

Zion's Advocate

*"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day,
for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost...."*

1 Nephi 3:187

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Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be

made free?

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

—John 8:31-36

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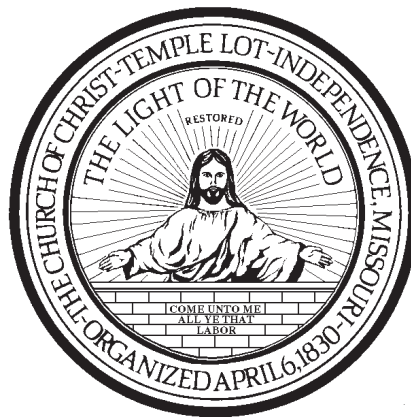
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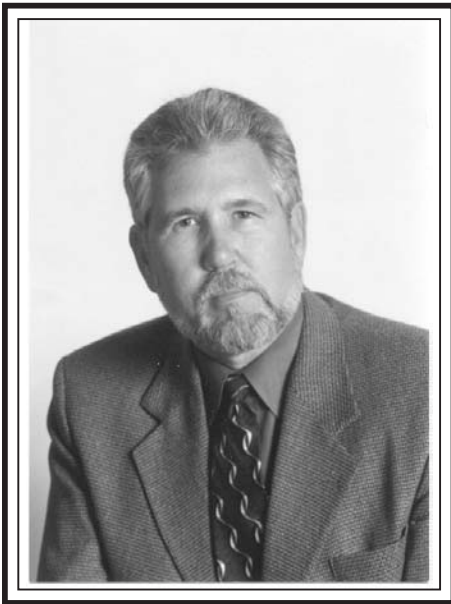
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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

To promote Jesus Christ as our only Saviour;
To promote His Teachings & His Church, the Church of Christ;
To be a voice of warning to His people; to be Zion's advocate.

The False Doctrine of the Rapture



By Apostle Brian E. McIndoo

Scriptural Reference Misused to Teach the Rapture

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17: *“For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and re-*

Part 2

main shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.”

This reference obviously speaks of Christ coming to the earth and gathering His people who are alive and walking the earth at that time. We have a fundamental belief that Christ will return to gather the saints and conquer Satan, binding him and casting him in a pit for 1,000 years while the saints live in peace with Christ.

This time is known as the millennium, and we can also read about it in John's writings.

Revelation 20:1-7: *“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat*

We have a fundamental belief that Christ will return to gather the saints and conquer Satan, binding him and casting him in a pit for 1,000 years while the saints live in peace with Christ.

upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall

reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison."

To make a case for the Rapture it is said the resurrection referred to in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 is not the same as the resurrection spoken of in Revelation 20. Reference: *The Full Life Study Bible*, Zondervan Publishing House, pg. 1889, Article entitled 'The Rapture' pp. (1).

How do they come up with such a conclusion? This seems to be an obvious error in that theology. John saw the last days, days just prior to the millennium, and was commanded to record them. In obedience, John records the very words of Christ given to him describing these end time events.

Revelation 4:1: *"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."*

In a revelation had by Nephi he saw many things concerning the end times; however, he was forbidden to write all the things he saw, for one of the twelve Apostles would write the things which are true. We should look to his writings as the authority, and that writing is the Book of Revelation, recorded by John.

1 Nephi 3:238-251: *"And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me, saying, Look! And I looked and beheld a man, and he was dressed in a white robe; And the angel said unto me, Behold one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb! Behold, he shall see and write the*

remainder of these things; Yea, and also many things which have been; And he shall also write concerning the end of the world; Wherefore, the things which he shall write are just and true; And behold, they are written in the book which thou beheld proceeding out of the mouth of the Jew; And at the time they proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, or, at the time the book proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, the things which were written were plain and pure, and most precious and easy to the understanding of all men. And behold, the things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write, are many things which thou hast seen; And behold, the remainder shalt thou see; But the things which thou shalt see hereafter, thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them. And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them; And they are sealed up to come forth in their purity according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of Israel. And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel."

Returning to John's description in Revelation 20:5 it refers to this as the first of two Resurrections. *"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. **This is the first resurrection.** Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection:"* Rapture proponents believe the dead will be resurrected and meet the saints in the air prior to the 1st resurrection. Therefore the 1st resurrec-

tion spoken of in Revelation 20:5 would become the 2nd and then the 2nd would become the 3rd. We would have to abandon God's words about the resurrection recorded by John to follow such a doctrine.

John also wrote:

Revelation 20:4: *"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."*

This relates to the martyred dead of the tribulation. If all the righteous had been taken away from the earth who is left to be these witnesses, who will teach the gospel, or be the example to the non-believers? If all the saints and believers were gone from the world then the world would be in darkness and without the light of Christ.

John 8:12: *"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*

Rapture supporters claim that the days of tribulation will naturally persuade people to turn to the Lord. According to scripture that is not the nature of mankind. If only the evil and wicked are left, none will come to light (Christ). Unless Christ's servants are among unbelievers to reprove, rebuke and persuade them they will not turn unto the Lord.

John 3:19-20: *“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d.”*

In Revelation 7 verse 9 John sees a group in heaven wearing white garments and wonders who they are.

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hand.”

The answer to John’s question came in verse 14:

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

What is it telling us about the tribulation? There are saints that came through or out of a great tribulation which would not have been possible if the saints had been taken away before the time of tribulation.

Now let us look at what the writer, Paul, is trying to teach those whom he is writing to. The subject of Paul’s treatise begins in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we

say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.”

The Thessalonians did not understand how the dead believers, those who had gone before them, such as their friends, loved ones, children, Old Testament heroes of the faith, and the prophets would join them, the living, if Christ would return during their lives. The believers at Thessalonica thought the dead were going to resurrect at a much later time, the time of judgment, and not join Christ and the saints at the millennium.

Paul expounds to them about the resurrection at the end times, which is also the beginning of the millennium. He explains that the souls that went before are not just in some unconscious state, buried in the ground with their dead bodies. He explains, the dead have gone to the Lord but will return with Him when he comes in His power, and then they which died previously will join them which are alive. He goes on to talk about the reunion of those that died before and those that are yet alive. He says those that are alive will be changed, for this flesh can not dwell for 1,000 years because it is corruptible. Although we may not be able to use the scripture found in the Book of Mormon to the convincing of most futurists, we can use it to our benefit to better understand who will have part in the first resurrection.

Mosiah 8:53-65: *“For were it not for the redemption which he hath*

made for his people, which was prepared from the foundation of the world; I say unto you, were it not for this, all mankind must have perished. But behold, the bands of death shall be broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead. And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ: for so shall he be called. And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection. They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them: thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death. And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord. And little children also have eternal life. But behold, and fear, and tremble before God; for ye ought to tremble: for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him, and die in their sins; Yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have willfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection. Therefore had ye not ought to tremble? For salvation cometh to none such; for

the Lord hath redeemed none such; Yea, neither can the Lord redeem such: for he can not deny himself; for he can not deny justice when it has its claim."

This brings us to another commonly misused scripture in support of the Rapture Doctrine.

1 Corinthians 15:51-54: *"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."*

Again Paul is discussing how this mortal flesh will have to be changed in order to dwell for 1,000 years during the millennium. As before, Paul is again speaking to a specific question. This time that specific inquiry can be found in Corinthians 15:35-36:

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:"

Paul expounds that a transformation in our present body must occur.

1 Corinthians 15:50: *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*

He also tells when such a

change will occur.

