

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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How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! —Isaiah 52:7



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 To promote His Teachings and His Church, the Church of Christ;

To be a voice of warning to His people; to be Zion's advocate.

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EDITORIAL

Searching for, then retaining, the

TRUTH

By Elder Robert Dewaele

I've been considering the topic of "truth" on a frequent basis for quite some time, now.

It is increasingly clear to me that the truth is something one must never take for granted. In this article, I hope to explore how one can evaluate whether the truth exists in our daily encounters with the outside world, and also in our personal and spiritual-based relationships.

It is very disturbing for me to see the definition of truth become so degraded and diluted in our modern society. The declination of truth has been a long and steady process which has its roots in the earliest recorded scriptures. It is not a great leap to realize that this process is occurring at a nearly blinding pace today, with the advent of social media and other forms of instant communication. We need to be ever more vigilant in divining what is actually true and what is false.

Truth is the conformity to fact or actuality. Truth can be proven and should be adhered to. The absence of truth in a given situation should

be a clear warning that one is about to make some possibly grave mistake if we fall in with what is being presented in such a situation. It is easy for people to create their own version of the truth when they believe it is expedient to go along with whatever is popular at the time. If something is proven to be untruthful, or a lie, we must fall back on the scriptures to give us the confidence we need to resist those who are being untruthful, or are lying.

The application of what has become considered to be the truth is, in many instances, a collection of selected beliefs which promotes or glorifies the individual or a group of people. This modern application of what passes for the truth does not glorify God in all too many instances. Truth stands the test of time because it is of God and not of Satan.

Ether very directly addresses what I'm trying to explain here. In Ether 3:100:

"And it bringeth to pass the destruction of all people, for it is built up by the devil, which is the father of all lies; even that

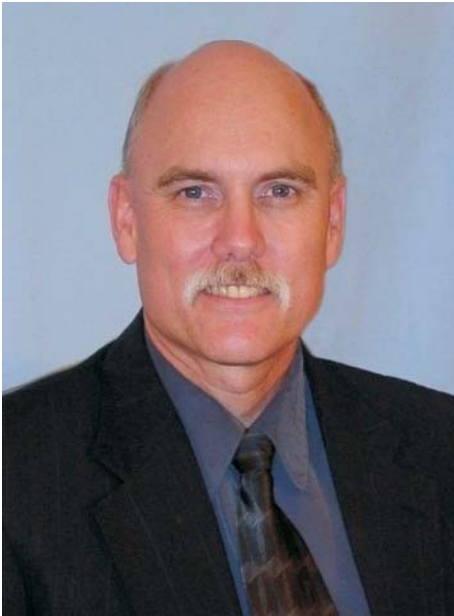
same liar which beguiled our first parents;"

A further explanation can be found in John 8:44:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

These scriptures amplify the absolute need which each of us has in being able to reliably discern what is true and what is not. When we communicate something which is not totally true, we are disavowing the plain and precious things which we have been taught, in favor of taking a possibly easier road of not owning up to what we know is correct. This is never the correct decision to make. We cannot go wrong in telling the truth at all times. It is what is expected of each one of us!

FILLED with DESIRE



By Elder Gordon McCann

“Delight thyself also in the LORD: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart” (Psalms 37:4).

I recently preached a sermon in Phoenix on the subject of being filled with desire and the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. You might think it odd to bring the two subjects together, but I hope that once you have digested my thoughts you will be able to see that they do, and much more.

My curiosity got the better of me, so I searched the internet to see what other people had posted concerning

their testimonies of the Book of Mormon. I came across a man named Greg Trimble who provided his testimony, which included an eleven point list of reasons why he believed that the Book of Mormon was of God. Greg’s title was, *So...You Think The Book of Mormon is a Fraud* (Greg notes that he is a Mormon, and you can find his blog at: <https://www.gregtrimble.com/so-you-think-the-book-of-mormon-is-a-fraud/>). I will list the points that Greg made and provide input as needed as an “Editor’s Note.” Then, at the end of the list of points I will put my thoughts together, focusing on the promise from God contained in the above-quoted scripture in the book of Psalms.

Greg starts out, “If you’re ever having doubts about the Restoration or about Joseph Smith, just read the Book of Mormon and ask yourself these 11 questions:”

1 Could an uneducated boy come up with 531 pages of ancient scripture on his own that was historically accurate and prophetic in nature?

Editor’s Note: Joseph Smith, Jr. was 24 years old when the Church of Christ was restored

in April, 1830.

2 Would it be possible for that boy to understand and include ancient Hebrew literary writing styles such as idioms and Chiasmus, some of which weren’t even discovered until long after Joseph Smith was gone?

