

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

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In considering the theme “The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament,” I feel “like a droplet of spray proudly poised for a moment on the crest of a wave, undertaking to analyze the sea.”¹ Or, as Moses said after seeing God and His innumerable creations, “Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed” (Moses 1:10).

“A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible” (2 Nephi 29:3). This prophetic description of biblical convictions as they would exist today was given by the Lord to Nephi in about 550 BC. For thousands of years, Jews and Gentiles alike have made this same narrow, restrictive declaration concerning the Old and New Testaments.

Such were existing conditions in 1820 when Joseph Smith Jr., a young farm boy, began a search for truth. The religious sects of the day, using the Bible, were vigorously proselyting for new converts. There was great “confusion and strife among the different denominations” (Joseph Smith—History 1:8). Young Joseph said: “My mind at times was greatly excited,

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the cry and tumult were so great and incessant. The Presbyterians were most decided against the Baptists and Methodists, and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the Baptists and Methodists in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own tenets and disprove all others” (Joseph Smith—History 1:9).

Lamenting the apparent differences between the local religious leaders, Joseph said, “The teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as to destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible” (Joseph Smith—History 1:12). In his confusion, he turned to the admonition of James in the New Testament: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraided not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5). With innocence and pure faith, the boy followed the admonition and appealed in secret prayer to the only perfect source of truth, his Heavenly Father. Then in a moment unique in all of history, God the Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, appeared in glory to Joseph Smith. From that moment on, knowledge and understanding began to cover the earth and illuminate the minds of men.

Praise be to God for a modern-day prophet! Were it not for Joseph Smith, we would still be mired down in the black tar of ignorance, “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7). Until Joseph Smith came on the scene, no one had understood many of the truths found in the Old Testament for over a thousand years.

The Jews still conformed to the Mosaic covenant, completely unaware that Israel had broken the “everlasting covenant” (Isaiah 24:5). Christianity’s use of the Old Testament had been relegated to a carefully selected menu of character-building stories. As light and knowledge burst forth, the old Mosaic covenant was replaced with the new and everlasting covenant! The everlasting covenant given anew in every dispensation was appropriately called the new and everlasting covenant in this, the last dispensation.

Clearly the world had misinterpreted, misconstrued, and misunderstood the divine message of the Bible, namely that Jehovah was none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of the Everlasting Father; that the gospel

of salvation was given in the beginning to Adam and Eve and was everlasting; and that all the prophets had declared these same eternal truths.

The remarkable visit of the Father and the Son to Joseph in 1820 was only the prelude to many extraordinary events that gradually led to a further understanding of truth restored to the earth. The following events in the life of Joseph Smith will lead us to a better grasp of our theme, the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

1. In 1823, three years after the glorious visitation of God the Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to the boy Joseph Smith Jr., an angel calling himself Moroni made an appearance to Joseph and informed him of golden plates that were buried in a hill not far from his home. He was told that, using an instrument called the Urim and Thummim, he was to translate the writings engraved on the plates. The plates contained a sacred record of an ancient people who had inhabited the American continent. Joseph was told that after visiting the site every year for four years he was to obtain possession of the plates and commence an interpretation.
2. On September 22, 1827, the plates were obtained by Joseph, and by the spring of 1829, the translation was completed. Although there were many impediments to the printing, the work continued and in the early spring of 1830, the first editions of the Book of Mormon were ready for distribution.
3. During his work on the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith was commanded to commence a translation of the Bible relying on revelation. In June of 1830, with Oliver Cowdery acting as scribe, the work began in earnest. He started with the book of Genesis. It is interesting to note that the Prophet was only twenty-four years old and Oliver but twenty-three years old at the time.

It seems important at this point to emphasize the respect that Joseph had for the Bible—both the Old and New Testaments. He said that those who read the Bible can “see God’s own handwriting in the sacred volume: and he who reads it oftenest will like it best, and he who is acquainted with it, will know the hand [of God] wherever he can see it.”²² However, he

recognized that there were many omissions and “many plain and precious things” had been lost. Said he, “I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.”³

As the Prophet Joseph Smith began to translate the Bible, truths so long hidden from the world came to light. Keys to understanding the scriptures were revealed. The gospel of Jesus Christ, with the priesthood and all the ordinances necessary for salvation, had been given to man from the beginning. Suddenly, the Creation of the earth, the Fall of man, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the holy priesthood all began to make sense. And the new knowledge gave a clear pattern to follow in order to obtain eternal life.

Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Isaiah, and others have become heroes in my eyes. There was great purpose in their lives. I see them as real people—yet spiritual giants—prophesying, performing miracles, struggling to bless their people, defending the truth, and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

ADAM AND EVE

Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden because they transgressed a law given to them by God. They ate the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and in so doing became mortal—knowing good from evil, enduring pain (physical and emotional), having natural feelings of sadness and happiness, and being subject to Satan’s temptations. Children were born to them. In their need, Adam and Eve called out to the Lord and heard His voice, “and they saw him not; for they were shut out from his presence” (Moses 5:4). They were commanded to worship the Lord their God and make a sacrificial offering of a firstborn lamb from their flock. “And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord” (Moses 5:5).

After many days, an angel of the Lord appeared to Adam and Eve and taught them the purpose for sacrifice, saying, “This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth” (Moses 5:7). The angel further taught them that they should do all things in the name of the Son, that they should repent, and that they should call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore. The Holy Ghost fell

upon Adam and taught him that even though “thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will” (Moses 5:9).

Can you imagine the joy they felt as the gospel was given to them? Is there any way to express the happiness that entered into their hearts? They responded to their newfound knowledge just as any of us would: “they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters” (Moses 5:12). But some of their children did not accept the truth, and the scripture sadly states that “they loved Satan more than God” (Moses 5:13). Still, the plan of happiness was in place—Jesus Christ was the Redeemer, and all men could be redeemed through obedience to the laws and ordinances He prescribed, including baptism and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

No one is nor can be exempt from these basic ordinances; hence Adam “was caught away by the Spirit of the Lord, and was carried down into the water, and was laid under the water, and was brought forth out of the water. And thus he was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man. And he heard a voice out of heaven, saying: Thou art baptized with fire, and with the Holy Ghost” (Moses 6:64–66).

Adam lived to be 930 years old. He preached the plan of salvation to his children and grandchildren. As has been stated, some rejected the word of their first father; others listened, believed, and acted on his teachings. Abel, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, and Enoch—one righteous son after another came forth, “and they were preachers of righteousness, and spake and prophesied, and called upon all men, everywhere, to repent; and faith was taught unto the children of men” (Moses 6:23).

The prophet Daniel in the Old Testament refers to Adam as the Ancient of Days (see Daniel 7:9). We know him as Michael, who helped Jehovah form the earth and is the mortal father of all men. The Prophet Joseph Smith declared, “He (Adam) is the father of the human family, and presides over the spirits of all men.”²⁴ Further Joseph stated, “Christ is the Great High Priest; Adam next.”²⁵

ENOCH

Enoch, the seventh patriarch from Adam, is another of my scriptural heroes. He is hardly mentioned in the Old Testament. After the “begats” and “all the days of,” we read, “And Enoch walked with God: and he was

not; for God took him” (Genesis 5:24). We shall look further at this scripture in a moment, for it has a thrilling ending. Enoch was well acquainted with Father Adam. According to the order of the priesthood, which came through Adam to his sons and grandsons, “Enoch was twenty-five years old when he was ordained under the hand of Adam; and he was sixty-five and Adam blessed him” (D&C 107:48).

While Enoch was journeying among his people, the voice of the Lord came to him. He was commanded to preach repentance to the people, and if they would not repent, they would incur the wrath of the Lord: “They have brought upon themselves death; and a hell I have prepared for them, if they repent not” (Moses 6:29). Enoch was humbled by this command, and he asked the Lord, “Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant?” (Moses 6:31). The Lord comforted Enoch, assuring him that His Spirit was upon him, and the Lord gave a most remarkable promise to him: “All thy words will I justify; and the mountains shall flee before you, and the rivers shall turn from their course; and thou shalt abide in me, and I in you; therefore walk with me” (Moses 6:34). Following this wonderful blessing of comfort, the eyes of Enoch were opened, and he saw “the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye” (Moses 6:36). From that moment, the people referred to him as a seer, and they gathered to hear him and said, “A wild man hath come among us” (Moses 6:38).

Enoch led his people into battle against their enemies, and so great was his faith that he “spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him” (Moses 7:13). “And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even Zion” (Moses 7:19).

