All Those Who
Have Dwindled in Unbelief
Shall not be Forgotten

Evidence that
The Book of Mormon Authors
Knew our Church Would
Help Save the Dead
If you Think me Deluded
Please try to Reclaim me

Dear reader, let me warn you up front, this is a painful book. I know how to write an enjoyable book. This isn’t it. Here’s a review of my last book.

Every once in a while you come across a book that lifts you up and you just want to share it with everyone you know. This is one of those books. It's wonderful to read about a whole group of people that have shared small parts of their lives to change the lives of thousands. Thank you for sharing your life and the amazing life of your son.

Angela Strebe, September 20, 2015

That’s one of the reviews on a book I wrote about my son. It's called "Wheelz." All the reviews are pretty much the same because it's a good story. I'm not a great writer, but I know the secret to good writing. I got it from Sole Stein, an excellent author/editor. I apologize that this is crude. But if you want to be a writer you will want to remember this.

"... our century has made the realization that sex has to be good for both partners. That is also the key to writing both fiction and nonfiction. It has to be a good experience for both partners, the
writer and the reader, and it is a source of distress to me to observe how frequently writers ignore the pleasure of their partners."

I spent five years writing that book. I think I met Sole's prime directive. My readers seem to enjoy the experience. That's all I need. I have spent twenty five years on this little book. Last month I had what was probably my tenth review on it. After I read the review I thought of titling this chapter "I am not a monster." Boy he was angry. I'm confident Mr. Stein would assign full blame to me. I do.

Keeping with Sole's analogy, I am back on the couch. I have tried so many introductions to try to brace my reader, all to no avail. This is my umpteenth attempt. So many times I've woken up in the middle of the night thinking I've found the right words only to realize by morning I've failed again. At least no one can accuse me of "sleeping through the restoration." Then when I think I'm soft enough I send this in for another painful review.

"Who do you think you are?" "I've never heard this before." "You think you have your own special insight above everyone else in the church." "I haven't heard a prophet say this." "These are merely your thoughts." Maybe I am a monster.

What really gets me is if we could just talk they would say "We need this." That has also been my experience all these years.

To be fair, I've had some kind reviews. But that was only because those people are kind. As an aside from my main thesis, I think I can show

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1 Stein on Writing, St. Martin's Griffin, New York, 1995, p 7.
Nephi knew we could help save the dead. To me that’s like unearthing a sign that says “Welcome to Zarahemla,” and no one even says “Hey we ought to look into that.” They are so mad at me they don’t care that I’m vindicating a prophet of God.

Here's my crime. I can show that the outline the Savior gave us in D&C 1 and 133 is the best framework for scripture on planet earth. This too vindicates Joseph Smith.

But we have a problem, and here’s where I cross the line. That framework cannot work unless we realize that our church, the Second Coming and the Millennium are integral parts of the plan of salvation.

And no matter how gently I say that, many of my readers are offended. I can’t count how many people have told me that we can’t do that because Abraham is exalted. Not only do a lot of us not include these in our depictions and discussions of the plan, many are prepared to argue we can’t and that we shouldn’t.

They say “Well no prophets have said our church is part of the plan.” Actually Elder Gordon B. Hinckley did. “Well that wasn’t recently.” Elder Russell M. Nelson said the same thing in 2006.

“What about Abraham? Surely he doesn’t need our church. How can something be part of the plan if it’s not for everyone?” I can (and I do in this article) quote prophets and scriptures that say Abraham needs our church notwithstanding he is a God.

If we have prophets that say our church is part of the plan, don’t we want to find the prophets and scriptures and reasoning to sustain them?
Shouldn’t we cheer anyone on who wants to prove our prophets are on solid doctrinal ground?

But I lose readers the moment I imply we’re missing something. To readers who already teach these things I apologize because I sound like I’m the only one teaching them. And that surely cannot be true.

If I answer a challenge with a quote from a prophet, then it’s my “tone” that offends. Well I think many of us could learn a lesson about tone. I stand in my ward and announce “I know this church is true.” My non-member friend tells me that’s like fingernails on a chalk board. To him it is pure arrogance. No matter how sincere I am, he still gets the message, his church isn’t true. So I can say “You might want to try including this in the plan” and all my reader hears is “You left something out.” Notice my tone in this paragraph.

Tell older members of the church that the Millennium is part of the plan to prepare them to become like God and for many that is a new thought. Then ask them "How does that make you feel?" Invariably their answer will include the word "hope." I assume that's because older people are more aware of their imperfections and slow progress. For them (myself included) becoming like God is quite daunting.

My reviewer responded, "Many are just too kind to tell the author how far off base this concept is." I wasn’t joking about spending twenty five years on this. I don’t know how to say these things any kinder.

Psychologist and Philosopher William James once wrote,
True genius is the ability to see things in an un-habitual way. It is the greatest gift one human being can give another, the very essence of freedom, because in seeing things differently and sharing that new view one opens up more space for communion, for confidence, and for love.ii

I’m no genius, but I’m trying to share, what will be for many, a new view. I will be the first to admit my tone reveals some exasperation. I will also admit some pride. This is quite a find and there is a place in my heart that wants a little credit. But twice I have asked more skilled writers to take this from me without mentioning my name. I need the sleep. I believe I have found something tremendously valuable that I want to share and I do believe it will open communication. I think I’ve just scratched the surface and better minds than mine will expand this view.

But what Mr. James didn’t mention is that people hate new views. Because it implies there was something wrong with their old view. If your old view doesn’t notice the tiger in the grass, and someone is screaming, tone should be your least concern.

After studying these things for so many years I have become pretty good at knowing what we don’t see on this subject. I can show the reader a few blind spots. But I warn you this can be painful. I’ll ask some questions and try to predict the reader’s answers.

Question: Are the Second Coming and Millennium important parts of the plan of salvation?
Answer: Of course.

Question: What will we do in the Millennium?
Answer: Temple work and missionary work.

Question: Will there be non-members in the Millennium?
Answer: Yes we believe those who can abide a terrestrial law (the good people of the earth) will be in the Millennium.

Question: You’re aware we’ll be taught by Christ in that realm?
Answer: Yeah I know that.

I know we know that. But when I ask “What will we do in the Millennium?” No one ever says that without a little prompting.

Now this eye test has become a heart test. If this makes a reader mad, I’m sorry. Offending my reader is the last thing I want. If we were face to face my eyes and tone would tell you when I say “I know we know that” that I know you know that.

I give high marks for the person who would rather do temple work than learn from Christ how He made the earth. But as for me I know what class I would sign up for. I think most people would agree. Then why is learning from Christ our second answer if we bring it up at all? I think that’s because we’re not used to seeing that realm as part of the plan for our own salvation.
I think that gives us something to talk about. For instance, why do we have Terrestrial rooms in our temples? I’ll leave that for the reader to pursue. But it is doctrinally sound that we will go through a millennial experience before we inherit a Celestial earth. That discussion may turn some lights on for some.

Regardless I can, with full confidence, teach that the Millennium is part of the plan because Elder Dallin H. Oakes taught it. He taught,

Many of the most important deprivations of mortality will be set right in the Millennium, which is the time for fulfilling all that is incomplete in the great plan of happiness for all of our Father’s worthy children. We know that will be true of temple ordinances. I believe it will also be true of family relationships and experiences.” (Elder Dallin H. Oakes, October Conference 1993 “The Great Plan of Happiness).

I would lose my job if I taught the Millennium is not part of the plan. And my reviewer would probably have no problem with that. His objection, I am sure, is me teaching it is a time of preparation. Elder Oakes was not teaching the Millennium prepares us for godhood. But the Savior did. He taught that when He comes He will “reveal all things—things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof” (D&C 101:33).

Surely learning how to make an earth will help us become more like God. For heaven’s sake, basketball rims in our chapels can help us become more like God.
Indeed we are told there will be things revealed in the dispensation of the fullness of times (which includes the Millennium) that are necessary to know for a fullness of our Glory (See D&C 121:26-31) I really don't know what that means. But it suggests that that knowledge will help us be more like God. Moreover Christ taught that this was planned.

According to that which was ordained in the midst of the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods before this world was, that should be reserved unto the finishing and the end thereof, when every man shall enter into his eternal presence and into his immortal rest (D&C 121:32).

In the Gospel Principles manual we read, “Jesus will “reign over the Saints and come down and instruct” (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith [2007], 258).” The only way the Millennium could not prepare us for godhood is if there is no progression in that realm.

So the author of our faith will finish our redemption in the Millennium (see also D&C 45:46 and D&C 77:12). And oh we need this, because if we can agree that the Millennium is part of the plan, then we can use the Savior's framework. Then we can go to the Exodus story, which we always teach is a type of the plan, and look for the Millennium. And when we find it we have a new view and something to talk about.

My experience has been people like the thought that when Jesus comes our “redemption shall be perfected” (D&C 45:46) It does offer hope. If

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iii Gospel Principles chapter 25.
the reader already knows these things that’s great. Surely many do, but for many it is a new idea.

So if my tone is okay and my thought inspiring, why did my reviewer get so mad? I believe it’s because he’s been charged with protecting the doctrine. I honestly think he is being true to the Brethren. We must look with the utmost scrutiny at some nobody promoting a new idea. But this is not a new doctrine. It may be new to those who have not looked at these things in this way. It is actually a small shift, such as instead of seeing our church as being for most of mankind, we need to see it as for all mankind. And our prophets have said that repeatedly.

After that review I thought I’m done with this. But then I realized he made my point. He knows his stuff and yet this was new to him. There is a need.

So dear reader if you think I’m prideful, you’re right. If you think my tone is harsh, I’ll own that as well. If you think I act like I’m the only one who sees this, I apologize. But none of this matters. There is only one question we should be asking, “Is this true?” (Is there really a tiger in the grass?) And (as Joseph Smith suggested) if you suppose me to be deluded please be my friend and treat me kindly and endeavor in a proper and affectionate manner to reclaim me (see JS-History 1:28).