Editor’s Note: Chiasmus in the United States was not known until Nils W. Lund published articles on the subject; *The Presence of Chiasmus in the Old Testament*, American Journal for Semitic Languages 46, 1929-30.

3 How would Joseph Smith have been able to know so much about the Middle East, especially the Arabian Peninsula where Lehi and his family traveled? The book includes findings in that region that no one had discovered yet.

Editor’s Note: Bertram Thomas of Britain was the first European to cross the desert Rub’ al Khali (Empty Quarter) in 1930 to 1931. In 1928 he was also the first to describe his Omani experiences while serving as a wazir (minister) in the Sultan’s court. He said of the mountains of Dhufar, “What a glorious place! Mountains 3,000 feet high basking above a tropical ocean, their seaward slopes velvety with waving

jungle, their roofs fragrant with yellow meadows.... A crowd of villagers came along with more milk. This is their staple diet with honey.... Two wide fig trees, as big and shady as good English walnuts, and bursting with apple-like fruit made inviting bivouacs." (Bertram Thomas, *Arabia Felix Across the Empty Quarter of Arabia*, Charles Scribners & Sons, New York, 1932, pages 48-78). Nephi's description of the land we understand to be the land of Dhufar: In the record found in 1 Nephi 5:62-67 Nephi describes the same area Bertram Thomas saw, which was unknown to the Western world at the time the Book of Mormon came forth in 1830: "we called the place Bountiful, because of its much fruit, and also wild honey...."

4 How could Joseph Smith come up with roughly 200 new names in the Book of Mormon and then have them turn out to be Semitic in nature?

Editor's Note: ref. Hebrew Names in the Book of Mormon, by John A. Tvedtnes; <https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/tvedtnes-HebrewNames.pdf>

5 If you think Joseph Smith couldn't have written this book, then where did it come from? If one says the devil put him up to it...then why would Satan want to publish another testament of Jesus Christ and a book that does

nothing but promote righteousness? Jesus said that a house divided against itself would fall.

Editor's Note: Matthew 12:24-30.

6 Who were the "other sheep" that would hear Jesus' voice in John 10:16?

Editor's Note: "And verily, I say unto you, that ye are they of which I said, Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. ...And verily, verily, I say unto you, that I have other sheep, which are not of this land; neither of the land of Jerusalem; neither in any parts of that land round about, whither I have been to minister" 3 Nephi 7:20, 24.

7 Why are there volumes of books written by non-LDS authors stating that Christ came and visited the Americas a couple thousand years ago, just like it says in 3rd Nephi? (See Example, *He Walked the Americas*). How would Joseph Smith have known this when at the time no one even considered it?

Editor's Note: L. Taylor Hansen, *He Walked the Americas*, Amherst Press, Amherst, Wisconsin, 1963.

8 If we have the stick of Judah (record of the Jews, or the Bible), then where is the stick of Joseph that is referenced in Ezekiel 37:15-20? The Book of Mormon is the only explanation for this scripture. Lehi was a descendant of Jo-

seph. Think Joseph Smith could have gotten that right by sheer chance?

Editor's Note: "And Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the son of Lehi, who came out of the land of Jerusalem, who was a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph, which was sold into Egypt by the hands of his brethren" Alma 8:3.

9 How could there be so many witnesses of the Book of Mormon and the plates, and not one of them deny their testimony, even when some of them became bitter toward Joseph Smith? With so many people involved...a hoax of this magnitude could never go uncovered.

Editor's Note: This is in reference to the testimonies of the 3 witnesses and also the 8 witnesses that are recorded in the front of the Book of Mormon. A prophecy was also recorded concerning the witnesses, as found in 2 Nephi 11:133: "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."

10 How could the Book of Mormon never contradict itself while being an extremely complex book? After

all these years...someone would have found something...but no?

Editor's Note: To prove this statement, one must give the book a very lengthy and in-depth study, of which the detractors are not willing to give.

11 And the most important question to ask yourself is, "How do I feel while I read the Book of Mormon?"

Editor's Note: *"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, and he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things"* Moroni 10:4-5.

