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Temple Sermons in the Book of Mormon

Summary:

Clark Johnson examines sermons given by Jacob, Benjamin, and the Savior to Nephites gathered at their respective temples. He analyzes some of the high points to see how they taught "the doctrine of the temple," giving particular attention to the teachings of the atonement and the contingent covenants covered in the ordinances taught by King Benjamin. Johnson also discusses Christ's beatitudes in succession.

Transcript

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Temple Sermons in the Book of Mormon

Clark Johnson

There are at least four temple sermons in the Book of Mormon. The first is given by Jacob in the book of Jacob. The second is given by King Benjamin in the book of Mosiah, in the early part of that book. The third is given by Limhi, whose people were held captive by the Lamanites in the land of Nephi. Limhi summoned his people to the temple, in my opinion, because they were safe there from prying Lamanite eyes. The meeting took place after Ammon had been sent by Mosiah₂ to rescue the people of Limhi from the land of Nephi. In the temple on that occasion, Limhi's people plotted their course of action and how they would escape from the bondage they were held under by the Lamanites. The final temple sermon, or meeting, is given by the Savior in the land of Bountiful. After his resurrection, he appeared to the Nephites and taught them on three separate occasions. The time restraints on this presentation will not allow me to cover the details of all of those sermons. However, I think that we can do some things that will be worth your time in analyzing the sermons and teaching the doctrine of the temple as was taught by these authors.

Jacob really didn't want to go to the temple. He obtained his errand from the Lord, and the Lord gave him two topics to teach. He said, "It supposeth me that they have come up hither to hear the pleasing word of God" (Jacob 2:8). And yet he was burdened and his soul was weighed down heavily because of the two topics the Lord had required him to teach. The first was pride. He said in Jacob 2:13, "Ye suppose that ye are better than [others]." They felt that they were better than others because of the costly apparel that they had and because of the riches of the earth that they had. His counsel to them on that occasion was, "Before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God" (Jacob 2:18). He counseled them to obtain a hope in Christ.

This hope was not the type of hope that Alma talked of to the Zoramite poor. That was a desperate hope. Those people, who had no belief in God, who had been rejected and exiled from worship in the synagogues, came to Alma for help. In his discourse Alma taught them to believe, and then to have hope, and then to have faith, which would lead to knowledge. The type of hope that Jacob wanted his people to have is the hope declared by Moroni in the book of Ether, chapter 12. This hope is an anchor to the soul. This hope leads to charity, one of God's greatest gifts. This is the hope that he counseled his people to have.

After he had dealt with hope, Jacob turned to the next problem that he was required to speak about by the Lord. This was the sexual impurity that had begun among the Nephites as they sought to imitate David and Solomon by taking many wives and concubines. Jacob gave the law of the Lord to his people on that occasion. "There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none" (Jacob 2:27).

Once he had dealt with the problems of pride and sexual impurity, Jacob said, "Behold, I . . . would speak unto you that are pure in heart" (Jacob 3:1). He gave the pure in heart several keys that would help them through life. He talked to them about prayer. He asked them to become pure in heart. He said, "Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand" (Jacob 4:10). He advised them to search the prophets and to obtain that hope that we've already mentioned. And he asked them to face reality. Now, for Jacob, reality was spoken by the Spirit. In Jacob 4:13 he said, "Behold, my brethren, he that prophesieth, let him prophesy to the understanding of men; for the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be." For Jacob, then, reality was to be had not only in what happens around us but what happens in the future. For a Latter-day Saint today, "The temple is there to call us back to our senses, to tell us where our real existence lies, to save us from ourselves. So let us

go there often and face the reality" (Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, p. 35).

