



BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY • PROVO, UTAH

Transcript

The following transcript represents the views of the speaker and not the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, Brigham Young University, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.



FARMS

FOUNDATION FOR ANCIENT RESEARCH AND MORMON STUDIES

Susan Easton Black

Christ in the Book of Mormon

Summary:

Susan Easton Black discusses insights into the nature and mission of Jesus Christ that can be gained by examining the 101 names the Book of Mormon uses to describe him, such as Lord, Messiah, and Eternal Judge. She describes the book's focus on the atonement and bears powerful testimony of its effects in her life and in the lives of others.

Transcript
Book of Mormon, Christ

FARMS
Brigham Young University
P.O. Box 7113
University Station
Provo, UT 84602
1-800-327-6715
(801) 373-5111
www.farmsresearch.com

\$2.00
BLA-T1



7 14861 00260 7

FARMS

© 1994 Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies

This transcript of a video lecture was prepared by the staff of the Portland Institute of Religion.

Fair Use Copying Notice: These pages may be reproduced and used, without alteration, addition, or deletion, for any nonpecuniary or nonpublishing purpose without permission.

Christ in the Book of Mormon

Susan Easton Black

This morning we are going to be talking about the Book of Mormon as a witness for Christ. I thought I would preface my remarks with an experience I had as a child. I have to take you back to a time in the United States when we used to have devotionals that opened all of our elementary school classes, and we used to also have prayer in school. My own children have accused me of having my bones numbered with roman numerals. But, if you will be patient, let me describe what life was like for me in the 1950s growing up in Long Beach, California.

It used to be in that type of environment I would attend school but every morning, I would pray with my classmates, and we would have some kind of devotional and sing, much like we do in religion classes on campus. However, that particular school district felt that its responsibility was to educate the entire child, meaning not only the physical child, the emotional, social child but also the spiritual child. And so two weeks out of every year for 5th and 6th graders they were invited, not to attend school, but to attend some type of religion of their choice. Well, as you can probably imagine that meant that not only, in 5th and 6th grade, did you get off two weeks at Christmas time, but then you got two weeks off from attending any other kind of class to attend a religion class.

I got excited about the prospects and began to look forward to it from, well, kindergarten on. And, when the time came a note was sent home with all of the children, including me, that said I had a choice for two weeks of attending a Catholic cathedral, a Jewish synagogue, or a non-denominational church. I shared the note with my father and his comment was that I could not go to any of them. Now, he had been a bishop; he never quite got over the experience, and since he didn't see the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a choice, he indicated that I would not be able to attend.

Well, I decided I would learn to live with that; but I don't know if you can imagine how boring school was when I was the only 5th grader on the entire campus. It definitely left something to be desired at recess, let alone lunchtime. And, so I vowed that no matter what in 6th grade I would be able to attend.

I spent two weeks reading Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys, watching my team teacher carve on her fingernails, and thought, "Never again." Well, everything I did for my father the next year always had attached, "Now can I attend religious education?" From washing the car, doing the dishes, hanging up clothes, you name it—it always had the attached. My father stood strong and finally the note came. I

had been praying that our church would be a choice, but once again it was the same big three—non denominational church, Jewish synagogue, Catholic cathedral. I shared it with my father and he said I couldn't go.

Now, at this time I started to cry. Little did I realize the power of tears. I wish I had done it the year before, and years before that! With my sobs he finally agreed that I could attend, but I had to do two things for him. One was to wear my primary bandelo, and I thought I would share it with you. This was to be a daily experience. You quickly notice that it's got the Salt Lake Temple, the lark/seagull, and other things that I had earned from memorizing the Articles of Faith. He also, then, insisted that I carry a very large-size Book of Mormon. I can only assume that my father thought that then I would have on the full armor of God, and would be prepared for this onslaught against my testimony.

Well, I doubt if anyone in my elementary school was more excited to attend religious education than I was. I remember running to school, seeing my friends and the big question was, "Do you get to go?" I said, "Yes, I get to go," and they said, "But what is that around your neck?" And my comment was, "Don't worry about it. I get to go, I get to be a part of everything this year."

Well, it was agreed with my father that I could attend whichever church that most of my friends were going to. Most of my friends were attending the non-denominational church which met across the street from the elementary school, and most of my friends attended that church on Sunday. And so, we went out to the lunch ground, and there we said goodbye to our teachers. I think my teacher was pretty happy to see me go, and we were now welcomed by the PTA mothers who led most of the 300 children to the non-denominational church.

Now this was the first time I had ever been in a church that wasn't ours. I loved the stain glass window—it was absolutely beautiful. I also loved the candle; a woman was singing in beautiful white flowing robes. I was just riveted on the experience. I had worked so hard to get there. Then came in a man wearing long black robes, white collar. I didn't know it then, but the black was to show the fall of man and his depravity. The white collar is to show that man now turns his head to God to live. As I looked at him he looked so much different than my father and others had looked as they were wearing their business suits.