I get chills when I read these powerful words about this unique prophet of God. Enoch was so great that the people believed his message, and they lived together in righteousness. “And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them” (Moses 7:18).

Now I refer back to the biblical scripture found in Genesis 5:24: “And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.” To this day, no one has understood this passage of scripture except those who have read and believed the inspired translation of the Bible by Joseph Smith.

As for Enoch, he was blessed to see the day that God took the righteous into heaven: “And lo, Zion, in process of time, was taken up into heaven” (Moses 7:21).

An amazing vision showing all the nations of the earth passed before the eyes of Enoch. He saw the wickedness of the people and the eventual destruction that awaited them. He beheld the Crucifixion of the Son of Man, even Jesus Christ, “and the earth groaned; and the rocks were rent” (Moses 7:56). And Enoch wept! But despair and sorrow vanished, for the Lord said, “And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare, an Holy City, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion, a New Jerusalem” (Moses 7:62).

This prophetic vision was shown thousands of years before the coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. Enoch saw the truth that would come out of the earth—the Book of Mormon—and the Restoration of the fulness of the gospel, which would gather the elect into a Holy City—Zion, the New Jerusalem.

There have been very few prophets so great as Enoch. I admire him for his humility, his courage, his righteousness, and his special ability to see and talk with God. He will always be a favorite of mine.

ABRAHAM

In the early days of July 1835, the Prophet Joseph Smith obtained several Egyptian mummies along with two or more papyrus scrolls. After beginning a translation of the scrolls, Joseph wrote in his journal, “I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and

much to our joy found that one of the rolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt, etc.—a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth.”⁶

Every soul who claims lineage in the house of Israel looks back to Abraham as their father. Little is known about his early life. We do know that at some point he married a woman named Sarai. It is also documented by Paul in his letter to the Galatians that the gospel was preached to Abraham—“first, Faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Articles of Faith 1:4; see Galatians 3:8).

In his own words Abraham described his remarkable search for the blessings of the fathers:

And finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers. It was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth, down to the present time, even the right of the firstborn, or the first man, who is Adam, or first father, through the fathers unto me. I sought for mine appointment unto the Priesthood according to the appointment of God unto the fathers concerning the seed. (Abraham 1:2–4)

Abraham’s search for the blessings of the fathers was not an occurrence of chance; he was chosen before coming to earth. Abraham said, “Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of

the noble and great ones; and God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born” (Abraham 3:22–23). This foreordination of righteous priests was explained further by Alma, the great Nephite prophet, “And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such” (Alma 13:3).

What a heartache it must have been for Abraham to see the wickedness of his father’s family, for he was raised in Ur of the Chaldees by a family that had left the faith of their fathers and practiced idolatry. According to the book of Abraham, Terah, the father of Abraham, actually attempted to offer up his righteous son as a sacrifice to pagan gods (see Abraham 1:12–15, 30). Only through the intervention of Jehovah was Abraham’s life preserved and the wicked priests destroyed (see Abraham 1:20).

Following this harrowing experience, Abraham was commanded to leave Ur and go to the land of Canaan. He was obedient to the Lord, took Sarai and a nephew named Lot, and journeyed to a land which was called Haran. It is interesting to note that Terah had repented of his attempt to sacrifice Abraham and followed him to Haran. Later Terah reverted back to his idolatrous ways, died, and was buried in Haran.

While Abraham lived in Haran, the Lord appeared to Abraham and commanded him, saying, “Arise, and take Lot with thee; for I have purposed . . . to make of thee a minister to my name in a strange land which I will give unto thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession, when they hearken to my voice” (Abraham 2:6). Then a most remarkable blessing was pronounced upon Abraham. The Lord said:

I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee above measure, and make thy name great among all nations, and thou

shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations;

And I will bless them through thy name; for as many as receive this Gospel shall be called after thy name, and shall be accounted thy seed, and shall rise up and bless thee, as their father;

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee (that is, in thy Priesthood) and in thy seed (that is, thy Priesthood), for I give unto thee a promise that this right shall continue in thee, and in thy seed after thee (that is to say, the literal seed, or the seed of the body) shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal. (Abraham 2:9–11)

Being obedient, they left Haran and journeyed to the land of Canaan. As they traveled, they came to the land of Jershon. There Abraham built an altar and offered a sacrifice to the Lord. As mentioned, sacrifice had been a required offering since the beginning and was done in similitude of the sacrifice of the Holy Messiah, who would sacrifice His own life to atone for the sins of all men (see 2 Nephi 2:6–7).