I found that these eleven points were very good. They show that Greg had read the Book of Mormon, and that he had done what Moroni had exhorted all who would read the book to do "...that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true." I also believe that according to the promise "...if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, and he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost." Greg received his answer that the

Book of Mormon was truly of God and not of the man, Joseph Smith. I can add to that thought with my testimony that Moroni's final conclusion is true: *"and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things."*

However, Greg did not continue in Christ's words, where he would understand that Jesus Christ did not teach that there is to be a President at the head of His church that would be above His chosen apostles (1 Corinthians 12:27-28; Ephesians 2:20-22, 4:11-13; Moroni 2:1, 6:2; Mormon 4:80-82). Jesus Christ did not teach the concept of "baptism for the dead" (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; John 9:4; Acts 2:38-39; Alma 16:230; Moroni 8:11-29) or "eternal marriage" (Genesis 2:23-24; Matthew 19:4-9; Mark 12:23-25; Luke 20:33-35; 4 Nephi 1:12-13). The facts are that these supposed teachings of Jesus Christ are neither taught nor supported in the Bible or the Book of Mormon, except by condemnation of such practices.

Let me try to help clarify my point by first quoting the words of Christ found in John 8:31-32:

"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."

These words that Jesus spoke provide a guide to all professed believers in Jesus Christ. A believer must continue to seek the complete truth contained in the words of Christ if he or she desires to become a true disciple. As a believer in Christ walks down that path, allowing the Holy Ghost to confirm all the words of Christ, they will come to understand and see the truth of what Jesus Christ taught in both records, the Bible and Book of Mormon.

There is a basic tenet that we, of the Church of Christ, endeavor to hold tight to and teach, which is:

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" Hebrews 13:8.

Therefore, if Jesus Christ does not change, Christ's church today must have the same name, doctrine, structure, and practices as the church had when Christ built it.

There is a blessing that Jesus Christ spoke of in 3 Nephi 5:48-49, where Christ emphasizes, *"more blessed are they which shall believe in your words"* speaking of the record found in the Book of Mormon:

"And again, more blessed are they which shall believe in your words, because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am.

“Yea, blessed are they which shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility, and be baptized; for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.”

There are two important points that need to be emphasized from the above-quoted words of Jesus Christ. The first, if we would allow ourselves to consider the testimonies of those found in the Book of Mormon to be true concerning Jesus Christ and what He taught we would be “more blessed.” The second, that through humility with a true desire to be a follower of Jesus Christ we would come to understand the need to be baptized in order to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost and the remission of our sins, thus becoming “more blessed.”

Before I begin to compare the testimonies of both books I want to quote from the Book of Mormon concerning its stated purpose as to why God brought it forth.

“And the angel spake unto me, saying, These last records which thou hast seen among the Gentiles shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them;” (1 Nephi 3:192.

To help bring clarity to the statement, “which have been taken away from them” I want to provide an example by comparing the following words of Jesus Christ; first from the Bible:

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” Matthew 5:6.

Now, the same words of Christ as found recorded in the Book of Mormon:

“And blessed are all they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost” 3 Nephi 5:53.

You can quickly see that the Bible had not included the words, “with the Holy Ghost.” One can read the Bible commentaries of Matthew Henry, Albert Barnes, or John Gill where they dance all around the subject but never hit the mark. Jesus Christ provided us the example found in the Bible when He was baptized by John, by saying, “for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness” (Matthew 3:14-17). That if Christ who was “without spot” (1 Peter 1:19) had need to be baptized to fulfill the will of His Father in all things, “how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water” (2 Nephi 13:7-11).

The words that Jesus spoke, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, “for they

shall be filled with the Holy Ghost,” provide a complete thought that included the promise to those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness,” that they could be filled with the Holy Ghost. This is what the angel was referring to when speaking to Nephi, “and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them.”

There are many more examples that I could rehearse, but I believe I have provided enough to, hopefully, spark the desire within you to continue in the words of Jesus Christ. I invite all who have an opportunity to read this article and have doubts concerning the Book of Mormon to try the experiment found in the book. May God bless you in your pursuit of the truth!

“Now I Moroni, ... would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, ... that you would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost;” Moroni 10:1-10.

BIBLICAL CITIES WHERE CHRISTIANS LIVED

THESSALONICA AND BEREIA

BIBLE CITIES WHERE CHRISTIANS LIVED



By Apostle Don McIndoo

In the year 315 B.C. when the Greek empire dominated the known world, the city of Thessalonica was founded by King Cassander. He named it after his wife, Thessalonike. The name implies "victory" in the Greek language. It was a city built on a harbor in the Aegean Sea. The city grew rapidly and became famous as a trade center.

After Macedonia fell to the Roman armies in 166 B.C. the city's name was changed to the Latin, Thessalonica. It remained so to the time when Paul was making his second missionary trip with Silas and Timothy. On this journey they traveled in Macedonia and Greece.

In the year A.D. 50, after being forced to leave Philippi, Paul and his two companions, Silas and Timothy, traveled about 100 miles southwest

of Philippi to the city of Thessalonica. In this large city were many Jews, and they had a large synagogue where they met.