He started to talk and his topic was the nature of God. He indicated that God was very large and filled all of space. He also indicated that God was also very small. Well, I began thinking about this, and thinking about this huge being, and in my mind it was the biggest person I had ever seen in my life. He said that God could fill a cloud and suddenly I saw him just blown up—absolutely the biggest person I had ever seen in my life.

I started to raise my hand, because I had never heard anything about this and wanted to ask a question. He then said, "My dear friends, God also dwells in the

tree." Suddenly, I saw him go eek, eek, eek as he is elongating out into this tree. Now, I am waving my hand; and then he says, my dear children, God is also in a flower. Suddenly he is squished and I am trying to picture—he is in a flower? I am definitely waving my hand madly now, and he said, and my dear children God is also in a raindrop!

Suddenly in my mind's eye, I put myself back to the bedroom in the home where I grew up. Suddenly here he is! No, no here he is! No, . . . I could stand it no longer, and suddenly I jumped up and as loud as I could I yelled, "Stop!" Well, the preacher stopped! All my friends that are throwing spitballs, passing notes, the PTA mothers saying, "One more time and you are out of here"—everybody stopped! And he leaned over the pulpit and he said, "What's wrong little girl?" Now, if he had known me better he would have known not to ask. Just keep it rolling on; it's just one of those. But because he asked, I felt the need to respond. I said, "What you just said is not true."

Well, you quickly notice that my missionary approach has never been picked up. Others have avoided this one, but, when I said, "What you have just said is not true," he said, "What's not true?" And I said, "I can't see God choosing to live in a cloud. I can't see him fitting in a tree, a flower; and really if he is in a raindrop tell me exactly which one so that I can fall down and worship him." He then paused, now notice we've got 300 kids staring at us, and I am a little nervous, like now. But nevertheless we are having a little dialogue back and forth.

And he said, "Well, what do you think that God looks like?" And I said, "He's got a body, he looks like man." At which point he says, "How do you know this?" Suddenly my knowledge totally fails me, I quickly look to my primary bandelo. How did I know this as I looked down and see the seagulls and the temple. Yeah, okay, how do I know this? Suddenly I raise up my very large size Book of Mormon, and I said, "It says so in this book; it says so in the Book of Mormon." His comment was, "Oh, that!" He then invited all of my friends to leave the big chapel early, and to go off to their workshops. But he said, "You, young lady, I would like to see in my office."

Well, my worried friends now gathered around me, everyone saying, "How could you?" and I turned to them and said, "This was my first time in your church, you could have stopped me, and you just sat there." They now pushed me into the preacher's office, but let me go in to see him alone. As I went into his office he was, of course, curious about the bandelo. I repeated the thirteen Articles of Faith, but he was less than impressed.

He then said, "Well exactly where in that book of yours does it tell you that God has a body." I now opened the Book of Mormon for the first time in my life, even though I had said several times in primary, "I know this book is true!" As I opened it I remembered hearing or looking at such words as Abinadi, (Uh,oh) Zarahemla—I was clueless. I could not find, as I now flipped the pages back and

forth, where it tells me that God has a body.

Suddenly he said, "Could it be young lady you have never read that book that you purport says that God has a body?" I then said, "How did you know?" And he then said, "You no longer have the right to attend religious education. I want you to cross back over the street, and you attend school. And, this time if I were you, I would read that book of yours to find out if it is true or not!" Now, it was a sad day, the day I crossed over the street. It was a sad day for my teacher as well as me. But this time I didn't read Nancy Drew and Hardy boys, I decided I would read the Book of Mormon.

Now, I want to describe my first experience. I would say my first experience occurred in the sum total of two weeks. I read fast. It was like someone who wins a prize, a trip to Europe, and they have only two weeks to see everything. They stop here, stop there, and zoom in and out. When they return home they have the audacity to invite you to their home to watch slides. You now watch slides and you see statues, and you see what pigeons can do to statues, and then suddenly you can't stand it any longer and you say, "Tell me about the people. Tell me about the heart of the people. What are they like? What brings them happiness? What brings them sadness?" And they say, "You don't get it, I only had two weeks." Well, that is how my first reading out of the Book of Mormon was. I was like a hurried traveler! I was like a pupil! I was like someone who never reads the book but takes the Book of Mormon class and finally just before the finals they read it in the mass cramming, hoping they will make it.

