

History is prophecy in reverse and, of the two, prophecy is always more sure. The Book of Mormon contains not only the gospel of Jesus Christ, but is also a prophetic record about a choice and chosen land. It contains the history of three migrations that come to the same promised land; the Jaredites, the Mulekites and the Lehites, who were led there by the ‘hand of the Lord.’ Although a historical record the text is foremost a *prophetic record* of a fourth group that is to be led by the Lord to the same land as the other three to accomplish His purposes. This fourth group are those Gentiles that are ‘led out of captivity, that battle against their mother Gentiles’ (1 Ne. 13:16, 17) and become a ‘mighty Gentile nation’ upon the land (1 Ne. 22:7). The Gentiles who come to this land of promise are discussed in prophetic detail throughout the text so the reader would make no mistake as to where that land of freedom was then and would be in the latter-days.

These four cultures have a number of things in common. All fled from a spiritual Babylon, all received the teachings of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Each came to the same land; each had with them, or received by revelation a record regarded as scripture, the teachings of Jesus Christ. All of these groups received from the Lord, the prophecies and promises pertaining to their righteousness and the freedoms that are connected to the land to which they were led.

The Book of Mormon contains three primary intrinsic messages. The first two are spoken of in the Doctrine and Covenants as the Lord declares that this sacred text contains “a fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ” and is also a “record of a fallen people” (D&C 20:9). The third message, unrealized by most readers, is the testimony that these cultures ‘fell’ because they did not take seriously the ‘deed restrictions’ that were in place by divine decree on the land of promise.

The first is a worldwide message. The good news of the gospel is available for the salvation of everyone and contained within this prophetic history for the “convincing of Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.” This simply includes all mankind.

The second message directed to members of the church around the world, and found from the beginning to the end in this sacred text, is what the Lord calls in a modern revelation, a ‘record of a fallen people.’ The Book of Mormon, like the Old Testament, teaches the latter-day reader that that the sins of Israel (those who know the Gospel) are the sins of Israel in every dispensation and every generation. The modern members of Mormonism are afflicted by the same desires, appetites, passions and pride as were the ancient Nephite believers. The spiritual failures of those believers in antiquity will be the same spiritual setbacks for the contemporary church member unless scriptural history is understood. Nephi instructed the readers to “liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning” (1 Nephi 19:23). The character, temporal desires, appetites, faults, failings and sins, as well as the righteousness and obedience of a people who once knew the Lord, can be recognized in the history of scripture and likened to all members, individually and collectively today. This is one primary purpose of scriptural history as Joseph Smith explained, because the “constitution of man has not changed since he fell.” (TPJS p 60) Those who live on the Nephite homeland (member and non-member alike) must learn that the sins that led to the fall of the Nephite saints in antiquity, are the same sins that plague the saints in the latter-day. These same character traits and pride are inseparably connected to the third message of the ‘deed restrictions’ or stipulations placed on the promised land.

There is no security in the future unless we understand the past, and our latter-day hope lies in the message that speaks loudly from the dust as delivered by the prophets of the Book of Mormon. It is a natural tendency to reject this unpopular and painful message of a fallen people by the accolade that today we are like the Nephites, we are members of the true church and therefore a chosen and righteous people. One silent message of the Book of Mormon is the scriptural witness of ‘historical prophecy.’ This would mean that Mormon chose, (by seeing the latter-day inhabitants through the prophetic eye of inspiration) the Nephite histories as a *prophetic history* for the future inhabitants of the promised land. **This record needs to be** taken seriously.

As is shown time and time again in the Book of Mormon and throughout world history, the culture itself is the greatest threat to the culture. It is not what exists on the outside that constitutes the greatest danger, but what becomes the accepted way of life within the culture. There are some who pride themselves in ‘reviling against revilers’ setting up apologetic and defensive forums and foundations to combat the onslaught of the ‘anti-Mormon.’ However, scripture teaches that sin is the miss-use of time, and defending the church from outside influences is unnecessary; “...For the Lord hath said: This is my church, and I will establish it; and *nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people*” (Mosiah 27:13). The phrase “And thus we see” in Mormon’s editorial comments always conclude “that wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). It becomes obvious that there is a great spiritual benefit and purpose for scriptural history. The wake-up call has been issued by the Book of Mormon, and part of this ‘call’ is a non-denominational message that needs to be delivered to all those who are living on the promised land. This can only be done by those who know what that message is, and who understand that this Book of Mormon is truly the keystone of the spiritual and temporal security for our faith, freedoms, and families.