The Apostle Paul did as he was accustomed to doing, and for three consecutive weeks he met with them on the Sabbath and taught them about Jesus Christ and His teachings. A number of the Jews and Greeks who heard his message came to believe in Christ and His Gospel, as did also a number of the leading women of the city. Let's read Acts 17:4:

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

However, those Jews who did not accept Paul's teachings became furious at both, the missionaries and those of their number who had accepted the teachings about Jesus and His gospel. The Jews gathered together a group of worldly and violent men who set the entire city into an uproar. They were directed to the home of Jason, one of the believers who had taken in the disciples.

When they did not find them in Jason's home, they brought him before the city magistrates and made accusations against Jason and his companions. Now in Acts 17 verse 9, we read:

And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

Jason and his brethren, now believers, brought the three missionaries together at night and sent

them on their way. They traveled several miles southward to the town of Berea. Here there was another Jewish synagogue. God blessed His servants, and they found a better situation than in Thessalonica. In Acts 17:11, 12 we read the following:

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

Now when the irate Jews in Thessalonica heard Paul was in Berea preaching the Word, they went down to Berea and stirred up the people against him. Good believers of Berea conducted him all the way south to Athens. Paul asked these men to tell Silas and Timothy to come meet him in Corinth.

When the three missionaries were together once more the Apostle Paul sent his young companion, Timothy, back to Thessalonica. He was to study the group of believers closely and report to the apostle their dedication and diligence in serving the Lord. The apostles were very pleased with the report given to them by Timothy in 1 Thessalonians 3:6-8:

But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you: There-

fore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

After the receipt of this report is when Apostle Paul wrote the letter of 1 Thessalonians and sent it to the brethren there in Thessalonica. That was probably in A.D. 51 or 52. It was undoubtedly one of the New Testament books to be written. The apostle told them of their great joy in their perseverance in the faith. He also gave them (and to us as well) instructions about correct Christian living:

For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit. But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing (1 Thessalonians 4:7-12).

It is very possible that Paul was told that a few of the elderly believers had passed away, and their descendants were worried about their future, so the Apostle Paul responds to this in Chapter 4, verses 13-17:

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. 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 remain 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.

In the fifth chapter of his first letter the apostle writes about the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He ends those words with the admonition we find in verse eight:

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

The second letter of Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians was written just a few months after his first letter. It was revealed to the apostle that false teachers were saying that the day of Christ's return was at hand. So the apostle felt the need to respond and to tell the believers of those things that will take place before the Lord returns. Let's read 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2, verses 1-5:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth

and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

We in the Restoration know that "falling away" is speaking of the apostasy of Christ's true church. The "man of sin" spoken of by the apostle refers to the Pope of the Catholic Church. The Apostle Paul continues with a simple instruction which is just as applicable to us as it was to the believers of Thessalonica:

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work (2 Thessalonians 2:15-17).

We will close with a reasonable demand of the Apostle Paul that the saints should be active and continue in their labors:

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing (2 Thessalonians 3:10-13).

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The General Sunday School Association (GSSA) is providing portions of lessons for several age groups on a common topic. Please visit the Church of Christ's Audio Visual Aid (AVA) committee website at www.cocsermons.net and click on the "Resources" tab to view all complete lessons and studies for children and adults. Contact Susan Porter at: porter_susan@sbcglobal.net, or 9 Market Street, Middleville, MI 49333, for more information. The GSSA has a private Facebook group for all members. If you would like to be added contact Betsy Trudgen at trucooking@yahoo.com.



Parables

Joyce Lee
Bradley Michigan Local



Materials: Two treasure chests, fake jewels and coins, Bible and Book of Mormon, Beginner's Bible.

Scripture: Matthew 13: 44-46.

Preparation: Before the lesson, hide a treasure chest of toys/fake jewelry/pearls/money, and a treasure box with a Bible and Book of Mormon in it in the Sunday School Room.

Say opening prayer together: make sure that children are repeating what you say, and that they all say, "amen." Give praise and high-five to those who participate, and give them a sticker to put on the chart.

Review the meaning of a parable: A story with a different meaning, teaching us some religious truth or moral lesson.

Review the story, "The Lost Coin" and "The Lost Sheep" from the Beginner's Bible. If someone stops believing or going to church, Jesus/God/the Holy Spirit will keep trying to get that person back to believing and coming to church.

Read the story: "The Treasure and the Pearl" from the Beginner's Bible; or Matthew 13.

