

**THE PURPOSE
OF THE
RESTORATION MOVEMENT**

LESSONS ON THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP

Fourth Printing

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Note: This is only a preliminary draft. There is much more that can be added to these lessons and there are more lessons to be identified. This material has been divided into lessons to make it easier to understand. If you have any ideas for additional lessons or additional information to be added to present lessons let us know.

LESSON #1 WHAT IS THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP?

The covenant relationship is the most sacred, solemn agreement possible.

Most of us belong to what is called “western civilization.” People in this category know less about the concept of a covenant than any other category. Every native tribe and most third-world peoples understand covenants and use them in their daily lives. We do not. We hire lawyers instead. The true story of Stanley and Livingstone is a good example. Stanley wanted to find Livingstone, so he organized human caravans to escort him through the jungles of Africa. In the 1800s Africa was a closed continent. It was not easy to travel. Every attempt that Stanley made met with failure. His cargo bearers would disappear into the bush, taking with them his supplies. One day, after several failures, his right-hand man, a native who had lived for a while in England and knew the language and customs, told Stanley that the only way he could travel successfully through Africa was to make covenants with the heads of the various chiefdoms or tribes through whose territory he was passing. Stanley did not like this idea because, being a proper Englishman, (and therefore part of the same western civilization as most of us are) he thought that the native customs were primitive, barbaric and certainly beneath him. He did not realize that the idea of making covenants and thereby having a covenant relationship was originated by God with Adam and that the covenant relationship was God’s chosen way for dealing with His creation. He did not realize that although the physical way in which the covenant was put into force was changed and perverted through the centuries, the seriousness and effectiveness of the covenant remained. However, Stanley finally consented to make a covenant because he had no other alternative. Part of the covenant procedure required that Stanley give a gift to the chief. The chief wanted Stanley’s goat so Stanley had to give it to him. Stanley had stomach trouble and thought that the only way he could survive was on goat’s milk. Stanley did not want to part with his goat but he had to. In exchange, the chief gave Stanley a wooden staff decorated with strips of copper. This did not mean anything to Stanley. He did not understand covenants. Nevertheless, Stanley went through the covenant process and continued on to the next village with the staff in hand. Although Stanley did not know the meaning of the staff, the people in the next village did. It meant that Stanley had a covenant with the chief in the previous village and that all the resources of that chief, which were extensive, would be used against them if they did not treat Stanley as a friend. (It is revealing to note that the word “friend” in the word of God does not mean the same as we think. To be a friend means to have a covenant and not just to be someone you are acquainted with and like to be with. Abraham was called a friend of God. That means he had a covenant with God.) Having no doubt as to the consequences if they mistreated Stanley, they treated him like a king. Stanley’s eyes were opening. He was now receiving a revelation of what a covenant relationship was. If Stanley had desired, every goat in the village would have been

given to him. The cargo bearers no longer disappeared into the bush with Stanley's supplies. They knew the judgments that would come upon them. Like the villagers, they had no doubt. Covenant people have the fear of the Lord, which is defined as awe and reverence. Having the fear of the Lord and having no doubt are two attributes of covenant people. In the course of his journeys, Stanley made covenants with over fifty chiefs and tribal leaders. Needless to say, Stanley's journey was a success. Stanley was the one who said, "Dr. Livingstone I presume?" Stanley had to give up his one goat. But because of the covenants which he made, he could have had all of the goats in Africa if he had needed them. If we give ourselves fully to the Lord according to the covenant relationship, then the Lord will make available to us all of the direction and resources needed to accomplish our stewardship and complete our journey to the Promised Land.

The covenant relationship is the most important subject in all scripture (see **Lesson #2**).

The covenant relationship is the purpose of the Restoration Movement (see **Lesson #3**).

The covenant relationship is the most ignored and least understood subject among our people. In asking people about the subject of the covenant relationship in the last 12 years I have discovered that this subject has not received any emphasis at all as far back as people can remember, which takes us back three generations. In my own experience in my first 30 years in this movement, I had not even heard a single sermon or attended a class on the covenant relationship, and only heard about one class with the word covenant in the title. The Lord officially informed us in 1832 (D&C 83:8) that we were ignoring or treating lightly the covenant. What does all of this tell us about our spiritual condition if, in fact, the covenant relationship is the reason for the Restoration Movement?

The covenant relationship is the main purpose of the Book of Mormon (see **Lesson #4**).

The covenant relationship is the top response of the parable of the sower (see **Lesson #5**).

The covenant relationship is the context for all of the word of God (see **Lesson #6**).

The covenant relationship is the fullness of the gospel (see **Lesson #7**).

The covenant relationship is being a child of Christ (see **Lesson #8**).

The covenant relationship is the spiritual equivalent of the physical steps of the ancient Hebrew covenant (see **Lesson #9**).

The covenant relationship has three parts or steps (see **Lesson #10**).

The covenant relationship is a mystery (see **Lesson #11**).

LESSON #2 : THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECT IN ALL SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 9:14-17 settles this issue once and for all. We are told here that Jesus came to die to establish the covenant—He came to die to make the covenant relationship available to anyone who would desire to believe, repent and come unto Him. Jesus did not come to heal people. He did not come to feed people etc. However, all of these blessings are available to us all of the time when we have a covenant relationship. If Jesus came to die to establish the covenant then this was the reason the Father sent Him because He only did what the Father directed Him to do.

Ephesians 1:13-14 tells us the Holy Spirit of Promise is the earnest (down payment) of our inheritance. Covenant people always receive an inheritance. Non-covenant people always lose what they have and will not have an inheritance. If the Holy Spirit of Promise is the earnest of our inheritance then we could say that It was part of the covenant process.

Moroni 7:32 tells us that the work of the angels is the work of the covenants. Therefore, heaven is unanimous. The work of the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit of Promise and the angels centers around establishing a covenant relationship with everyone who will. Therefore, the covenant relationship is the most important subject in all scripture. Jesus Christ is the most important person, but the covenant relationship is the most important subject.

LESSON #3 THE PURPOSE OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

The purpose of the Restoration Movement is to restore a knowledge of the covenant relationship. This was not known fifteen years ago because the subject of the covenant relationship was hardly mentioned let alone emphasized. This lack of interest in covenants is the result of an incorrect tradition that the Lord warned us about in 1832:

And your minds in times past have been darkened
because of unbelief
and because you have treated lightly the things you have received
Which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation;
And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all;
And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent
and remember the new covenant
even The Book of Mormon
and the former commandments which I have given them
not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written
That they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom... D&C 83:8

We were told that we were treating the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments lightly. Once we understand that all of the word of God is His covenant to us then we have an additional insight into this reference. Because The Book of Mormon is the word of God it is also His covenant to us and, of course, the former commandments also refer to the word of God which is also His covenant to us. Therefore the Lord is saying covenant to us three times in a row. This is God's way of placing maximum emphasis on a statement. God was and is

telling us in the strongest possible terms that we were and are treating the covenant lightly.

