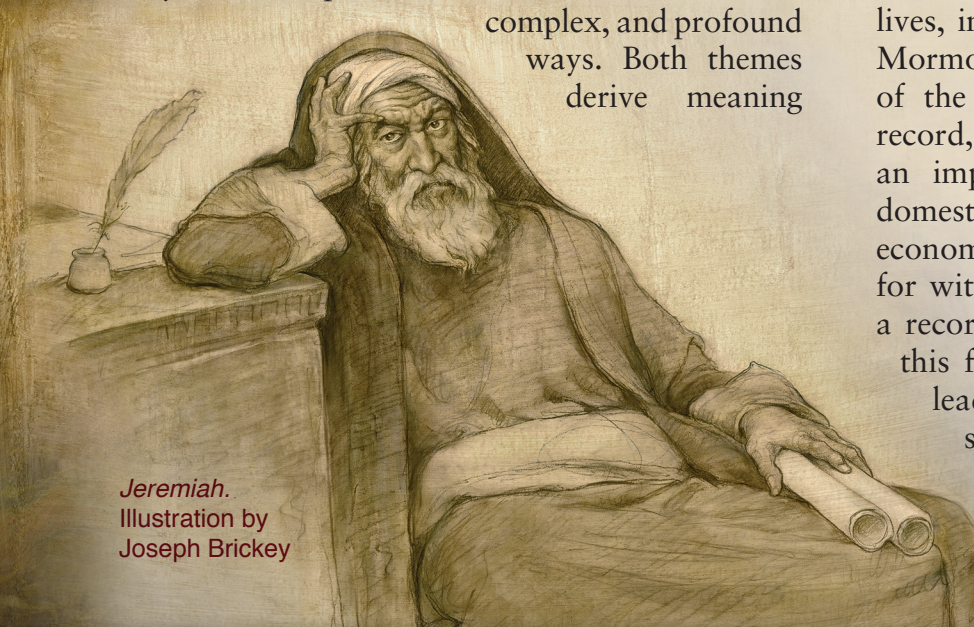
For most of the history of the Nephites in the promised land, sacred records are kept and preserved by the supreme leaders, whether king, prophet, priest, or general. As the society begins to disintegrate, the preservation of records by leaders, regardless how righteous, becomes more problematic. Near the end, stewards of the records begin hiding and even compiling them in caves or in other secure natural repositories. Hence, the hill Shim and hill Ramah play an important role among the Nephites and their counterparts among the Jaredites. [Mormon 1:3; 4:23; Ether 9:3; 13:13-14; 15:11 LDS] (Mormon 1:3-4; 2:25; Ether 4:3-4; 6:14-15; 6:83 RLDS) Not being able to secure sacred records in the traditional way is a sign that society has so completely forgotten their covenants that they are “ripe for destruction,” in accordance with the covenants’ curse.

## CONCLUSION

Nephi repeatedly testifies that he writes nothing on plates except that which is sacred. One thousand years later, Mormon testifies that he intends to model his abridgment on Nephi’s writings. [Words of Mormon 1:4-5 LDS] (Words of Mormon 1:6-8 RLDS) By implication, everything about the Book of Mormon—language, contents, literary structures, manner of transmission and preservation, and latter-day mission—is to be considered sacred. The foregoing study has shown how concepts of memory and identity support this perspective. Not only do these concepts pervade the narrative, but they also complement each other in consistent, complex, and profound ways. Both themes derive meaning

from and are grounded in divine revelation and sacred covenants, which helps to distinguish the Book of Mormon as a scriptural record.

According to the Book of Mormon, covenants are established by God with his children through revelation to a prophet. They serve as the basis of a unified community of committed believers and of an enduring relationship with God as well as a primary mechanism for realizing the blessings of salvation, partially in mortality and fully in eternity. Thus, the Book of Mormon portrays history as the record of covenants that distinguish a chosen people and give eternal meaning to their lives, including their eventual destruction. While Mormon and Moroni include only a small portion of the available material in the final Nephite record, the narrative illustrates the extent to which an impressive array of information—military, domestic, spiritual, ecclesiastical, political, economic, social and so on—can be accounted for within a covenant framework. Keeping such a record is crucial to Nephite identity, and thus this function is entrusted to supreme spiritual leaders. In addition to being a key to understanding the people of Nephi, this covenant pattern is shown in the Book of Mormon to be equally relevant to other peoples of the past and future. The Book of Mormon presents itself as both



*Jeremiah.*  
Illustration by  
Joseph Brickey



a record of God's covenants among an ancient people and the agent of covenant renewal in the latter days. Thus, the Book of Mormon defines a

comprehensive covenant-based worldview whose principal purpose is the salvation of mankind in the kingdom of God.