Well, years have passed since then. I have now read the Book of Mormon many, many times. I have taught it for fifteen years. I love the Book of Mormon, it is my favorite book. Despite the fact I have written many, it is still my favorite book. It is always the one that is at my bedstand—I am always reading someplace in it. And as I continue to read it I always say to myself, who put that in there? I have never seen that, it must be the new edition! But nevertheless, it is my favorite book, and today I want to take that book for you, and show you a way to read it so that you will be able to say I know why the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ.

For all of you with your Books of Mormon I am going to do something with you. You are going to say, "This is basic," and I say, "But that is part of the fun of reading. You learn the basics first and then the details fall into place." Notice as you look at the cover of the Book of Mormon, the title of the book says: *The Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ*. We then need to conclude just from the mere title of the book that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Christ, or the Book of Mormon should testify of Christ.

Now, when you think about it and you think about reading it you say, "Wait a minute, the Book of Mormon is about Lehi and his family and their wanderings and travellings. And then it moves on and then you get the Jaredites and you get

battles Well, yeah, you're right 3 Nephi—it's a witness for Christ." And what I want to show you this hour is that the entire book is another testament of Christ. In other words, there is a New Testament, there's an Old Testament and now there is Another Testament.

Turn with me to the title page of the Book of Mormon. Notice the title page of the Book of Mormon—it is written by Moroni. When you get into the second paragraph look for the words that are all in capital letters where it says "JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE ETERNAL GOD." Here you will find a purpose statement for the Book of Mormon. As part of this purpose statement you will read, "And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God." So, then I look and I say, "If the title is about Jesus Christ, if the purpose statement is to convince then both Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, would you not suppose that he must be the main character in the book? Does that not make sense?"

With that we are going to now turn to 1 Nephi 1:1. As you turn to 1 Nephi notice what I am looking for. I am looking to learn if I can find in the first verse something about him. You will see that the first verse is one sentence. *Most verses in the Book of Mormon are only one sentence.* And so, I want to learn in this one sentence if I can learn anything about Christ.

The first phrase is definitely the most read phrase of the book. Would you all agree? It is one that we often hear in testimony meetings about Nephi having been born of goodly parents. And people then saying, "I am grateful I had goodly parents," or "I got ripped. I didn't have goodly parents." But you read it and it says, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents." Then stop and say, "What does goodly mean?" Obviously, Lehi is well-to-do. It appears he has lands in Manasseh as well as Jerusalem. It also appears that he is a faithful man; that he is a praying man, and ultimately a prophet.

But, notice in that phrase where you see the comma, I have not learned something about Christ. So, I keep reading because what I am trying to find is—I want to find—is this book another testament for Jesus Christ. I then read the second phrase. "Therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father." Now notice what this tells us—this tells us that Lehi was obviously a learned man; that he was the teacher of Nephi. We would then say, "Well what does he appear to know as we've read further in the Book of Mormon?" It is obvious from just his mere naming of his sons that he knows something of Hebrew, Arabic, also Egyptian. But notice in that phrase you haven't found Christ yet. So I keep reading.

"And having seen many afflictions in the course of my days." Ah, obviously Nephi faces great afflictions, here from his own house, his brothers. I don't know if we all have Laman and Lemuels in our own home; but nevertheless, you will read much about his afflictions, but still no Christ.

Then watch this phrase, "Nevertheless, having been highly favored of the

Lord." Ah, I find a name for Jesus Christ—it is *Lord*. I underline that name. And, then I say, "In that phrase, what did I just learn about him? I learned that he has favorites, and that he has highly favorites!" Hah, I can now become pretty excited.

I now say, "What is the most important thing I just learned in that verse? Is it that Nephi had good parents? Is it that Lehi was a learned man; that Nephi suffered afflictions like all of us will; or is it that Jesus Christ has favorites?" Now, I loved it when I was a teacher's pet. I trust all of you felt the same. I got to be the class monitor—I got to go in and out. I had all these special privileges. The ultimate perks—I had benefits; it was wonderful!

If Christ had a favorite in 600 B.C., could he have favorites in our year, too? And how does one know they are a favorite? Now, I am excited about what I am reading because all of a sudden that verse opens up to me about Christ. I keep reading on. Nephi tells us, not only was he highly favored of the Lord, but he was highly favored of the Lord in all his days. That is wonderful. A lifetime of being a favorite. Not just a second grade class room monitor, a third grade, or high school, or whatever. He is favored all of his days, and then he tells us how he knew he was a favorite. He then says, by the end of the verse, "Having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God." Now, how can you recognize then a favorite of God upon the earth? Easy, they have a knowledge of God, they understand him, and they know his mysteries.

I want to put forth the thesis this hour—or the hypothesis that there is a story within the Book of Mormon that is a story within a story. The casual pupil, as I was when I first read the Book of Mormon way back in my 6th grade experience, will run through it and they'll say, "I've read it." And, I'll say, "But did you find the story within the story?" The story within the story reveals Jesus Christ.