I hope to show that:

The framework for scripture given by the Savior in the Doctrine and Covenants is a marvelous framework.
The scattering, the atonement, Zion (in this paper that always means our latter-day church), the gathering, the Second Coming and the Millennium are the most repeated doctrines in scripture and they are important parts of the plan of salvation.

Nephi and others saw these doctrines as being for themselves as well as for all those who would die in unbelief. Therefore they knew our church would help save the dead.

When Joseph Smith translated The Book of Mormon he did not know our church was for the salvation of the human family.
A Book Written by God

When I ask my teacher friends “Are the Second Coming and Millennium important parts of the plan?” The answer is always “Of course.” That’s strange because we seldom, if ever, see these things in any depictions of the plan. I think we say “Of course” because to say “No” would be absurd. I’m really not sure. I know of teachers who do include these things. But I know most of our youth don’t see these things in the plan.

When I ask the youth “Where will a righteous member go after Spirit Paradise?” they invariably say “The Celestial Kingdom.” That is technically true. But I seldom, if ever, hear the Millennium mentioned. But if I then ask them “What does it mean to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection?” they always say “To rise from the dead and come with Christ at his Second Coming.”

It’s like we have two models in our heads. We have a marvelous work and a wonder (restoration) model and a plan of salvation model--like we’re looking through a pair of binoculars but both sides are not connected, so we see two pictures.

We can combine those two picture by bringing the sides of the binoculars together until they line up on one picture. And when we do, it is a bigger, clearer picture.
I said this is a small shift. But it’s like the slight shift of a small piece of metal (a switch plate) on a railroad track. It can take us to a whole new destination.

Speaking of new views, philosopher G. K. Chesterton wrote,

The Christian Church in its practical relation to my soul is a living teacher, not a dead one. It not only certainly taught me yesterday, but will almost certainly teach me tomorrow. Once I saw suddenly the meaning of the shape of the cross; some day I may see suddenly the meaning the shape of the mitre . . . Plato told you a truth; but Plato is dead. Shakespeare has startled you with an image; but Shakespeare will not startle you with any more. But imagine what it would be to live with such men still living, to know that Plato might break out with an original lecture tomorrow, or that at any moment Shakespeare might shatter everything with a single song. The man who lives in contact with what he believes to be a living Church is a man always expecting to meet Plato and Shakespeare tomorrow for breakfast. He is always expecting to see some truth that he has never seen before.

This therefore, is, in conclusion, my reason for accepting the religion and not merely the scattered and secular truths out of the religion. I do it because the thing has not merely
told this truth or that truth, but has revealed itself as a truth-telling thing.iv

Likewise Ellen F. Davis of Duke Divinity school taught,

Whenever we pick up the Bible, read it, put it down, and say, “That’s just what I thought,” we are probably in trouble . . . Using the text to confirm our presuppositions is sinful; it is an act of resistance against God’s fresh speaking to us, an effective denial that the Bible is the word of the living God.v

In a similar vein, James Faulconer of the BYU Philosophy Department, taught, “Mormons read the scriptures to make sure they say the same thing they said the last time they read them.”vi

I’m confident most of us have read the scriptures in both ways. We don’t need what I am proposing to find new things in the scriptures. But what follows is a tool that can help the scriptures be an even greater truth giving thing.

To me that tool is analogous to a pair of Mickey Mouse glasses. As guests disembark from their boats on the Pirates of the Caribbean ride they pass under three barrels. Those barrels are Mickey Mouse.

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v Ellen F. Davis, Duke Divinity School, also a quote from Kedrick Bassett.

vi Quoted to me by my friend Kedrick Bassett.
Two of them are his ears and one is his face. Disney fans say there are well over three hundred hidden Mickeys inside Disneyland. Just knowing that helps us look for him as we go throughout that park.

Suppose they gave us Mickey Mouse finder glasses at the entrance gate. Suppose, when you come upon a hidden Mickey they outlined him on our lenses, shown a light on him, and made him three-D. Those Imagineers could probably invent such a tool. We know of such a tool for scripture. Nephi gave it to us. He taught, “and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him” (2 Nephi 11:4). Those who use that tool find Christ everywhere in scripture as well as in nature.

Let’s suppose Mickey was known for having six jobs. He was a steamboat captain, Merlin’s assistant, etc. And suppose they made glasses that identified and shed light on each of those roles. This book is about a similar pair of glasses for Christ’s roles detailed in scripture. But those glasses can’t work unless we realize Nephi knew our church would help save the people of his day. Those glasses help us see that, but we need to see that for them to work. They’re difficult to get used to. But they’re worth the effort. The effort requires being open to see new things.

Instead of describing how the glasses are made I ask the reader to just try them on. And if you like what you see we can talk.
A Church For All Mankind

In the first chapter of Isaiah the Lord prophesied “And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city” (Isaiah 1:26). That faithful city is the latter-day Zion. It is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The context of that prophecy is straightforward. Isaiah was talking to his wayward people (see Isaiah 1:1–15).

However for most latter-day saints that context is not that straightforward. We think Isaiah was talking to us. After all, we too are the house of Israel. We can liken his words unto ourselves. Indeed we live in that city. Those within the pages of the Bible never had a Bible. Like The Book of Mormon, we believe the Bible was compiled for our day. Therefore when we read latter-day prophecies we tend to think of latter-day saints. But such thoughts can cause us to miss the full beauty and grandeur of many of those prophesies. The context of almost all of them is this, they were talking to their people.
It may be unwise to suggest how people think. But here’s a question that reveals our thoughts. Ask a well versed member of the church, “Why would Nebuchadnezzar care about that stone?” The answer will most likely be “I’m not sure he would care. His dream seems to be more for us than him.” I have asked that question of my scholarly friends for the last twenty five years. Never has anyone said, “Nebuchadnezzar’s salvation depends on that stone.” But his salvation does depend on that stone.

Surely our God wasn’t mocking him by telling him his kingdom would lose in the end. No doubt He was trying to save him and his people. It stands to reason He was offering them hope, a reason to repent. If they did repent they could be part of that latter-day kingdom. I think it is safe to say He was telling them how He planned to save them and all mankind. One thing is for certain, no matter how much He was talking to us, He was talking to them about the church that would someday save them.

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught.

“Ours is a vision greater than that granted any other people who have walked the earth. It encompasses all of the sons and daughters of God of all generations of time, those who have walked the earth, those now upon the earth, and those
yet to come upon the earth. For the salvation and eternal life of all of these we have a responsibility.”

We have that vision. We know our church is not limited by time. We understand our responsibility. We have no problem with the idea that ancient prophets could have had that vision. It’s just that when we read the scriptures we generally don’t consider they did. When we read “for I did liken all scriptures unto us” (1 Nephi 19:23) we usually say, “You see students we can apply the scriptures to ourselves.” But Nephi wasn’t talking to us. He was telling his brothers that Isaiah’s words applied to them. Joseph Smith taught, “The building up of Zion is a cause that has interested the people of God in every age . . .” Why? Because it meant everything to them.

President Hinckley, on another occasion, spoke of the mission of the church that

Contemplates all generations of mankind—those who have gone before, all who live upon the earth, and those who will yet be born. It is larger than any race or nation or generation. It encompasses all mankind. It is a cause

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without parallel. The fruits of its labors are everlasting in
their consequences.”

We can assume if God gave the ancients a prophecy about the
church, whose mission “encompasses all mankind,” He would
explain that to them. And yet nowhere in the Bible (that I know of)
does anyone say “the latter-day Zion is for us.” Thank heavens we
have Book of Mormon prophets who did. Nephi put it this way, “and
it meaneth us in the days to come.”

Nevertheless, after they shall be nursed by the Gentiles,
and the Lord has lifted up his hand upon the Gentiles and
set them up for a standard, and their children have been
carried in their arms, and their daughters have been carried
upon their shoulders, behold these things of which are
spoken are temporal; for thus are the covenants of the Lord
with our fathers; and it meaneth us in the days to come, and
also all our brethren who are of the house of Israel (1 Nephi
22:6).

Those days to come are the latter-days. We know that standard to be
set up is the restored gospel. And yet Nephi was claiming our church
for his family, as well as all the house of Israel. Later Nephi asked

ix President Hinckley, Gordon B. Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 70; or Ensign,
May 1982, 46.
his brother Jacob to speak to his brothers about that same verse. Again it is helpful to remember he was talking to his brothers.

And now, behold, I would speak unto you concerning things which are, and which are to come; wherefore, I will read you the words of Isaiah. And they are the words which my brother has desired that I should speak unto you. And I speak unto you for your sakes, that ye may learn and glorify the name of your God” (2 Nephi 6:4, italics added).

And now, the words which I shall read are they which Isaiah spake concerning all the house of Israel; wherefore, they may be likened unto you, for ye are of the house of Israel. And there are many things which have been spoken by Isaiah which may be likened unto you, because ye are of the house of Israel (2 Nephi 6:5, italics added).

And now, these are the words: Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders (2 Nephi 6:6).

That word “all” can be tricky. It can be qualified. Eve, after all, was technically not the mother of all living. So when Nephi and Jacob said these things are for all, they could have meant all of Israel living
in the last days. But they included their generation, “which may be likened unto you” (2 Nephi 22:5), when they said “all.” Therefore it appears they really meant all.

That verse about that standard to be raised was the center of Nephi’s commentary on two chapters of Isaiah (Isaiah 48 and 49). Before he read those chapters to his brothers he said who they were for.

Wherefore I spake unto them, saying: Hear ye the words of the prophet, ye who are a remnant of the house of Israel, a branch who have been broken off; hear ye the words of the prophet, which were written unto all the house of Israel, and liken them unto yourselves, that ye may have hope as well as your brethren from whom ye have been broken off; for after this manner has the prophet written (1 Nephi 19:24).