Dr. Steven L. Olsen (Ph.D., Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1985) has published widely on The Book of Mormon. The present study previously appeared in the *Journal of The Book of Mormon and other Restoration Scriptures*, volume 22, number 2, 2013. He lives in Heber City, Utah with his wife, Kathi, occasional children and grandchildren, and assorted pets.

## NOTES

1. Yosef Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982). The scholarly literature on memory is extensive, ranging from the cognitive and social sciences to the humanities and philosophy. One of the more valuable and broad-ranging examinations of the subject from a philosophical perspective is Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004)
2. R. Gary Shapiro, comp., *An Exhaustive Concordance of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes, 1977), s.vv. “memory,” “remember,” “remembered,” “rememberest,” “remembereth,” “remembering,” “remembrance.” Of the several hundred different verbs in the Book of Mormon, only about three dozen appear more frequently than *remember*, and many of these are basic verbs (e.g., *to be, to have, to go*).
3. The literary similarities between the sacrament prayers [Moroni 4:3; 5:2 LDS] (Moroni 4:4; 5:3 RLDS) and Moroni's promise [Moroni 10:3-5 LDS/RLDS] imply a degree of conscious intentionality on Moroni's part and, hence, a strong relationship of meaning among covenant renewal, historical consciousness, social identity, and spiritual witness.
4. The following usage strengthens the association of *remember* with righteous action. In his final blessing to his posterity, Lehi urges his children, “Wherefore, my sons, I would that ye would remember; yea, I would that ye would hearken unto my words.” [2 Nephi 1:12 LDS] (2 Nephi 1:25-26 RLDS) In the Book of Mormon, the second clause in such a construction reinforces and amplifies the meaning of the first. Hence, *remember* in the first clause is defined and its importance is amplified by *hearken* in the second. Thus *hearken* connotes more than “listen” or “pay attention;” rather, it implies “mind,” “give heed to,” or “live according to” the counsel.
5. Shapiro, *Exhaustive Concordance*, s.vv. “recall,” “recollection,” “reminded,” “reminding.”
6. Shapiro, *Exhaustive Concordance*, s.vv. “forget,” “forgettest,” “forgetting.”
7. For an expanded discussion of the concept of *dismember* in the Book of Mormon, see Steven L. Olsen, “The Death of Laban: A Literary Interpretation,” *FARMS Review* 21/1 (2009):192.
8. Shapiro, *Exhaustive Concordance*, s.vv. “cut,” “cutteth,” “cutting.”
9. Shapiro, *Exhaustive Concordance*, s.vv. “destroy,” “destroyed,” “destroyeth,” “destroyers,” “destroying,” “destruction(s).”
10. Steven L. Olsen, “Prospering in the Land of Promise,” *FARMS Review* 22/1 (2010): 229-45.
11. Steven L. Olsen, “The Centrality of Nephi's Vision,” *Religious Educator* 11/2 (2010): 51-65; Olsen, “Prophecy and History: Structuring the Abridgment of the Nephite Records,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15/1 (2006): 18-29.
12. A classic social science perspective on the subject is Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
13. For expanded treatments of these two covenants in the Book of Mormon, see Steven L. Olsen, “The Covenant of the Promised Land: Territorial Symbolism in the Book of Mormon,” *FARMS Review* 22/2 (2010): 137-54; and Olsen, “The Covenant of the Chosen People: The Spiritual Foundations of Ethnic Identity in the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21/2(2012): 14-29.
14. Shapiro, *Exhaustive Concordance*, s.v. “people.”
15. These stereotypical distinctions between Nephites and Lamanites are made explicit in 2 Nephi 5 [LDS] (2 Nephi 4:1-51 RLDS) and are developed throughout the rest of the Book of Mormon; [see, for example, Enos 1:20-21; Jarom 1:5-11 LDS] (Enos 1:30-34; Jarom 1:10-26 RLDS).
16. Shapiro, *Exhaustive Concordance*, s.vv. “Gentile(s),” “people.”
17. See also Shapiro, *Exhaustive Concordance*, s.vv. “band,” “Gadianton,” “robbers,” “society.”
18. A classic study of the subject is Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969). Doctrine and Covenants 84:54-58 may be a modern-day expression of a similar idea.
19. Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 65-67, 73-74, 123-124; Terryl L. Givens, *The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3-12
20. See also Steven L. Olsen, “Nephi's Literary Endeavor,” *Religious Educator* 4/3 (2003): 133-41.