Now, let us suppose that during our time together you get bored this hour. I can't imagine it, but just suppose it does happen! If it were to happen, do something so simple. Go through just chapter 1 of 1 Nephi and underline every time the name of Christ appears. As you do you will find *Lord* and *God* as you did in the first verse. As you begin to underline then, each time stop, and say to yourself, what did I learn about Jesus Christ? You will find the Book of Mormon will begin to open up to you like a Urim and Thummin. You will be able to say, "I still love 3 Nephi best," but you will be able to find that his name appears so often that indeed this is another testament of Jesus Christ from page to page, chapter to chapter.

See that 1 Nephi (notice that I am not going to underline every time I see *he*, *his*, or *him*) but I am just underlining every time I see his proper name which is capitalized. You will find in 1 Nephi that 474 times the name of Christ appears—out of 618 verses. That means that you can't read more than 1.3 verses, on an average, and not find his name. In essence in every verse, every 1.3 verses in 1 Nephi, you'll find his name.

Now notice I am carrying through. In 2 Nephi it is the same; Jacob, Enos, and

you start to see apostasy in Jarom. Jarom what happened? You are not talking about Christ as much as the others were. The part I would like you to focus on is that, on the average in every 1.7 verses you will find the name of Christ.

In other words if you were to say, is this another testament—a powerful witness for Jesus Christ? I would say that in just word count for his name, it is more powerful than the Old Testament, than the New Testament. I will be forever grateful that the Book of Mormon was not tampered with by scribes. All of you who have taken English classes realize that your English professor, if you were to use the main character's name every sentence would go through and say, "Don't you know pronouns?" And for sure there would have been delition of the name in the Book of Mormon.

Not only does his name appear, but his name appears in many different forms. (Can I draw your attention again to the overhead?) I have put them in alphabetical order, but what you will see is that the writers of the Book of Mormon knew him by many names. Starting with "A Mighty," you can look up there and you can see he is known as *Christ, Counselor, Creator*. He is known as *God of Jacob, God of Israel, Good Shepherd, Great Creator, Great Spirit, Mediator, Messiah, Lord God, Lamb, King, Keeper of the Gate*. (All of you looking forward to seeing St. Peter, ah, that is your big clue—*Keeper of the gate*—Jesus Christ.)

He is known by many names to the Book of Mormon writers. He is known by 101 *different names*. Now, as I look through, you can probably imagine I don't take many things casually—especially not research. And I got pretty excited—I am learning so much about Christ. I am finding so many different names by which he is known, and I am feeling really good about the experience; I now have 100 names, until I come to the last verse in the Book of Mormon, and you may want to turn there with me. That is Moroni 10:34. As I come to the last verse I've got 100 names. I am running through the halls of the Joseph Smith Building saying, "There are 100 different names by which Christ is known by the writers of the Book of Mormon." I now hit Moroni 10:34.

"I now bid unto all, farewell." as Moroni writes. "I soon go to rest [rest in Hebrew means "I soon go to my grave"] in the paradise of God, [I have seen *God* most often of the names being used, so I merely underlined it and said, yup, there are still 100 names] until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah." I had seen *Jehovah* several times. Jehovah means "I AM" and is an Old Testament name. And then I came across the 101st name. The 101st name, the name used just one time in the Book of Mormon is the *Eternal Judge* of both quick and dead. All of a sudden I went oh, no, why couldn't the last name have been *Savior*? Why couldn't it have been *Messiah*? Why does this have to be *Eternal Judge*?

Now, you realize that in the judgement day we will be judged by the books.

What is the standard measurement? Notice we call scriptures the standard works. What will be the book that the house of Joseph will be judged by? It is the Book of Mormon. Who will be our judge? Well, it is the *Eternal Judge*.

Now, what I want to testify (you realize as a professor you can profess—but in this case, I can testify) is that all of the 101 names by which Christ is known in the Book of Mormon are defined differently. I decided to take each out of context and find out what that name meant. For example, I went to other scriptures—I went to writings of prophets, general authorities—to find out, for example, what does *Lord God of Hosts* mean. It means that Christ is angry and he will fight the battles of his people.

Messiah, when it is used, has everything to do with when he comes in his glory. *Savior* has to do with the fact that he has saved his people so they can return to his Father in Heaven. *Holy Child* has everything to do with the fact that he is without spot and blemish. *Creator* is obviously creation, and so forth.

Now, what I was doing was trying to see if it could be possible that Joseph Smith (he's translating fast, we can name as many as twelve scribes that will scribe translation), could it be Joseph Smith, an unschooled young man, who hadn't had the privileges of education as many of you, could it be that he made a simple mistake? Say, he called Jesus Christ *Lord God of Abraham*, when he should have said *Lord God of Jacob*. Or should have said *Lord God of the House of Israel*, when he should have said *God of Isaac*. I was curious.

