

THE 2023 SIDNEY B. SPERRY SYMPOSIUM

*“I Glory in My Jesus”:
Understanding Christ in the Book of Mormon*

Call for Proposals

Jesus Christ is the central figure in the Book of Mormon. Ancient prophets in the western hemisphere consistently pointed to his life and atoning sacrifice. For example, Nephi wrote, “I glory in my Jesus, for he hath redeemed my soul from hell” (2 Nephi 33:6). After his resurrection, Jesus Christ personally ministered to the Nephites and taught them. The voice of Jesus Christ was heard not only in his personal ministry, but also in direct conversations between Jesus Christ and prophets who recorded his words. President Ezra Taft Benson taught, “The Book of Mormon is the keystone in our witness of Jesus Christ, who is Himself the cornerstone of everything we do. It bears witness of His reality with power and clarity” (*Ensign*, November 1986).

The 2023 Sperry Symposium, which will be held at Brigham Young University in October 2023, will focus on Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon. Specifically, we are looking for papers that focus on the person and teachings of the Savior when he is textually identified as Jesus Christ. Sometimes the Book of Mormon uses generic references such as “Lord.” While acknowledging that all or many of such generic references connect to the Savior, we seek for papers that focus on passages where it is textually clear that Jesus Christ is the speaker or referent. Our hope is to publish papers that provide new and meaningful insights that will be valuable to Latter-day Saints. See a list of potential topics below.

The target audience of the Sperry Symposium is Latter-day Saint Gospel Doctrine teachers and other lay members who are nonspecialists in the formal study of the scriptures, but whom we hope will better understand and thus better teach the scriptures after observing Sperry presentations and reading Sperry publications. We specifically call for papers that are simultaneously spiritually strengthening and intellectually enlarging.

Proposals should take the form of an abstract of the paper of no more than 300 words containing all of the following: (1) the main thesis of your paper/presentation, (2) a brief outline of the components supporting your main thesis, (3) a summary of your methodology as well as the primary and secondary sources you will consult as evidence and support, and (4) a brief statement concerning how your study will make a significant contribution to previous scholarship (either academic, Latter-day Saint, or both) to providing valuable insights on Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon.

Following the abstract, please include a short separate statement (25–50 words) outlining your background, qualifications, or preparation to address this subject (you should already have completed some research in preparation for writing the proposal). Please include the following information in the heading of your proposal: name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and a working title for your paper. Proposals must be submitted electronically, as an attached Word or PDF document, to Beverly Yellowhorse at beverly_yellowhorse@byu.edu on or before **February 1, 2022**.

Each submitter will be notified of his or her proposal’s status by **March 1, 2022**. Those whose proposals are accepted for possible presentation at the symposium and consideration for inclusion in the symposium publication (released prior to the conference) must submit final papers, ranging between 15 to 25 pages in length (double-spaced) by **September 1, 2022**. All papers will be reviewed by the Sperry Symposium Committee and those being considered for inclusion in the volume will receive additional blind peer review by two external reviewers. Based upon review, papers will be accepted for publication, accepted with revisions, or rejected. Proposals and papers must be consistent with the doctrines and practices of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Questions can be addressed to members of the 2023 Sperry Symposium Committee:

John Hilton III, Chair
270E JSB
(801) 422-7394
johnhiltoniii@byu.edu

Krystal Pierce
303L JSB
(801) 422-2370
krystal_pierce@byu.edu

Mark Ogletree
270F JSB
(801) 422-2156
mark_ogletree@byu.edu

Nicholas Frederick
275 G JSB
(801) 422-3223
nick_frederick@byu.edu

Brent Nordgren
167 HGB
(801) 422-3293
brent_nordgren@byu.edu

Beverly Yellowhorse
271 JSB
(801) 422-3611
beverly_yellowhorse@byu.edu

Potential paper topics could include but are not limited to:

The unique teachings of Nephi (or Jacob, King Benjamin, Samuel the Lamanite, etc.) regarding Jesus Christ

The Savior's sermons in the Book of Mormon (e.g., 3 Nephi 16, 20-22)

Teaching in the Savior's way: A close analysis of Jesus Christ's teaching techniques in the Book of Mormon

The Atonement of Jesus Christ as presented in the Book of Mormon (consider aspects such as the death of Jesus Christ, the universal resurrection (Mormon 9:13), a physical resurrection (2 Nephi 9:4; Alma 11:42-43), blood coming from every pore (Mosiah 3:7), the Atonement was to appease justice (Mosiah 15:9; Alma 42:5, 25), the connection between the fall of Adam and the Atonement (2 Nephi 2:22-23; 2 Nephi 2:11-27), without the Atonement, we would be in Satan's power (2 Nephi 9:8; Mosiah 16:3-12), the role of grace (2 Nephi 25:23; 3 Nephi 27:21-22)

Personal conversations between Jesus Christ and Book of Mormon individuals (e.g., Ether 12:23-37)

Jesus Christ's nature and personality as portrayed in the Book of Mormon

What Jesus Christ teaches about specific ordinances and covenants in the Book of Mormon (e.g., baptism, sacrament, the gathering of Israel)

What Jesus Christ teaches about specific topics (e.g., marriage and family, revelation, the name of the church, the promised land, etc.) in the Book of Mormon

Comparing Jesus Christ's words in the Book of Mormon with New Testament texts

Book of Mormon prophecies about Jesus Christ

Symbols of Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon

Comparing the events surrounding the arrival of Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon with those described for the Second Coming

Jesus Christ as part of the Godhead in the Book of Mormon (connections/interactions with Heavenly Father and the Holy Ghost)

Jesus Christ and the fulfilment of the Mosaic Law in the Book of Mormon

Jesus Christ's use of Old Testament prophets (e.g., Isaiah, Micah, Malachi)