Of course we had been treating the covenant lightly for a while before this warning was given. There is evidence as early as October, 1830 that we were not obedient, in covenant terms, to the word of God. Covenant people will obey the direction of the Lord without hesitation or deviation. D&C 31 tells us that four men, Parley P. Pratt, Ziba Peterson, Oliver Cowdery and Peter Whitmer were told by the Lord in no uncertain terms (look closely at 31:1de) to declare the gospel (including the Book of Mormon) to the Lamanites in the wilderness. Church history tells us that they did not go directly to the Lamanites in the wilderness but spent some six to seven weeks in Kirtland and another week in Cincinnati among the white man, violating the word of the Lord.

After the warning in 1832, the Lord gave our spiritual ancestors until D&C 102, given in 1834 to return to the covenant relationship. They did not. Their stewardship was postponed until our day. The Lord is still waiting but He will not wait forever because there is a set time for Zion (Psalms 102:13). Collectively speaking, the Restoration Movement does not have a covenant relationship at the present time because covenant people are always gathered (Psalms 50:5) and non-covenant people are always scattered. We continue to scatter.

There is abundant evidence throughout scripture that the purpose of the Restoration Movement is to restore a knowledge of the covenants. Here are two examples:

But behold, there shall be many at that day when I shall
proceed to do a marvelous work among them,
That I may remember My covenants which I have made
unto the children of men... 2 Nephi 12:42

We all know that the marvelous work is the Restoration Movement (D&C 4). Its purpose is "That I may remember My covenants." For the Lord to remember His covenants He has to restore a knowledge of them. We also know that many covenants were removed from the Bible (1 Nephi 3:168-170). The Book of Mormon (a synonym for the Restoration Movement) began the process of restoring them. The next example also connects the marvelous work with the idea of restoring a knowledge of the covenants:

And after that our seed is scattered, the Lord God will
proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles
which shall be of great worth unto our seed;
And it shall also be of worth unto the Gentiles,
And not only unto the Gentiles, but unto all the house
of Israel unto the making known of the covenants
of the Father of heaven unto Abraham, saying:
In thy Seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. 1 Nephi 7:17, 19-20

If restoring a knowledge of the covenants is the purpose of the Restoration Movement, and if we have been ignoring this subject for several generations then it becomes obvious that we need to reverse this trend or the Lord will raise up others who will choose to be a covenant people. Reversing this trend means that we will have to stop treating The Book of Mormon lightly. The main purpose of The Book of Mormon is the same as the purpose of the Restoration Movement.

LESSON #4 THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

The main purpose of The Book of Mormon is to restore a knowledge of the covenants. It should not be surprising that the main purpose of The Book of Mormon is the same as the purpose of the Restoration Movement. The two can be considered synonyms. It should not be surprising that the main purpose of The Book of Mormon has also remained hidden until a few years ago. It was through our recent understanding of the Hebrew nature of The Book of Mormon that its main purpose has come to light.

Appropriately enough, the main purpose of The Book of Mormon appears on the first page of the Restored Covenant Edition. This is called the Title Page. The main purpose is given in the first two lines of verse 2 along with verse 6:

Written to the Lamanites which are a remnant
of the house of Israel,
Which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel
how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers,
And that they may know the covenants of the Lord,
that they are not cast off forever. Title Page 2, 6

Notice that the phrase “remnant of the house of Israel” is repeated in the first line of verse 6. This repetition is part of a type of Hebrew poetry which ties the first two lines of verse 2 with verse 6. These two verses comprise the “A” and “A’” (read A prime) part of an “ABA’B’” pattern. This pattern is called repeated alternate parallelism. If the “A’B’” were reversed to “B’A’” then the entire pattern would be “ABB’A’” and would be called a chiasm. The “BB’” part of the parallelism is the last line of verse 2 and verse 7:

And also to Jew and Gentile.
And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile
that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God,
manifesting Himself unto all nations. Title Page 2, 7

A more detailed description of the main purpose would be to restore a knowledge of the covenants, firstly to the Lamanites, then to the rest of the house of Israel and then to the Gentiles. Even now many of our Book of Mormon believing friends would say that the main purpose was “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.” This is a purpose of The Book of Mormon but not the main purpose. The main purpose must come first before the secondary purposes can be accomplished. It is our responsibility to share this information with our friends.

The message of the Title Page is repeated in 3 Nephi 10:1-7 even more clearly. Also, Mormon 2:39-41 shows that The Book of Mormon is written to the Lamanites (the remnant of the house of Jacob) after which the Jews are mentioned implying that The Book of Mormon is to go to the Lamanites first.

Additional evidence supporting these scriptures is the meaning of the name “Mormon.” Most of us think that the Book of Mormon was named after the man, Mormon. This does not make any sense when you think about it because the other two books are not named after men. We are told

in 3 Nephi 2:96 that Mormon is named after the Land of Mormon, the land where Alma established the church. Alma did this by restoring the covenant relationship and then baptizing the people as a witness that they had made a covenant (Mosiah 9:41, 44, 174-179; Alma 5:27). The Land of Mormon to the Nephite believers meant the land where the covenant was restored. Therefore, “Mormon” means restoration of the covenant and spiritually speaking, The Book of Mormon means The Book of the Restoration of the Covenant. This means that all three books now have the same name. The Doctrine and Covenants already has covenant in the title. Bible is not its real name. Bible is Greek for a collection of books. The real name is Old Testament and New Testament. Testament is an old English word for covenant. It makes sense that the purpose of the Restoration Movement and the main purpose of the Book of Mormon are the same. The Book of Mormon has several purposes but the main purpose comes first. The primary purpose of the Restored Covenant Edition is to restore The Book of Mormon back to its beginnings in order to focus attention on the original purpose of the Restoration Movement—the restoration of the covenants.