Now, I want to share with you an example. For example, one of the names by which Christ is known is *Lord Omnipotent* by two of the Book of Mormon writers, which means all powerful. Notice, as you look at it, then, in Mosiah 3:5: "For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power," would it have been appropriate to use the Lord God of Hosts? No, he is not angry in this verse. Would it have been appropriate to use *our Lord God of Jacob*? No, it would never fit. So, you say, notice that, "The Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity" shall come down from heaven, (how shall he come? with power) I say, Joseph Smith, that is incredible.

Try another one. *Holy One* means he is without spot or blemish. And, in 2 Nephi 2:10, "And because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him. Wherefore, the ends of the law which the Holy One hath given," (who could give that law? One without blemish). Now, what I am trying to tell you is, that I went through to see, Joseph did you make a mistake? I can testify that of the 101 names, I didn't find any name that was in wrong contextual usage.

Now, let me try and put this in context with my own life. I have been a writer as long as I can remember. A lot of people have a lot of talents and I'd say for me I can read and write and that pretty much sums up the total. But, I have written

and written. I now have close to 55,000 pages in print. If you were to say, have I ever written a popular book? I would say, "My Mother and I own them." So, I would say, no; but I would also say I have never written anything that I haven't rewritten, checked, rewritten, and still it isn't perfect.

I look at the Book of Mormon and it is perfect. Every time his name appears it is perfect. I have a hard time coming up with 3, 4, 5 different names to give a main character, let alone 101. Now, if you were to ask me, "How could Joseph Smith have done such a thing? And especially since it is his first book. You know that he never reread the manuscript until after it was published. How could he have done that and let it go from his hands? I can't even do that with a letter without reading it over to make sure I have commas, and this and that." And I look and I say, "Joseph Smith!" The only answer I have for how he could have done a 500+ page manuscript in a matter of months, using twelve different scribes, with the main character used well every 1.7 verses, giving the main character 101 different names—the only way I know he could have done that is to have been inspired by God! Truly, Joseph Smith was the translator of the Book of Mormon. There is no other way that I could begin to explain what I discovered in that process.

Now, notice what I discovered at the end. I discovered the last name by which Christ would be known was *Eternal Judge*. Now, that is scary for me—a sinner! As I was growing up a popular TV series was Perry Mason. Perry Mason was a pretty big man, he was an attorney and he always wanted to have the best case. And even though it looked like he could never win because of the faults of his client, he always wanted to make sure that the client went before just the right judge. And he would tell the client what to wear, how to act, and mannerisms to use, so that he would be able to get the client off and the case would be won.

Well, I am no dummy! I want to know about Jesus Christ. You realize that judgement bar is going to be pretty crowded! Moroni says he is going to be there; Nephi says, "I am coming too." Jacob says he's there; Alma's there; and when I stand before the judgement bar I don't want to say, "Thank you very much for the atonement." And he says, "Excuse me my name is Nephi!" So, I would seriously like to know more about him, so that I would recognize him among all the noble and great that will be there at the judgment bar. And I won't by foot-in-mouth say, "Moroni, you must be Christ; if not you, what about the man seated next to you?" "No, that is my father." "Oh boy, I am having one of those bad days!"

Well, with that in mind I decided I wanted to answer what the preacher had asked. What does he look like and how do you know that Christ has a body? I am now reading the Book of Mormon the next time—notice I am reading it several times through this process. And I trust you are doing the same.

What I am trying to find is, what is the nature of God? Joseph Smith indicated in 1844 that the most important thing that men, women, and children could learn in this life is what is the nature of God? Reading the Book of Mormon I

am now looking for references that tell me about him. Not just what are his names, but what's his nature, what's his characteristic, what's he like, what does he dislike, what does he like the most? As I looked through I found a reference to him having a body. There 283 times in the Book of Mormon that describe him with a body. I would love to run into the preacher now; now I could point out every verse. How long do you have? Let's sit down, let's look at it, no question—body.

It also indicates that God has passions—320 times in the Book of Mormon it tells us about the passions of God. Now, I could readily divide these references into two camps. In other words, there is never a passion of apathy. And for us today I divided them into loving attributes of God as well as judgmental attributes. Now, I realize judgmental attributes are also loving. It is just that when I have felt them in the past they don't feel so much loving. But what I wanted you to see is that on a 2 to 1 basis the Lord shows forth more mercy and love than he shows forth judgement. Now think about this as it relates to the story line of the Book of Mormon. The story line of the Book of Mormon is about peoples that failed. The Nephites fail, the people of Mulek fail, the Lamanites fail, the Jaredites fail; and yet the Lord, on a 2 to 1 basis, to a failing society, shows forth more mercy.