Late in their lives, Abraham and Sarai, now called Sarah, were told that they would have a son. She was skeptical because of her advanced age; however, in due course a son was born to them and they named him Isaac. Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, gave an interesting commentary on this extraordinary birth: “Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable” (Hebrews 11:11–12).

Then an awful command came to Abraham from God: “Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Genesis 22:2). How could this possibly be? Abraham did love his son, his only son through Sarah. But even more, how could the covenant of God be fulfilled—the promise of

innumerable seed, the blessing of his descendants holding the priesthood, the continuation of his ministry to take the gospel to all the inhabitants of the earth and to ensure that the families of the earth would have an opportunity of life eternal? We can be certain that he also remembered very well the idolatry of his father and himself being laid on an altar as a sacrifice to pagan gods.

With the trial of his faith looming before him, Abraham took his beloved son Isaac on a three-day journey to the place of sacrifice. The trusting son said to his father, “My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” Abraham replied, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together” (Genesis 22:7–8). There Isaac was bound and placed on an altar, and Abraham took the knife in his hand to slay his son. In this critical moment, the angel of the Lord called out and said, “Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me” (Genesis 22:12).

The test was passed. Abraham had given up his own will to that of the Lord. A ram caught in a thicket was offered up as the sacrifice, and the covenant of God with Abraham was kept, “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be” (Genesis 15:5).

The great Book of Mormon prophet Jacob correlated the sacrifice of Isaac with that of the Nephites keeping the law of Moses to remind them of Christ in these words, “And for this intent we keep the law of Moses, it pointing our souls to him; and for this cause it is sanctified unto us for righteousness, even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son” (Jacob 4:5). Even our Heavenly Father was willing to offer up His own Son as a sacrifice so that all His children could have access to salvation; however, in His case there was no ram in the thicket, and the life of His Son, Jesus Christ, was taken.

From Abraham to Isaac, to Jacob, to Joseph, to Ephraim and Manasseh, and to other noble prophets down to the meridian of time, the gospel was taught and obeyed with its saving principles and ordinances.

True, the children of Israel rejected God during the time of Moses and consequently were left with the “preparatory gospel, which gospel is the gospel of repentance and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments” (D&C 84:26–27). Still, Moses held the keys of the priesthood and presided over his people as a living prophet. Joseph Smith declared, “Some say the kingdom of God was not set up on the earth until the day of Pentecost, and that John did not preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; but I say, in the name of the Lord, that the kingdom of God was set up on the earth from the days of Adam to the present time. Whenever there has been a righteous man on earth unto whom God revealed His word and gave power and authority to administer in His name, and where there is a priest of God—a minister who has power and authority from God to administer in the ordinances of the gospel and officiate in the priesthood of God, there is the kingdom of God.”⁷

For nearly two millennia following the death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ and the subsequent killing of the Apostles, the world began a spiritual decline into darkness. With the Restoration of the gospel and the priesthood through Joseph Smith the Prophet, the words of Parley P. Pratt ring in our ears, “The morning breaks, the shadows flee; lo, Zion’s standard is unfurled! The dawning of a brighter day majestic rises on the world.”⁸ The so-called “dark ages” of despair were replaced with hope and joy. A new day had dawned! The stone cut out of the mountain without hands, as described by Daniel, began to roll forth and become a great mountain to fill the earth (see Daniel 2:34, 45). The kingdom of God had been reestablished on the earth, and the seed of Abraham had begun to proclaim the reality of Jesus Christ and His everlasting gospel to all the world.

Isaiah gave a prophetic description of the life of the Savior, including His sorrows and suffering. Said he, “He was bruised for our iniquities” and “brought as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:5, 7). This wonderful messianic proclamation may be one of the most famous of all the scriptures. The great composer Handel brought the beauty of Isaiah’s words to the world in his stunning musical masterpiece, *Messiah*. Isaiah followed with a remarkable question, “And who shall declare his generation?” (Isaiah 53:8).

The Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi stood before his evil accusers and defended his knowledge of the Atonement of Christ by asking, “Even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began—have they not spoken more or less concerning these things?” (Mosiah 13:33). Then after quoting Isaiah chapter 53, Abinadi testified that Christ would soon fulfill the prophecies of his life, death, and Resurrection. Further, he demanded, “And now I say unto you, who shall declare his generation? . . . And who shall be his seed?” (Mosiah 15:10). He answered his own questions in this way:

Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God.