Reality for Jacob and his people stemmed from the fact that the Savior had not yet been born, but would come. Jacob taught them of Christ and said to them, "Be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ. . . . For this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming" (Jacob 4:11, 4). Jacob felt that it was within the ability of man to understand the things of God. He spoke not only of the Atonement, but of the Fall, of mortality, and of the Resurrection that was to come. He also noted that this Christ created this earth by the power of his word. In other words, Jacob revealed the plan of God to the people who gathered at the temple on that day to hear his sermon. Because we are Latter-day Saints and believe in prophets, we have much more knowledge today of the plan that God gave and has revealed. The plan includes a pre-earth life, the day of this life, and the resurrection. There is only one plan that was presented by our Father in Heaven, and that plan includes a Fall, an Atonement, a Resurrection, agency, a pre-earth training course, and the creation of an earth. He gave us the tools of faith and hope as well as three other tools: commandments, the Holy Ghost, and covenants. The commandments are to inspire us, to help us to be better than we ever thought possible. The Holy Ghost is a spiritual guide whose witness will change our course in life. Covenants bind us to his Christ through the Atonement and eventually bring us back into the presence of our Father in Heaven.

In the pre-earth life there were two respondents. Jehovah, who later became the Christ or Jesus, said something like, "I will go, I will do it your way, and you take the glory, Father." Lucifer, who later became Satan, said, "I will do it my way and I want the glory and the credit." Satan and those of our brothers and sisters who followed him were kicked out of heaven. Now, not only did this plan include a resurrection as was spoken of by Jacob, but because of Jacob's teachings and because

of Latter-day Saint prophets today, we also have a greater knowledge and understanding of what Jacob was teaching. For example, those who inherit the telestial kingdom go there because of what they haven't done. They have not committed murder wherein they shed innocent blood. They have not become sons of perdition. Those who inherit the terrestrial kingdom go there because of what they do. They are good people, they help others, they are honest, they are trustworthy, they are loyal, and they are helpful, courteous, and kind. (I just want to prove to you I've been a scoutmaster twice.) Those who inherit the celestial kingdom go there because of what they have become. Moroni wrote, "When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (Moroni 7:48).

Jacob was also concerned about his people and their feelings toward one another. He wanted them to care for one another and to love one another. Benjamin continued this theme in his temple sermon, which is found in the first few chapters of the book of Mosiah. He was serious—it was near the end of his life. This aged king and priest called for his people to come to the temple. "I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view" (Mosiah 2:9). *Unfolded* means to spread out, to make known.

Benjamin continued where Jacob left off. He spoke of an angel that had appeared to him and had spoken the words that God wished Benjamin to teach the people. In chapter three, Benjamin spoke of the Savior. He repeated the words of the angel: "Awake, and hear the words which I shall tell thee; for behold, I am come to declare unto you the glad tidings of great joy" (Mosiah 3:3). Benjamin next continued with the earthly mission of the Savior: "The Lord Omnipotent . . . shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a

tabernacle of clay" (Mosiah 3:5). With this tabernacle of clay, being a God-man, he would perform miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, and causing the lame to walk and the blind to receive their sight. He would suffer hunger, temptation, pain of body, and fatigue, even more than any man could possibly suffer and not die—so much so, "that blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish" (Mosiah 3:7). He would be called Jesus Christ, we learn from Benjamin, "the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary" (Mosiah 3:8). We also learn from Benjamin that in order for salvation to come to the children of men, the Savior would allow himself to be scourged and crucified and would give up his life on the cross. He would remain as though dead for three days, and then he would stand and resurrect. He would do this so that he might draw you and me to him. "His blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned" (Mosiah 3:11). Through faith and repentance, we are told by Benjamin, we can regain God's presence. Salvation comes through the atonement of Christ. Christ will draw us to him for judgment, and we will be held accountable for the lives that we live on earth. The plan of the Atonement, the commandments, the faith that we have, and the conditions by which man can accept the Atonement and return to our Father in Heaven are all outlined by Benjamin, even though he's speaking of Christ as though he should come and will come.

Next, Benjamin turned to the conduct of his people. He pointed out that he was their king. As their king, he said, "I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and have not sought gold nor silver nor any manner of riches of you; Neither have I suffered . . . that ye should make slaves one of another . . . [but] I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve

you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne" (Mosiah 2:12–14). And, of course, we get to that famous scripture in Mosiah 2:17: "I tell you these things," King Benjamin said, "that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God."