Those “from whom [they had] been broken off” ended up in Babylon. They were brought into bondage because they, like the ten tribes, hardened their hearts against the Holy One of Israel (see 1 Nephi 22:5). The chapter heading for the first chapter Nephi read (1 Nephi 20) reads, “The Lord reveals his purposes for Israel—Israel has been chosen in the furnace in affliction and are to go forth from Babylon, compare Isaiah 48.”
The Lord prophesied that furnace would do its job. “And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin” (Isaiah 1:25). Being torn from home and family, being scattered and made to serve in bondage must have refined many of them. And yet most of Israel, even if penitent, would find themselves without the gospel in this life and in Spirit Prison in the life to come. Perhaps that is why Nephi quoted the next chapter of Isaiah. It talks about the prisoners being freed from Spirit Prison (see 1 Nephi 21:9), the Lord assuring Israel He had not forgotten them (see 1 Nephi 21:14–16), and that standard to be raised in the last days (see 1 Nephi 21:22).

In conjunction with that standard, Nephi spoke of a “marvelous work” and the Lord bringing about his covenants and his gospel (see 1 Nephi 22). He centered on our church.

But it is to whom he said our church is for that is instructive. He began his commentary with, “And since they [the ten tribes] have been led away these things have been prophesied concerning them, and also concerning all those who shall hereafter be scattered and be confounded . . .” (1 Nephi 22:5, italics added).

Combining his introduction to those Isaiah chapters with the beginning of his commentary, it is as if he said, “The latter-day Zion is for those who have been scattered, those who are now being scattered, and those who would hereafter be scattered and
confounded. It is for all the house of Israel.” He sounds a lot like President Hinckley.

Orson Pratt observed, “There is no one thing more fully revealed in the scripture of eternal truth, than the rise of the Zion of our God in the Latter-days.” Nephi just told us why. He was claiming our church for Laman and Lemuel as well as his righteous brothers, as well as so many Israelites on their way to hell.

Nephi said Isaiah’s words offered hope to all the house of Israel. The phrase, “That thou mayest say to the prisoners: Go forth” (1 Nephi 21:9), could give them hope. But can they “go forth” without baptism? Is hope possible without baptism? Nephi didn’t seem to think so. He later wrote, “I also have charity for the Gentiles. But behold, for none of these can I hope except they shall be reconciled unto Christ, and enter into the narrow gate, and walk in the strait path which leads to life, and continue in the path until the end of the day of probation” (2 Nephi 33:9).

We cannot say Nephi knew we would do baptisms for the dead. But how else could our church offer ancient Israel hope? There is no hope in telling wayward people, “Although you’re going to hell at least your children will be saved.” Hope is deeply personal. Notwithstanding all our Savior has done for us, without access to his

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atonement, we are hopeless. The atonement makes salvation possible. Zion makes it available. And Nephi centered on Zion.

Surely Israel felt hopeless in Babylon. In those Isaiah chapters, Nephi read “But, behold, Zion hath said: The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me—but he will show that he hath not” (1 Nephi 21:14, italics added). Those italicized words are not found in the Bible. They offer an impressive prophecy.

Nebuchadnezzar’s outlandish demands for the interpretation of his dream must have reverberated throughout Babylon. God did indeed show them, in a spectacular way, he had not forgotten them. Seeing that prophecy dramatically fulfilled and understanding (perhaps with the help of Daniel) what our church would offer them, could have given them hope.

Being “reconciled unto Christ” goes hand in hand with Israel being gathered to their lands of inheritance. On this subject, Mormon also said “all.” He explained,

And behold, they [the words of The Book of Mormon] shall go unto the unbelieving of the Jews; and for this intent shall they go—that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath
given them, unto the fulfilling of his covenant (Mormon 5:14)

On this subject, President Marion G. Romney taught,

These predictions by the Book of Mormon prophets make it perfectly clear that the restoration of the house of Israel to the lands of their inheritance will signal their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Redeemer, to which I testify, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen."\(^{\text{xi}}\)

Can we accept Jesus as our Redeemer without joining his church? Jacob taught,

And now, my beloved brethren, I have read these things that ye might know concerning the covenants of the Lord that he has covenanted with all the house of Israel-

That he has spoken unto the Jews, by the mouth of his holy prophets, even from the beginning down, from generation to generation, until the time comes that they shall be restored to the true church and fold of God; when they shall be gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and shall

\(^{\text{xi}}\) President Marion G. Romney, 1981 April General Conference, Saturday Morning Session.
be established in all their lands of promise (2 Nephi 9:1–2).

Remember, in this context, when they said “Jews,” they meant “all the house of Israel” (see Mormon 5:14). If they are all to be gathered to the lands of their inheritance, then they will all have to accept Christ and be restored to the true church and fold of God.

Does “all” include the dead? Ezekiel was one of those prophets who, from generation to generation, spoke on this subject. He wrote,

Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel (Ezekiel 37:11–12, italics added).

With that prophecy, we might wonder if “all” includes any living? We believe the gathering includes the dead. Elder Russell M. Nelson taught, “We are part of a great movement—the gathering of scattered Israel. I speak of this doctrine today because of its unique
importance in God’s eternal plan.”xii He included “... we help to gather the elect of the Lord on both sides of the veil.”xiii And, “This dispensation of the fullness of times would not be limited in time or in location.”xiv It seems like the ancient prophets saw the gathering the same way.

Commenting on the allegory of Zenos (which is the quintessential chapter on the gathering), Jacob exclaimed, “how merciful is our God unto us, for he remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches” (Jacob 6:4, italics added). Branches need roots and roots need branches. We are all in this together. We all need The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The roots are ancient Israel. “And, behold, the roots ... are yet alive” (Jacob 5:54).

If Elder Nelson says the gathering of our dispensation is important in “God’s eternal plan,” can we include our church in our depictions of the plan? Some may suppose that for something to be included in “the plan” it must be for all. Therefore they may reason we can’t include it because Abraham was exalted without our church. Maybe President Hinckley meant our church is for all except a few like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That word “all” can be tricky.

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xiii Ibid., p. 79.
xiv Ibid., p. 80.
Elder John Taylor may help us here. He gives a plausible answer to how Nephi, who held the Melchizedek priesthood, and likely the sealing power (see 2 Nephi 33:13) could say our church was for them?

The ancient Nephites who lived on the earth, those men of God who, through faith, wrought righteousness, accomplished a good work and obtained exaltation, are as much interested in the welfare of their descendants as we are, and a good deal more; and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and those ancient men of God who once lived on the earth, and who yet live, are as much interested in the accomplishment of God’s purposes as we are, and a good deal more . . . We are not alone in these things, others are operating with us, I mean all the men of God who ever lived, and they are as much interested as we are, and a good deal more, for they know more, and “they without us cannot be made perfect” neither can we be perfected without them. . . . there is a combination of earthly beings and of heavenly beings, all under the influence of the same priesthood, which is an everlasting priesthood, and whose administrations are effective in time and in eternity. We are
all operating together, to bring about the same things and
to accomplish the same purposes.\textsuperscript{xv}

Thus even exalted Abraham participates in and will benefit from the
latter-day Zion. Paul wrote, “That in the dispensation of the fulness
of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both
which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him”
(Ephesians 1:10). Someone being in heaven doesn’t exclude him
from the gathering and other blessings of the restoration. In fact,
Joseph Smith taught that there was knowledge to be revealed in our
dispensation “Which our forefathers have awaited with anxious
expectation to be revealed in the last times, which their minds were
pointed to by the angels, as held in reserve for the fulness of their
glory” (D&C 121:27).

Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder
and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). That city is the latter-day Zion.
Thus God spoke of the restitution of all things “by the mouth of all
his holy prophets since the world began” (Acts 3:21). When the
ancients drew the plan of salvation, our church was in the picture. In
fact President Hinckley said our church is the picture. He taught,
“Keep before you the big picture, for this cause is as large as all

mankind and as broad as all eternity. This is the church and kingdom of God.”\(^{\text{xvi}}\)

We ought to include Zion in the plan because Zion is the plan. Brigham Young taught, “This is the Gospel; this is the plan of salvation; this is the Kingdom of God; this is the Zion that has been spoken and written of by all the Prophets since the world began. This is the work of Zion which the Lord has promised to bring forth.”\(^{\text{xvii}}\)

When that standard is raised and Israel’s seed is nourished they are not all the house of Israel. They are Israel’s seed living in the last days. Perhaps that’s why Nephi said “these things of which are spoken are temporal” (1 Nephi 22:6). But that standard (which includes that seed) will bless all mankind spiritually. Maybe that’s why he said these things are “both temporal and spiritual” (see 1 Nephi 22:1–3 and 1 Nephi 15:31–32). Nephi continued,

> And after 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; wherefore, it is likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles and being carried in their arms and upon their shoulders.

\(^{\text{xvi}}\) President Gordon B. Hinckley, Conference Report, Apr. 1982,70; or Ensign, May 1982, 46.

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 22:8–9, italics added).

We understand how Abraham’s seed will bless all the families of the earth. We understand how our mission encompasses all mankind. Evidently so does Nephi because he then taught that blessing all the kindreds of the earth necessitated the Lord establishing his church in the last days.

And I would, my brethren that ye should know that all the kindreds of the earth cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations, in bringing about his covenants and his gospel unto those who are of the house of Israel (1 Nephi 22:10–11).

And then he said “wherefore.” “Wherefore” means “as a consequence of.” As a consequence of God “bringing about his covenants and his gospel, He will save the dead. Nephi continued,

Wherefore, he will bring them again out of captivity and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their
inheritance; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness; and they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel (1 Nephi 22:12).

Who are they? They are who Nephi said these prophecies are for—those who hardened their hearts against the Holy One of Israel (see 1 Nephi 22:5). Even though they had been freed from Babylon and Assyria, they would need to be brought out of captivity “again.”