The Restored Covenant Edition

- 1) is part of a larger, unique pattern of Book of Mormon enlightenment
- 2) contains many word restorations from the Original and Printer’s manuscripts
- 3) has brought forth many testimonies
- 4) is preparation for the hidden Title Page (the restoring of the Restoration Movement)
- 5) is mentioned in two Book of Mormon references
- 6) is ready for a second printing

The Larger Pattern

The Restored Covenant Edition (RCE) is not a one-time stand-alone project. It is part of the Lord’s plan to take The Book of Mormon to the world for the last time. The Restoration Movement is soon to be manifested again to the world in great power. Before this is all over every believer in Jesus Christ will be a Book of Mormon believer as well as a Bible believer (2 Nephi 2:20-23; 3 Nephi 9:98). In preparation for this, the Lord has brought forth more new Book of Mormon enlightenment in the last 21 years than in all of the previous 150 years combined. The RCE is a part of this 21-year pattern and makes use of much of this enlightenment. The RCE is also supported by *A Comparison of The Book of Mormon Manuscripts and Editions* which documents all of the word changes comparing the two manuscripts with 11 editions from four different churches. Every Book of Mormon believer should have their own revelation of the significance of these last 21 years. We cannot afford to ignore this last days move of God.

In 1979 the book *Discovery of Genesis* provided evidence from the Chinese characters of the existence of the Jaredites. In the early 1980s we started to become aware of the Hebrew nature of The Book of Mormon. Meanwhile, more information on Book of Mormon archaeology, geography, “no erasers,” ancient Middle East treaty patterns and spiritual insights was coming forth. For example, the Lord began to open up our understanding of the covenant relationship which is the most important subject in The Book of Mormon and in all scripture as we have seen. The RCE is not an isolated event but part of a larger pattern.

Restored Words

- 1) In 1 Nephi 3:165 the 1908 edition has “the **plainness** of the gospel.” The correct wording from the Original manuscript is “the **fullness** of the gospel.”

- 2) In 1 Nephi 4:23 the 1908 edition has “they shall be **remembered** again among the house of Israel.” The correct wording from the Original manuscript is “they shall be **numbered** among the house of Israel.” This is a significant change in meaning. To be numbered among the house of Israel is an important concept from the Restoration Movement.
- 3) In 1 Nephi 3:127 the 1908 edition has “The **word** of the justice of the Eternal God.” The correct wording from the Original manuscript is “the **sword** of the justice of the Eternal God.”
- 4) In 1 Nephi 4:62 the 1908 edition has “The wicked are **rejected** from the righteous.” The correct wording from the Original manuscript is “the wicked are **separated** from the righteous.” The separation of the righteous from the wicked is a major theme throughout scripture and is central to the Restoration Movement. Zion is the ultimate example of this. Zion is a gathering of covenant people who are separated from the world.
- 5) In 1 Nephi 2:39 the 1908 edition has “did offer sacrifice and [] burnt offerings.” The correct wording from the Original manuscript is “did offer sacrifice and **offer** burnt offerings.” This restores a Hebraism. The discovery of this omission through a photograph shocked us into a greater realization of the need for a restoration of the text. The Hebrew nature of The Book of Mormon is very important. It tells us that no one in the 1800s could have written The Book of Mormon. The RCE restores variations of “And it came to pass,” an important Hebraism, 47 times.
- 6) In 1 Nephi 3:179 the 1908 edition has “Awful state of **blindness**.” The correct wording from the Original manuscript is “state of awful **woundedness**.” This correlates with Jacob 2:8 which says “the word which healeth the wounded soul.”
- 7) In 1 Nephi 3:111 the 1908 edition has “I saw the multitudes which had [] fallen.” The correct wording from the Original manuscript is “I saw the multitudes which had **not** fallen.”

Testimonies

We have heard many testimonies about the RCE since it was first made available for sale on the evening of July 21, 1999. The general rule is that for everyone who volunteers a testimony there are many more who have not had an opportunity to do so.

The most common theme is that the RCE is easier to read and easier to understand at the same time. Because of the natural flow of the poetic alignment, which mirrors in part the underlying Hebrew nature of The Book of Mormon, readers are seeing things which they have not seen before. The idea for the poetic alignment of the text came from a Jewish woman, the wife of an elder.

Another testimony theme is that readers are spending more time with The Book of Mormon. It is more enjoyable to read. One brother said, “It reads like a novel!” Also, some believers are now studying The Book of Mormon on a regular basis for the first time in their lives.

We have heard three testimonies in which the reader was told that the text of the RCE was that which was originally delivered to young Joseph. We should be aware of the fact that the only Book of Mormon we have is the two manuscripts. Between the two, we have 100% of The Book of Mormon in manuscript form. The Lord spoke to an elder in 1987 regarding The Book of Mormon and said: “Leave the Book alone! Because of the faithfulness of the brethren who kept the record it is sacred unto Me and not to be tampered with!” In other words, do not tamper with that which was originally given.

The Hidden Title Page

The importance of the Title Page of The Book of Mormon can not be overemphasized. It sets the stage for the entire book. We were told that we had been treating The Book of Mormon lightly (D&C 83:8). That being the case, we have been treating the Title Page even more lightly.

The RCE takes steps to remedy this. The Title Page is now page 1 (although the page has no number because it is the Title Page). First Nephi Chapter 1 is now page 3. The Title Page has verse numbers for the first time, helping readers realize that the Title Page came from the plates as did the rest of the book. There is also a side-note showing that the main purpose of The Book of Mormon from verses 2 and 6 is to restore a knowledge of the covenants (firstly to the Lamanites, then to the rest of the house of Israel and then to the world).

Another "Title Page" has been discovered (3 Nephi 10:1-7). This passage has the same basic information as the Title Page. It starts out with the covenant. It then talks about the beginning of the New Jerusalem and the gospel going to the Lamanites. The work of the Father commences in verse 4. Verses 5-6 also have the word "commence." They deal with the rest of the house of Israel. Verse 7 also has "commence." It talks about all nations. The implication is that the Restoration, which was put on hold in 1834 (D&C 102), will commence again in great power just as it did in the 1830 period. By putting proper emphasis on the Title Page the RCE is pointing us to the time when 3 Nephi 10:1-7, the hidden Title Page, will be fulfilled. The Lord is saying to us through the hidden "Title Page" that the scenario described in 3 Nephi 10:1-7 is that which He desired to have happened in the 1830s but we treated the book lightly. This time it will come to pass. The publication of the RCE is a part of the preparation. The RCE does represent more light. If we reject it we run the risk of losing what we have. We should never tell the Lord we have enough.

Two References Point to the RCE

It has been pointed out to us that there are two possible references in The Book of Mormon that point to the RCE. Here is the evidence. You decide.

The story in 3 Nephi 10:34-41 is well known. Jesus tells Nephi to bring forth the records. Jesus then asks them why Samuel the Lamanite's prophecy that at the resurrection many saints should arise and bring ministry to many was not written. Jesus then commanded that it be written. We enjoy the story but we need to realize that its inclusion in The Book of Mormon was for a purpose. The purpose is to tell us that if Jesus were to appear to us today He would do the same thing. He would ask that our Book of Mormon record be brought forth (the 1908 edition) and then ask why certain words were left out or changed and then He would command us to restore them. This is what the RCE is—a restoration of the words from the Original and the Printer's manuscripts.