"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

Therefore we see the specified time such a change will take place, *"when the last trump shall sound."* When Christ returns to bind and cast Satan into the pit, the beginning of the millennium, which comes at the end of the tribulation.

Matthew 24:29-31: *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."*

Christ was silent when it comes to the Rapture, but had much to say about His return.

In Luke 12:35-46 Jesus speaks a parable to teach about His return, He gives instruction to be prepared. Vs. 35: *"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning...."* To be watchful, vs. 37: *"Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching...."* Then he tells us to be diligently watching

as the man of the house would, knowing a thief would be coming that night, vs. 39, 40: *"And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not."* We are commanded to watch and be ready for that day. We can not do that if we have previously been taken out of the earth.

Jesus prayed to the Father in behalf of the saints, as they must dwell in the world, even indicating that He has not even asked that they should be removed, only protected from the evil which is around them.

John 17:15: *"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."*

Referring to Luke 17:26-36 Jesus spoke yet another parable to teach concerning conditions surrounding His return.

Luke 17:26-30: *"And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In*

that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

According to Jesus, the days before He returns will be days of wickedness upon the face of the earth. He used the epic simile of the days in which Noah lived before the flood and Lot lived before the destructive judgement of God was poured out on Sodom and Gomorrah to make His point.

According to this parable, Christ will come to all the earth at the same time. He gives examples of activities which occur at different times of the day, such as working in the field in the morning, grinding in the afternoon for the evening meal, and in the bed sleeping in the evening. Thus, we see Christ's return comes simultaneously to all people in every time zone of the world. Given the wording of one being taken causes this reference to be used to make a case for the rapture; they say those taken were the righteous caught up to heaven. Is such an argument valid, or is it, too, a misused scrip-

ture to support a false doctrine? Let us try to determine whom it was that was taken by referring to another one of Jesus' parables concerning the end times, often referred to as the parable of the tares.

Matthew 13:24-30: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."

Dissecting this reference for a closer examination we find the sower is Christ (vs. 37), the field is the world (v. 38); the good seed are children of God, His believers (vs. 38); the tares are the wicked children of Satan (vs. 38); the one who sowed the tares is the devil (v. 39); the reapers of the harvest are the angels (vs. 39, 40); the harvest, when the good seed and the tares are separated at the end times (vs. 40); the tares gathered and burned first (vs. 40-42). From this parable we see the one

taken first is not the righteous, rather, the tares or wicked children of Satan.

Returning to Luke 17, when Jesus spoke of the two in one bed, two women grinding, two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, those listening at the time asked Him, "Where Lord?" (vs. 37); they, too, wanted to know where would the one be taken. Jesus answered them and said, "...Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." Jesus is telling them where evil flesh dwells there too will the judgment of the Lord be, ready to consume. God's judgment falls on them like birds of prey where moral and social corruption is prevalent. This, I believe, is the same judgment described being poured out after the final battle of Armageddon.

Rev 19:17-18: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."

These end time parables emphasize the destruction and removal of the wicked, not the righteous, and such as was the case when God destroyed all but eight souls with the flood and the entire population of Sodom and Gomorrah, except Lot and some of his family. Keeping with the same chronology of events we can understand the one that is taken in

Luke 17 was not the righteous being caught up; rather, the wicked being removed. Compare the consistency of this concept with Isaiah 1:18-31 where we see God removes the dross (impure), leaving the pure.

In Summation

I maintain the Rapture doctrine is incompatible with the plain simple truth of the gospel as taught by Jesus Christ. This doctrine has its very roots coming from writings of the 1500's that were meant to deliberately divert the attention away from the truth about the papacy. In doing so they effected new interpretations of the scriptures and generated new ideas, such as a seven-year tribulation and the rise of an Antichrist. In the early 1800's, about the same time as the restoration of the Church of Christ, the Pentecostal movement, with its new version of worship, adopted this futurist belief and espoused the vision of one young woman of a pre-tribulation rapture and made it a doctrine more commonly known today as "The Rapture."

Many New Testament scriptures warn us not to be carried away or deceived by false doctrines. The Rapture doctrine is a tool of Satan to bring followers to a false sense of security and cause them to sleep, rather than to be found ready and watching. In Matthew 25 we read the parable of the ten virgins, of which five are considered foolish because they did not have sufficient oil in their lamps and were not ready

when the bridegroom came. These foolish virgins had to go purchase oil after the bridegroom came, but when they returned with their oil the door was already shut. The parable Christ spoke was a warning to be ready and watching for His coming. There is no second chance for those who are not prepared and come late. The Bridegroom will come and collect His bride but once. The proponents of the Rapture doctrine would have you believe there are those who are not ready (foolish virgins) at Christ's coming, but will come to Him because of the "Great tribulation."

The orthodox way of thinking in today's world would have you believe in a way of escaping the things to come rather than be watching for the signs of Christ's return. Rather than having vision they would have you to become blinded with the doctrines of devils.

2 Corinthians 4:4: *"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

Prophetically we are warned of the coming of such false doctrines that will be accepted because they are pleasing to the ears.

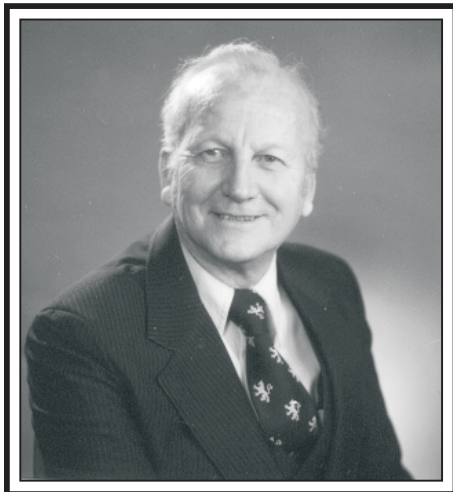
2 Timothy 4:3-4: *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."*

God does have a plan, and there

is a way to escape the true enemy of eternal death and being forever separated from God. Let us of the Restoration refer once again to the Book of Mormon to help clarify some of these points of our Lord's return.

2 Nephi 6:24-33: *"O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; Yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit. And because of the way of deliverance of our God the Holy One of Israel, this death, of which I have spoken, which is the temporal, shall deliver up its dead, which death is the grave. And this death of which I have spoken, which is the spiritual death, shall deliver up its dead; which spiritual death is hell; Wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, And the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored, one to the other; And it is by the power of the resurrection of the Holy One of Israel. O how great the plan of our God! For on the other hand, the paradise of God must deliver up the spirits of the righteous, and the grave deliver up the bodies of the righteous; And the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls, having a perfect knowledge like unto us, in the flesh; Save it be that our knowledge shall be perfect;..."*

Pondering the Words of JESUS CHRIST



By Apostle William A. Sheldon

Item 2: They That Mourn

Mat 5:4: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (same in 3 Ne. 5:51).

The word "mourn" is defined as "sorrow." There are many who mourn, and for many reasons; but it is not necessarily a godly sorrow for sin, as spoken by Apostle Paul, which is the sense intended by Jesus. These shall indeed be comforted.

2 Cor 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

Item 3: The Meek

Mat 5:5: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (same in 3 Ne. 5:52).

Meek means gentle, not easily provoked; submissive, not rebellious.

(Quotations are from the King James Authorized Edition of the Bible and from the 1908 RLDS Edition of the Book of Mormon; same chapters/verses as Independence Edition.)

Such shall inherit the earth, reigning with Christ during His millennial reign.