Benjamin wondered what effect knowing of the Atonement and knowing of the service that was required of them had had on his people. The people responded, "O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ" (Mosiah 4:2). These were the words that Benjamin wanted them to speak. He counseled them that in giving to each other it was "not requisite that [they] should run faster than [they had] strength" (Mosiah 4:27). His counsel was to give what you can. The rich should give to the poor and share with them. The poor should develop a giving attitude: "Again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give. And now, if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are condemned; and your condemnation is just for ye covet that which ye have not received" (Mosiah 4:24–25). The people reacted again. They recognized that they were beggars and that they depended upon God for eternal life. They told Benjamin, "We believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil. . . . We are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days" (Mosiah 5:2, 5).

The covenant spoken of by Benjamin is the gospel covenant. The gospel

covenant, we learn from modern-day prophets, includes all the contracts, bonds, and promises that we make to the Lord and that he makes to us. For the purpose of analysis, I have divided those covenants into two parts using the ordinances of the priesthood, because the covenants we make are found within the ordinances of the priesthood.

I have determined that there are saving ordinances and blessing ordinances. The prophets, beginning with Benjamin, tell us that baptism is a saving ordinance, followed by confirmation, ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood, washing and anointing, the endowment, and finally the temple marriage. The Nephites understood this. They knew that God had provided the way through the Atonement for them to make covenants, or contracts, with Jehovah, or with Christ. Each of these ordinances reveals to us something about God himself. For example, we learn from baptism the power of Christ and the promise he gives us when we bind ourselves to him by always remembering him, by taking upon us his name, and by keeping his commandments. The promise is that we receive the Holy Ghost, which we do in the ordinance of confirmation. The Holy Ghost, then, is a guide to us, a justifier for our actions, and ultimately, along with the atonement of Christ, a sanctifier so that we are clean from the blood and sins of this world.

The ordination to the Melchizedek Priesthood gives us the power and authority of God and helps us to represent him and further his work on this earth. We next enter the temple where we are washed and anointed. Washing and anointing is a foreordination ordinance. It is an ordinance that is pronounced upon us here, but the promises will be fulfilled in some future world or in some future setting. It binds us to the Savior and lets us know that we have a future. Next we enter the endowment. There are a series of covenants we make within the endowment. I used to teach there are five. A friend said there are twenty-three. I'm finally up to nineteen after going to the temple for thirty-five years. Behind the

major covenants are a series of minor covenants that likewise enrich us spiritually and bind us to the Savior.

The crowning ordinance of the temple for you and me in mortality is temple marriage. In temple marriage, a couple who have entered into all the covenants previously mentioned surround an altar and are sealed by a sealer who has been ordained and set apart by a prophet of God. This marriage is not only good for this life, but propels them into the eternal worlds. In my wife's and my case, we knelt across that altar some thirty-three years ago, and there came into being the most basic unit of the celestial kingdom; it's called a family. At first there were two members of our family. That family grew, with five children, now with a total of seven. Now, with four of those five children being married and having grandsons and granddaughters, that family has multiplied and divided and will continue its special relationship into the eternities. I guess that what I'm trying to say is that for my wife and me, our eternal life does not begin when we resurrect. Our eternal life began thirty-three plus years ago when we entered the Logan Temple and were sealed for time and for all eternity.

There are other ordinances the prophets teach us that have to do with our salvation and exaltation that we will receive beyond the veil. Both President Brigham Young and Spencer W. Kimball named one, the same one. The resurrection, they said, was an ordinance of the priesthood.

In addition to the saving ordinances, there are the blessing ordinances. The blessing ordinances have an entirely different purpose than do the saving ordinances. The blessing ordinances allow you and me as members of the Church, holders of the priesthood, to bless and enjoy and improve our lives on this earth. They include the naming and blessing of an infant and the setting apart for a Church call. When the bishop called me to be the explorer advisor and priest quorum advisor for the fifth time in the same ward, I was a little bit mystified.

Surely someone else in the ward could be an explorer advisor. He noticed my lack of enthusiasm and said, "Are you going to do it?" I said, "Of course I will do it. You've called me. But on the other hand, I think I need a double portion in the setting apart blessing." At that he smiled and laughed and said, "You shall have it." And when that call came and I was sustained, I met him at his office and indeed received a special blessing.