For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions.

And now, are they not his seed?

Yea, and are not the prophets, every one that has opened his mouth to prophesy, that has not fallen into transgression, I mean all the holy prophets ever since the world began?

I say unto you that they are his seed.

And these are they who have published peace, who have brought good tidings of good, who have published salvation; and said unto Zion: Thy God reigneth! And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet! (Mosiah 15:11–15)

This description of the seed of Christ was followed by a lovely pronouncement, “And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that are still publishing peace! And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who shall hereafter publish peace, yea, from this time henceforth and forever!” (Mosiah 15:16–17). And the work goes on as thousands of missionary voices are raised to publish peace, to proclaim the reality of Jesus Christ, and to announce the Restoration of His gospel.

The extraordinary commitment, depth of understanding, and strength of character of these faithful young people is displayed in the following clipping I recently received from the *Signal*, a newspaper in California, of an interview with the top graduate from the local high school, Bryce DeFiguierido. I quote only a portion of the questions and answers from the article:

What is the secret to your academic success?

A long time ago, I decided to work hard and never settle for less than my best.

What person has been a role model, or has inspired you, during your high school years?

My family has been a huge influence in my life. We spend a lot of time together, and my parents and siblings are very important to me. They have helped shape me into the person I am. I am very grateful for the relationship we share. I always try to do my best and make them proud of me. . . .

What are your plans and goals for the future?

I am enrolling at Brigham Young University this fall. After a year, I will serve a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When I return, I will finish my bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering with a minor in music. I then plan to earn a graduate degree in either business or biotechnology. I want to go into neuroprosthetics, designing robotic prostheses that can be controlled by the human nervous system.

Starting a family is also very important to me. I hope to be able to have a close family and raise my children to be people of character.⁹

There was no “maybe I will serve a mission, or perhaps I will get a college education.” Bryce knew where he was going and what he intended to do with his life. I am especially proud of this young man, because his mother was one of the amazing missionaries who served with us in the great country of Bolivia. Although Bryce is certainly an outstanding young man, there are tens of thousands who profess the same commitment and aspirations, for they are the seed of Abraham and the seed of

Christ, and “how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that are still publishing peace!” (Mosiah 15:16).

Now I return to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of the Lord Jesus Christ in this, the last dispensation. All the information given in this brief treatise that might shed some light on the Old Testament must be attributed to Joseph Smith. Brigham Young, a true and loyal friend, said of Joseph, “What is the nature and beauty of Joseph’s mission? You know that I am one of his Apostles. When I first heard him preach, he brought heaven and earth together; and all the priests of the day could not tell me anything correct about heaven, hell, God, angels, or devils: they were as blind as Egyptian darkness. When I saw Joseph Smith, he took heaven, figuratively speaking, and brought it down to earth; and he took the earth, brought it up, and opened up, in plainness and simplicity, the things of God; and that is the beauty of his mission.”¹⁰

The impression that Joseph Smith has made on me personally is captured in this short verse that I wrote about him: “With each new birth cast into the sea of men, a gentle ripple is begun. Cause and effect is quite the same for all. For some, the ripple moves for but a moment, then quickly slips and dies. For most, creation’s tiny wave leaves little trace of having been. A few move out like tidal waves which never ebb away. They crash upon the human race and mark the life of men—so is Joseph Smith, the Prophet.”

So the tidal wave of Joseph Smith rolls forward. We are all products of his eternal vision and of the keys that he received. One day we shall see him. Then we will praise him as the Prophet of the last dispensation, and we will praise him as the one who helped us understand all previous dispensations. We will see that Joseph Smith was the prophet who best showed us the gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

NOTES

1. Will Durrant, quoted by Hugh B. Brown, devotional address at Brigham Young University, March 25, 1958.

2. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 56.

3. Smith, *Teachings*, 327.

4. Smith, *Teachings*, 157.
5. Smith, *Teachings*, 158.
6. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 2:236.
7. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:256.
8. Parley P. Pratt, "The Morning Breaks," *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 1.
9. Sharon Cotal, "Canyon Valedictorian Wants to Make Family Proud," *Signal*, June 3, 2008, A3.
10. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses* (London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–86), 5:332.