Now, I am going to start with *body* first, so that we can learn something about his body; and can we recognize him as *Eternal Judge*. I have taken his body (and not like I have cut it all apart), but I wanted to show you what kind of body we are looking at. Notice, I am looking for anything that will distinguish him from among those that might also be at our judgment bar. I am looking for such things as fur, scales, horns, rings, anything that I can say "I got you, I know exactly, I am going straight to the Eternal Judge." Notice what I have found. I have found that his body looks just like yours and mine; but there is an exception. He's got arms, he's got a back, blood, cheeks, ears, eyes, face, feet, fingers.

Is the exception, then, in how he uses the body? For example, I became very curious. Can he, say, speak with his feet? With his shoulders can he run? And I found that, no, he uses his body just like you and I. But the exception is, that he magnifies his body. Now, you and I (or many of us) try to magnify our church callings, or our roles in life as mother, friend, associate, or whatever it might be. But, he has learned to magnify his body.

Let me give just a couple of examples. Let us take for example his eye. With my eye I could see you and you look great. You look young, you look happy, and life is just filled with hope, and that is wonderful. Now, I could physically see you better if I put you under a microscope. I probably wouldn't like it, however, and you might not either. But, that is the way I could magnify your physical look. However, for Him, with his all-seeing eye, he can not only see you physically, but he can see into your heart, to know who you are really. Now, that is a big difference.

If you were to say, "Does he occasionally give that ability to others?" I would say, "yes, that ability is often referred to as the spirit of discernment." Now, if you

were to say, "Who has the spirit of discernment?" I would say, "Your bishops." Have you ever noticed when you are not living right, first of all, when you go to church, you go through the back door? And you quickly want to leave before the Sunday School lady stands up and starts singing time. But, when you go through the back door, have you ever noticed, when you see the bishop, occasionally, he will find you or catch you, and he will shake you by the hand. As he does so one of the things you will try to avoid is looking him in the eye. He will say, "How do you do?" And you will say, "Fine bishop, just great." And then he will hold your hand, and say, "Do you think we need to talk?" And you will say, "How did you know?" He'll say, "I knew." Why? Because he has the spirit of discernment. He can see into your heart. Whereas, if you are living well, you shake the bishop's hand, he says "How are you doing?" You say, "Great, bishop." You look him straight in the eye, and he says, "yes, you are."

Another example, let's look at the word *voice*. He has a voice. Notice that his voice has pitches much like yours and mine. He has a mighty voice, he has a voice of great tumultuousness, a voice of thunder. Hopefully, we don't use our voice in that awful way, and he also does not in the Book of Mormon. If you were to say, then, "What kind of voice would you most like to hear?" I have had several students say, "I would go on a mission, I would marry in the temple, if the Lord would just speak up." And I would say, "Oh, my friend, he can speak up, but that is not the voice you want to hear." If you hear that voice you're in trouble!

The voice you want to hear is a voice of mildness. You want to hear the still, small voice, the voice of perfect mildness. Now, notice when you hear that voice. Remember in 3 Nephi, when it is announced that Christ is coming, the people hear what kind of a voice? They hear a still, small voice, and yet the voice is so powerful, it shakes them to the very core, and causes their hearts to burn within them. And you look and you say, "Ah, that's the voice I want to hear."

If you were to say, "Has he given that kind of voice to any man on earth?" During my lifetime lived a wonderful prophet named Spencer W. Kimball. Some of you may recall that he had problem with cancer, and had one and a half vocal chords removed. And yet, once he had learned to speak again you'd say that still, small voice, that whisper, literally circled the globe as you and I recognized that voice and said, "That is our prophet!" The eternal judge—what is his body like? It is like yours and mine with the exception that he has learned to magnify that body.

We say he has passions. Obviously, the ones we like best are the ones he shows forth on a 2 to 1 basis. These passions are the passions that he shows forth to man in the Book of Mormon. He shows comfort, compassion, pity, goodness, great infinite goodness, joy, love, mercy, abundant mercy, tender mercies, a multitude of His tender mercies, patience, long-suffering.

You would say on a good day these are also the passions you and I show forth. The difference between my passions and his is that my passions are not controlled.

For example, say it is Christmas—everyone gets love! Say it is my birthday—everyone gets love! Say it is Monday, say it's finals, and then how loving am I? And, I say, "It has nothing to do with the people around me, it is that I am out of control with passions."