The second reference is Mormon 4:32-38. This reference apparently is one of those prophecies that refer to more than one time period, as do several in Isaiah. It starts by talking about The Book of Mormon coming forth in 1830. Then there are a series of statements describing the time period. A type of Hebrew poetry called initial repetition is used in this prophecy. The phrase, "it shall come in a day when" is repeated six times as a beginning statement. Verses 37 and 38 describe our day more than they do the 1830 period. In verse 37 we are told about earthquakes in divers places. We know that the frequency of earthquakes is considerably higher now than in 1830. In addition, communication, while instant now took weeks or months in 1830. Verse 38 talks about great pollutions. This is definitely today, not 1830. If these verses do describe our day then they would

be referring to the RCE which is the edition closest to the manuscripts to date.

The Second Printing

Out of the original 10,000 books printed, there are less than 1000 left to sell (this includes 2500 books that are designated for missionary work). Because it takes several months to produce the books, it is necessary to begin the second printing now before all the books are sold in order to keep the RCE from going out of print. This means that the money from these books will not be available. We estimate that we will need \$40,000 more to pay for the second printing. After that the RCE will be self supporting. Please share this need with others. The Book of Mormon is still our primary stewardship. Our vision of The Book of Mormon needs expansion.

LESSON #5 THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IS THE TOP RESPONSE OF THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

This and the next lesson are related because they are both based on the parable of the sower. These are separate lessons in order to provide the proper emphasis. Jesus tells us in Mark 4:12 [4:13 KJV] that the parable of the sower is the most important parable of all because it is the key to understanding the other parables. The kingdom of God is in parable form. The kingdom of God on earth is Zion, therefore, the parable of the sower is the key to Zion. Why? Because it tells us that there are four responses to the word of God and that only the top response bears fruit. If you want to be part of Zion make the top response of the sower. Ultimately, the other three responses are burned (Hebrews 6:8; Alma 3:58-59, 90; John 15:1-6). Zion is a gathering of covenant people (D&C 83:17). Therefore, the top response of the sower is the covenant relationship.

This is important information in helping us to understand what the covenant relationship is. God is responsible for the parable of the sower. He sees us making one of four responses in any situation or to any portion of His word. The four responses represent His classification system. As a result, the four responses are found throughout scripture. Every time you find the four responses in the word of God, you will then know the top or covenant response in that particular situation. For example, the four responses for resolving differences are: 1-reason; 2-contention, spreading rumors, backbiting; 3-blows, smiting; 4-war, murder. This is very revealing. If you want to be a covenant person you will only reason. You will never backbite. Everyone seems to agree that backbiting is the most common corporate sin among our people. This is additional evidence that as a group and not individually we do not yet live according to the covenant relationship. This is why we are constantly scattering. People who backbite are covenant breakers (Malachi 2:10, Romans 1:29-31) and they will not be part of Zion (Psalms 15:1-3). Hebrews 6:16 says that an oath for confirmation is an end to all strife. "Oath" is a synonym for covenant. Again, covenant people do not backbite. See if you can find the four responses in Alma 16:138 (hint: the fourth response is implied as those who do not respond even to compelling). Also look for the four responses to Nephi, the son of Helaman as he was preaching from his tower (Helaman 3:1-113), and to Samuel as he was preaching from the wall in Helaman chapter 5. Alma preaches to four locations in Alma chapters 3-10. They are types for the four responses. The people in Zarahemla represent the response #2 which most of our people apparently are in. Study carefully Alma chapter 3 as pertaining especially to us. The people of Gideon (Alma chapter 5) represent the top response. Compare Alma's words to them with his words to the people in Zarahemla. The reference to Melek (Alma 6:4-7) is short and they represent the third response because they received the word

which is what the third response does initially. Because we are not told more they are a type for the third response. The people of Ammonihah are a very clear type for the fourth response (Alma 6:7-10:86). Looking for the four responses illustrates a principle. If you know a pattern exists and look for it you will find it. You only find what you are looking for.

Four major references to the four responses have been identified so far. A study and comparison of all of these including the three versions of the sower in Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8 will be very fruitful. Besides the sower, we have the Book of Mormon version of the sower found in Alma 16:152-173. We call this Alma's parable of the seed. The Book of Mormon version helps explain the sower. For example, the sower classifies some people as making the bottom or fourth response simply because they do not understand. This sounds unfair. However, Alma 16:153 says they do not understand because they resist the Spirit of God. The sower tells you about the four responses but does not tell you how to improve your response. The Book of Mormon version does. Hebrews 6:8 is a reference to the sower and therefore to the four responses to the gospel described in the first two verses. Verses 11 and 12 are a direct reference to the climax of the Book of Mormon sower, Alma 16:170. Both references use the same three words, diligence, faith and patience. The word order is different but that is not significant. Therefore, we have in Hebrews chapter 6, two sower references, one to the Bible and one to The Book of Mormon. This fits the pattern of two witnesses in ancient Hebrew law.

The other two major references to the four responses is Lehi's tree of life vision in 1 Nephi 2:41-88 and Psalms 1:1-3, which is the Bible version of Lehi's vision. Can you find the three bad responses in verse 1? Verses 2 and 3 are an excellent description of the covenant relationship. Only two words distinguish the top response in Lehi's vision from the second response. They are "fall down." This means humility. So far, we have found 40 synonyms for humility in the Book of Mormon. Obviously, this is a very important attribute of covenant people.

LESSON #6 THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IS THE CONTEXT FOR ALL OF THE WORD OF GOD

All of the word of God is His covenant to us if we will accept it. All of the word of God, according to God's definition, is in the top response. Each of the four responses has its own definition of the word of God. Only the top response has the correct, full definition. The other three responses have varying degrees of the definitions of man and of the devil. That is why they will all be burned. Once we understand this, it is easy to see that the covenant relationship, or the top response of the sower, is the context for all of the word of God. The only way to fully understand the word of God is to view it through the eyes of the covenant relationship because that is the context in which God has given it.