Of that captivity, Isaiah taught “That thou mayest say to the prisoners: Go forth” (1 Nephi 21:9). We teach that has reference to salvation for the dead (see 1 Nephi 21:9a). Nephi seems to be commenting on that verse. Right before that verse, Isaiah taught that Israel shall “inherit the desolate heritages” (1 Nephi 21:8). Nephi spoke of them being gathered “to the lands of their inheritance” (1 Nephi 22:12). Isaiah wrote about those who “sit in darkness” showing themselves (see 1 Nephi 21:9). Nephi said they would “be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness” (see 1 Nephi 22:12).

Maybe they’ll be brought out of obscurity by children who search out their kindred dead.

In Nephi’s commentary he said our church was for “all the house of Israel” three times (see 1 Nephi 19:24 and 1 Nephi 22:1–12). Considering Israel’s history, we can assume a lot, if not most of
them will end up in Spirit Prison. If our church can’t help get them out, then saying it is for all of them doesn’t make any sense.

It would have been nice if he, who delighted in plainness, had said, “In the last days God will establish a temple that will bless all mankind, including my people.” Actually that’s exactly what he did say. Before he again quoted Isaiah’s writings extensively, which are packed with prophecies about our day, right before he read about a temple to be built in Utah xviii (see 2 Nephi 12:1–3; this could include all latter-day temples), he taught, “And now I write some of the words of Isaiah, that whoso of my people shall see these words may lift up their hearts and rejoice for all men. Now these are the words, and ye may liken them unto you and unto all men” (2 Nephi 11:8).

I think Nephi would argue that word “all” is not that tricky.

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Did They Know the Gospel
Would be Preached to The Dead?

King Benjamin described two groups who are considered blameless after death. The first is those who die without the gospel. "For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned" (Mosiah 3:11). The second are children who die before the age of accountability. “For behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just; and the infant perisheth not that dieth in his infancy” (Mosiah 3:18).

Surely if he thought there was an advantage in ignorance, he would not have gone to such great lengths to teach his people. Rather he taught, “And even at this time, when thou shalt have taught thy people the things which the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, even then are they found no more blameless in the sight of God” (Mosiah 3:22).

The idea that those who die in their ignorance are covered by the atonement, but his people were now without excuse, could have
caused some of them to have concerns. However King Benjamin had already addressed such concerns. Earlier he taught,

And moreover, I say unto you, that the time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. And behold, when that time cometh, none shall be found blameless before God, except it be little children, only through repentance and faith on the name of the Lord God Omnipotent (Mosiah 3:20–21).

He went from two blameless groups after death to one. Once the gospel goes to every people then only little children will be blameless. Those who die in their ignorance do not remain in their ignorance.

On the same subject, Abinidi taught, “And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord” (Mosiah 15:24).

Surely if Abinidi thought those who die in their ignorance automatically get eternal life he would not have risked his life to
share the gospel. Indeed he would not have said anything to anybody about it. He, like King Benjamin, taught,

And now I say unto you that the time shall come that the salvation of the Lord shall be declared to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

Yea, Lord, thy watchmen shall lift up their voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God (Mosiah 15:28–30).

Jerusalem was laid waste when Israel was scattered. They are who Nephi was talking about—those from whom they had been broken off. God will comfort them. He will redeem them. That will be accomplished when the Lord makes “bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations.” The Lord making bare his arm is the restoration of His church (see 1 Nephi 22:11). At that time and especially at his Second
Coming “all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Mosiah 15:30, italics added).

If these things didn’t pertain to their people then why bring them up? “You priests need to repent. Hold on a second. Those of you reading this need to know the gospel will go to everyone in your day. How neat for you. Now where was I?”

No, they were talking to their people. For wicked priests (recipients of Abinidi’s message) who would likely end up in hell, and parents (recipients of King Benjamin’s message) with children who would refuse to be baptized, that message may prove to be the most pertinent of all.

The Savior quoted, “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God” (3 Nephi 16:20). Immediately afterwards He told the people to go home, ponder, pray, and prepare their minds that they might understand (see 3 Nephi 17:2–3). Why? And why repeat that passage (see 3 Nephi 20:35) if getting it on the record was all He cared about?
Did They Know Spirits in Hell Could be Redeemed?

Jacob told his brothers that they could “rejoice, and lift up [their] heads forever, because of the blessings which the Lord God shall bestow upon [their] children” (2 Nephi 9:3). But many of their children would perish because of unbelief (2 Nephi 10:2). Therefore, many of their children would end up in Spirit Prison. That went directly to Jacob’s point—God prepared a way to get them out.

“O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit” (2 Nephi 9:10). As we will see, to escape is not just keeping people out of hell, it includes getting people out.

Of that deliverance Jacob continued, “and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored one to the other”
(2 Nephi 9:12). After Jacob included a description of those delivered from Paradise (see 2 Nephi 9:13), he continued,

And it shall come to pass that when all men shall have passed from this first death unto life, insomuch as they have become immortal, they must appear before the judgment-seat of the Holy One of Israel.

And assuredly, as the Lord liveth . . . they who are righteous shall be righteous still, and they who are filthy shall be filthy still; wherefore, they who are filthy are the devil and his angels; and they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them (2 Nephi 9:15–16).

The moment Jacob taught that those in hell are judged, he was teaching there is salvation for the dead. That is unless they are all sent back. That would make their escape from that awful monster a cruel joke.

Enoch saw, “And as many of the spirits as were in prison came forth, and stood on the right hand of God; and the remainder were reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day” (Moses 7:57). There is only one obstinate group that will return to hell. Of them the Lord says “they shall return again to their own place” (D&C 88:32).
That which breaketh a law, and abideth not by law, but seeketh to become a law unto itself, and willeth to abide in sin, and altogether abideth in sin, cannot be sanctified by law, neither by mercy, justice, nor judgment. Therefore, they must remain filthy still (D&C 88:35).

Wherefore, he saves all except them [sons of Perdition]—they shall go away into everlasting punishment, which is endless punishment, which is eternal punishment, to reign with the devil and his angels in eternity, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, which is their torment (D&C 76:44).

Evidently Endless punishment is forever for one group. That last verse sounds like Jacob.

And . . . they who are filthy shall be filthy still; wherefore, they who are filthy are the devil and his angels; and they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them; and their torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever and has no end (2 Nephi 9:16).

Apparently there is an exception to “all” after all.
Did They Know God Would Save Those Who Die in Unbelief

There are many verses in The Book of Mormon that can be read two ways. For example verses teaching that God will gather Israel to their lands of inheritance could refer to the living, the dead, or both. We know the answer is “both.” But we don’t always know the mind of the author. The following verse doesn’t seem to leave any such questions. Nephi taught,

After my seed and the seed of my brethren shall have dwindled in unbelief, and shall have been smitten by the Gentiles . . . and after they shall have been brought down low in the dust, even that they are not, yet the words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten (2 Nephi 26:15).

After their seed have dwindled in unbelief and after they are dead (“brought down low to the dust, even that they are not,”) they shall not be forgotten. Indeed “all those who have dwindled in unbelief
shall not be forgotten.” They are unmistakably dead. They died in unbelief. And yet none of them will be forgotten. All we need ask is what does it mean to be remembered?

We know it is God who will remember them (see Enos 1:13–18; 1 Nephi 21:14–16; 2 Nephi 29:2; Jacob 6:4; D&C 3:18–19). We cannot assume He, at some point in eternity, says, “Oh that’s right I remember those who dwindled and died in unbelief—too bad they messed up.” If that’s all the words of the righteous and prayers of the faithful can yield then it is a useless promise. Obviously the God of the universe has a good memory. To remember them means to save them to some degree or it means nothing at all. Isaiah prophesied,

But, behold, Zion hath said: The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me—but he will show that he hath not.

For can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. O house of Israel.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me (1 Nephi 21:14–16.)

Wilford Woodruff, referring to this passage in Isaiah, said, “Any man who has ever read the book of Isaiah . . . can see that he, with
other prophets, had his eye upon the latter-day Zion of God.”

Hence, the Lord connects remembering Israel to his Atonement (palms) and his church (walls). To remember them is to save them. Long before any of Lehi’s seed dwindled in unbelief, God promised Abraham he would remember them. “I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever” (2 Nephi 29:14). Evidently he remembers all his children. “and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile” (2 Nephi 26:33). We cannot assume he remembers only the lucky heathens living in the last days. Jacob spoke of many of their children perishing in unbelief and yet they would be restored to the knowledge of Christ.

For behold, the promises which we have obtained are promises unto us according to the flesh; wherefore, as it has been shown unto me that many of our children shall perish in the flesh because of unbelief, nevertheless, God will be merciful unto many; and our children shall be restored, that they may come to that which will give them the true knowledge of their Redeemer (2 Nephi 10:2).

That word “many” seems contrary to Jacob teaching that all the house of Israel will be restored to the true church and fold of God.

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It seems contrary to Nephi teaching that all who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten. Those brothers said “all” all the time. This time Jacob said “many.”

That word “many” makes God sound capricious, like many will perish because of unbelief but that’s okay because He will save many in the end. But Jacob didn’t say “many of our children shall be restored,” probably because all of them will be.

The context of that verse helps. In the preceding verse we read, “And now I, Jacob, speak unto you again, my beloved brethren, concerning this righteous branch of which I have spoken” (2 Nephi 10:1).

This is a promise “according to the flesh.” Not all, in the flesh, will be that righteous branch—albeit many will be. The result of that branch being righteous is “our children, [all of them], shall be restored, that they may come to that which will give them the true knowledge of their Redeemer” (2 Nephi 10:2). God will be merciful unto as many as will accept his latter-day gospel and they in turn will help bless those who perished in unbelief.

As noted earlier, Nephi taught that when that standard is raised, and Israel’s seed is carried, they will, in turn, bless all the house of Israel. Concerning that righteous branch he wrote,
And now, the thing which our father meaneth concerning the grafting in of the natural branches through the fulness of the Gentiles, is, that in the latter days, when our seed shall have dwindled in unbelief, yea, for the space of many years, and many generations after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed—(1 Nephi 15:1).