A look at the prophecies about the Gentiles that will come to the promised land should be the beginning for an understanding of the political message of the Book of Mormon. When Lehi steps foot on the land he makes some interesting prophecies in 2 Nephi 1:5-10. In summary he states by the ‘workings of the Spirit that:’ “...none come into this land save they shall be brought by the hand of the Lord...this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring...that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance...” Lehi also speaks in this same passage about the ‘deed restrictions’ and their relation to freedom: “...if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a *land of liberty* unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity...” Speaking about those who dwell there Lehi continues that if they: “...shall keep his commandments, they shall prosper upon the face of this land; and they shall be kept from all other nations, that they may possess this land unto themselves...” Lehi begins this prophecy with these words that Nephi uses to establish the location of the land of promise:

“But, said he, notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; *a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed.* Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord.” Nephi explains where the land is that the puritans and pilgrims come. “Nevertheless, thou

beholdest that the Gentiles who have gone forth out of captivity, and have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations, upon the face of the land which is choice above all other lands, *which is the land* that the Lord God hath covenanted with thy father that his seed should have for the land of their inheritance; (1 Nephi 13:30).

Jacob also speaks of the freedom that must be on the land as he teaches that: "... this land, said God, shall be a land of thine inheritance, and the Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land. And this land shall be a *land of liberty* unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations" (2 Nephi 10:10-12). Christ explains, as He visits them at Bountiful, how the Nephite record will come about: "...when these things which I declare unto you, and which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself...shall be made known unto the Gentiles...it is wisdom in the Father that they should be established in *this land*, and be *set up as a free people* by the power of the Father, *that these things might come forth...*" (3 Nephi 21:2-4).

As discussed in the Book of Mormon by Christ and other prophetic authors, it was not by chance but by design that religious freedom appends the promised land. It was not for economic prosperity or political power, **but** it is for religion, reformation, and restoration that this great "Gentile nation" exists. The land to which the Gentiles came from captivity became a 'mighty Gentile nation.' The freedoms promised by prophecy about this nation are found only in the North America and in particular the United States. This nation was established for the 'rebirth' of Zion in this dispensation. This promised land was set apart and protected for the righteous by scriptural proclamation. Those who live on the land have a responsibility to provide a protection of freedom, for the spiritual revival that will eventually cause the fall of Babylon. As described by Christ, the founding of this nation provided a setting and a vehicle for the religious freedom necessary for the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the organization of the Church, and the eventual establishment of Zion.

Moroni, alone without family or peer or people, speaks to the future Gentile nation that will live on his land of promise about the 'deed restrictions' that he has personally seen enforced. He pleads: "O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should be shown unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins" (Ether 8:23). From beginning to end, the record of the Book of Mormon explains with depressing accuracy and detail the very nature and character that led to the annihilation of a once-blessed culture and people who previously and actively possessed the gospel of Jesus Christ, living on the promised land.

A latter-day message from the first and last prophetic inhabitants of the promised land found in the historical prophecy of the Book of Mormon is provided by Moroni and the Brother of Jared. Moroni recounts the Lord's words to the Jaredite prophet: "... he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that *time henceforth and forever*, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off..." Moroni now adds his editorial comments: "...now, we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off...For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for *it is the everlasting decree of God...* And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may

repent...Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be *free from bondage, and from captivity*, and from all other nations under heaven, *if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ...*" (Ether 2:8-12).

The political issues today, according to the scriptures, are not that of economics, gross national product, political provisions, but one of faith in the "God of the land who is Jesus Christ." This nation was founded on religious freedom and faith in God, who was—to the founding fathers—Jesus Christ. The subtle movements of modern-day philosophers, politicians, and platforms that teach the new morality and intellectualism of today are nothing more than faithless falsehoods. Couched in such a subtle way, the doctrines of the anti-Christ are taught as truths. Though not spoken loudly, these philosophies are nonetheless presented in a form of propriety called 'moral tolerance' or 'political correctness' to sway or convince the unsuspecting masses. By teaching these doctrines of the anti-Christ with 'flattering words' many are led to believe that moral tolerance and religion should be separated. The message of the Book of Mormon is that the political freedoms held sacred cannot be separated from faith and religion. The freedoms guaranteed by law in the Bill of Rights are in peril when the foundation of God, faith and religion is forced into the background.