The Restoration Movement backed away from the full response, the top response, officially in 1832 just as the children of Israel did at Mt. Sinai. (We call ourselves latter day Israel. That is not always a compliment.) We have been looking at the Restoration Movement out of context ever since. The Lord is now restoring a knowledge of the covenant relationship so we can respond and the Lord can raise the Restoration Movement back to the top response. This is the time for our people to return to the top response. We are told in 2 Nephi 2:20-23 that the Lamanites (Manasseh) and the (Ephraimites [a symbol for the ten tribes]) will be brought to a knowledge of

the covenants of the Lord when the Bible and the Book of Mormon grow together. The primary way the Lord is growing these two books together is by revealing their common foundation, their ancient Hebrew nature. An estimated 80-90% of all we know about the Hebrew nature of the Book of Mormon has come forth in only the last 20 years. This is definitely a move of the Lord and is a message of timing for us. The Spirit of God is ready to move in a great way upon the Lamanites. This is our time to respond.

LESSON #7 THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IS THE FULLNESS OF THE GOSPEL

The Doctrine and Covenants relates the fullness of the gospel to the covenant relationship. Section 1 and 108 both have a form of Hebrew poetry called a chiasm with a double center point dealing with the fullness of the gospel and the covenant. Being in a double center point tells us that both terms mean the same, therefore the fullness of the gospel is the covenant relationship.

Actually it should be obvious even if there were not any scriptures that said as much. If we give our all, we give our fullness. If we give our fullness then the Lord can give us His fullness. Giving our all is what the covenant relationship is. We can see this in Omni 1:47: "Yea, come unto Him and offer your whole souls as an offering unto Him..." because "come unto Him" is the covenant-making step. The essence of the covenant relationship is caught up in Jesus' prayers in 3 Nephi 9:23, 30. He prayed the same thing twice—"...that I may be in them as Thou, Father, art in Me, that We may be one." The Father was in Jesus 100%. If Jesus is in us 100% then we have totally died to self and given our all, our fullness. The prayers of Jesus will be answered. There will be people in this category. The second step of the ancient Hebrew covenant is the exchange of weapons belts which means that each party will defend the other even if it means losing your own life. Jesus has already died for us. He is now waiting for us to die for Him. This is why the covenant relationship is so powerful. It is stronger than life itself. It overcomes the fear of death and all other fears.

Additional evidence equating the fullness to the covenant is found in two verses already discussed, Alma 9:18 and 3 Nephi 9:92. Alma 9:18 talks about knowing the mysteries in full if we do not harden our hearts. In full means fullness. We now know that to not harden means to have a covenant (3 Nephi 9:92). Therefore, covenant means fullness. We talk about the fullness of the gospel all of the time, but until recently, we have not been talking about the covenant relationship. Is it possible that we have been using a watered down definition of the fullness of the gospel in the past? After all, there are four definitions for every spiritual concept.

LESSON #8 THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IS BEING A CHILD OF CHRIST

King Benjamin's sermon is one of the spiritual highlights of the Book of Mormon. His people made the top response to the word of God through him. In Mosiah 3:6-8, we find they were called the children of Christ because they made a covenant. It is very enlightening to read a list of attributes of the children of Christ and then compare it with a list of the attributes of the children of men, who do not have a covenant. Studying the children of Christ list is an excellent way to gain a better understanding of the covenant relationship. Here are the two lists. Add to them. Compare them often:

Attributes of the Children of Christ

- They do not trifle with the words of Christ—Mosiah 1:39 (see also 2 Nephi 14:3; Mosiah 1:91; 2:1)
- They hearken to the words of Christ—Mosiah 1:39 (see also Mosiah 1:91)
- They open their ears that they may hear—Mosiah 1:39
- They open their hearts that they may understand—Mosiah 1:39
- They open their minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to their view—Mosiah 1:39
- They keep the commandments of God—Mosiah 1:55, 58, 88
- They are diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord—Mosiah 2:10
- They render to their heavenly Father all that they have and are—Mosiah 1:77
- They know and believe and do not transgress the prophecies which have been spoken by the holy prophets—Mosiah 1:77-79
- They allow the Spirit of the Lord to guide them—Mosiah 1:79
- They yield to the enticings of the Holy Spirit—Mosiah 1:120
- They walk in wisdom's path—Mosiah 1:79
- They are blessed—Mosiah 1:88
- They are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual—Mosiah 1:89
- They are happy—Mosiah 1:88
- They do not rebel against God—Mosiah 1:80
- If they hold out faithful to the end, they are received into heaven, that hereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness—Mosiah 1:90
- They humble themselves—Mosiah 1:118, 120
 - even in the depths of humility—Mosiah 2:21
- They always retain in remembrance their own nothingness—Mosiah 2:20
- They are submissive—Mosiah 1:120
- They are meek—Mosiah 1:120
- They become as little children—Mosiah 1:118, 120
- They believe that salvation is through the atoning blood of Christ—Mosiah 1:118
- They put off the natural man—Mosiah 1:120
- They view themselves in their own carnal state even less than the dust of the earth—Mosiah—1:61; 2:2
- They become a saint—Mosiah 1:120
- They are patient—Mosiah 1:120
- They are willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon them, even as a child doth submit to his father—Mosiah 1:120
- They have the fear of the Lord—Mosiah 2:1
- They cry for mercy—Mosiah 2:3
- They receive forgiveness of their sins—Mosiah 2:3
- Their hearts are purified—Mosiah 2:3
- They believe in Jesus Christ—Mosiah 2:4
- They have exceeding faith in Jesus Christ—Mosiah 2:6
- They are filled with joy—Mosiah 2:5
- They have exceeding great joy—Mosiah 2:19
- They receive a remission of their sins—Mosiah 2:6, 19
- They have peace of conscience—Mosiah 2:6
- They have a knowledge of
 - the goodness of God—Mosiah 2:8-9, 20
 - and his matchless power—Mosiah 2:9