And at that day shall the remnant of our seed know that they are of the house of Israel, and that they are the covenant people of the Lord; and then shall they know and come to the knowledge of their forefathers, and also to the knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers by him; wherefore, they shall come to the knowledge of their Redeemer and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved (1 Nephi 15:13–14).

Wherefore, our father hath not spoken of our seed alone, but also of all the house of Israel, pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days; which covenant the Lord made to our father Abraham, saying: In thy seed
shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed (1 Nephi 15:18)

Often, in The Book of Mormon, when it speaks of that remnant in the last days, it is followed by the blessing of all (see 1 Nephi 13:39–40; 1 Nephi 22:6–9; 2 Nephi 3:5–13; 2 Nephi 21:11–12; 2 Nephi 30:3–8; 3 Nephi 5:23–26; 3 Nephi 16:4–5; 3 Nephi 20:25–30; 3 Nephi 21; Mormon 3:18–22; Mormon 5:9–14; Ether 13:6–11). That word “many” is consistent with that.

I pause here with a word of caution. G. K. Chesterton once wrote “A teacher that is not dogmatic is simply a teacher who is not teaching.” At times I come across dogmatically. But all my words need to be checked with scripture and the words of the prophets, especially regarding what follows.

I’ve heard it suggested there might be some indication that King Benjamin’s sermon was given during the Feast of Tabernacles. I like the thought and the insights such a thought can bring. But there is always the fear that a teacher may say, “King Benjamin’s speech was given during the Feast of Tabernacles.” What is said here tentatively (or maybe even too dogmatically) may be taught with certainty in the future. I do not want that. But what is our alternative? never suggest a new thought? I seriously hope no one will treat what follows as a known fact.
It is the word “that” in that verse which is interesting. What is “that which will give them the true knowledge of their Redeemer”? “That” could be missionaries. It could be The Book of Mormon. Most likely it is both. After Nephi said “all who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten,” he taught, “For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground” (2 Nephi 26:16). “Them” includes those who have been brought down low to the dust.

There is reason to believe The Book of Mormon will end up in the Spirit World. The way the scriptures are presented in the temple, in the covenants we make for the dead, suggests (indeed requires) they have access to them. Immediately after Ezekiel prophesied that the whole house of Israel would inherit the land in the resurrection, he taught, “then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions” (Ezekiel 37:16. italics added).

I cannot tell the difference between “the whole house of Israel,” and “all the house of Israel.” Mormon makes a connection between The Book of Mormon coming forth and all of Israel being gathered to their lands of inheritance.

Now these things [the words in The Book of Mormon] are written unto the remnant of the house of Jacob” (Mormon 5:12; see also the title page).
And behold, they shall go unto the unbelieving of the Jews; and for this intent shall they go—that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath given them, unto the fulfilling of his covenant (Mormon 5:14)

If all the house of Israel inherits the land it means they all will be persuaded to believe in Christ. It seems Mormon was saying The Book of Mormon will go to all of them for that purpose. “These words shall go to some of the Jews to persuade some to believe in Christ, that all of them may be restored to the land of their inheritance.” That doesn’t work. Rather Mormon taught,

Yea, behold, I write unto all the ends of the earth; yea, unto you, twelve tribes of Israel . . .

And I write also unto the remnant of this people . . .

And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me; therefore I write unto you all. And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, yea, every soul who belongs to the whole human family of Adam; and ye must stand to
be judged of your works, whether they be good or evil;
(Mormon 3:18–20).

Does this pertain to us? Is he speaking to us living today? Of course, we are part of “all.” But on face value, he sounds like he’s writing to all mankind. They must all be judged, but only we get that message, only we have access to the standard. How is that fair? The dead will “be judged according to men in the flesh” (1 Peter 4:6). Well those in the flesh have that book.

This next verse seems to be saying that book would be for those who crucified Christ. Mormon continued commenting on why he was writing.

And also that ye may believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, which ye shall have among you; and also that the Jews, the covenant people of the Lord, shall have other witness besides him whom they saw and heard, that Jesus, whom they slew, was the very Christ and the very God.” (Mormon 3:21; consider also Jacob 5:63 with Jacob 6:7).

Mormon could have been referring to the Jews, as a people, living in the last days. And yet it seems to be a bit of a strain to suggest that the Jews of our day, as a people, saw and heard and slew Jesus. We do not believe that. Our church has never taught that. I think we
need to ask why it is so difficult for us to take Mormon’s words at face value?

I like asking my students “How many people were baptized into our church last year?” Someone will invariably say “About three hundred thousand.” I respond “You know you’re off by millions.” They know. It’s what’s going on the other side of the veil that makes the marvelous work so marvelous. Of that work Nephi prophesied,

And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men.

Wherefore, he shall bring forth his words unto them, which words shall judge them at the last day, for they shall be given them for the purpose of convincing them of the true Messiah, who was rejected by them; and unto the convincing of them that they need not look forward any more for a Messiah to come, for there should not any come, save it should be a false Messiah which should deceive the people; for there is save one Messiah spoken of by the prophets, and that Messiah is he who should be rejected of the Jews. (2 Nephi 25:17–18).
I know we can read that either way. But the Lord, in His book, consistently leaves the door open for His scriptures and His church to be for all (see 2 Nephi 25:18).

When Joseph Smith lost the 116 pages, the Lord told him,

Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people-

And to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers-

And this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquity of their fathers, whom the Lord has suffered to destroy their brethren the Nephites, because of their iniquities and their abominations. (D&C 3:16–18).

He just reminded us that those Nephites were destroyed. Except for those who were mingled with the Lamanites, they, as a people, were extinguished. Probably the reason He didn’t tell the early missionaries to go to the Lamanites and the Nephites (see D&C 32:1–2) is because there are no Nephites.
Why can’t Tyrannosaurus Rex’s clap their hands? It’s because they’re dead (author unknown). Why can’t the Nephites have The Book of Mormon? He just said they could. Speaking of the last days when God’s word will be gathered into one, the Lord prophesied,

And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews. (2 Nephi 29:13).

Mormon prophesied that it will be the Lamanites (“the remnant of this people who are are spared”) who will have the record of the Jews (see Mormon 7, and Title page). They have given us enough evidence to show they knew how both prophecies could be right. All will be persuaded to believe in Christ.

Elder Spencer W. Kimble taught, “The more clearly we see eternity, the more obvious it becomes that the Lord’s work in which we are engaged is one vast and grand work with striking similarities on each side of the veil . . .”

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xx Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, Teachings of The Prophet Joseph Smith, Deseret Book, p. 232
Regardless if The Book of Mormon is there or not, I plan to teach with it in Spirit Prison. Even if it’s only there in my head, I will quote it. For those unbelieving of the Jews—those who dwindled in unbelief—even those who saw and heard and slew Him, I am dying (pun intended) to share the following with them.

Yea, for thus saith the Lord: Have I put thee away, or have I cast thee off forever? For thus saith the Lord: Where is the bill of your mother’s divorcement? To whom have I put thee away, or to which of my creditors have I sold you? Yea, to whom have I sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

Wherefore, when I came, there was no man; when I called, yea, there was none to answer. O house of Israel, is my hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem, or have I no power to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea . . . (2 Nephi 7:1–2).

I will teach they are not forgotten? I will tell them they are not cast off forever, because that book makes that point repeatedly. They kept saying “all.”

Jacob asked, “And now, my beloved, how is it possible that these, after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that
it may become the head of their corner?” (Jacob 4:16). We are given no reason to suggest he really didn’t mean those Jews who rejected Christ—like not really those of the past, but their offspring who are an extension of them. His question was straightforward. How can those who rejected Him ever build on Him? His answer was Zenos’s allegory. He concluded, “And how merciful is our God unto us for He remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches” (Jacob 6:4, italics added). Who is this Savior who immediately after his death prepared a way for saving (to some degree) all who had rejected Him?

Six times in the Doctrine and Covenants He tells us “I am the same that came unto mine own, and mine own received me not” (D&C 6:21). Evidently that really hurt Him. “And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads” (Mark 15:29). I stand all amazed that He didn’t fry them there on the spot. One twitch of his quivering finger, one word from his parched lips, and they would have been sent to where they belonged. And yet as soon as He said “It is finished” (John 19:30) He set out to reclaim them. Even they will not be forgotten.
Hope

Moroni tells us that the story of Joseph is a type of the New Jerusalem (our church).

For as Joseph brought his father down into the land of Egypt, even so he died there; wherefore, the Lord brought a remnant of the seed of Joseph out of the land of Jerusalem, that he might be merciful unto the seed of Joseph that they should perish not, even as he was merciful unto the father of Joseph that he should perish not (Ether 13:7).

How could his father die but not perish? Only in our church does that make any sense. Nephi tells us Joseph saved his father “and all his household from perishing with famine” (1 Nephi 5:14). Notwithstanding our fathers die, we can help save them from perishing from the famine—”not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11). And notice how many of Jacob’s household were saved. And remember how rotten most of them were. But I may be detracting from Moroni’s point. Even though Joseph saved all his household, and all of Egypt, Moroni focused on a son saving his father as the type.
We have considerable evidence that in 1829, when The Book of Mormon was published, Joseph Smith didn’t realize the full reach of Zion (see D&C 137:5–6). We have evidence that by 1840 (Joseph’s announcement regarding baptism for the dead) he had put it all together. In 1842 he taught that “the building up of Zion” is for “the salvation of the human family.” As we have seen that would be the entire family.

He also taught that Adam “cannot receive a fullness until Christ shall present the Kingdom to the Father, which shall be at the end of the last dispensation.” I have no idea what that means. But it suggests even Adam needs our dispensation. That means the scattering and the gathering, Zion, the Second Coming, and the Millennium, as well as the atonement, are for him. These are the most repeated prophesies in scripture. Surely that is because they are how Christ plans to save the world.