We anoint and bless the sick, and we expect them to get well. We seal them up to their Father in Heaven. Fathers may give blessings. These blessings are patriarchal in nature. They reveal to their children those things that solve crises at times when their children need special help and special blessings. We have all received priesthood blessings. Priesthood blessings help us through life. They give us guidance, they give us assurance that within the next twenty-four hours, thirty-six hours, or a year, we can survive whatever we face. There are the dedication ordinances that are blessings. We dedicate graves, homes, buildings, and temples. What we don't realize, many of us, is that the lack of dedicating a home or an apartment prevents us from a special blessing that we could have if we followed through with that type of an ordinance of the priesthood.

The blessing ordinances may be performed many, many times for the same individual—as many times as is needed. In my struggle with cancer, I received three anointings and three blessings in one day, all by priesthood brethren who were led to my home by the Spirit to bless me. I had not eaten for three days because of the drugs and the chemotherapy that had been given me by doctors. In those moments I rested after those blessings. At the end of the third blessing I looked at my wife and said, "I'm hungry." And for the first time in four days, I held food and drink in my stomach. I survived because of the blessings of the priesthood and thoughtful priesthood brethren who came to our home, who were guided by the Spirit.

Unlike the blessing ordinances, the saving ordinances are performed only once by a person for himself or herself. King Benjamin was delighted that his people understood these things and had made the gospel covenant, which includes all the ordinances and covenants of the priesthood. He rejoiced with them, saying, "The covenant which ye have made is a righteous covenant. And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5:6–7). Like the people of Benjamin, we have made the covenants and are the children of Christ. We know the name by which we are called and he knows us, because he knows what is in our hearts. Now, Benjamin told his people this as he concluded his sermon: "I would that ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life" (Mosiah 5:15). "The temple brings all things together. It is a school where we can learn about the principle in the universe that organizes all things. In other words, it is a school where we can learn about the Christ, who organizes all things" (Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, p. 11).

Benjamin told his people, "I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin. . . . But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not" (Mosiah 4:29–30).

Now this brings me to the point where we need to talk about the Savior's sermon and introduce him. To do this I would like to show you an overhead (see

Figure 1 attached). In this overhead we see several gates. We approach this life with faith. We approach the Savior with repentance. He blesses us with knowledge and we're ready to enter the first gate. This gate is called ordinances. (This is a review of some of what we have talked about, but I'm trying to bring the gate and the thoughts and the actions and the words together.) We enter through baptism, we are confirmed members of the Church, and we enter and receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. Along the way we make covenants, and our actions come into harmony with the covenants we have made. We learn to serve. Our words and our thoughts then have to correspond with our actions and the covenants to make it complete. We enter the second gate, which is the temple gate where we are washed and anointed, we are endowed, and we are married. We change our thoughts to certain attitudes that are commensurate with a person entering the temple. We gain hope—again, the hope that is an anchor to the soul—and we develop charity, which is the pure love of Christ. The final gate I call the veil. Beyond the veil we know that there are other ordinances as previously mentioned.

Now, introducing the Savior's sermon, I found it very interesting that the most significant teaching that the Savior did in the Holy Land, or in Israel, or in Palestine, was the Sermon on the Mount. I found it most interesting that when he appeared as a resurrected being to the Nephites in the temple in the land of Bountiful, he once again began with the Sermon on the Mount. There is no way in the time permitted in this video that we can discuss all of the teachings of the Savior, but may I suggest to you that those teachings, beginning with the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount, changed lives and brought people into harmony with him, both in the Old World and in the New.

At this point I would like to discuss the first part of that memorable sermon, the Beatitudes. I define the Beatitudes as eight attitudes that you and I must acquire along the way if we are to resurrect and receive eternal life. If the covenants that we

have made are to be fully developed, we must develop the right attitudes. Years ago when I began teaching this, I used to teach it step-by-step as you have seen illustrated in many books. However, I became frustrated. While I was poor in spirit, and recognized that I needed help, I mourned for all the things that I'd done that were wrong. Then I became meek, which I never really defined, but I was meek, I felt, after mourning and being poor in spirit. Suddenly something would happen in my life and I was back at step one, and I saw no way how Clark Johnson could ever, ever in this life make it to pure in heart or to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

I was discussing this with a good friend of mine. He suggested that we put the Beatitudes in a wheel. A wheel has a hub, and the Book of Mormon Sermon on the Mount begins with that hub. The hub is Jesus Christ. For example, in 3 Nephi 12:3, we read, "Blessed are the poor in spirit *who come unto me*," i.e., who come unto Christ. Christ is the hub of the wheel. A wheel also has to have a rim. The rim of this wheel is also alluded to by the Savior in 3 Nephi: "And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings. And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (9:19–20). If we do that, then he promises that he will sanctify us. And from that point on, all we have to do is endure to the end. I might add I love the scripture better that speaks of enduring "in faith" to the end (D&C 63:20). There's a difference in my mind between enduring and enduring in faith to the end.