and his wisdom—Mosiah 2:9
 and his patience—Mosiah 2:9
 and his longsuffering towards the children of men—Mosiah 2:9, 20
 and the atonement which has been prepared from the foundation of the world—Mosiah 2:10
 They put their trust in the Lord—Mosiah 2:10
 They continue in the faith even to the end of the life of the mortal body—Mosiah 2:10
 They receive salvation—Mosiah 2:11
 They believe:
 in God—Mosiah 2:13-14
 that He is—Mosiah 2:13
 that He created all things both in heaven and in earth—Mosiah 2:13
 that He has all wisdom and all power, both in heaven and in earth—Mosiah 2:14
 that man doth not comprehend all things which the Lord can comprehend—Mosiah 2:15
 that they must repent of their sins and forsake them, and humble themselves before God
 and ask in sincerity of heart that He will forgive them—Mosiah 2:16
 (and they do these things—Mosiah 2:17)
 They have come to the knowledge of the glory of God—Mosiah 2:18
 They have tasted of the love of God—Mosiah 2:19
 They always retain in remembrance the greatness of God—Mosiah 2:20
 They call on the name of the Lord daily—Mosiah 2:21
 They stand steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come (Christ)—Mosiah 2:21
 They always rejoice—Mosiah 2:22
 They are always filled with the love of God—Mosiah 2:22
 They always retain a remission of their sins—Mosiah 2:22
 They grow in the knowledge of the glory of their Creator—Mosiah 2:23
 They grow in the knowledge of that which is just and true—Mosiah 2:23
 They do not have a mind to injure one another—Mosiah 2:24
 They live peaceably—Mosiah 2:24
 They render to every man according to that which is his due—Mosiah 2:24
 They do not suffer their children to go hungry or naked—Mosiah 2:25
 They do not suffer their children to transgress the laws of God and fight and quarrel one with
 another and serve the devil—Mosiah 2:26
 They teach their children:
 to walk in the ways of truth and soberness—Mosiah 2:27
 to love one another—Mosiah 2:27
 to serve one another—Mosiah 2:27
 They succor those that stand in need of their succor—Mosiah 2:28
 They administer of their substance unto him that standeth in need—Mosiah 2:28
 They do not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to them in vain and turn him out to
 perish—Mosiah 2:29
 They recognize that they are beggars—Mosiah 2:32
 God grants to them whatsoever they ask that is right—Mosiah 2:36
 They are guiltless—Mosiah 2:42
 They impart of their substance to the poor according to that which they have:
 they feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and administer to their relief,
 both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants—Mosiah 2:43
 They do all these things in wisdom and order—Mosiah 2:44-45

They do not run faster than they have strength—Mosiah 2:44
They return the things which they borrow—Mosiah 2:46
They watch: themselves, their thoughts, their words, their deeds—Mosiah 2:49
They observe to keep the commandments of God—Mosiah 2:49
A mighty change is wrought in their hearts—Mosiah 3:3, 9
They have great views of that which is to come—Mosiah 3:4
Were it expedient, they could prophesy of all things—Mosiah 3:4
They are willing to enter into a covenant with God to do His will and to be obedient to His commandments in all things that He shall command them all the remainder of their days—Mosiah 3:6
They receive a new name, children of Christ, His sons and His daughters—Mosiah 3:8-9
They are born of Christ—Mosiah 3:9
They are spiritually begotten of Christ—Mosiah 3:9
They are made free—Mosiah 3:10
They are pure—Mosiah 3:11
They are steadfast, immovable—Mosiah 3:21
They always abound in good works—Mosiah 3:21
They search diligently in the light of Christ that they may know good from evil—Moroni 7:18
They lay hold upon every good thing and condemn it not—Moroni 7:18

Attributes of the Children of Men

The temptations of the devil come to them—1 Nephi 3:125
An exceeding great many do stumble insomuch that Satan hath great power over them because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the Bible—1 Nephi 3:175
The kingdom of the devil shall be built up among them—1 Nephi 3:49
The devil transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light and stirreth them up unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness—2 Nephi 6:23, Helaman—2:156
They are bound by chains—2 Nephi 1:27
In the last days the devil shall rage in their hearts and stir them up to anger against that which is good—2 Nephi 12:24
The covenants and condescensions of the Lord are great unto them—2 Nephi 6:104; Jacob 3:8
The Lord will fulfill His promises which He has made unto them—2 Nephi 7:26
To fulfill His covenants unto them, the Lord must needs destroy the secret works of darkness, and of murders, and of abominations—2 Nephi 7:22
Christ makes intercession for them—2 Nephi 1:76; Mosiah 8:35
If they believe in Christ they shall be saved—2 Nephi 1:77; Alma 9:27
The Messiah comes that he may redeem them from the fall—2 Nephi 1:116; Mosiah 8:28
Angels minister to them—1 Nephi 3:81; Moroni 7:21, 30-34, 38
The way is prepared from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto Christ—1 Nephi 3:28
A way is prepared for them to fulfill God's commandments—1 Nephi 1:65
If they exercise faith the Lord is able to do all things according to His will for them—1 Nephi 2:18; 2 Nephi 11:145
The Holy Spirit maketh manifest unto them according to their faith—Jarom 1:9
Salvation comes unto them through faith on the name of Christ—Mosiah 1:103
There shall be no other name given, nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can

come unto them, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent—Mosiah 1:116
 They are nourished and strengthened by God if they keep His commandments—1 Nephi 5:59
 The Book of Mormon is of worth to them—1 Nephi 2:6; 2 Nephi 12:2
 There is great wickedness among them—1 Nephi 4:5
 They have vain imaginations and pride—1 Nephi 3:126
 All of the works which are part of the Lord's plan for them will be accomplished—1 Nephi 2:101
 The love of God is available to them—1 Nephi 3:64
 The Lord will work a great and a marvelous work among them—1 Nephi 3:214; 2 Nephi 11:29
 They shall be judged by the words of the Lord at the last day—2 Nephi 11:30
 They will either be convinced unto peace and life eternal or delivered into captivity and
 destruction both temporally and spiritually according to the captivity
 of the devil—1 Nephi 3:216
 They are judged righteously—Mosiah 1:106
 The Lord has wrought many miracles among them—1 Nephi 5:159
 Jesus Christ works mighty miracles, signs and wonders among them according to
 their faith—2 Nephi 11:79
 The Lord has lovingkindness and longsuffering towards them—1 Nephi 5:238
 God is patient and longsuffering toward them—Mosiah 2:9
 The prophets know all things which shall come upon them according to the flesh—1 Nephi 7:4
 The time cometh that Satan shall have no more power over their hearts—1 Nephi 7:32
 for a long time—2 Nephi 12:99
 The time cometh that the fullness of the wrath of God shall be poured out
 upon them—1 Nephi 7:34
 The prophecies of Isaiah are of worth unto them—2 Nephi 11:13
 The Lord doeth that which is good among them—2 Nephi 11:111
 The Lord doeth nothing save it be plain unto them—2 Nephi 11:112; 13:4
 The Lord inviteth them all to come unto Him, and partake of His goodness—2 Nephi 11:113
 The day cometh when all things shall be revealed unto them which ever have been among them,
 and which ever will be, even unto the end of the earth—2 Nephi 11:132, 144; 12:96, 98
 The Lord God will show unto them that He is able to do His own work—2 Nephi 11:143
 The Lord God will give unto them line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little
 and there a little—2 Nephi 12:36
 The Lord God brings forth His word unto them—2 Nephi 12:57
 The Lamb of God said unto them, Follow thou Me—2 Nephi 13:12
 They are shown:
 that the Lamb of God humbleth Himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that
 He would be obedient unto Him in keeping His commandments—2 Nephi 13:9
 the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate by which
 they should enter—2 Nephi 13:11
 They will not seek wisdom—Mosiah 5:85
 They are as a wild flock, which fleeth from the shepherd, and scattereth, and are driven,
 and are devoured by the beasts of the forest—Mosiah 5:86
 Their hearts are false and unsteady—Helaman 4:48
 They are foolish, vain, evil, devilish, quick to do iniquity and slow to do good—Helaman 4:53
 They are quick to do iniquity and be led away by the evil one—Alma 21:37
 They are quick to forget the Lord—Alma 21:37
 They are less than the dust of the earth—Helaman 4:57