Once we realize what these prophecies mean to the human family then we can consider context. If we do not think those prophecies pertained to them, then where and when they lived is meaningless. But if they did apply to them then understanding context is crucial.

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xii Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, Teachings of The Prophet Joseph Smith, Deseret Book, p. 169
For example if we lived in Jerusalem during Isaiah’s day, him telling us we are wicked, that we could repent, that we would be refined, and that there would be a “faithful city” (see Isaiah 1), would mean little to us.

But after the Babylonians killed our friends and families, made our wives and children someone’s property, and turned us into slaves (see Lamentations 1), we would likely cling to every word of Isaiah. Could our scarlet sins really be as snow? We would believe Isaiah was talking to us. Could our God really purge away our dross? Indeed that was happening to us. Could we repent? Yes. Could we be baptized and sealed to our families? Probably not. Thus we would need that faithful city. The Lord’s house to be established in the top of the mountains would mean everything to us.

Then suppose we died and someone gave us the book which says we will not be cast off forever (see 2 Nephi 7:1–2). Suppose we read this passage from the first chapter.

And he read, saying: Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations! Yea, and many things did my father read concerning Jerusalem—that it should be destroyed, and the inhabitants thereof; many should perish by the sword, and many should be carried away captive into Babylon.

And it came to pass that when my father had read and seen many great and marvelous things, he did exclaim many things
unto the Lord; such as: Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power, and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the earth; and, because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish! (1 Nephi 1:13–14, italics added).

Would we not believe that passage was for us? Suppose we read where Nephi said Isaiah’s words could be likened unto us (see 1 Nephi 19:24). Would we not do that? When I read from that perspective, especially when I read Nephi’s commentary, the word that repeatedly comes to mind is “hope.
A Useful Tool for Teaching the Scriptures

It was hoped that the reader liked those glasses. They were given to me by Elder Bruce R. McConkie. But it was Elder Boyd K. Packer who showed me how to turn them on. In 1993 Elder Packer assigned Seminary and Institute teachers to “. . . prepare a brief synopsis or overview of the plan of happiness—the plan of salvation.”xxiii He said this would provide “. . . a framework on which . . . students can organize the truths [their teachers] will share with them.”

Now a lot of people worked hard on that assignment and came up with frameworks that gave powerful insights. I am treading on sacred ground. Please hear me out. My intent is to show that Christ gave us a tool better than any of us could have made. This is an argument you want me to win. If I can, we will have another witness that these things are over our heads, and over Joseph Smith’s head. Hopefully those who worked the hardest on that assignment will appreciate this the most.

xxiii Ibid., p. 2.
Elder Packer said, “Providing your students with a collection of unrelated truths will hurt as much as it helps. Provide a basic feeling for the whole plan, even with just a few details, and it will help them ever so much more.”

He added, “At first you may think that a simple assignment. I assure you, it is not. Brevity and simplicity are remarkably difficult to achieve. At first you will be tempted to include too much. The plan in its fullness encompasses every gospel truth.”

Actually making a framework is simple. All you need to do is count. Most teachers know that the scattering, the atonement, the latter-day Zion, the gathering, the Second Coming and the Millennium are talked about all the time in scripture. Orson Pratt observed, “There is no one thing more fully revealed in the scripture of eternal truth, than the rise of the Zion of our God in the Latter-days.”

So for Zion we don’t even need to count. We just need to make sure it ends up on our framework.

Those six elements offer a good framework. That was easy.

Another approach would be to use one provided by Jesus Christ. We teach that Sections 1 and 133 of the Doctrine and Covenants constitute a framework for that sacred record. In those enclosing sections Christ mentions Zion 25 times, His atonement 8 times, the

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xxiv Ibid., p. 3.  
gathering 20 times, His second coming 19 times and the Millennium 9 times.

Except for the scattering, those two sections emphasize the same elements. We’re done.

Most teachers know those are prevalent themes. And they know those sections constitute a framework given by God. Then why don’t we use it? I think it’s because Elder Packer threw us off. He said we could call that framework “The plan.” Many, if not most, of us do not consider these things the plan.

In a popular study on perception, Daniel Simmons and Christopher Chabris asked participants to count the number of basketball passes between players. Most of the observers missed the gorilla that came in, danced around, then ran out.xxvi

Saying that framework could be considered the plan was like saying “Count the passes,” because if there’s anything we’re sure we know, it is the plan. Elder Packer said this would be difficult. There are few things harder than trying to ignore what we know. Whatever you do don’t think of an elephant.

Elder Packer may have diverted us, but he also pointed us in the right direction. He forced us to look at these things in an un-habitual

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way. He made us ask “Can we call the Savior’s framework “the plan?” The answer to that question opens up new views and offers the most excellent scriptural tool ever.

Long before I found Section 1 (which is kind of funny because it comes up fairly early in the Doctrine and Covenants) I found this framework. Elder Bruce R. McConkie offered it for understanding Isaiah. According to Elder McConkie, Isaiah’s “. . . chief doctrinal contributions fall into seven categories (I have added those themes in parentheses):

a) restoration of the gospel in latter days through Joseph Smith, (Zion)

b) Latter-day gathering of Israel and her final triumph and glory, (Gathering)

c) coming forth of the Book of Mormon as a new witness for Christ and the total revolution it will eventually bring in the doctrinal understanding of men, (For the gathering)

d) apostate conditions of the nations of the world in the latter days, (scattering)

e) messianic prophecies relative to our Lord’s first coming, (Atonement)
f) (second coming of Christ and millennial reign, (Second
    Coming and Millennium)

g) historical data and prophetic utterances relative to his
    own day.\textsuperscript{xvii}

Those acquainted with the scriptures realize these are also Ezekiel’s
chief doctrinal themes, and Jeremiah’s and Malachi’s, as well as so
many other prophets. Elder Packer said, “There is one framework
that fits every course you teach.” I found one that did that. But he
also said we could call it “the plan.”

I tried that framework and tried that framework and it worked so
well. But I could not see how we could call it “the plan.” For
something to be considered part of the plan, in my mind, it needed
to be for all. And most of those six elements (except for the
atonement) seemed to be more for us than them. Ignoring that
thought I asked “What is a plan?” A plan is how. The atonement is
how. But Zion is also very much how. Zion is how I got access to
the atonement. Zion is how I renew my covenants. It is how I learn
my salvation and stay in the kingdom. Actually Zion is the kingdom.
It is how we help save the dead. And obviously the bulk of mankind
will die without hearing the gospel, so it is how for them. It is the
“dispensation to meet the promises made by Jesus Christ before the

\textsuperscript{xvii} Elder Bruce R. McConkie, \textit{Ten Keys To Understanding Isaiah}, Ensign, Oct.
1973, 80.
of the world for the salvation of man” (Teachings: Joseph Smith, 475). That sounds like it was planned.

My biggest problem was that we know Abraham was exalted without our church. But Joseph Smith taught that Paul could not be made perfect without us (D&C 128:15–18). So I went searching and found that cool quote from John Taylor.

The fact is the plan we are used to is more about where we came from, why we’re here and where we’re going. We usually include the atonement so it has the major how. But the plan of the framework has more to do with how. I’m not denigrating the plan I was raised on and love. I’m merely saying the plan we see reiterated in scripture is all about “how.” For doctrinal understanding, for missionary work, the plan that we traditionally teach is crucial. But to show the relationships of doctrines, to understand better the point of the scriptural authors, to realize why they kept bringing up the same things, to have a framework that fits every course we teach, we need to see the plan as they saw it. And when we do, one thing is obvious, they had to have seen these things as being for all mankind.

People have told me we can’t say these things are part of the plan because Abraham was exalted without them. Others have cautioned that we shouldn’t teach ahead of the Brethren. My answer to both concerns is this excellent quote from Elder Gordon B. Hinckley. “This church is part of His divine plan.” (Gordon B. Hinckley, April
A Framework Given by an Angel

In 1990 Kent P. Jackson wrote an Ensign article that examined the verses Moroni quoted to Joseph Smith on 21–22 September 1823. After examining those verses, Brother Jackson concluded they fall into the following categories. (I have added those oft repeated themes in parentheses).

1. Apostasy and scattering (the scattering)

2. The calling of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Zion)

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3. The opening of the heavens during the restoration (Zion)
4. The coming forth of The Book of Mormon (Zion)
5. The restoration of the priesthood and the sealing keys (Zion)
6. The gathering of the elect (the gathering)
7. Destruction and purification prior to and during the Second Coming (the Second Coming)
8. Deliverance of the faithful (the Second Coming)
9. The Second Coming (the Second Coming)
10. The pre-millennial and millennial state of the faithful. (Zion and the Millennium)

Moroni did what Elder Packer asked us to do. He gave the Seminary aged Joseph a framework that could hold virtually all of the revelations he would receive throughout his life. That framework could also show Joseph where he fit in the plan. And then at age twenty six, Joseph received the same framework again (Sections 1 and 133). If we tried to draw those themes it might look something like the following.
The cross represents the atonement of Christ (In the New Testament Seminary Teacher Manual, the Savior is portrayed on the cross in their depiction of the plan). The missionaries represent the gathering. Notice the scriptures in their hands. The Savior coming in the clouds represents His second coming.

I have added two things to the Savior’s framework. The dots on the continents represent the scattering. The scattering is implied by the gathering. Most of the prophets in scripture include the scattering. In the Doctrine and Covenants the scattering is not a major theme. It was pretty much done when that record was given. But it’s good to have there for the rest of scripture. I also added the Celestial
Kingdom to show what these things lead to. The Celestial Kingdom is also not a major theme in the Doctrine and Covenants. But since the Lord includes it in the ancient tabernacle, this should be okay. But I did not make these additions lightly.