# PROPHECY WATCH

One of the most widely discussed prophetic signs today surrounds the phrase: “when ye shall see all these things.” This phrase, or some version of it, is found in the parable of the fig tree and attached to scriptures described by theologians as the “Olivet Discourse.” The Olivet Discourses are found in Matthew 24 (IV/KJV), Mark 13 (IV/KVJ), Luke 21 (IV/KJV), 3 Nephi 7, 9, 10 (RLDS) [3 Nephi 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 LDS] and D&C 45 (RLDS/LDS). The Book of Mormon doesn’t specifically mention the fig tree parable but its prophecies of the latter days support its fulfillment.

The joining together of latter day signs is called convergence, meaning many signs are being fulfilled within the same time period. Hence the phrase, “when you shall see all these things then...”

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When its branches are yet tender, and it begins to put forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh at hand. So likewise mine elect, when they shall see all these things, they shall know that he is near, even at the doors. But of that day and hour no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God in heaven, but my Father only. (Matthew 24:41-43 KJV/IV)

Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branches are yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh at hand. So likewise, mine elect, when they shall see all these things, they shall know that he is near, even at the doors. But of that day and hour no one knoweth; no, not the angels of God in heaven, but my Father only.

(Mark 13:45-47 KJV/IV)

And he spake to them a parable, saying, Behold the fig tree, and all the trees.

When they now shoot forth, ye see, and know of your own selves, that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

(Luke 21:29-31 KJV/IV)

and they shall learn the parable of the fig tree; for even now already summer is nigh, and I have sent forth the fullness of my gospel by the hand of my servant Joseph; (D&C 34:4e RLDS) [D&C 35:16-17 LDS]

ye look and behold the fig trees, and ye see them with your eyes, and ye say, when they begin to shoot forth and their leaves are yet tender, that summer is now nigh at hand; even so it shall be in that day, when they shall see all these things, then shall they know that the hour is nigh. And it shall come to pass that he that feareth me shall be looking forth for the great day of the Lord to come, even for the signs of the coming of the Son of man; (D&C 45:5d-6a RLDS) [D&C 45:37-39 LDS]

The significance of these scriptures is summarized well in excerpts from an article written by Britt Gillette, titled *The Number One Prophetic Sign: Convergence*:

- What is the number one prophetic sign? What sign more than any other, points to the soon return of Jesus Christ?
- While any number of signs are present, I believe one stands out above all others. In fact, Jesus Himself told us what it is.
- When the disciples said, "Tell us the signs of your coming and the end of the age" (Matthew 24:3), Jesus detailed a number of things to look for.
- He then said, "When you see all these things, you can know my return is near. I'm right at the door" (Matthew 24:33).
- He also said, "When all these things begin to happen, look up for your salvation is near!" (Luke 21:28).

This means the number one sign of Jesus' return is all the signs appearing together. Both Jesus and the prophets told us what signs to look for, and the appearance of just one is reason enough to take



notice. But the arrival of one sign after another should really get your attention. This convergence of signs is the number one prophetic sign - the number one reason to believe Jesus is right at the door.

### **The Convergence of Signs**

The Bible tells us a number of events will take place just prior to the return of Jesus. Generations of Christians lived and died without witnessing one of these signs. Yet our generation is witness to all of them. Those signs include:

**Israel Back in the Land** - God promised to bring the Jewish people back into the land of Israel before He returned (Jeremiah 23:7-8). He said He would call them from "among the nations" (Ezekiel 39:28), from "the farthest corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:12), and from "north, south, east, and west" (Psalm 107:3). He promised to welcome them home from the lands where they were scattered (Ezekiel 20:34). When they did, He promised to return and establish His everlasting kingdom (Isaiah 11:11-12).

**The Jews Back in Jerusalem** - Jesus said armies would surround Jerusalem, destroy the city, and enslave its citizens. This happened in A.D. 70 when the Roman legions did exactly that. Jesus then said people other than the Jews would control Jerusalem for a time, then the Jewish people would once again control Jerusalem. When they did, Jesus promised to return (Luke 21:24-28). Since 1967, the Jewish people have been in possession of Jerusalem and will be celebrating their 50 year reunification this June.

**The Gospel Preached Throughout the World** - When asked about the end of the age and the signs of His coming, Jesus said to look for a very specific sign. He said the gospel will be preached throughout the entire world. Every nation will hear it. And then? And then, the end will come (Matthew 24:14)...

**An Increase in Travel and Knowledge** - Six hundred years before Jesus, an angel gave Daniel a special message. He said "travel and knowledge" will increase in the end times (Daniel 12:4). For centuries of human history, dramatic gains in travel and knowledge did NOT take place. Yet the last two hundred years have seen explosions in the speed and frequency of travel as well as the amount and availability of knowledge.