Alma 17:66, 67: "Preach unto them repentance, and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ: teach them to humble themselves, and to be meek and lowly in heart; teach them to withstand every temptation of the devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. Teach them to never be weary of good works, but to be meek and lowly in heart: for such shall find rest to their souls."

Mor 8:29: "And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart, cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God."

Rev. 5:9-10: "Thou...hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

Item 4: Hungering & Thirsting for Righteousness

Matt. 5:6: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

3 Ne 5:53: "And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost."

John 6:32-35: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

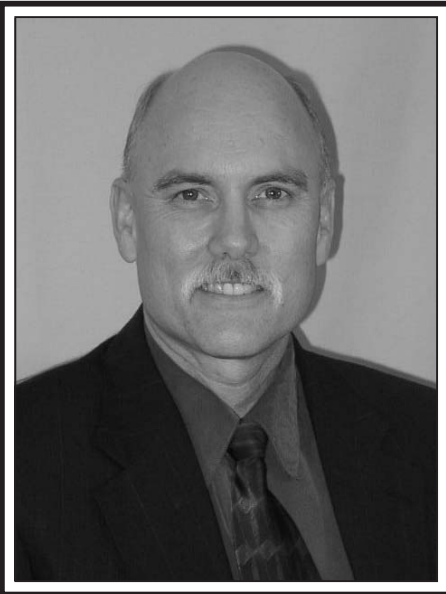
John 5:39: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

It is those who feast upon the words of Christ, who crave His words to abide within, and are obedient to His righteous will, who shall be filled with the Holy Ghost and have eternal life.

2 Ne 13:30: "Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life."

2 Ne 14:4: "...Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do."

Articles of Faith & Practice



**A continuation study by
Elder Gordon McCann**

Article eight quotes a portion of a scripture verse found in Galatians 5:22-23. Paul is defining the works of the flesh and the works of the spirit for his followers so that they could make wise choices in their lives concerning the things that pertain to God. The listed fruits of the spirit can also be found in Alma 5:39-41, but instead of referring to them as “fruits of the spirit,” the text refers to them as “good works.” In both cases the fruits or works are a by-product of the workings of the spirit within the individual.

In the scripture the word “fruit” is used metaphorically to describe our works or deeds that have become our

outward expression of the spirit working within us.

Most of us have, at some time in our lives, had an opportunity to go shopping at a grocery store either with our parents or on our own. Having gone to the produce area and viewed all the available fruit the store had to offer, you begin the task of finding a good quality fruit to take home to eat. How many times have you looked at the color and texture of the skin of the fruit to try and determine the quality or freshness of the fruit, and then pick up several samples to feel the fruit for firmness, and then take a short sniff for that identifiable smell that would be apparent if the fruit was ripe? After making your choice you take the fruit home and prepare it for your meal with the greatest anticipation that the fruit is going to be sweet and juicy. In goes the first bite of fruit and you find the fruit to be juicy and sweet, just as you expected. Your careful selection of the fruit at the grocery store by looking for all the attributes that come with a fresh ripe piece of fruit led to an enjoyable meal.

To produce good fruit much care goes into the pruning and cultivating of the fruit trees or a garden that will be used to raise fruit for consumption. A lot of hard work goes into nourishing the plants by watering, periodic feeding, pruning when necessary, and keeping the weeds dug out from robbing the tender plants of the vital nutrients necessary for healthy growth. The same is

Article #8

We believe the fruit of the spirit to be love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance.

true with our spiritual lives, where we have to take much care for the things that pertain to the spirit of God to develop within us to produce the fruit that God is looking for. Through obeying the commandments of God and by allowing the gift of charity to become a working part in our lives (Moroni 7:50-53) the spirit of God can help us overcome the works of the flesh in our lives (the weeds) and produce good fruit.

Our works, then, as a by-product of the workings of the spirit of God within us, becomes the desired fruit that God wants us to produce and share with others. Our lives can have the same effect on those around us where others can experience the spirit of God by our works. The experience that others could have would be no different than receiving a fresh, ripe, sweet piece of fruit from us and tasting the fruit for themselves for the first time.

BOOK OF MORMON HEROES NEPHI STEPS OUT IN FAITH

REFERENCES: I Nephi: 1: 104-147, 2: 7-11

INTRODUCTION

When the story ended last issue Nephi and his brothers did not know what was going to happen to them. God had sent them back to Jerusalem, the place where people wanted to kill them! God had a mission for the sons of Lehi. They were to get the brass plates with His words on them. God wanted Lehi's family to have the brass plates so they could teach their children about God in the new land. So far they had failed in their mission. Laman, the oldest brother, went to his Uncle Laban to ask for the plates. Laban called Laman a thief and chased him out. Laman wanted to give up but Nephi said, "God will find a way." The brothers gathered all their riches to buy the plates from Laban. Again, Laban chased them out. But this time he sent his servants to kill them and take their treasures. The brothers had to drop everything and run for their lives! Laman and Lemuel were so angry that they began to beat their younger brothers with a stick. An angel suddenly appeared and told them, "Go back to Jerusalem, God will deliver Laban into your hands."

NEPHI STEPS OUT IN FAITH

Complaining as usual, Laman and Lemuel went with Nephi and Sam back to Jerusalem. It was dark when they reached the city. "Hide outside the city walls," Nephi told his brothers. Nephi headed out alone for his Uncle Laban's house. "I don't know what I'm going to do when I get there," Nephi thought as he made his way through the city to Laban's house. "I will tell you what to do," God said. When Nephi reached Laban's home he was surprised to find Laban outside, laying on the ground. Laban was drunk! God spoke to Nephi. "Kill him." "I have never hurt anyone in my life," Nephi said. "I don't want to, Lord." "It is better for one man to die than for a whole nation to forget about God," God answered.

Nephi knew that God wanted his family to have the brass plates so that they could teach their children about God in the new land. Just as the angel had promised, God had delivered Laban into his hands. As hard as it was, Nephi took Laban's own sword and killed him. Then Nephi put on Laban's clothes. He strapped on Laban's sword. Then Nephi walked right into Laban's house. Zoram, one of Laban's servants, saw

Nephi coming. In the dark, he thought the man walking toward him was his master Laban. "Bring me the brass plates," Nephi ordered. Zoram ran to get them. "Help me take them into the city," Nephi said. Zoram helped Nephi carry the heavy plates across the city. When Nephi's brothers saw him coming, dressed in Laban's clothes, they started to run. "Wait!" Nephi called out. "Don't be afraid. It's me, your brother." When Zoram realized this tall man walking beside him was not his master, he turned to run. Nephi was very strong. He grabbed Zoram. "I will let you go if you promise to stay with us. You can come with us to the new land God has promised us." Zoram promised to stay with them. So Laban's servant Zoram and Nephi and his brothers all left Jerusalem together. They headed back through the wilderness carrying the precious plates.