You would never find in the Book of Mormon that suddenly he said, "Everybody in Zarahemla, I feel so happy today, you all get joy." Right, it is blanket—across the board. You will find that his passions are controlled by the actions of man. When man acts, God then reacts by showing passions. Now, if you were to say, "Well, then how can I get the loving passions?" I'd say, "Easy." Loving passions from the Lord, his goodness, his long-suffering, his patience, are always correlated with keeping the commandments. The closer you keep the commandments, the greater will be the loving passions you receive.

Now, I have always wanted to hold out for the best. I always wanted to be the A student. There is a difference between receiving his goodness, and receiving his exceeding goodness. There is a difference between receiving his mercy, and receiving his infinite mercy, and multitude of his tender mercies. How do you do that, then? By keeping the commandments, I can receive his goodness, but, how do I receive the multitude of his tender mercies? The answer is, I keep the commandments with *exact* obedience.

Let me use an example so you will be able to focus in on that. I remember a time in my life when I was sent to California to do Education Week lectures. I had been down there, and had done 64 stops in 21 days! I was pretty beat; I would describe myself as burned out and I was at my last stand. While I was there, a place called Upland, California, the kids were honking in the car; everybody wanted to come back to Utah. This had been an incredible vacation as we had been on the freeway from one chapel to another.

And, as we were at this last place a young man came up to me and he said, "Ah, Sister Black." He said, "Before you leave I want to show you that I own a hymnbook of the Church." And what do you say? I tried to smile, I tried to not be so grouchy. I said, "Oh, that's great," passed it back to him, and he said, "But you didn't look inside." I looked inside and saw that he had—well his hymnbook was just like mine. He had The Spirit of God, Come, Come Ye Saints, that's great. He said, "Would you look in the cover?" I now looked in the cover, and he had signatures of most of the living General Authorities. So it didn't matter that the kids were honking in the car; this is important. This man really has a prize.

I now asked him how he got it? And he said, "Well, I was a bodyguard for President Kimball and General Authorities when they came to speak at the Rose Bowl." Well, I was pretty impressed. But he said, "Wait a minute you didn't ask me how I got President Marion G. Romney's signature." I said, "Okay, okay, how did you get it?" And he said, "Well, I had everyone else's and he was the last one. I finally got him by himself, and I said 'Can I have your signature and then my whole

hymnbook will be complete.' And President Romney said, 'What would you give me for my signature?' "

At which point, the young man said to me, "Well, Susan what would you say?" I said, "\$5.00 at the most." You are totally pushing it. I have kids honking in the car, you know, I have got to get out of here. And he said, "I didn't know what to say. I mean, a man in the First Presidency of the Church. I looked at him; I spent the rest of the day thinking about it. Finally, at the end of the day I went back to him, and said, 'I will give obedience.' At which point, President Romney said, 'Ah, my dear young friend, if you will give obedience, anything you ask for will be yours in this life.' "

You and I want the goodness of God, we want the love, we want the multitude of his tender mercies, we want all that life can provide. And then I would say, "What is your clue?" Ah, it is easy; keep the commandments. But you want to hold out for the best? Well, keep the commandments with exact obedience. Then we recieve what we will call the *Loving Passions*.

The passions that will probably bring you to your knees are what I will call the *Judgmental Passions*. Recall that they are also loving, it is just that when we feel them there is a difference. For example, the Lord can show forth anger. I can do that too. He can show forth fierce anger. Ah! Fiery indignation, fury, chastening, displeasure, grief, suffering, vengeance, wrath, fulness of wrath, His Almighty wrath.

Well, you and I look at this, and we then begin to think, "You mean he is capable of all that?" I'd say yes! How can you awaken that in him? Obviously, we could have several censored brain-storming comments; and we would say, yes, that one would probably bring wrath, fiery indignation on the other. But, the bottom line comes; if you get the loving passions by keeping the commandments—how do you get his judgmental passions? Easy, don't keep the commandments!

For example, Father Lehi, when he murmured over the broken bow incident, he was chastened. And recall then his experience, his sorrow. Consider the brother of Jared when he failed to pray. What was the passion he received? He was chastened! Consider Alma the younger when he and the sons of Mosiah, attempted to try to destroy the Church. What passion did he experience? He experienced wrath! What was his comment? Oh, he wished that he could be banished.

So how do you get those judgmental passions? Don't keep the commandments! How do you get fiery indignation? How do you get fulness of wrath? Ah, easy, know the commandments and willfully rebel. And willful rebellion, then, is the greatest sin that would bring upon you judgment, such that you would not like; one that would cause the deepest sorrow that you would ever know in this life.

What have we learned so far? We have learned that the Book of Mormon is a witness for Christ. We have learned that every 1.7 verses you can find some form of His name; there are 101 different names for Christ. We have also learned that the last name is *Eternal Judge*. We now know that he has a body; it is talked about over 200 times in the Book of Mormon. He has a body and he is capable of showing passions to man. The passions that he shows forth are loving and judgmental. Loving passions we get by keeping the commandments. Judgmental passions we get by not keeping the commandments.