So, let's go back and analyze the Beatitudes, knowing that the Savior is at the center for anyone who successfully tries to live them. "Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (3 Nephi 12:3). I'm not so much interested in the promise as I am in defining what it means to be poor in spirit. There was a time, and there have been several times in my life, when I became poor in spirit. I could not discuss my feelings with my wife, even though I

tried, and she is closest to me, nor with my parents, because they could not understand. I had nowhere to go. In other words, I was spiritually bankrupt. I found myself on my knees, in my room alone, before my Father in Heaven. He understood. I became broken-hearted—and often when this happens to me, tears fall—and I mourned. I mourned for my own weaknesses, for my own imperfections. Others mourn for the loss of a loved one. And so, “Blessed are all they that mourn [who come unto Jesus], for they shall be comforted” (3 Nephi 12:4). We recognize that as that comfort and mourning process goes on, we develop a contrite spirit. Those who develop a contrite spirit become meek. “Blessed are the meek [who come unto me], for they shall inherit the earth” (3 Nephi 12:5). To be meek means to be humble. To be humble means to be teachable. There’s an old cliché that goes about the Church: “If you think you’re humble, or you know you’re humble, then you’ve just lost your humility.” That’s an absolutely false accusation. You and I can know that we are humble or meek, if when we read the latest conference talk, we find in there counsel that causes us to change our lives under the direction of living prophets. We are meek, we come unto the Savior, and the earth is ours.

Then we next enter the part of the road that leads us to sanctification. The Savior taught in that great sermon at the temple in the land of Bountiful, “Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 12:6). The Holy Ghost is the justifier and the sanctifier. He justifies my actions. I suppose he even smiles sometimes at the practical jokes that I play on others or that others play on me. I believe he has a great sense of humor. He is a tenderizer. He makes my heart tender. I cry sometimes when I read poetry, or when I see thoughtful presentations in videos or movies. I cry and I weep not because I’m in pain, but because the Spirit has borne witness to my soul that that something is good, and that that something will help

me, and that I need to incorporate it in my life as I seek to return to my Father in Heaven.

The next Beatitude is, "Blessed are the merciful [who come unto Christ], for they shall obtain mercy" (3 Nephi 12:7). As I said, the Holy Ghost is a tenderizer. I am more considerate, I am more thoughtful of others, I find myself to be less judgmental, because above all else, if I'm going to make it, I need mercy. The only way that I can receive mercy is if I extend mercy to others. "Blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (3 Nephi 12:8). I believe that not only apostles and prophets see God, but that many members of the Church see God and know the Christ and know that he is.

Let me give you a case in point. Twenty-three years ago when I was living in San Jose, I was stricken with cancer. I gave my final lecture to my institute class and bore my testimony of the veracity of the gospel and the truthfulness of the Atonement and of my witness of the Savior. A young woman followed me to my office and said, "Brother Johnson, can I speak with you?" I said, "Of course." When she came in, she said, "I feel prompted to share something special with you." This young woman was twenty or twenty-one years of age. She had been a member of the Church only a few months. I said, "Okay, I'll listen." She smiled and began. She said that several weeks before her baptism her parents, her uncles and aunts, and her brothers and sisters began to hassle her about becoming a Mormon. Why do you want to become a Mormon? Why do you want to become a member of *that* church? "I tried to explain to them," she said, "that I had had a witness from the Holy Ghost that what the missionaries had taught me was true, but it didn't work. The intensity on their part continued, so much so that the night before I was to be baptized, I decided when I went to bed that I would call the missionaries in the morning and postpone my baptism." She said, "During the night I had a dream, and in that dream the Savior came to me." She said, "I know it was the Savior,

because I saw the nail prints in his hands and in his feet, and he said, 'It's all right, daughter, the Church is mine, be baptized.' From that special witness, Brother Johnson," she said, "I gained the courage to be baptized." The pure in heart see God.

"Blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (3 Nephi 12:9). A peacemaker is difficult to describe. I don't know that *peacemaker* has to do with world peace. I think *peacemaker* and being at peace have to do with the individual heart and soul. And certainly that is what the Savior is concerned with—my heart and my soul, as well as your heart and soul. We have, in our family, a peacemaker. She's a blond. She's married now, but when she was about fourteen years of age, we all went to the mall. We purchased something for every member of the family. One son got new basketball shoes, the oldest daughter got a dress, I even got a new tie. Something for everyone. When we arrived home, we had only been home a few minutes when my wife stopped me and said, "Clark, we forgot to get Shamayn anything." I said, "You're kidding." She said, "No." I said, "I'll take care of it." I went upstairs to her room and I didn't find her. I expected to see her lying on the bed crying her eyes out because she had been slighted by Mom and Dad, not getting anything. Instead I heard uproarious laughter from the boys' room across the hall. I peeked in and found her modeling her older brother's shoes, which were many times too large for her, and pretending to shoot baskets as he would. The boys were lying on their beds, hysterically enjoying their sister's antics and imitations. I left—I didn't want to interrupt that; that's too much fun for them. After pursuing a few errands I came back and I searched for her again. Again, she wasn't in her room, but I found her lying on her older sister's bed and I heard the words, "Jeannette, you look stunning in that outfit. You are beautiful." A short time later I found her alone. I apologized and said, "Daughter, I am so sorry. We didn't get you anything." Her answer, "That's all right, Dad. I'll get double next time, won't I?" And she did, and she has ever since.

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake; For ye shall have great joy and be exceedingly glad, for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you" (3 Nephi 12:11–12). When we enter the realm of persecution and we focus on the Savior, our hearts are lifted in spite of the persecution and we find joy in service in spite of the ridicule. For example, in my mind there are two types of persecution, as illustrated in the Book of Mormon. There's outside persecution, in which you are called names, rocks are thrown at you, or you are ridiculed in other ways. That type of persecution can't hurt you. For example, several years ago while standing under a balcony as a missionary in Uruguay, South America, we had knocked on the door and suddenly we were drenched with a bucket of greasy mop water. I wanted to swear. I looked up to see from where the water came. I couldn't see anything because a thin film of grease covered my glasses. I took my glasses off and the lady stood up there smiling down at me. She had got the missionaries. My companion at that point, because the water had drenched both of us, sniffed a couple of times and said, "Elder, you stink," upon which we both began to laugh. We returned to our apartment, changed our clothes, and started out again in new clothing, dropping our suits off at the dry cleaner's along the way, carefully avoiding balconies for the rest of our tenure in that town. That kind of persecution didn't hurt. It made us a little uncomfortable, it was inconvenient, but beyond that it didn't hurt.

The type of persecution that hurts is inside persecution, when those who should be your friends torment you and ridicule you for your most sacred beliefs. For example, the Carthage Grays may have pulled the trigger that killed the Prophet Joseph Smith at Carthage, Illinois, in 1844, but it was Wilson and William Law, the Higbee brothers, Robert Foster, and a hundred men and three women who plotted for several years the prophet's death that led him and placed him in that position so

that he could be brutally murdered.

The results of the Beatitudes to the individual are priceless. First, these people who come unto Christ, who look to him as their example, become the salt of the earth. *The salt of the earth* means that they are the backbone of the ward. There are men and women in our ward where we have lived the last twenty-three years whom we can go to with any assignment. Regardless of how busy they are, they will serve.