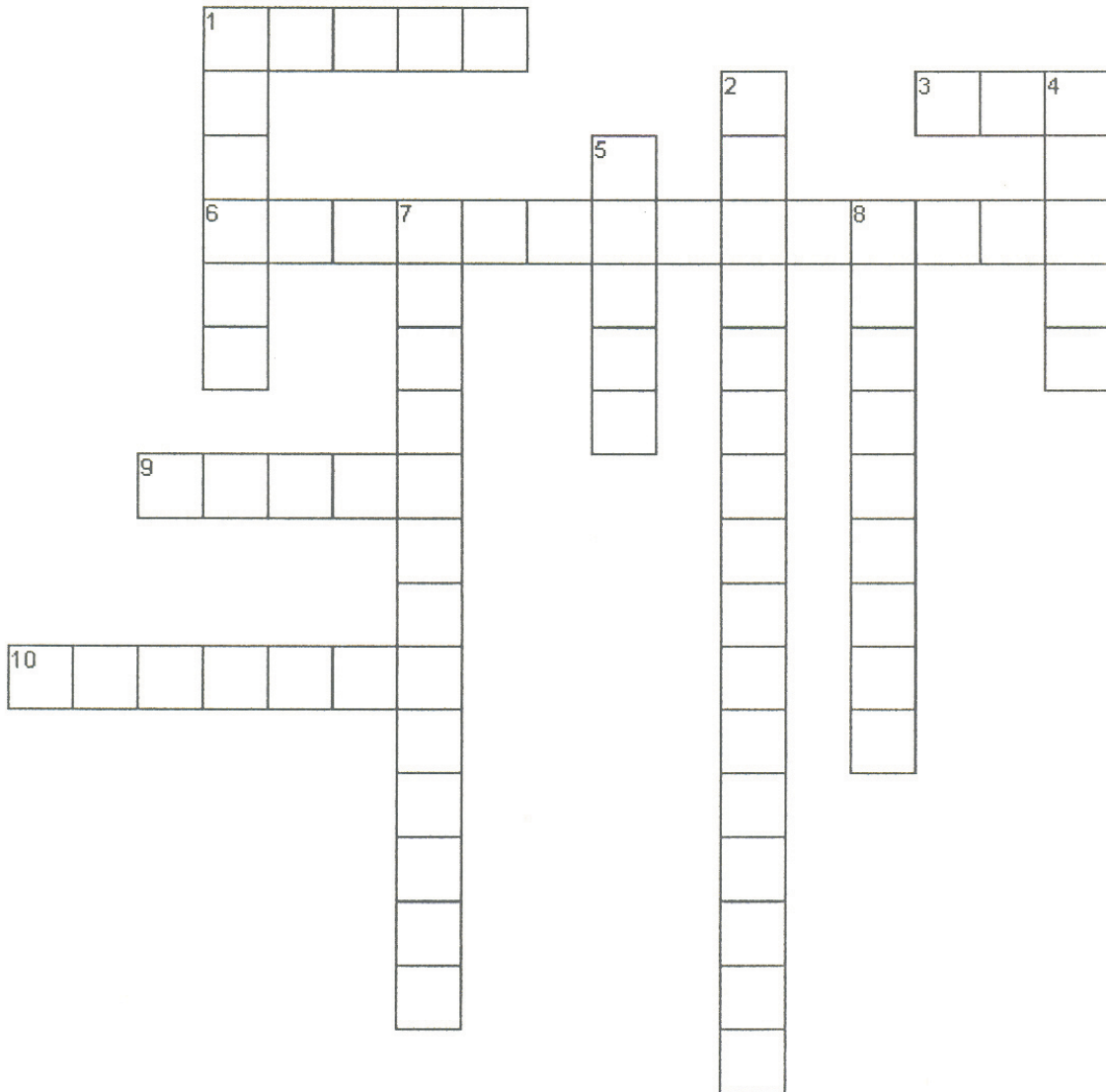
"Thank God you're safe!" Lehi and his wife Sariah cried when they saw their sons coming toward their camp in the wilderness. "You got the brass plates!" "Praise God! He has done everything He promised!" Lehi and his family were ready to be on their way to the new land. But God had one more mission for them before they could begin their journey...a trip back to Jerusalem. God did not want Lehi and his family to be lonely in the new land. "Go to the house of a man named Ishmael," God said. Nephi and his brothers traveled back to Jerusalem one last time. They went to Ishmael's house and told him everything the Lord had done. "I believe you," Ishmael said. "We will go with you to this new land God has promised." God knew that someday Nephi and his brothers would want to have families of their own. Lehi had a family of sons. Ishmael had a family of daughters. God had taken care of everything. The little group of people was ready to be on their way to the promised land.

It took awhile for Lehi and his family to do everything that God asked them to do. Sometimes it was hard. Sometimes things even went wrong. But God helped them do whatever He asked them to do. God kept all His promises. All because Lehi trusted God. You may never have to move to a new land like Lehi, but whatever you do in your life, God can guide you and care for you. You just have to trust and obey Him, just like Lehi.

For you older kids, you can find the answers to your crossword puzzle in the Book of Mormon verses at the top of the page.

—Marlene Oar

NEPHI STEPS OUT IN FAITH

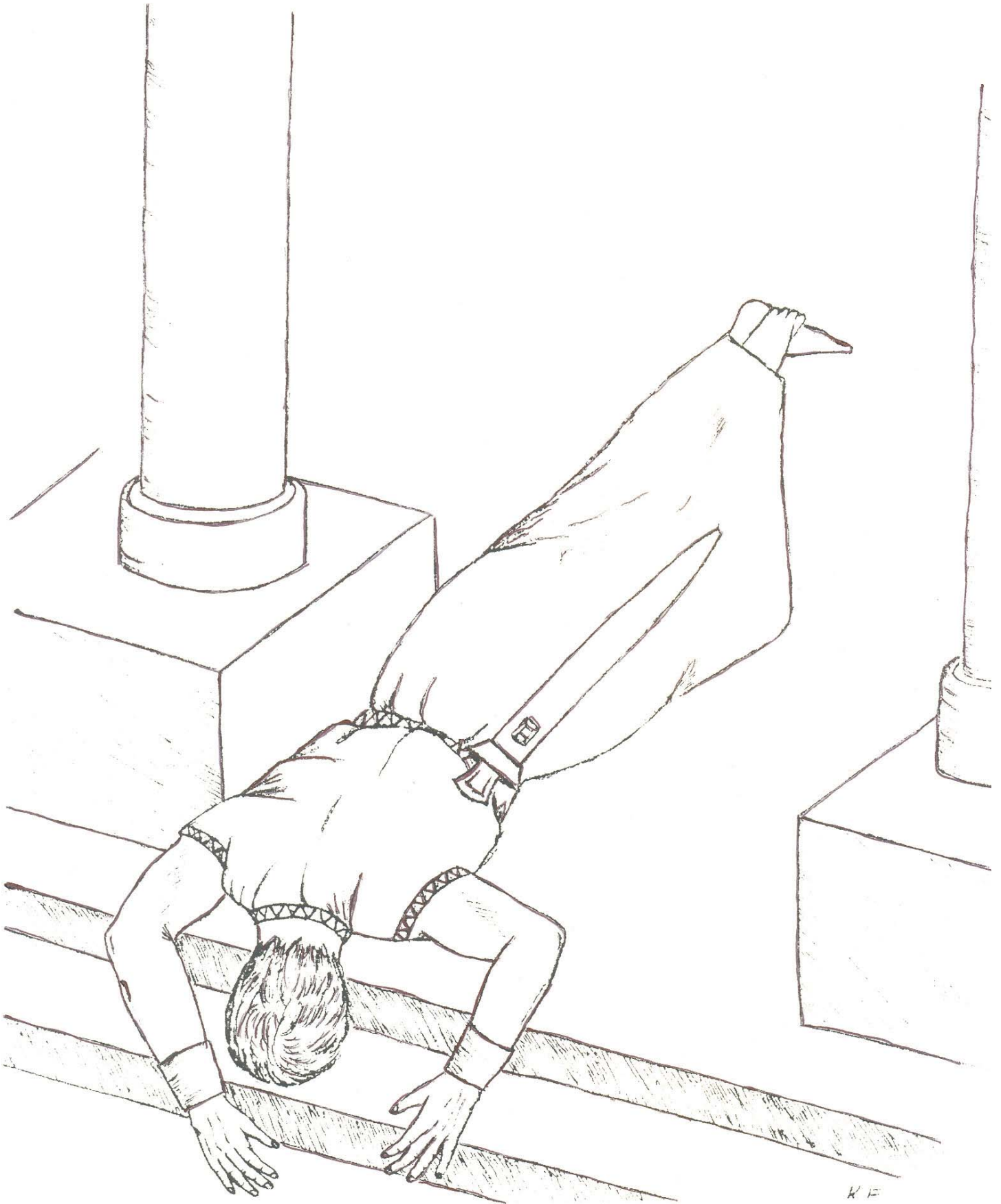


Across

1. WHAT DID NEPHI KILL LABAN WITH?
3. WHO KEPT ALL OF HIS PROMISES?
6. WHAT DID ZORAM PROMISE?
9. WHO DID HIS BROTHERS THINK NEPHI WAS?
10. WHO HAD A FAMILY OF DAUGHTERS?