Some have said, “You ought to include the pre-mortal existence, the creation and the fall.” Such thinking proves my point. It is hard to ignore what we know. Those with such thoughts are plan experts. Frame experts would ask, Why didn’t the Savior include those things on His framework?” If someone would like to add these items it would be good because they would be making it their own. But I suggest we adopt before we adapt.

Consider this phrase “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”(Revelation 13:8). That verse is not about the pre-mortal realm. It is about the Lamb. We have a place on that framework for that Lamb. Almost every pre-mortal reference was given to describe one of those six themes. We are, in my opinion, more on topic by leaving that realm off. It is as if John was saying (referring to this picture) “That sacrifice on that cross, depicted in this picture, was planned (even in some respects a finished act) in the pre-mortal existence.” I don’t think he was saying “You see we lived in a spirit realm before we came here and the Lamb’s sacrifice is another example of that.” If that realm were depicted a well-meaning teacher may use the time and that realm to vindicate our belief of our pre-mortal doctrine. That would be like counting passes.
Consider, “Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men” (D&C 138:56). That verse is about helping post-mortal spirits (see D&C 138:57). We could say (pointing at realms) “You see students you were prepared in this pre-mortal realm to continue your labors in that post-mortal realm.” Or we could point at the missionaries and say the same thing. By having those missionaries (and a temple) in the picture we have a place for that verse and those realms. And that verse is more about the preparation of those laborers than realms. We were told to keep it small. And the One who told us that (through Elder Packer) is the most experienced framework maker in the universe. That’s why I’m hesitant to make additions.

The picture I draw includes a created fallen earth by default because I used the earth as a backdrop. I say they’re included only to appease the people who have been mad at me because I left them out. This is not my framework. But I say they’re included to avoid the fight. The framework the Savior gave us centers more on His roles for overcoming the fall. He scattered His people to refine them and bless the earth with the house of Israel. He atoned for us. He established the latter-day Zion. He gathers Israel along with the rest of the world (gentiles). He will come again and He will prepare us in the Millennium for the Celestial Kingdom.
The fall is need. The plan is how. If someone wants to include the creation and fall in their picture it would do no harm. Like I said I did. It is obviously in His framework in the temple. But for His framework in scripture He often left it out and counters understand why.
The Genius of Including Zion

I can sketch that picture and tell my students “That’s basically what the Doctrine and Covenants is about.” I can do the same for each of the standard works. But it is Zion that makes this tool so good. Zion is the kingdom of God (see D&C 105:32). Through Joseph Smith the Lord instructed,

Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand; (see D&C 88:78).

The God who created life, created a framework that includes Zion. It is overwhelming to me that He used the word “pertain.” The reason we want a framework, according to Elder Packer, is to show the relationships of doctrines. Every principle, doctrine and law of the gospel pertains (relates) to the kingdom of God. For example faith in Jesus Christ (the atonement represented by that cross) is the first principle for applying that atonement and for entering the kingdom. It is an attribute of those who belong to the kingdom. It is
a requirement of those missionaries who go forth from the kingdom (see D&C 4) to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, to gather people to the kingdom. Baptism is the gate to the kingdom (there is a gate in the picture). Apostles and prophets are the foundation and Christ is the corner stone of the kingdom (thus Zion is depicted with a wall). Sacrifice is not just giving up something good for something better, it is for the building up of the kingdom of God on the earth and the establishment of Zion. A good exercise for me has been to try to find where a doctrine or principle fits in the kingdom. “. . . all things pertain unto the kingdom.”

A huge part of the plan is the Second Coming and Millennium. I once drew our traditional depiction of the plan on a survey and asked 100 Institute students (all Seminary graduates) what they would add to it. On my survey I included a number of questions about the Second Coming and Millennium. That was a way to contaminate the survey. Even with that hint they almost all said we should add “labels and Outer Darkness.” As I recall only one said “the Millennium.”

Go through the scriptures and count the number of times Outer Darkness is mentioned. Go through and count how many times the Second Coming and the Millennium are mentioned. Our students see Outer Darkness more than they see a thousand year ministry of Jesus Christ when they think of the plan.
No one will miss the Second Coming. “The desolation of abomination . . . awaits the wicked, both in this world and in the world to come” (D&C 88:85). Laman and Lemuel couldn’t miss it even if they wanted to. And no righteous person, including Abraham (see D&C 27:10; Moses 7:62–64; and D&C 133:54–56) will miss the Millennium (see D&C 101:35).
The Exodus is a Picture of The Plan

Suppose we began a semester on the Old Testament by teaching the plan as we traditionally do. That would offer a valuable doctrinal framework for understanding. For example God’s command to kill all the inhabitants in Canaan makes more sense when we consider we are in the middle of a three act play. But there are few times we would pin a story or prophecy on that framework. The pre and post-mortal realms, as well as the Telestial and Terrestrial Kingdoms almost never come up in the Old Testament. Erase those off that framework and what do we have left?

Now suppose we ask our students to look for the plan of salvation in the Exodus story. They would rightfully see the death of the lamb as a type. They might realize the Red Sea and the pillar of fire represent baptism by water and fire (see 1 Corinthians 10:2). The wilderness seems to represent our life’s journey and Canaan the Celestial Kingdom.

But Zion, the gathering, the Second Coming and Millennium are conspicuously in the story. Our students may even notice them. We
would surely point them out. But when looking for the plan they wouldn’t see them. I doubt anyone can find in our literature where these elements are included when the Exodus is compared to the plan. I have never seen it. Apparently how we see the plan influences how we see the stories in scripture.

Every teacher knows the destroying angel, plagues, pillar fire and parting of the Red Sea represent the Second Coming. Some recognize many Millennial types in Israel’s wilderness wanderings. These types are like a dozen gorillas running through the story. But when we look for the plan we don’t see them.

On the other hand if my students know Zion is generally part of the picture, they will look for it. And when they find it I can ask, “When those plagues are repeated in the last days, when that heavy hail (that John describes) falls, will members of the church get smooched?” “Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail” (Exodus 9:26). If they know during the Millennium the earth will bring forth food spontaneously, they might look for that in the Exodus story. Now we could have these discussions without saying it’s the plan. But why, when it is the plan?

Furthermore there is something in the picture that, keeping with our analogy, is as huge as King Kong. Like crossing the Red Sea, the day will come when we will leave Satan’s bondage and the fallen world behind. The wicked will be destroyed and cut off from the people. But if
the Red Sea typifies the Second Coming, which it surely does, where is the resurrection portrayed? The resurrection is a huge part of the Second Coming.

We teach that the Savior’s visit in Third Nephi typifies His second coming. That is probably why He was so insistent that the dead rising be part of the story (3 Nephi 23:9). If that wasn’t in the picture we might wonder if we really found a type. Thus we see how important it is to Him that the story is portrayed correctly.

The Savior Himself tells us that Israel’s experience on Mount Sinai was designed to represent His second coming and the resurrection.

And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, and it hath gone forth in a firm decree, by the will of the Father, that mine apostles, the Twelve which were with me in my ministry at Jerusalem, shall stand at my right hand at the day of my coming in a pillar of fire, being clothed with robes of righteousness, with crowns upon their heads, in glory even as I am, to judge the whole house of Israel, even as many as have loved me and kept my commandments, and none else.

For a trump shall sound both long and loud, even as upon Mount Sinai, and all the earth shall quake, and they shall come forth-yea, even the dead which died in me, to receive a crown
of righteousness, and to be clothed upon, even as I am, to be with me, that we may be one (D&C 29:12–13).

Imagine standing five hundred yards away from Mount Sinai. Try to hear and see and feel every element in those verses. Better yet try to draw that scene. The righteous going up and Jehovah coming down is a brilliant type. Trumpets, thunders and lightening, the earth shaking, clean clothes, a pillar of fire—that was quite a production. But Israel told God to stop speaking (see Exodus 20:18–19). They failed to go up. They ruined the type. But, like the Savior in Third Nephi, He apparently is not okay with this being left out of the story. That is probably why He had the whole thing repeated with Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel (see Exodus 24).
The Tabernacle is That Framework

And then He commanded that the tabernacle be built in the next chapter (see Exodus 25). That tabernacle, seems to duplicate the experience of those men on the mountain of the Lord. That tabernacle, which illustrates those six themes, also provides an excellent framework. The following is a top view of the ancient tabernacle.
I leave it for the reader to find the Second Coming and the Millennium in this picture. I assume the Savior’s sacrifice is obvious. But my question is, “Where is Zion?” And here’s my point, the knowledge that the Savior is continually trying to show us His plan and the knowledge that Zion is central to his plan, helps us to ask such questions. Where is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints portrayed in the ancient tabernacle?

If you want to figure this out do so before you read on.
Those stones represent the twelve tribes of Israel (Exodus 28:21–29). But they are not just the twelve tribes, they are the gathered twelve tribes. The only time Israel was gathered into one group was with Moses and Joshua. And that time, like the ancient tabernacle, was a type of things to come. The type given by the breastplate will see fulfillment in the last days when Christ comes to make up his jewels (D&C 101:3) and take them across that threshold (Ezekiel 9).

Those stones must represent his church. It is God’s church that will go with Him (on His shoulders, next to His heart) from Telestial through Terrestrial to the Celestial realm. The belt (linen girdle) on the High Priest also represents God’s people (see Jeremiah 13). The Savior’s picture (the tabernacle) is much better than mine (drawn earlier) because Zion ends up in every realm. So when Isaiah wrote “afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city” (Isaiah 1:26) we could ask “After what?” It doesn’t matter because there is only one faithful city. After Israel is refined, Zion will be established. After the Second Coming, Zion will still be there. It will be that heavenly city Abraham looked for. Zion is the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, the New Jerusalem, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the stone cut out of a mountain without hands, the mustard seed, the Ensign, that standard. Once you’re in the kingdom, you’re in the kingdom. Just don’t leave and you’ll be fine. Stay in the boat—the “Old Ship Zion.”
I have now shown were our God has given the same framework for scripture four times (Through Moroni, Sections 1 & 133, Elder McConkie on Isaiah, and the tabernacle). These elements are also outlined in the first seven chapters of scripture (Moses 1–7). Then Enoch’s city typifies Zion, Noah’s flood is like the Second Coming, Isaac on an altar points to the atonement, Jacob’s ladder represents our three step journey, and Joseph is a type of the New Jerusalem. We then move on to the Exodus story which we’ve already discussed.