**Arrival of the Exponential Curve** - Jesus said a variety of global signs will come before His return and the end of the age. These signs will be spiritual, natural, societal, and political in nature. And He said they would appear in a distinct way - "like birth pains" (Matthew 24:3-8).

This means the frequency and intensity of these signs will increase as we near His return. Our generation has seen the exponential increase in war and famine that Jesus said to look for. In the 20th Century alone, more people died from war and famine than lived on the earth when Jesus spoke these words.

**Israel Surrounded by Enemies** - The Bible says enemies will surround Israel in the end times. Those enemies will say "Come, let us wipe away the nation of Israel. Let's destroy the memory of its existence" (Psalm 83:4) and "Let us take for ourselves these pasturelands of God" (Psalm 83:12).

Ezekiel said Israel's neighbors will say "God has given their land to us" (Ezekiel 11:14-17), and "Israel and Judah are ours. We will take possession of them. What do we care if their God is there?" (Ezekiel 35:10). Ever since the rebirth of Israel in 1948, the daily headlines have included these Bible verses. Israel's Muslim neighbors claim the land of Israel for themselves, and they have no regard for the God of Israel.

**Israel's Exceedingly Great Army** - Ezekiel said, in the end times, Israel will field "an exceedingly great army" (Ezekiel 37:10). Zechariah said Israel will be like a fire among sheaves of grain, burning up the neighboring nations (Zechariah 12:6) and even the weakest Israeli soldier will be like David (Zechariah 12:8).

Since 1948, Israel has fought no less than four conventional wars against its neighbors. Despite being outnumbered more than 50 to 1, Israel has achieved overwhelming victory every time.

**Rise of the Gog of Magog Alliance** - The Bible says a military alliance that includes Russia, Iran, Turkey, and a number of Muslim nations will attack Israel "in the latter days" (Ezekiel 38:8) when God brings His people home from among the enemy nations (Ezekiel 39:27). Today, we see those very nations coming together - an alliance that has never existed in world history.



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**Rise of a United Europe** - The Bible says a revived Roman Empire will come to power in the end times (Daniel 2, Daniel 7, Revelation 17). According to Daniel, it will be a ten nation alliance of weak and strong nations.

Some parts will be as strong as iron, while other parts will be as weak as clay (Daniel 2:42). We see the beginning of this alliance in the European Union - a coalition of weak and strong nations struggling to stay together despite the efforts of Britain to leave through Brexit.

**The Rise of Global Government** - The Bible says a single government will rule the world politically (Revelation 13:7), religiously (Revelation 13:8), and economically (Revelation 13:16-17) in the last days. It will rule over "all people, tribes, and languages" on the face of the earth (Revelation 13:7). Its authority will be so complete no one will be able to buy or sell anything without its permission (Revelation 13:16-17). For centuries, a true global government was impossible. Today, world leaders openly discuss it.

**Denial of the Signs** - Almost two thousand years ago, Peter issued a warning. He said in the last days people will mock the idea of Jesus returning. They will make fun of those who believe in the Second Coming and say exactly what we hear today - things like, "I thought Jesus was coming back? What happened to His promise? Generation after

generation has said He's coming. Yet, since the beginning of the world, everything has remained the same!" (2 Peter 3:34).<sup>i</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This is just a short list of signs being converged, written by an author of another faith but ringing true for all Christians. I'm sure he could add many more to the list. We, using Restoration scriptures, can add even more to the list, as the Book of Mormon and latter day revelation shed further light on signs converging in our day. They add support to the overall sign of convergence.

A few examples include: the Book of Mormon says the Gentiles will "ripen in iniquity" and gives insights into some of the great iniquities that have come together in our generation. It speaks of the restoration of the House of Israel and their gathering to the lands of their inheritance. We are also seeing the remnant of Jacob coming among the unrepentant Gentiles and treading them down. The list is growing quickly and beckons our diligent study of the scriptures to know them.

The signs seem to indicate our generation could be the one that will witness Christ's return. Time will tell. Even though there are naysayers, inside and outside the church, the convergence of these signs provides stronger and stronger evidence of the fulfillment of the fig tree parable.

The signs of the times are among us! Watch, therefore, and pray always!

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**The purpose of Prophecy Watch** is to assist in looking for and knowing the signs of the times and the signs of the coming of the Son of Man. The perspectives it contains are not presented as the "only, best or final answer" to their meaning, but rather "to the intent that ye might believe on his name" and more fully participate in their fulfillment. We hope Prophecy Watch will provide a brief glimpse into specific prophetic subjects that will encourage each person to diligently pray, study, fast and seek the will of God concerning them.

<sup>i</sup> [http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent\\_news\\_id=1164](http://www.prophecynewswatch.com/article.cfm?recent_news_id=1164)