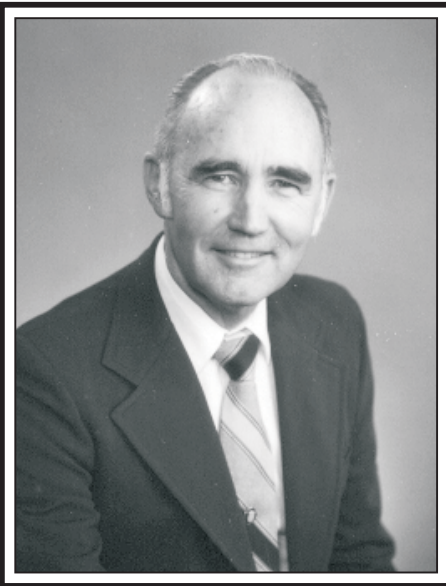
Down

1. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF NEPHI'S MOTHER?
2. NEPHI ORDERED ZORAM TO?
4. NEPHI FOUND LABAN ON THE GROUND -----.
5. WHO WAS LABAN'S SERVANT?
7. WHAT DID NEPHI PUT ON?
8. WHO DID ZORAM THINK NEPHI WAS?





THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST TO THE APOSTLE JOHN



By Apostle Don McIndoo

CHAPTER SIXTEEN (CONTINUED)

In verse 12 of chapter 16 we read of the coming, or perhaps the present, confrontation between the “**kings of the east**” and the western world. Verses 13 and 14 are most interesting and should be very important to our thought today.

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs

SECTION 21: THE SIXTH VIAL (CON'T)

come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

These verses speak of an evil spirit of deception that will affect the whole world in the end times, calling “**unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.**” Why are these spirits likened unto frogs? Because frogs, such as those in the plague sent upon Egypt, can be pervasively present throughout the world. Likewise, frogs are venomous; hence, this deception shall be deadly. From

...The Lord has opened the door for this gospel to be preached by His little restored church in those very nations where unrest, revolution and terrorism are rampant.

whence comes this deception? Verse 13 tells us that it proceeds from three sources:

a. From the mouth of the **dragon**. This refers to Satan, and he is deceiving the world, yes, especially the Christian world, with the enticements of false and pagan religions. In today's paper there was an explanation of the attraction of Buddhism to many in our nation: “**...the source of power for humans is within, not in some distant God, and**

there is no reliance on faith....”¹ Who would be a more likely author of such thought than Satan? It is he who is promoting the increased worldliness, violence and hatred that are so rampant throughout the world today.

b. From the mouth of the **beast**. This is Roman Catholicism and the Papacy. They are laboring with all their might against the inroads of evangelical Christianity. They would also deceive the nations with the enticement of the ecumenical movement, one united Christian church in the latter day. Does that ever sound familiar to a believer in the Book of Mormon! They sponsored the teachings that have led to the false doctrines of the “rapture” and the “Anti-christ” of the latter day, diverting the attention of millions from the beast described in Revelation 13.

c. From the mouth of the **false prophet**. This is the first mention of this individual. He is thought by many commentators to be Mohammed, the arch enemy of both Judaism and Christianity. Think of the numbers of former Christians that now proudly wear their new names of Islam. It is presently the fastest growing religion in our country. What think you, are not the radical Muslim forces in the Middle

East striving to bring both Israel and the world to the brink of war?

War! This was the very purpose behind the drying up of **“the great river, Euphrates”** (verse 12). It is the purpose of these three deceiving spirits at large in the world today. They go forth **“unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.”** When we think of warfare, our thoughts should not be altogether negative, for God has a purpose, in addition to the punishment of the wicked, in many, if not all, these vials that were to be poured out upon the world. Let’s consider one positive aspect of the wrath of God being poured out upon the world:

“And it came to pass that I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon the great and abominable church, inasmuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth, And as there began to be wars and rumors of wars among all the nations which belonged to the mother of abominations, the angel spake unto me, saying, Behold, the wrath of God is upon the mother of harlots; And behold, thou seest all these things; And when the day cometh that the wrath of God is poured out upon

the mother of harlots, which is the great and abominable church of all the earth, whose foundation is the devil, Then at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants which he hath made to his people, who are of the house of Israel” (1 Nephi 3:232-237).

The first step in fulfilling the covenant God has made with His people shall be that they hear the fullness of the Gospel preached and come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Do I find it strange that the Lord has opened the door for this gospel to be preached by His little restored church in those very nations where unrest, revolution and terrorism are rampant? No, I find it to be the beginning of the fulfillment of these very words of Nephi. The very next verse (238) in this vision of Nephi refers us to the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the Apostle John, the burden of this study. How it all fits together like “hand in glove.”

In verse fifteen John hears the words of Jesus Christ: **“Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”** This verse, falling where it does, almost seems out of context. But no, the Lord is here speaking to His people, telling them that the time of His coming is nigh. In

the midst of ominous warnings of deception, warfare and destruction come these encouraging words of the Lord to His people, "Be ready! Be prepared, and you shall be blessed." As He told His disciples, **"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh"** (Luke 21:28).

Now in verse sixteen we read, **"And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."** All history has been leading us to this moment. The nations of the world shall be gathered together to face the wrath of Almighty God. Jesus prophesied relative to that day, just prior to the establishment of the New Jerusalem and the gathering of Israel. **"And it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that the sword of my justice shall hang over them at that day; and except they repent, it shall fall upon them, saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles. And it shall come to pass that I will establish my people, O house of Israel"** (3 Nephi 9:56, 57).

Barnes points out the great variety of beliefs that exist about the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the Apostle John. He tells us that just concerning who shall gather the nations, one commentator says it refers to the "spirits," another says the "sixth angel," another says it is the "devil," yet another that it is Christ.² Although this

word, Armageddon, is found nowhere else in the Scripture, I believe it is referred to in several Old Testament prophecies. Let's consider the prophecy of Joel:

"For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land" (Joel 3:1, 2). We see clearly it is the Lord whose purpose it shall be to bring about this gathering of the nations. The very word, Armageddon, comes from the Hebrew *Har-Meggiddon*, which can be translated "hill of rendezvous."