The man in the parable somehow stumbled across a treasure. He did not own the field where he found it, so maybe he was in the process of doing work for someone. He might have been planting or constructing some sort of building. Whatever he was doing, it must have been a wonderful surprise to find a treasure. The treasure might have been a clay jar full of money. People sometimes hid their money this way to keep it safe from thieves. If the person were to die without telling anyone where the money was buried, then who would ever know? This might have been the kind of treasure that the man in the parable found.

There was no doubt in the mind of this man that the treasure he found was worth everything he owned. The scripture said he joyfully sold everything he had so he could buy the field.

The meaning of the story: When we truly realize the worth of our salvation we will joyfully give up everything to serve God. Anything that we give up will be nothing in comparison to the treasure of God.

The man stumbled upon the treasure. Some people come to God that way. They might accept a friend's invitation to worship one day. Or, some situation (like an illness or the death of a loved one) might suddenly lead them to God. Other people might search for God for a long time. They know that there is something missing in their life, and they try to figure out how to fill the void. They may search the Scriptures or "try out" different types of faiths or churches. Finally, they find the truth and be-

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

come a Christian. This kind of searching is what happened to the merchant in the second parable.

Hidden Treasure Box: Inform students that there is hidden treasure box in the Sunday School room and, "let's see if we can find the treasure."

After looking at all the treasures inform students that there is another parable with the same meaning.

Continue reading pages 361-362. A merchant would be experienced in riches. He would constantly be looking for treasures so he could buy and sell them. The merchant in this parable probably already had a lot of wealth. When he found this one precious pearl he recognized its value. He was willing to sell everything he owned to buy this pearl.

Inform students that we are going to look for another treasure, the treasure of the pearl of great price. That box will have a Bible and Book of Mormon and a set of real pearls. Explain that these two books have the word of God for us to follow so we can make it to heaven, and they are worth more than all the gold, silver and pearls we can find because they help us to make it to heaven, which is the greatest treasure of all.

Discuss that they are precious jewels for God and Jesus. God loves the little children! You are more precious to Him than all the gold, silver, pearls, and other jewels.

Bring the collection box into the Sunday School room for them to put in their offering to the Lord.

Parables: Treasure and the Pearl, Part 2

Materials: Treasure box, coins, envelopes, printed pages with treasure chest, Bible, Book of Mormon and the Beginner's Bible.

Preparation: Before the lesson, hide a treasure box containing a Bible and Book of Mormon in the Sunday School Room, and place coins around the room.

Review the story: "The Treasure and the Pearl" and review the meaning of that story:

The treasure is Heaven and the pearl is God's Kingdom. Heaven is the real treasure and is perfect like the pearl; it is better than anything else in the world and is worth anything you might give up for it.

Give each child an envelope and have them write their name on it (you may help those who cannot write.)

Inform students that they are going to look around the room to find as many coins as they can and bring them back to the table. Each student will count how many coins they have (assist with those who need help). Ask whether this is the best treasure, or if Heaven is the best treasure (students will use these coins for collection later). Inform students that we are going to look for the treasure again, and it is hidden somewhere around the room. After the treasure is found and opened again, ask what the real treasure is...Heaven.

Ask students what they would give up for heaven: their toys, friends, favorite food? Show students the printed treasure box, "My treasure is..." and have them say what it is. Write their answer down. If it is not heaven, ask them if they will give that treasure up for Heaven. Bring the collection box into the Sunday School room for them to put the money into it. Say the closing prayer and clean up.

REPORT



Gathering Together "...but gather the wheat into my barn;" Matthew 13:30.

On Friday, October 20, 2017, many of the saints gathered together at the Brant-Norfolk church, located in Teeterville, Ontario, Canada. In attendance were 75 people, traveling from Arizona, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, New York and Kenya. Following a dinner and fellowship, we were blessed to have the word of the Lord delivered to us through Elder Moses Chuma from

Kenya. With passion, Moses stated the need know where our source of strength comes from. There are those without Christ, and their thinking is as wells without water. We need to continue in the faith and endure to the end.

Saturday morning started off with a prayer service led by Elder Gordon McCann, followed with a preaching service by Elder Michael Otero from Kenya. This sermon was titled, "Do Not Fear." Do not fear men, man's lies, slander of the Book of Mormon, and

mocking of us. 2nd Nephi 6:91 tells us to prepare your souls and not to shrink in fear. 2nd Peter 1:2 says that "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God..." 2nd Corinthians 12:9-10 states that God gives us strength to conquer our weaknesses: "for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Following lunch, Apostle Jay Moser preached about the Lord being king. Revelation 19:9, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." John, chapter 18:36-37, Jesus says



► Elder Michael Manyura Otero

that, *"My kingdom is not of this world;"* and that, *"Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."* In Jacob, the kingdom is created by the word of God. Revelation 11:15, *"the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."* The first book of Nephi, chapter 7:56-58, says that, *"he gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; he numbereth his sheep, and they know him; And there shall be one fold and one shepherd: . . ."*

Next, we enjoyed a song service with specials from Michael and Moses, the children, and each of the locals that were in attendance.