Second, they are a light unto the people. I didn't realize what this meant until I was in Israel leading a group of seventy-five young Latter-day Saints a decade ago. As we walked down the streets of Old Jerusalem through the Arab section, after having been in Israel for three days, I noticed that the Arab shopkeepers were calling, "Hey BYU, hey Mormon, over here! Best deal in town!" "This belt only five dollar," or, "This T-shirt only five dollar" (as they pronounced the word *dollars*). I thought, "I'd better warn these kids; these guys have really got their number." I did so the next day in my presentations to them. Several weeks passed and I'd been on an errand to get antibiotics for a student who had become critically ill. I had gone around the Old City of Jerusalem by bus, I'd picked up the antibiotics, and suddenly realized that if I made the same connections going back I'd miss lunch. To one who likes to eat, this is a great sacrifice. So I decided to cut through the streets of Jerusalem. I went past some of those same shops, and I had fallen in, inadvertently, with another group of North American students. I noticed that the Arabs didn't call to them. We had gone a few blocks when I found on a street corner three of our students. I walked up to them and said, "Hi guys." And they looked at me and said, "Brother Johnson, what are you doing here?" You see, I knew that they were supposed to be in class. I simply said, "I'll tell you what, guys, I won't tell on you if you won't tell on me." This was agreed to. I asked them where they were going. They said, "Back to the kibbutz for lunch." I asked if I could tag along, and

they said, "Of course," and so we began, with them leading the way and me following. As I followed along, those shopkeepers began to call, "Hey Mormon, over here! Best deal in town! Hey BYU, over here! Best deal in town!" I stopped and I took a look. Certainly, there was no difference in their dress as compared to the dress of the other group I had followed, but there was something about them that was different. I recognized that a light shone from them, an aura of light around them. It was a result of living the gospel all of their twenty-two or twenty-three years. They shone to the people. They did not have to open their mouths.

Third, they are built on Christ's rock, the rock of revelation. To be built on Christ's rock is to receive personal revelation. When a Latter-day Saint kneels down to pray, he or she expects an answer, and most often gets it.

Finally, they become as little children. A number of years ago when our children were small, on a Saturday morning, I had sentenced my youngest son to his bedroom for misbehavior at the breakfast table. Saturday is a day for me to run errands. I hate to run errands alone, and I knew that my wife was too busy, and so I began with my oldest daughter. "Jeannette, why don't you come and we'll go downtown and run my errands and then we'll shop for a while." "I can't, Dad, I have to make cookies. We're having a Laurels' project." "Paul and Duane, how about you guys? We'll go out to the model airplane field and watch them fly radio-controlled airplanes when we finish." "No, Dad, we've got a Scout service project." I turned to our youngest daughter and said, "Shamayn, how about you?" "No, Dad, Jeannette's going to teach me how to make cookies." Now, no honest father can insist that a young daughter who wants to learn to make cookies go with him on such an errand. After all, I would benefit from her learning.

Finally, I was standing in the entrance way to our home at the foot of six steps. I said to anyone in particular, "Doesn't anybody want to go downtown with Dad this morning and run errands?" I happened to glance up the steps and I saw a

little face come around that was sobbing. When he saw me looking at him he ducked back into the room. It was our youngest son. I called to him and said, "James, do you want to go downtown with Dad to run errands?" Once again the little face came around, the tears still flowing, as he nodded yes. I said, "Well, come on." Fortunately I turned and faced the stairs, because I expected him to run down the stairs around me and out the door to get in the pickup. Instead, he leaped from the landing. I caught him in my arms. He put his head on my shoulder and we stood there several moments, both of us crying. Finally I said, "Do you think we can stop crying and go downtown and have fun?" He whispered, "Yes, Dad." And you know, we did. Childlike.

Now, if you're sixteen or seventeen and your dad had sent you to your room, what would you say if he said, "Does anybody want to go downtown with Dad?" The answer would be a descriptive, resounding, "No. Let the old man go downtown himself for all I care." We must become childlike in order to accept the Savior. We must develop these attitudes.

The rest of the Savior's sermon to the Nephites, which took place on three separate days, instructs them in the doctrine and how to live life. But it's based on, I believe, the Beatitudes as he has explained them, and he is the center. For he realizes that as we change our lives, our hearts, and our thoughts and receive the covenants through the ordinances of the priesthood, we become his sons and daughters. Then he can act as our advocate or mediator with our Father in Heaven and bind us and promise us and give to us eternal life.