Keener explains the term, valley of Jehoshaphat, like this: **"The Old Testament site of the end was the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:2, 12, 14), probably the strategic plain of Meggido in the valley of Jezreel and Esdraelon."**³ The purpose of that great rendezvous of the nations is clearly prophesied by Zephaniah:

"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indigna-

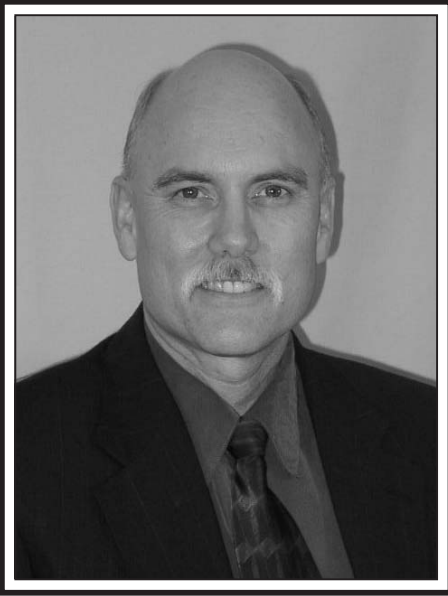
tion, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (Zephaniah 3:8, 9).

Let us be watching and ready!

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 2. Barnes, Albert, *Notes on the New Testament, Explanatory and Practical*, 1949, p. 373.
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Church History in Review



By Elder Gordon McCann

One of the most confusing things to a non-believer of the Book of Mormon is the reason why we need the Book of Mormon when we have the testimony of Jesus Christ in the Holy Bible. The following scripture from the Book of Mormon succinctly addresses the question as to why the necessity of the Book of Mormon:

August

Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; And that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, Unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, And bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; And also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord” (2 Ne 2:19-23).

Any casual student of God’s word would know that Jesus plainly taught, “*that in the mouth of two or three witnesses*

...Jesus plainly taught, “that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” The Book of Mormon is that added testimony that the Bible is the word of God.

every word may be established.” The Book of Mormon is that added testimony that the Bible is the word of God.

Another confusing thing to the non-believer is how the Book of Mormon came to be. God has provided sufficient testimony of individuals who have had a first hand knowledge of the source (the plates), and how the book was written, or in reality, translated. The following is a short account and testi-

mony of some of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon.

In the month of June, 1829, the translation had progressed to where the following scripture was read and considered by Joseph Smith, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris:

“Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it, save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book and the things therein. And there is none other which shall view it, save it be a few, according to the will of God, to bear testimony of his word unto the children of men: for the Lord God hath said, that the words of the faithful should speak as if it were from the dead. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to bring forth the words of the book; and in the mouth of as many witnesses as seemeth him good, will he

establish his word; and wo be unto him that rejecteth the word of God” (2 Ne 11:133-135).

It was determined by the afore-mentioned individuals that they would approach the Lord in earnest prayer concerning these witnesses that were mentioned in the above passage of scripture. While in prayer they beheld a light above them in the air and an angel stood before them. In his hands he held the plates that contained the engravings that were translated by the power of God, which became the Book of Mormon. The four heard a voice that came out from the bright light above them, saying, *“These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God; the translation of them which you have seen is correct, and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear.”*

In August of 1874 (forty three years later), a James Caffall of Council Bluffs, Iowa, visited David Whitmer and recorded the following: “Before I bade him good-bye, I said to him, ‘Can I, Brother Whitmer, say, I this day have seen a living witness to the Book of Mor-

mon?’ whereupon he raised his eyes heavenward, and said: ‘As my testimony stands, so it is; I have not, nor will I deny it” (Saints’ Herald, vol. 21, p. 564).

As prophecied in the Book of Mormon, God provided the three witnesses, besides Joseph Smith, who would see the plates with their own eyes, along with eight others who would handle the plates as well. The testimony of these three witnesses and the eight other witnesses can be found in the front pages of the Book of Mormon.

(Ref.: An Outline History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), chapter 4, pages 30 & 31; Book of Commandments, Chapter XII, page 24; History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints, Volume 1, Ninth Edition, chapter 4, pages 46, 47, 48, 54, & 55.)

Michigan Reunion Report

June 27 & 28th, 2003

Saturday, June 27th, was a beautiful morning as we gathered in to the Bradley Local for the 67th Michigan State Reunion. Elder Adam Porter welcomed us with the hope that we all came with an attitude of expecting something from the Lord. If we do, we shall receive. We sang, "Let Us Go to the House of the Lord," and the opening prayer followed, given by Br. Adam.

Elder Aaron Heath gave the morning's sermon. He began by asking if we will help build on the foundation of the true gospel preached by Christ. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost; we are not our own; we belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We must take care not to damage our bodies or our spirits so they may go back to God. We must love each other and prepare to meet God (John 15:12-14). When we give up, Satan has won (John 13:1). Are we glorifying God? Press forward feasting on the words of Christ and keep His commandments and ye shall abide in His love (John 15:9-10). Depart from evil; shun the very appearance of evil. Can you imagine how God feels when we don't want to be near Him? He is always there for us. Satan lulls us, tricks us and disguises things. Signs tell us it is the end time. There is no time for the foolishness of this world. We have to pull ourselves away from these things, and with God's help we can! Christ is our example.

Br. Aaron read Alma 6:174-187, 198-200, and asked us whether the Lord can use us if our hearts are hardened? Plant HIS word in your hearts and nourish by faith.... "IF YE WILL." The kingdom of the devil is also on the earth, built up among them that are in the flesh. We are told, "Love NOT the world... the world passeth away" (1 John 2:15-17). "Ye are the temple of God and the Spirit dwelleth within you, IF ye keep His commandments and be not of this world" (1 Corinthians 3:16-21). Ephesians 6:11-18 tells us to put on the whole armor of God. When we stand before the judgment bar how will we be able to justify our wrongs? His law is to be fulfilled, for the righteous shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

Br. Adam admonished us to consider what we have heard and to put it into action. After a song ("We Have An Anchor") he gave the prayer to close.

We gathered back into the sanctuary where Apostle Roland Sarratt welcomed us. After another song ("Unto God Who Knows Our Every Weakness"), he gave the opening prayer and then introduced Priest Bill Malone.

Br. Bill admonished us to have the question, "What would Jesus do?" in our hearts every day. Jesus has set the example for us. In Matthew we read of His baptism, because repentance and baptism are necessary. There are two churches only; if you do not belong to the Church of Christ, you are automatically in the other. The more we read and study in the word of God the easier it will be to put those things into use and follow His example. Jesus was tempted by the devil: "It is written" was His reply to Satan (referring to Old Testament scriptures). God will overcome Satan. Things that have been written are for our own learning and for us to apply them to our lives. Every day we can put into practice what Jesus said and did in our decisions, our prayers, through our adversities. Pray for strength and God will be there to help us overcome.

Examples are written by way of parables so we can know the mysteries of heaven, because others (those without the Spirit) see and understand not (Matthew 13:10). If we are not led by the Spirit, wrong understandings will be received. Knowledge and understanding come only from God.

We need to be a meek and humble people who recognize their own weaknesses and who know they need God to be with them to overcome (Matthew 5:3). "Not everyone who saith 'Lord, Lord' will enter my Kingdom...but ye who DO the will of the Father..." (Matthew 7:21). Correct those things that are amiss; don't leave anything undone. He'll give us the strength to overcome.

In recalling the experiences Jesus had we can learn how to deal with others. We need to be gentle and deal with others as He would

have us do, in love. We have a tremendous responsibility because of what we have been given. We must use it well and remember the examples of Jesus.

After a song ("Wonderful Words of Life") and the closing prayer offered by Br. Roland, we were excused for the lunch hour.

After enjoying a noontime meal and time of fellowship with our brothers and sisters we gathered for a song service. There were several administrations that took place. Elder Aaron Heath opened the service with prayer. Much joyful noise was lifted up as many offered their gifts and talents in praise unto the Lord. We closed with song ("Holy, Holy, Holy") and Priest Alan Scott offered prayer.