The last sermon on Saturday was delivered by Elder Moses Chuma. This sermon was about repentance and inheriting the kingdom of God. Luke, chapter 3, says that unless you repent, you will perish. First Nephi, chapter 4:58, states that nothing unclean can enter the kingdom of God. Second Nephi, chapter 6:42 tells us that those that are righteous and have endured the crosses of the world shall inherit the kingdom of God, and their joy shall be full forever.

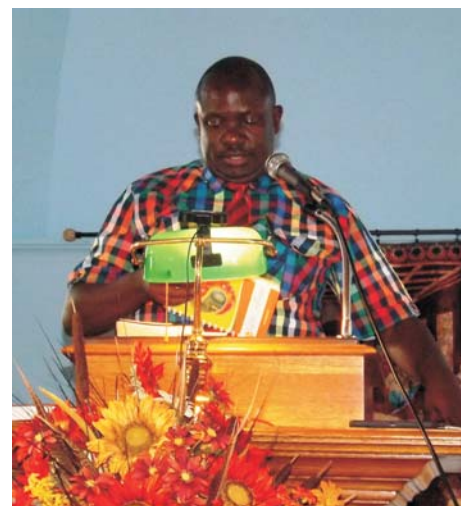
On Sunday morning, the saints gathered for a sacrament service where the Spirit was definitely with us; we were all feeling



► Special with Elders Michael and Moses

like our cup was full of joy for one another. There were many testimonies, which all were in accord with the theme of the reunion: Matthew 13:30: *" . . . but gather the wheat into my barn."* Testimony snippets include: comparison of a cell phone battery to needing a spiritual charge; labor with all thy might; bonds of true friendship; there is nowhere that I would rather be; and reunions are the best vacations ever!

Our final service of the reunion was preached by Elder Michael Otero regarding charity. If I don't have charity, I am nothing (1st Corinthians, chapter 13:1-3). Michael says, *"We take maize and cook it. We then give it to Brian McIndoo to eat. We have charity. We hug each other. Our love comes from Jesus Christ."* Alma 5:38-42 explains the need for faith, hope and charity. We need to take care of thy love with brothers and sisters. We need to use our charity. For example, Mike and Deb Bevaart have you stay in their house; someone you don't even resemble from another country and they love you and take care of you. Moroni 7:52 says to cleave unto charity because charity never fails. Things that we like to do can fail us, but charity doesn't fail. Michael says that he wants to be like Jesus Christ. From the Bible



► Elder Moses Ohuru Chuma

and Book of Mormon Michael knows that my God loves me and wants his children to know the love of God. Matthew 22:37; *"thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."* Moroni 10:15, we need faith, hope and charity in order to be saved in the kingdom of God.

Each of the sermons, testimonies and fellowship times fit the theme of gathering the wheat into God's barn. On Monday, several brothers and sisters gathered together for fellowship and visited Niagara Falls. Michael and Moses were amazed at this creation of God and truly enjoyed their visit to Canada, mainly because of the love of the brothers and sisters who were more than happy to show them charity.

*God Bless,
Sister Sue Porter*

PHOENIX LOCAL NEWS



Wow! I think the summer heat has finally decided to leave Arizona and Phoenix, for a little while at least! This was a record-breaking summer. Someone was so happy to see the heat leave that it was decided to have an evening service outside! It was nice, although I heard a few folks

mention they could smell someone cooking something that smelled very tasty.

The fall was busy as usual for the church. There was the cleanup day prior to Reunion – Dan and I were in Kansas City at the time; but, I should tell you that Sr. Bonnie E. managed to

wrangle me into helping the ladies do the twice yearly cleanup of the church kitchen there. I spent a couple of hours cleaning out that very old oven! I think almost every time we're there it's during the garage sale or kitchen cleanup!

The Cider Press raised a very



Evening Service



Reunion Special

nice \$1,200 for the young people. Congratulations to them and all who contributed. Maybe next year we can try for even more!!

Our Sr. Sasha Yates is hosting Bible studies at her home on certain Thursday evenings for the ladies. If you are interested in participating please contact her. We are still doing the Biblical Narratives, generally on Sunday evenings. Hopefully, you've all seen them on live stream. Anyone can participate, and if you are interested please see Sr. Michelle Yates. Everyone has done an amazing job.