Their nothingness is great—Helaman 4:57

All things which have been made known unto them shall be fulfilled—3 Nephi 1:14

Their hearts are stirred up by the wicked unto bloodshed—Mormon 2:6

Jesus Christ ceaseth to do miracles among them because they dwindle in unbelief, and

depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust—Mormon 4:83

Christ is filled with compassion toward them—Mosiah 8:36

Christ stands between them and justice—Mosiah 8:37

The Lord extends the arm of mercy towards them that put their trust in Him—Mosiah 13:37

The portion of the word of God that is shared with them depends on the heed and

diligence which they give unto Him—Alma 9:16

All of the Lord's words unto them will be fulfilled—Alma 22:19

They will receive the sealed portion in the own due time of the Lord—Ether 1:92

God can do no miracles among them without faith—Ether 5:13, 30

Jesus has prepared a place for them—Ether 5:33

There are divers ways that God manifests things unto them—Moroni 7:23

If miracles cease or if angels no longer appear, then wo unto them, for it is because of unbelief—Moroni 7:42

The Lord is merciful unto them—Moroni 10:3

God works by power according to their faith—Moroni 10:7

Spiritual gifts will never be done away only according to their unbelief—Moroni 10:14

Wo unto them if the power and gifts of God shall be done away among them for there shall be none that doeth good among them, no not one—Moroni 10:18-19

LESSON #9 THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IS THE SPIRITUAL EQUIVALENT OF THE PHYSICAL STEPS OF THE ANCIENT HEBREW COVENANT

This means that the physical steps of the ancient Hebrew covenant are a type for the spiritual covenant we are to have today. Although these steps are not all found in any one place, they pervade all scripture. The steps are:

Exchange robes

Exchange belts

Cut the covenant-raise right arms-mix blood-make a scar

Exchange names

Give the covenant terms

Eat a memorial meal

Plant a memorial

Exchange of robes: our robe is called filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6) and God's robe is called the robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10; 2 Nephi 3:56). We obtain righteousness by making and keeping a covenant. It is not something we can earn. God gives it to us through faith (Romans 3:22). This robe is also symbolic of all we have of a material nature. It also represents authority. The robe that his father put on the prodigal son was the robe of righteousness. The prodigal now had full covenant status in the family (the house of Israel or the church) and was permitted to go to the party (Zion).

Exchange of belts: this is the weapons belt. We offer to give our life in defense of the other person if necessary. This step shows that the endowment comes through the covenant relationship because the endowment is God's weapons belt. In this step we become one in power with God just as we became one in material resources with God in step 1 (Deuteronomy 8:18). This step tells us that the covenant is stronger than physical life. This is why the covenant relationship is so powerful. It overcomes the fear of death and replaces it with the fear of the Lord which is defined as awe and reverence.

Cut the covenant: The Hebrew word for covenant means to make an incision—the mixing of physical blood is symbolic of spiritual unity. Jesus prayed in 3 Nephi 9:23, “that they may believe in Me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, are in Me, that We may be one”—Jesus is in us through the covenant relationship. To make a scar is the mark of the covenant that the devil will copy with the mark of the beast. References that mention “in Me,” “in Him,” “in Christ,” etc. are all referring to this step of the covenant. This is an example of how pervasive the steps of the ancient Hebrew covenant are throughout scripture.

Exchange of names: through the exchange of names we become part of the same family, in this case the family is called the house of Israel. We are gathered in spiritually and then physically if necessary. In the first three steps we become one physically and spiritually and then in step 4 we are gathered into one family. God's name is YHWH. In making a covenant with Abram He gave him an H and he became Abraham and He gave Sarai another H and she became Sarah and God became known as the God of Abraham.

The covenant terms are actually all of the word of God for we are told in Isaiah 55:11 “So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” God has no doubt about His word and if we have a covenant relationship then we will also have no doubt about the word of God. We will grow to the point where we will only say things that are in harmony with the word of God. This means no more backbiting or murmuring or worry or fear etc.

A memorial meal we are familiar with, but the way we have approached communion needs improvement because we have not understood the true nature of the covenant relationship.

Plant a memorial, such as a tree or make some permanent reminder as an altar of stones. Notice that after we become one and join the house of Israel based on the word of God then we have two reminders—the scar (symbolic of a broken heart) and this memorial (plant the word in your heart)—to remember the covenant. Remember means to do.

LESSON #10 THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP HAS THREE STEPS

The first example of Hebrew poetry in the Book of Mormon is a chiasm in the first two verses. It is a seven-part chiasm: *owl*, *ge*, *record*, *language*, *learning of the Jews*, *language*, *record*, *knowledge*. The center point, which is the most important point, is “learning of the Jews”. The Lord is giving us the message at the very beginning of the Book of Mormon that the “learning of the Jews” will be important to understanding the Book of Mormon. A prime example of the “learning of the Jews” is the tabernacle. The Jews rejected Jesus at Mt Sinai, so He gave them a

picture of Himself in the form of the tabernacle. Jesus is the gospel in bodily form and the tabernacle is also a type for the gospel.

The holy place of the tabernacle has already been mentioned. The holy place has three pieces of furniture in it. These three pieces of furniture are a type for the three steps of the covenant relationship. The first piece of furniture in the holy place is the table of show bread. Jesus is called the bread of life. It is symbolic of the new, third principle of the gospel—come unto Me. The Book of Mormon tells us at least 26 times to repent, come unto Me and be baptized. This statement represents the second, third and fourth principles of the gospel. The next piece of furniture in the holy place is the golden candlestick, commonly called the Menorah. It is symbolic of both water and spiritual baptism. The center post is hollow, allowing oil to feed the seven lights. The oil is a liquid, symbolizing water and water baptism. The lights, of course, symbolize spiritual baptism. The third piece of furniture is the altar of incense. The incense represents prayers going up. Jesus prayed over everything and was directed in all that He did. He had the endowment. Covenant people also do whatever they are directed to do. Covenant people have died to self and have Jesus in them (3 Nephi 9:23, 30). They too have the endowment. They have given their all and now the Lord is able to give them this kind of power because they will only use it as He directs. The principle of laying on of hands comes after baptism. The altar of incense is symbolic of laying on of hands. This is not for the reception of the Holy Ghost because that was a part of the previous principle. Hands are symbolic of work. This is the kind of work that is directed by the Holy Ghost. This is the fruit. The three steps of the covenant relationship are come unto Me (Christ), where we make a covenant to serve Him and keep His commandments; baptisms, where we first make a public witness of the covenant (Alma 5:27) by being baptized in water; and then God responds by giving us the Holy Ghost to guide us and the laying on of hands which symbolizes the good works that are directed by the Holy Ghost, including the endowment.