Br. Adam opened the afternoon service with prayer after the song, "With a Steadfast Faith." Brothers Bill Malone and Apostle Roland Sarratt were then introduced to give us a Missionary Report, followed by Br. Roland's sermon.

Br. Bill told us of a trip he took to Mexico in May with Apostle Don McIndoo. They were blessed to have some tracts written in Spanish to pass out to the people there, who desperately need more ministry.

Br. Roland expressed his feeling that the Lord is working with us to be more of a missionary church than in the past. Apostles Buzz Brickhouse and Brian McIndoo are scheduled to go to Africa once again, this time to Nigeria. Apostles Frank Fann and Mike McGhee will be going to the Philippines soon. It has been a help with the men taking their wives along with them a few times, as they have also been able to reach others. This is a time of trial for us; we have to consider His plan and His work. Satan will thwart the work whenever he can.

Br. Roland then asked a question...what do we have that we can take with us when we leave this life? It is LOVE, the love of God, the love of others, our righteous virtues, our attributes and our knowledge.

Br. Roland used Ephesians 4:11 to explain that we should be tossed to and fro no more; we should be stable on His doctrine. Be an-

chored in the truth. God has a purpose in this church; we must have drive, selflessness and the Spirit of God. Embrace these things fully in the unity of faith, as we must prepare His bride. Knowledge comes precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little. The knowledge of the Lord shall counter all that is contrary to it. We are to seek the truth, pray for the truth and increase our knowledge.

We have a right to judge—by their fruits ye shall know them. Judge good from evil by the attitudes people exhibit. Our job is to take the Gospel to the world; God's job is to judge. We have to judge our own behavior and attitude, however, to perfect ourselves.

Carrying something so valuable to others is quite a privilege and quite a responsibility. We need to demonstrate the truth of the Gospel in our lives and look forward to greater evidences of God's hand. He admonished us to go to the Lord when we lack wisdom. Work for the unity of the faith, support each other, and study to show ourselves approved of God.

During the afternoon service we heard thunder and heavy rain at times. So there was no surprise when it was announced that the picnic at Gun Lake was moved to the church dining hall! The service was closed with song ("Give Of Your Best To The Master") and a prayer given by Br. Adam. Afterward we enjoyed a nice indoor picnic in the dining hall.

The Sunday, June 28th, Sacrament Service began as a cool dreary day with occasional sprinkles. We did not let it dampen our spirits as we gathered into the house of the Lord once again.

Elder Adam Porter welcomed us to the service to reunite with our Lord in communion. We felt the sweet Spirit as we opened with the song, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," and Br. Adam gave us the opening prayer. Elder Aaron Heath gave us a special, singing "Breathe on me Breath of God."

Apostle Roland Sarratt then gave us a few words from John 3:5-6, 14-17; John 6:31-35, 53-58; Moroni 4:1. In 3rd Nephi 8:32-33, 39, scripture admonishes us that partaking (and providing) brings forth the blessings of God as long as we remember Jesus Christ.

The emblems of our Lord's flesh and blood were then blessed and served in "holy quietness." Many names were lifted up as we went into a season of prayer unto our Heavenly Father. There were many wonderful testimonies of our Father's goodness and blessings showered upon us. It was a wonderful Spirit-filled service in which our hearts were lifted and strengthened by the outpouring of love from

our Heavenly Father and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Truly the Spirit of God was present! Our service was closed with the song, "Lord, Dismiss Us," and Br. Adam offered closing prayer.

We then enjoyed another wonderful meal provided by the Bradley Local. We also enjoyed the blessed fellowship of our church family as we relished in the blessings bestowed upon us all, including the blessing of fair skies and sunshine!

Br. Adam opened our afternoon song service; the opening song was "There Shall Be Showers of Blessing," and he offered the opening prayer. We felt very blessed as many voices were lifted up in praise unto our Heavenly Father. We especially enjoyed hearing, "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" sung by our ministry present.

Br. Aaron Heath made a few announcements: Next year's Michigan Reunion will be hosted by the Ravenna Local on June 26 & 27, 2004. Also, a Pig Roast is planned by the Porters once again to take place at Spring Park in Middleville on Saturday, September 20th of this year. Thanks were given unto God for all our blessings of this day, and for the efforts of all the various reunion committees.

The afternoon preaching service followed immediately with the singing of "When Earth in Bondage" and opening prayer given by Br. Aaron. We were then blessed with a sermon preached by Elder Adam Porter.

Br. Adam admonished us that we are not to contend with others, but to teach. The responsibility is great, the laborers few, and the time is short. We need every available man to preach, people to witness and work. . .to whom much is given, much is required.

Using Rev. 19:7-9, Br. Adam explained that our example is very important. We need to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, as God will purify a peculiar people zealous of good works, desiring to do God's will and desiring to please Him (Titus 2: 11-15).

Referring to the parable of the tares, Br. Adam admonished us that we need to be different; we should not blend in with the tares. We should not love the world, neither the things of this world (1 John 2: 15-17). The closer we come to God, the easier it is to discern what is good and what is evil. All that is in the world is lust, and he that doeth the will of the Father liveth forever. Be not conformed to the world, but be transformed (Romans 12). Do not blend in with the tares, nor their ways. We must keep worldly things out of the church, not just look the other way.

3 Nephi 8:51-52 says Satan desireth to have you that he may sift you as wheat. We must pray for that which is right, and ye shall receive. Pray you are strong enough to receive it. Pray for our families, and pray always unto the Father in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Br. Adam referred to 1 Nephi 4:16-33 where scripture tells us there is a mighty work to be done yet. He urged us to be a "useable" material. He also read 3 Nephi 7:31-40.

Using 3 Nephi 9:85-93, Br. Adam admonished us that God WILL gather in His people to His Zion, the land of their inheritance established in this Promised Land. These things are coming to pass in our time, things that were prophesied about 2000 years ago.

God has a plan for His church. In 3 Nephi 10:1-4, scripture tells us "They shall build up a city, a New Jerusalem." God's hand is at work.

Remember, in Moroni 10:4-7, it tells us to ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, and He will manifest the truth of it unto you.

In closing, he mentioned that each and every one of you makes this reunion. He gave his thanks to everyone who worked so hard.

Br. Aaron added his reference to 1 John 1:6 and reminded us that we can't juggle the things of this world and still be spiritual; if you think so, you are being deceived. We used, "Are You Witnessing For Him?" as our closing song, and Br. Aaron gave the closing prayer of the reunion.

We do give all thanks and praise to God for the blessings He has bestowed upon us. We were greatly blessed with His Spirit in attendance as we feasted upon His words and in His love.

*In Christian Love,
Your Reunion Reporter,
Sr: Deb Haines*

COLLINS, MISSOURI

Greetings from the Collins Local. We're all well here and, as Jack Martin says, "able to take nourishment!" The heat and humidity has become something close to oppressive. It's already 71 degrees and only 6:00 A.M. It was 101 degrees yesterday afternoon while we were picking up rocks—Allen has another yard project he's working on—supposing we survive! He has decided to pour a cement front porch, which requires taking up the wood deck we've been using for almost four years. And since nothing on this hill is level we will need to fill a portion of the porch area with rock and gravel before the concrete truck gets here—hence, the rock gathering in 100 degree weather. Thankfully we had two willing grandchildren come and help us (Sheala and Aaron Herd). Wish we were done, but we still have two or three more loads of rock to pick up. Oh, when you come to visit—use the BACK door!