Of course the Reunion came and went all too quickly. We had many friends and family attend,

while guest speakers included Elder Bob Hedrick, Apostle Placido Koyoc Matu and Elder Rich Bove.

We have been asked at our local to spend time in prayer concerning the physical expansion of our church. Do we have the real desire and the monetary backing to undergo this expansion? We have been asked to invite the ministry to our homes to study and discuss the Lord. Is this just a Phoenix Local issue? I doubt it. I'm sure many locals are facing issues with expansion or not, and trying to keep members active and engaged.

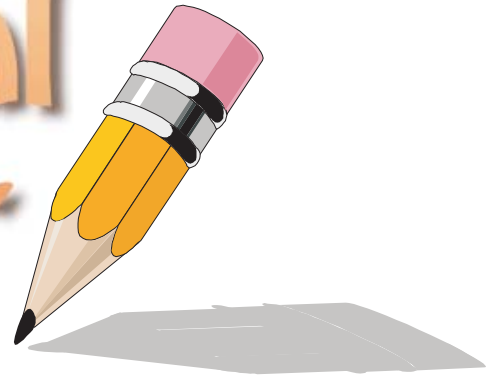
And finally, as usual, there are so many, many needs among us. I am not even going to mention

names. I think we are all aware of most of those who are in need of our prayers. I would like to ask that we might remember to think about those who don't always ask for help...those who think that "their" needs aren't important or "horrible" enough compared to those they hear about in church each week. I'm very sure that each and every one of us has something that we are dealing with.

I hope that each of you and your family have a blessed New Year.

DiAnn Hedrick

Temple Lot Local Report



Greetings from the Church of Christ, Temple Lot Local in Independence, Missouri. I've been a member of this local for twenty-six years. During the past few years I've had the necessity of being gone for a month at a time, and recently for extended months. When I returned in December for a short visit, I was hungry to worship at the local, to fellowship with my church family. I walked into the chapel, and I knew I'd come home.

While I was there I witnessed the baptism of a young woman, now a sister in Christ, who had worshiped



Baptism of Jiefei Seibel by Elder Don Case

with us for seven years: Jiefei Seibel, wife of Brother Jacob Seibel. Following the baptism, as the elders laid their hands on her head, I realized that Jiefei, far from her homeland of China, had also come home. In committing her life to Christ through baptism, she had also become part of the body of Christ—a member of the Temple Lot Local, but also part of a larger church family that is scattered over many lands.

In September, Brother Dan Lawrence was elected pastor of the local, and he chose Broth-

ers Don Case and Jim Case as his assistant pastors. Besides regular services on Sunday mornings/evenings and Wednesday prayer meetings, we have a Bible study class on Sunday afternoons. On the second Wednesday night of the month, we have joint prayer services with the East Local, alternating locations from month to month; and on the third Wednesday we have Worship in Song followed by snacks and fellowship.

November through December there is choir practice for the Christmas worship for East Local and the Temple Lot Local. And during the year Sister Manon Lawrence has Tiny Tots and Junior Choir practices at her home.

Brother Jacob Seibel was elected for this year's Sunday School Superintendent, and Brother Cody Fann is Assistant Superintendent. We currently have three adult Sunday School Classes, which includes a Spanish-speaking class, and we have four children's classes.

The Junior Young People's group, ages 5-11, resumed meeting this fall under the leadership of Sisters Cynthia Lawrence and Amy Fann. They have a monthly meeting for the children with a craft, games, snacks, and lesson activity. October's event was "Fall Fun." In November they

prepared packages for those in need, and in December the children experienced the Christmas story with adults presenting the parts. They average 15-27 children in attendance.

The YPCL in Independence includes youth from both locals and usually meets weekly. Brother Rusty Granger from the East Local is their leader this year. In December they enjoyed a planning meeting, Christmas Treat Auction—a fundraiser for the Honduras School, a study, and game night.

The United Workers continued to meet most months. During the fall months they sponsored an "End of Summer Picnic" for the locals, browsed quilt shops in Hamilton, Missouri, had their annual garage sale, cleaned the church kitchen, and made Christmas ornaments for the Junior Choir's caroling party. The women's group also plans to resume their monthly book study beginning in January.

God has blessed the Temple Lot Local with a precious group of babies these past months: Edwin, son of David and Stephanie Welch; Noah, son of Jake and Bethany Denham; Elliott, son of Cody and Savannah Sprague; Lily, daughter of Dylan and Cheyenne Proctor, and Luna, daughter of Jose and Esmerelda Crull. Alayna, daughter of AJ and Char-

ity Berwick and Christopher, son of Seth and Faith Stencel, visited in October to be blessed.