We are ready to move forward. I am now going to read the Book of Mormon again. This time I am curious. I want to find out what is the theme of the Book of Mormon about Christ. In other words, I know the purpose is to convince the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ. I know he is the central character. I now know about his nature and body. But what is the theme? In other words, when the prophets write of him, what is the theme they most often write of him?

One of the things they most often write of is his earth life. And I wanted to show you this. You will find that 39 times the Book of Mormon tells us that he will manifest himself unto the people in America. Twice it tells us that his Father is God the Father. Ten different times it tells us about his mother, Mary; twelve times about the birth; and so forth, but notice then what the theme of his ministry is. *The theme is the Atonement*; 101 times it tells of the atonement. That good news for you and I. Then what name would I think of him because of this theme—ah, he is my Savior, my Redeemer!

With that buildup I am going to have us turn to 3 Nephi, and we are going to start at 3 Nephi 11. Now we know a lot about Christ. We have found 101 times his name has been used in the Book of Mormon, different names. We now know that the theme is the Atonement. So now chapter 11.

"And it came to pass that there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi" (notice 39 times it has told us he is coming—various writers of the Book of Mormon) and the group is gathered. Two thousand five hundred people were in that multitude. They "gather together of the people of Nephi"; they are around a temple in the land of Bountiful.

At this point it appears that there is no one in charge of the meeting. There are two conversations that appear to be going on among the people. One conversation is that they marvel and wonder one with another, talking about the great and marvelous changes that have occurred in the land. Remember the three days of darkness and the destruction. They are also talking about Jesus Christ of whom the sign had been given concerning his death. So it is like you and I before a church meeting begins. Now, notice, the prophet Nephi is in that group, but Nephi is not talking. They are waiting for it to start.

"And it came to pass that while they were thus conversing one with another,

they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven." Notice the one speaking is the one who is going to preside. As they heard this voice, "they cast their eyes round about, for they understood not the voice which they heard; and it was not a harsh voice." (Ah, no wonder. They are good people, and that is good news. It is not a loud voice.) "Nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being [what kind of voice?] a small voice, it did pierce them that did hear to the center, insomuch that there was no part of their frame that it did not cause to quake; yea, it did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn."

"And it came to pass that again they heard the voice, and they understood it not." They did not understand until the third time. Notice who is presiding at this meeting. It is God the Father! This is a most unusual meeting upon the earth. This third time when they heard the voice they "did open their ears to hear it; and their eyes were toward the sound thereof; and they did look steadfastly towards heaven, from whence the sound came."

"And behold the third time they did understand." Now, notice what the presider says: "Behold my Beloved Son" (I now underline *Beloved Son*). Why is he so beloved? Ah, he has been faithful, he has been true, he has been *exactly obedient* and you would say he has finished his mission upon the earth. He has taken upon him the sins of mankind. And what name is reserved for him? Ah, *Beloved Son*! He said, "In whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him." In other words, Jesus Christ is now the conductor of the meeting.

"And it came to pass, as they understood they cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man [I now underline the word man—interesting] descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them; and the eyes of the whole multitude were turned upon him, and they durst not open their mouths, even one to another, and wist not what it meant, for they thought it was [a what!] an angel."

Now Christ has to introduce himself. Notice, as he does so in verse 10 he says, "Behold, I am [remember I AM means Jehovah; in other words he speaks the Old Testament name with the New Testament name] Jesus Christ." Then does he say, "Everybody, let me give you a clue? My mother's name was Mary. Does that ring any bells out there?" Or does he say, "John the Baptist. Listen up, how are we doing, anybody know exactly who I am?" He has to give them a clue because they do not respond. And notice what his clue is—verse 11. "I have drunk out of the bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world."

What does he talk about? He talks about the Atonement—the theme of the Book of Mormon. What is the response of the people? The whole multitude now fell to the earth. There is no other man, that they know about, that took upon him the sins of the world. They fall to the earth; they are then invited to come forth to feel the prints in his feet, and his hands, his side. And, then finally in verse 16 it

says, there and now they did cry out with one accord; they are at one, they are unified. What is the word they cry out? They cry out, "Hosanna!"

I am very grateful for the Book of Mormon. I know that Joseph Smith was the translator of this book, and because of this book my life is better. My life is better because I now know something of Jesus Christ. I now view it as my responsibility, now that I know something of him, to live a better life. I am grateful to live at this time, and I am especially grateful to be a teacher. I wanted to be a teacher for years, and this is my 25th year to do so. I love teaching, but there is nothing more that I love teaching than something that is true. I know the Book of Mormon is true and I say this in Jesus' name, Amen.