About the middle of May I got to go on a trip with my oldest sister, Melva, to visit our youngest sister, LaVange, in Montana. Melva's husband died last October and after she got through her obligations as a tax consultant, bookkeeper, etc., she wanted to get away for awhile. She loves the mountains so we drove through and over all we could on the way to and from Montana. It was nice to travel at leisure with no schedule to meet and get to visit with Vangie and her husband, Steve, and their family. I've got to admit though, of all the beautiful scenery and wonders we encountered, the best of all was that old rocky hill in Collins and my own driveway! It was good to be home again!

Jack and Betty Martin recently took a trip with their son Andy and wife, Sharon, to Gatlinburg, Tennessee. They were the guests of their oldest son, Mike and wife,

Shari, at a nice condo where they enjoyed a good visit with Mike and Shari's family. Betty said she got to see seven of their great grandchildren. On their way home they drove to Marietta, Georgia, where they used to live when Jack worked for Lockheed Aircraft Corp.—a walk (drive) down memory lane! I heard Betty say today at church that it was a wonderful trip and she enjoyed it so very much.

On July 4th, Independence Day, we had a small reunion at our house (before Allen ripped the front porch off!) with Allen's two sisters, their families and our families, along with one uncle and aunt from nearby Humansville. The silly thing is—we don't live far away from each other, we simply don't TAKE the time to get together. (I think there is a lesson to be learned there somewhere.)

My little Aunt Normie (Cook) is getting along very well at Big Spring Care Center in Humansville. Her daughter, Donna, sees her almost every day and takes her out for drives and such. She enjoys getting out and loves company and getting cards. Ella Ingle from Houston, Missouri, writes to her fairly often, and Aunt Norm really enjoys her notes of encouragement.

Marjory and R.C. Routh, Curtis and Margarite Yates and Allen and I attended the Springfield Rally in May. It was a wonderful full-day service of worship and preaching from three fine young men—Donald Gill, Scott Harris and their pastor, Matt Case. I'm so thankful we got to be there and partake of that wonderful Spirit. I wish I had words to explain how I felt—perhaps you know.

I have a few sermon quotes to share with you:

- *Do people see you as different, or will you be like everyone else???*

Let's make ourselves aware of what kind of person we ought to be.

- *It behooves us all to travel life's road with our conscience up front.*
- *Do you think God wants us to be "comfortable"?*
- *Christians, you have to PRACTICE being Christians!*
- *God could have MADE us love Him, but He ASKED us to love Him.*
- *Life's what happens when we're making other plans.*
- *I have a "HOPE."*
- *Sometimes death is the consequence of life.*
- *Don't do it because you fear what will happen to you, but do it because you love.*
- *There is no peace in the world, but if you want peace while you are in the world—it is through Jesus Christ.*
- *When it is plainly given—plainly believe.*
- *If I'm not showing the "right," it doesn't matter what I'm pointing out as wrong.*
- *How will you know God if you don't go fishing with Him? Is He a part of your life that you take Him where you go?*

*Your reporter and friend,
Czerna Kauffman*

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

RAVENNA, MICHIGAN

The first week of April found Elder Aaron Heath, Sr. Vivian Spencer, Br. Bruce Haines, Sr. Deb Haines, Elder Adam and Sr. Sue Porter, and your reporter traveling to Independence to attend Conference. The Conference business session was probably one of the shortest on record, which allowed us the opportunity of enjoying some wonderful sermons. The Haineses stayed over a few extra days to visit and do some much needed work at their Norton Street home.

May 10-15 Br. Bruce and Sr. Deb Haines made another trip back to Independence to visit their daughter Jenni and do some more work on their home.

May 25 we had a surprise visit from Elder Charles and Sr. Jeanne Brantner and, as usual, Br. Brantner was pressed into service to deliver the sermon.

June 2-9 Br. Bruce and Sr. Deb Haines again took off for what is turning out to be practically a monthly trek to Independence.

Once again, on the weekend of June 28-29 the annual Michigan State Reunion was held at the Bradley Local. We were blessed to have Apostle Roland Sarratt from Independence and Br. Bill and Sr. Karen Malone from Phoenix present to enjoy with us the many wonderful services planned for the reunion. The "Bradley Bunch," as usual, did a "yeoman's" job of hosting the reunion. The Ravenna Local, in order to take some of the pressure off the Bradley Local, has volunteered to host the 2004 State Reunion.

Following the reunion, Br. Bruce and Sr. Deb Haines, together with your reporter, made another trip to Independence. We experienced some extremely hot Missouri weather, making it almost impossible to do any yard work. However, we were able to meet with the folks in Inde-

pendence for some very good services (Wednesday night prayer meeting, Sunday sacrament, and Monday night scripture study), which made the trip well worthwhile.

July 19, Sr. Noni (Adams) Onstott and your reporter drove to Birch Run to witness the baptism of Lloyd Opper, husband of Sr. Nita (Adams) Opper, who also is Sr. Onstott's real sister. Elder Ed Toulouse performed the ordinance. Much to the surprise of everyone present, as Br. Lloyd emerged from the water his daughter, Carol Doyle, entered the water and was also baptized. Carol had apparently been thinking about and wanting to be baptized for some time, and when she made the final decision she kept the secret from everyone except Brother Toulouse. It was a happy occasion for all of us, and especially for her parents. Elder Adam Porter assisted Brother Toulouse in the confirmation. Following this joyful occasion, we enjoyed a delicious luncheon served by Brother and Sister Opper at their home. We ask that you keep this new brother and sister in your prayers that they may continue to allow themselves to be led through-out their lives by the Spirit of our Lord and Savior.

The weekend of July 19-20, our pastor, Elder Aaron Heath, accompanied by his mother, Sr. Lois Heath, traveled to Wisconsin to minister to and fellowship with the saints there. The little flock at Ravenna was not left without a shepherd, however, as Elder Lavern Lussenden, from Bradley, together with Sr. Joyce Lussenden, stepped in to bring us a very special, thought-provoking message from Matthew 24 on the destruction of the temple and signs of the coming of the Son of Man and the end of the world. The sermon fit in very nicely with our Sunday School class in which we

are studying the six principles of the gospel (this week we touched on the subject of eternal judgement). We also enjoyed having with us from Bradley the Ted and Carol Lee family.

Keep us in your prayers that we might remain firm and steadfast and continue to grow in our faith. We are looking forward to the going forth of the gospel to "every nation." It is our desire to be a part of God's great plan.

*Your sister in Christ,
June Haines,
Reporter, Ravenna Local*

PHOENIX REUNION

The Phoenix, Arizona Local would like to extend an invitation to join them for their annual Church of Christ reunion, which will be held on Friday, **November 28**, through Sunday, **November 30**, 2003. If you plan to attend please notify one of the below listed members for accommodations.

Pastor:

Bob Hedrick
2908 E. Rockwood
Phoenix, AZ 85050
(602) 494-9661
bobnliza@juno.com

Assistant Pastors:

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Jim Yates, Jr.
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The **2003 Ministers' Conference** (priesthood membership) of the Church of Christ will be held Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 4, 5 and 6, at Independence, Missouri.

The **2004 Ministers' Conference** (general membership) for the Church of Christ will commence Sunday, April 4. The business sessions will start at 9:00 A.M. Monday, April 5. A **Solemn Assembly** will be held prior to the conference, on April 2 & 3. All services will be held on the Temple Lot.

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	Synopsis, A (Compares beliefs of three Restoration churches)
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