One last thought... This past year a Temple Lot Local committee devoted itself to landscaping the north edge of the grounds. With the help of volunteers they created a beautiful border of roses and ground cover that runs slightly above a busy Independence sidewalk. Many people walk by the church daily, with only a few stopping in. I watched the strangers one day: old, young, fast, weary, some with headphones, some with heads down. They all took a look, though, and I wondered if maybe they felt a bit of encouragement to look up—not just as high as the roses, but higher. I prayed they would consider God for a moment, and feel that He cared and that the people inside could care for them also. Seeing those roses several times a week gently reminded me to look up right along with the stranger, praising God for the hope I have that His love can make my life beautiful, too.

Debra Vogel

OBITUARY

L. Marlene Cobb

February 25, 1932~June 19, 2017

Just as it says in 2 Timothy 4:7, Lillie Marlene Cobb, 85, Springfield, Missouri, fought the good fight and kept the faith her entire life, including her final day on this earth, Monday, June 19, 2017.

On February 25, 1932, Marlene was born in Phoenix, Arizona, to Frances Dexter and Elmer Leon "Skeet" Yates, and grew up loving the outdoors, pursuing adventures with her brothers and cousins, and enjoying the activities of her closely-knit church community.

Marlene graduated from Phoenix Union High School and started college where she studied art. In 1952, on Christmas Eve, Marlene married Virgil Bruce Cobb. Bruce and Marlene lived in Tucson, Arizona, and had four children – Rodney, Rebecca, Heidi and Jennifer. There was no job more important to Marlene than raising her four children, whom she parented lovingly well into their mid-life years! She was an engaged and attentive grandparent and great-grandparent.

Marlene continued her quest for higher education which, after ten years, culminated in a Master of Arts degree from the University of Arizona in Tucson. She was a dedicated reading teacher in Tucson's school district and, later, in Buffalo, Mis-



souri.

Marlene was an avid volunteer – she taught reading for the Literacy Council, which included teaching prisoners at the Federal Medical Center in Springfield. Marlene was the treasurer for many years for the Church of Christ, Springfield local, and she was a general church correspondent, writing notes and letters to many of our isolated members throughout the country and world.

Marlene had many wonderful experiences and happy days, but her

time here was not without challenges and low points. It was evident, even at the end, that she had built her house on the "the Rock." She was not afraid to transition to the next life. Marlene's "true north" was her Savior's example that she humbly worked to follow every day of her life. She fully embraced Romans 8:35-39, and made it clear that nothing could separate her from the love of God.

Marlene is survived by her brother, Ronald Yates, as well as her children Rodney Cobb, Rebecca Sheldon (Randy), Heidi Martin (Robert), Jennifer McClure (Kyle), plus 10 grandchildren, 17 great-grandchildren, her sisters-in-law, many nieces, nephews, and extended family that she loved very much. She was preceded in death by her parents and brother, Leon Yates.

In the future, when you think about Marlene, let it inspire you to revive an "old school" tradition she practiced often — send a handwritten note to a friend or family member through the U.S. Postal Service. She would like that.

OBITUARY

Diana Dewaele

September 8, 1951 ~ October 18, 2017

Diana Dewaele became a sister in Christ early in June, 1986, shortly after we became married. Diana had taken a year-long quest to learn of the precious things found in the Gospel, contained in both the Bible and Book of Mormon.

Sometime after we met in 1980, Diana remarked that while she had received the milk of the gospel, she realized that there was much more to be learned and savored. She began an intense study of the scriptures, which in turn led her to learn the many truths and promises that are contained in these books. Apostle Robert and Sister Doris Jensen were instrumental in her spiritual education.

The knowledge and strength which she acquired created a firm foundation that was necessary to face the severe health problems that ultimately led to her passing.

Diana exhibited a grace and stamina which was remarked upon by many of her caregivers, friends, and work associates. She was not one to



complain about her situation. She derived much from the prayers, plus verbal and written support from those who cared deeply about her. This outpouring of goodwill underscored the notion that Diana had been a giving and caring person to all of those who helped her along the way during her illness. It truly matters how each of us relates to those whom we come in contact with.

Diana was someone who had an innate curiosity about the natural wonders of this earth. Her inquisitiveness was honed by working in the library at the AEA 13 Media Center for a period of nearly 46 years. She was always an enthusiastic traveler and, during her and our lifetimes, she traveled to over 40 states.

Let's consider the following scriptures as we honor her memory:

“Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7).

“And it came to pass that I, Nephi, said unto my father,

I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded, for I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them” (1 Nephi 1:65).

Diana was successful in applying the truths which she had learned throughout her life and studies. May we all walk the righteous path she did.

Elder Robert Dewaele



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