The Book of Mormon viewed as a political text for freedom teaches **h**ow to choose leaders, what should be the philosophy of the candidates and the oaths of office that they should take. The text teaches about democracy as we are told to "observe and make it your law—to do your business by the voice of the people" (Mosiah 29:**25-29**). Political platforms are discussed, and the anti-Christ philosophy **t**aught in this scripture **i**s for us to recognize as this same philosophy **a**s proclaimed as a platform of choice and rights today. Corrupt governments and leaders are discussed from beginning to the end of the record. We should be asking: Why? Programs and entitlements are discussed in the Book of Mormon as government control is seen in Nephite history. Mormon taught the latter-day reader that the Nephites had "turned out of the way of righteousness, and did trample under their feet the commandments of God" (Helaman 6:31) as the government seduced the righteous by getting them to partake of entitlements selling their sacred freedom for free money: Seduction began: "...at the more wicked part of them, until they had overspread all the land of the Nephites, and had *seduced the more part of the righteous until they had come down to believe in their works and partake of their spoils...* And thus they did obtain the sole management of the government... And thus we see that they were in an awful state, and ripening for an everlasting destruction (Helaman 6:38–40). Because of the neglect of their religion and God, as well as the lack of an active concern for their political leaders and intellectual philosophies, the effect is a spiritual decline and loss of the freedom and peace that once secured the protection of their families from seen and unseen enemies. The physical and spiritual protection of the family in every dispensation is founded on the fact that freedom and peace must exist in the environment in which people live.

Freedom exists because of religion, and law exists for the protection of that freedom, maintaining the rights of every individual within the community to have the same privileges. Basic freedoms such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; religious freedom; and the protection of private property become the primary purpose that governments and laws are established. As soon as the government, laws, or judgments are enacted that favor one individual or entity over another, individual freedoms are compromised and the corruption of power is imminent.

Because of the “everlasting decree” the deed restrictions that will be “hence forth and forever” upon the land of promise; when Christian morals are compromised by our leaders and candidates, our security and prosperity—both temporally and spiritually—is placed in jeopardy by those same officials. This is a two-edged sword that not only holds those leaders responsible, but also those who placed them in this position either by the voice of their vote or the screaming silence of their apathy.

The Book of Mormon begins with destruction and ends with destruction because of spiritual Babylon. In the center of the text a ‘title of liberty’ is raised to retain the security of their ‘faith, freedom and families.’ Captain Moroni taught that the protection of our faith, freedom, and the temporal and spiritual welfare of our families requires an active responsibility. This activity in the political process is needed to ensure and maintain that these fundamental rights will be guaranteed for the generations that will need those blessings most. This call to action is by a divine mandate found in the Book of Mormon. Latter-day Saints who do not ‘act’ will be ‘acted upon’ by the will of others as elected leaders set policies and enact laws that will control our children and our children’s children.

The Book of Mormon explains in historical detail what will become of the Gentile nation if they do not recognize and act upon the responsibilities to preserve the freedoms guaranteed by obedience to the stipulations described within its text. There is a specific promised land and there exists—within the text—specific prophecies and blessings as well as promised judgments that are particular to the promised land of the Book of Mormon. These specific blessings and prophecies connected to the land should be understood, especially by those living on that land. If that land cannot be located definitively, by the text itself, the prophets of the Book of Mormon have failed and space was wasted on the plates. Latter-day Saints have been distracted from seeing this third intrinsic message by seeking to connect a setting of the Book of Mormon with ‘monumental ruins’ and creating ‘hypothetical maps’ while ignoring the prophetic record.

What difference does it make where the Book of Mormon took place? The answer to this question should make a tremendous difference to those who live on the land of Lehi if they understand that there are ‘deed restrictions’ connected to it. Knowing that one might live on that land could make a difference between freedom and prosperity or captivity and destruction.

The Book of Mormon was preserved for our day. It is the handbook of instruction for the spiritual and temporal security of our faith, freedom, and peace. The message of freedom found within the text is meant specifically for the readers who live upon the Promised Land. Our temporal and spiritual security depends upon the works and fruit of our faith in Christ and the Book of Mormon. This knowledge should lead to action rather than apathy in choosing those who will represent the voice of the people. There exists a sacred responsibility for the faithful to help maintain the freedom and security of the land. This scriptural responsibility lies within each individual who understands the Book of Mormon, to seek the righteous remnant and become a collective voice in the security of our faith, freedom and families.