The seven pieces of furniture in the tabernacle are symbolic of the seven principles of the gospel. It has been said that if there is a finite number of principles of the gospel there has to be seven and not six because seven is symbolic of perfection and six is symbolic of man and of the devil. We have always emphasized what we thought were the six principles of the gospel. We were blinded to the missing principle, come unto Me, which is the first step of the covenant relationship because we rejected the covenant relationship in the early 1830s. The seven principles are even listed in Hebrews 6:1-2. This is a seven-part Hebrew poetry list—each part beginning with “of”. “...of the doctrine of baptisms” is two principles and not one. There should be a comma after doctrine, which is the Bible equivalent of the common Book of Mormon phrase “come unto Me”. Doctrine means teaching in both Greek and Hebrew. After faith and repentance, we come unto Christ and He teaches us about a deeper commitment—the covenant relationship. The phrase “come unto Me” is found in the Bible 14 times but in the Book of Mormon at least 46 times.

Another Hebrew type for the three parts of the covenant is the ancient Hebrew wedding. Our weddings have only one part. The three parts of the ancient Hebrew wedding are the betrothal, which was considered a legal marriage requiring a divorce to break, the marriage ceremony and supper and the coming forth of the first child living. Then, and only then, did the wife (symbolic of the church) receive her full inheritance, meaning that if her husband dies, she can retain his name and his inheritance. The child is symbolic of Zion. This means we do not receive our full inheritance until we are a part of Zion.

After faith and repentance, we come unto Jesus as a teachable little child in total submission. This is the first step of our covenant relationship. Then we continue to submit ourselves by going into the waters of baptism. This is supposed to be a public witness of a spiritual covenant made previously (Alma 5:27). Then God does the rest. He baptizes us with the Holy Ghost. This completes the second step. The Holy Ghost directs us in everything and we are obedient. The resulting good works represent our fruit. This is the third step of the covenant. God completes the sixth and seventh principles through resurrection and eternal judgement. The seven principles then follow the same pattern as the final seven years, being divided into two three-and-a-half year periods. We do the first three-and-a-half principles, faith repentance, come unto Christ and water baptism and God does the last three-and-a-half.

LESSON #11 THE COVENANT RELATIONSHIP IS A MYSTERY

Colossians 1:26-27 tells us that the mystery is now made manifest to the saints which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Once we understand that the phrase "Christ in you" is a reference to one of the steps of the ancient Hebrew covenant (covered in Lesson #9) then we know that the mystery is referring to the covenant relationship.

The combination of two Book of Mormon verses also tells us that the covenant relationship is a mystery. Alma 9:18 tell us that if we will not harden our hearts we will know the mysteries of God. The next verse, 3 Nephi 9:92, defines what it means to not harden our hearts—"repent and come unto Me and be baptized in My name." We learned in Lesson #10 that to "come unto Me and be baptized" represents the first two steps of the three step covenant relationship. Therefore, to not harden means to have a covenant and to have the mystery of the covenant revealed.

The layout of the tabernacle built by Moses according to specifications given by God also gives us the message that the covenant is a mystery. The tabernacle has three parts: the outer court, the holy place and the holy of holies. The last two are hidden inside the tent. The holy place has three pieces of furniture which are symbolic of the three steps of the covenant. The fact that they are hidden inside the tent tells us that the covenant is a mystery which is revealed only to those who exercise faith and repentance.

The mystery of the covenant relationship has been hidden from us because of the decisions of a few of our spiritual ancestors. The Lord is now opening this mystery up to us just in time to use it just as He is preparing to take The Book of Mormon to the Lamanites to restore what they lost as a result of the decisions of a few of their ancestors. Ask the Lord for your own revelation of the covenant relationship.

LESSON #12 HOW DO I OBTAIN A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP?

The covenant relationship is strictly personal. It does not require a public ordinance like water baptism. It is only between you and the Lord. You cannot fool Him. He knows everything about you. If you are truly sincere then express to Him your desire to make a covenant to serve Him and keep His commandments (Mosiah 9:174-175). If you think you have a covenant but are not sure then ask Him and He will answer. One elder did this and the Lord answered him by giving

him a vision of Jesus Christ wearing his robe of filthy rags. The Lord will answer you in a way that is meaningful to you. This desire must be with full purpose of heart with no hypocrisy and no deception, but with real intent, repenting of your sins (2 Nephi 13:16).

We call 3 Nephi 5:39-40 Plan A and Plan B. Verse 39 is Plan A, the preferred sequence: repent and become as a little child and be baptized in My name. "Become as a little child" means come unto Me (3 Nephi 4:51) and represents the first step of the covenant relationship. Verse 40 is Plan B and appears to be the situation most of us are in. In this sequence, the second and third steps are reversed. The sequence is: "repent and be baptized in My name and become as a little child or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God". This verse says that repentance and baptism are not enough to inherit the kingdom of God. To the best of my understanding, this verse is contrary to our common belief. We did not know about the covenant relationship. Water baptism is certainly necessary, but it is a witness of what should have been the first step of the covenant relationship. How could it be a witness if it was never taught or known? Therefore, the Lord has provided Plan B so that we could take the first step of the covenant whenever we are ready. Then we will be ready for the third step, a necessary prerequisite for receiving the endowment.

Whatever our mindset is now, we will not be able to avoid making a covenant sooner or later. No matter how much we may dislike the idea of a covenant, we will eventually make a covenant, either with God or with the devil. The time for fence sitting will come to an end. God is completely in control of history and He will bring about events that will cause everyone to jump or fall off the fence and make a total commitment one way or the other. This is the very clear story of Lachoneus (3 Nephi 2). In this story, which is a perfect type for the final seven-year period, Lachoneus is a type for Jesus Christ and the Gaddianton* leader is a type for the devil. Everyone in their known world, which is a type for everyone in our world now, made a covenant with one leader or the other.

*This is not a misspelling. This is the spelling from the manuscripts as it appears in the Restored Covenant Edition of the Book of Mormon.