



# The IRON ROD



OUR CHARGE AS MISSIONARIES IS TO TEACH AND TESTIFY OF CHRIST AND THE RESTORATION AND INVITE ALL TO COME AND BE BAPTIZED UNTO REPENTANCE THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE.

## President's Message

May 1993

### "That They May Know The Covenants Of The Lord"

The prophet Joseph Smith stated "the title page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left side of the collection or book of plates..."

Moroni records the primary purpose of the Book of Mormon one of which is "to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord has done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord that they are not cast off forever."

The covenant referred to on the title page was given to Abraham and then renewed with Isaac and again with Jacob and is known as the Abrahamic covenant. The three primary promises given to Abraham were: Abraham was promised a chosen land, a numerous posterity, but most significantly he was promised that in his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. This last promise is fulfilled because the Messiah came through his lineage and also because his seed shall have the right to the blessings of the gospel, of the priesthood, and of eternal life. (See Abr 2:9-11).

The Abrahamic covenant was passed to Isaac and then to Jacob and then to all of the House of Israel. When the resurrected Lord appeared to the Nephites, He taught them that they were of the House of Israel and were "children of the covenant." (3 Nephi 20:20-25) We are also children of the covenant and therefore we have the same right to the priesthood, to the gospel, and to eternal life. (See D&C 132:30-33)

The work and glory of God to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man is accomplished through the House of Israel. In order to bring to pass the salvation of the greatest number of His children, our Father in Heaven sends his most righteous and worthy spirit children into mortality through the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

These spirits were elected in the pre-existence, and were "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 having chosen good, and exercising exceeding 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)." These spirits are born into mortality in a place and in circumstances where they will come in favorable contact with the gospel. (See BD Election pg. 662-663) They are born into families and so grouped together that during their mortal probation they have a more abundant opportunity to make and keep the covenants of salvation. These spirits come to mortality with the privilege and responsibility to carry the gospel to the world and "to teach His commandments unto the children of men." (See Alma 13:1,6)

For the full blessings of salvation to come the doctrine of election must operate twice. 1. The righteous spirits are elected to come to mortality through the House of Israel as heirs of special blessings. 2. We must be called and elected again in this life. This election takes place when we join the true church and remain faithful to the end.

With this understanding we can more fully appreciate our calling "to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect. For mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts." (D&C 29:7) When we teach and testify of Christ and the restoration with quiet dignity and with sincerity, we have the promise of the Lord that the Holy Ghost will bear record of what we have testified to (D&C 100:7-8). The people who are elect, those who are prepared by the Lord both in the pre-existence and in this life, will then feel the spirit and be converted. Therefore, the elect can be ready for baptism within two or three weeks. This is so, not because we are so capable ourselves, or because our investigators have a complete understanding of the gospel, but rather because they have been prepared in the pre-existence and come to this earth with the talent they developed there for recognizing truth and believing the doctrines of salvation. This is the talent of spirituality.

Ancient Israel was scattered because they rejected the gospel, defiled the priesthood and forsook the church and kingdom of God. To know that we are not cast off forever is to understand that Israel will be gathered. The gathering of Israel takes place as a person believes the gospel, joins the church, and receives the Holy Priesthood, which include all of the blessings given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As far as the gathering of Israel is concerned the Book of Mormon is the most important book that ever has been or ever will be written. It is the instrument or tool which God designed to gather Israel and to teach them of the covenants of the Lord.

Professor Victor Ludlow has observed that the Lord, more than anyone else, teaches about covenants. In 3 Nephi the Savior teaches three major sermons or discourses. The first, similar to the Sermon on the Mount comprises chapters 11 through 14. Next comes the Law and the Covenant Discourse comprising chapters 15 through 16. Here the Savior teaches that he is the one who gave the law of Moses; the one who covenanted with Israel; and through his atonement the law has been fulfilled and it has an end; and the covenant which he made with his people is not yet fulfilled. (3 Nephi 15:4-8) The third is the "Covenant People Discourse." This constitutes most of chapter 20 and all of chapter 21 and 22 and part of chapter 23 of 3 Nephi. This discourse is particularly valuable because it is unique to the Book of Mormon.

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