I feel very strongly about these things. In closing I would like to say this: based on my experience with death through cancer, I have come to know and have the hope that Moroni offered us in Ether 12. I can say with assurance that I know God lives, that Jesus is his son, that he suffered in Gethsemane, and that he suffered on the cross so that you and I can live if we learn to do things his way. As a member

of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, I declare openly that this is his Church. He guides us through living prophets, and as I follow them, they will lead me to him. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

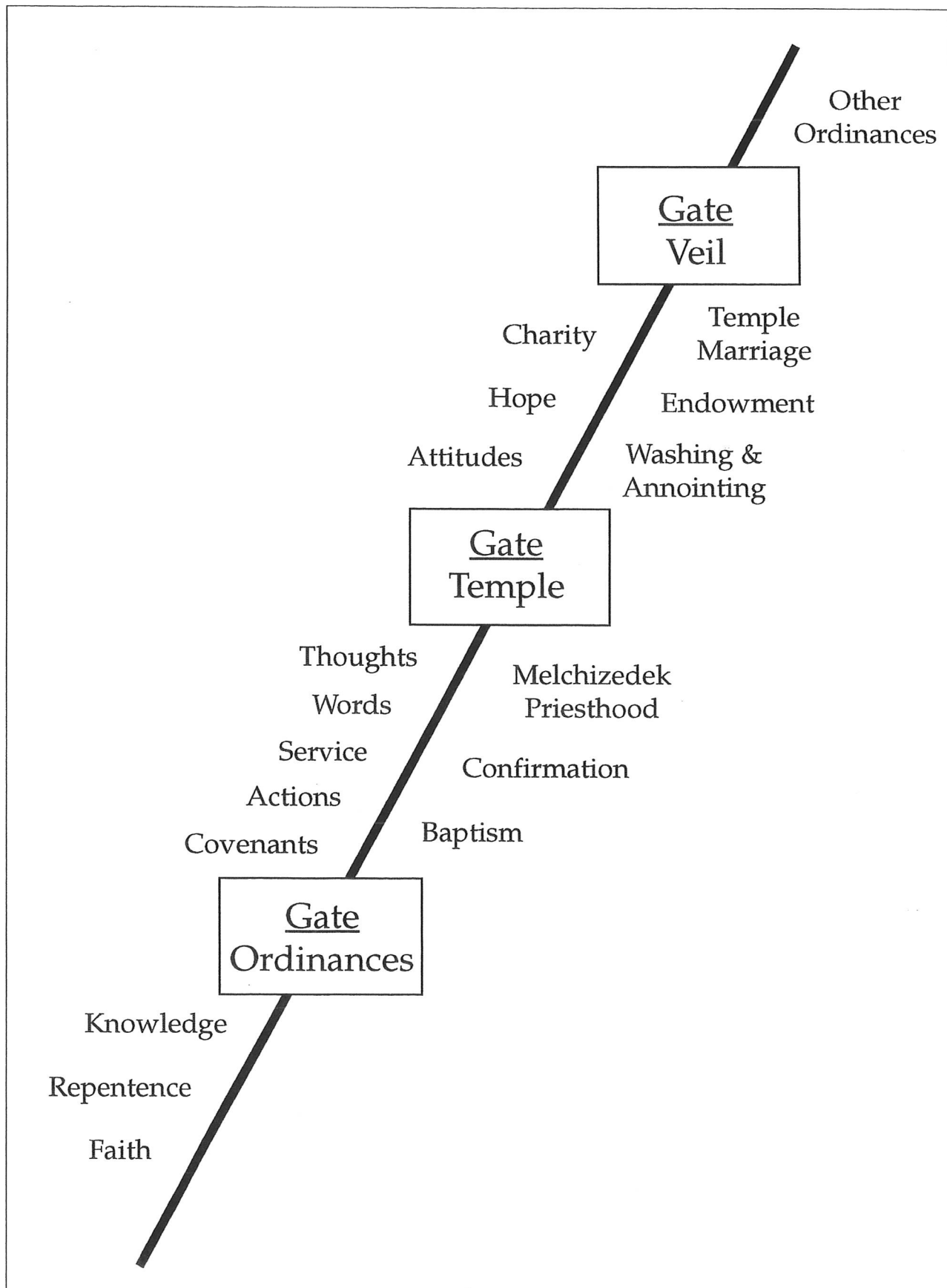


Figure 1. Temple Gates