By the time we get to the story of Ruth I can turn my students loose. The story of Ruth is an impressive lesson on loyalty. But not seeing the plan (the scattering, the gathering, the Savior, Zion) in the life of Ruth is like not seeing the Savior in the sacrifice of Isaac.

It is as if they all saw the same movie, and they each, in their turn, described what they saw. Nephi saw the movie then he taught his brothers. That is good order.

If you want to see the movie here’s a suggestion. Imagine you’ve been given 200 million dollars with the commission to make the movie. That is a small sum considering we’re talking about the greatest story ever told. Imagine how you would artistically present each aspect of that common vision. In my mind’s eye I have seen the movie. And I think I can argue that the book is better than the movie. Prophet after prophet describing the same movie from their
individual perspectives offers details movies can’t. Nephi described things his father missed after seeing the same movie (see 1 Nephi 15:27). If we had the actual vision, we might see our God weeping, but Hosea describes his heart.

That framework is a marvelous tool. I used to see teaching as creative review. I now see it as helping my students to see. When they see their paramount role in the plan, it is almost insulting to tell them they should serve a mission. When they realize that virtually every prophet saw them saving the world, we merely need to get out of their way. It is more show than tell. It is attraction, not promotion.

Here’s an example of show. What is the role of pepper in the plan of salvation? Bill Bryson wrote,

Pepper has been appreciated since time immemorial in its native territory, but it was the Romans who made it an international commodity. Romans loved pepper. They even peppered their desserts. Their attachment to it kept the price high and gave it a lasting value. Spice traders from the distant East couldn’t believe their luck “They arrive with gold and depart with pepper,” one Tamil trader remarked in wonder. When the Goths threatened to sack Rome in 408, the Romans bought them off with a tribute that included three thousand pounds of pepper. For his wedding meal in 1468 Duke Karl of Bourgogne ordered
380 pounds of black pepper—far more than even the largest wedding party could eat—and displayed it conspicuously so that people could see how fabulously wealthy he was.

Pepper accounted for some 70 percent of the spice trade by bulk . . . xxix

Nephi saw Columbus in the movie. He played a crucial role in the establishment of Zion. How brilliant is our God to make pepper indigenous to India. I imagine some council in heaven asking “How are we going to get America discovered?” And the Lord responding “Oh that’s easy just put pepper over here.” “And by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls” (Alma 37:7).

A framework that has Zion in the picture has a place for Columbus and pepper. And every time my students eat a baked potato they’ll think of the plan and the genius of our God.

The other day I was talking to an early morning Seminary teacher about the book of Micah. I said, “I don’t remember much about Micah. It’s been a while since I’ve taught the Old Testament. But I can tell you what it’s about. It’s about the scattering, the atonement,

Zion, the gathering, the Second Coming and the Millennium. We then skimmed Micah’s chapter headings. The first three chapters described why Israel would be scattered. Chapter six is the Lord’s desire for men to be just, merciful and humble (see Micah 6:8). The following are the remaining chapter headings for Micah.

Micah 4
In the last days, the temple will be built, (Zion)
Israel will gather to it (the gathering),
The millennial era will commence (Millennium),
And the Lord will reign in Zion (Zion)

Micah 5
The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem (In my class that cross represents the life and atonement of Christ. In other words His birth is part of his atonement)
In the last days, the remnant of Jacob will triumph gloriously over the Gentiles (Not sure? Could be considered part of the Second Coming??).

Micah 7
Though the people of Israel have rebelled (Scattering),
yet in the last days the Lord will have mercy on them (gathering).
He will have compassion and pardon their iniquities (atonement).

“Oh! They would put me in the zoo if they could see what I can do” (Dr. Seuss).

“Now if this is boasting, even so will I boast; for this is my life and my light, my joy and my salvation, and my redemption from everlasting wo . . .” (Alma 26:36). I want to be very clear I am boasting in our God who made the most excellent framework that features how He plans to save us.
A Script

With these glasses we can look at a story and ask “Is it here?” “And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman’s wife” (2 Kings 5:2). That little maid was scattered Israel. One of the blessings of the scattering is that “The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will [He] gather others to him” (Isaiah 56:8). “So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha” (2 Kings 5:9). If this story is the plan, then Elisha most likely represents Christ, then him not coming out to meet Naaman (2 Kings 5:10) makes perfect sense. “And they understood me not that the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice-that I should not manifest myself unto them save it were by the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 15:23). It sounds like Elisha was following a script.

“Then went [Naaman] down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean (2 Kings 5:14). That sounds like atonement. That sounds like he was
born again. That sounds like resurrection. “Seven” sounds like perfection and Millennium. “So, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years will the Lord God sanctify the earth, and complete the salvation of man (D&C 77:12). That sounds like the plan.

In another story we read “And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word” (1 Kings 18:36, italics added). Those guys were following a script.

That’s probably why Joseph of old put money in his brothers’ sacks. Jacob told his sons “And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight (Genesis 43:12).” And they shall bring forth their rich treasures unto the children of Ephraim, my servants (D&C 133:30).

A framework is just a tool like scaffolding. It merely gets us in a good position to look in the right direction. It is not depth. But when we know we’re looking in the right direction, we can then plumb for depth. And every time I have, I have found the scriptures to be a truth-telling thing. “And [Elijah] said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times” (1 Kings 18:43).
Things make more sense. Things come together. Christ could expound all the scriptures in one (3 Nephi 23:14). He gave us a tool to do the same.

The first sentence of the Explanatory Introduction of the Doctrine and Covenants reads, “The Doctrine and Covenants is a collection of divine revelations and inspired declarations given for the establishment and regulation of the kingdom of God on the earth in the last days.” So including Zion on a framework is kind of a must. I’m assuming that’s why the Savior did 25 times.

At the beginning of the Doctrine and Covenants year I basically quote the Seminary teacher manual which says, “A preface prepares a reader for the contents of a book by summarizing the message and purposes of the author.” I then draw that framework of the plan and ask a student to randomly pick a verse in that book. We find a match about 80% of the time. It’s funny when we don’t. I tell them that by the time we’re through with the Doctrine and Covenants they will see that the One who gave us Section 1 is God.

Section 2 refers to the promises. They represent our ultimate destination. It is almost like the Savior gave us Section 1 to outline how we would get there and then Section 2 to describe what there

looks like. That is also why I think it is okay to include the Celestial Kingdom in the framework.

Section 3 is about The Book of Mormon. Where is The Book of Mormon in the picture? It is in the hands of those missionaries. It is in the homes of those who dwell in Zion. It is in that temple. It is even in the arms of that angel on top of that temple.

Section 4 describes the prerequisite attributes of those missionaries.

I could go on and the point is I could go on.

Ask a hundred of our students to draw what they think is the big picture. It is doubtful that many would include Zion, let alone the rest of the elements we are discussing. But then let’s ask Enoch and Moses and Isaiah and Malachi and Micah and Nephi and Jacob and Mormon to draw the big picture. They would all draw the same thing. We know because they all drew the same thing.

Joseph Smith captured the essence of that movie at age 17 (Moroni’s visit) and then at 26 (D&C 1 & 133). At age 24 he gave us a book of scripture that is supreme at showing that movie. We are yet to be united even on what the big picture is, and yet Joseph gave the world the best rendition of it. The overarching message of scripture is Christ telling us how He plans to save us. I have tried to show that Nephi understood that, and that he, more than anyone else, told us what that plan means to all mankind.
Now what I’m about to say sounds like pride, but the truth is, if I was proud I wouldn’t go here. Indeed it makes me look small. But I rejoice to be a second witness. Years ago while pondering these themes I thought ‘They may have all seen the movie, but The Book of Mormon shows it better.’ To be clear, to have captured the essence of every Biblical prophet’s message and reiterate that same message with the same repetitiveness, is impressive. But not only that, those Book of Mormon prophets said it better.

Lehi’s family’s journey is an inside personal look at the scattering. Between that trip and Zenos’s allegory, The Book of Mormon describes the scattering and gathering better than anything I’ve seen. Third and Fourth Nephi are unsurpassed in portraying the Second Coming and Millennium. And right now the largest full time missionary force in the world uses Ammon’s missionary approach in the gathering—”Nay, but I will be thy servant” (Alma 17:25).

Here’s where I look silly. Sometime after that thought I found the following from Elder Bruce R. McConkie. He taught,

> Ponder the truths you learn, and it will not be long before you know that Lehi and Jacob excel Paul in teaching the Atonement; that Alma’s sermons on faith and on being born again surpass anything in the Bible; that Nephi makes a better exposition of the scattering and gathering of Israel than do Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel combined; that
Mormon’s words about faith, hope, and charity have a clarity, a breadth, and a power of expression that even Paul did not attain; and so on and so on.\textsuperscript{xxxi}

Not only that, Mormon structured the whole book to illustrate God’s plan. Alma established a church, Ammon portrayed the gathering, the Savior’s coming and millennial type round off the story. I am nowhere close to Elder McConkie. But I am an independent witness to his point.

Elder Packer said finding this framework would be the most difficult but also the most rewarding assignment of our career. That has been true for me on both counts.

I cannot take that difficulty away. This coming from me may a barrier and even add to the difficulty. Either way paradigm shifts are almost impossible.

I was once talking on the phone to a Zone Administrator in church education about these things. He said, in response to something I had written, “It’s like you’re coming into our class and pointing out all the things you think we’re doing wrong.” That was twenty years ago. I really know this is a painful book.

I later sat in his office and discussed these things. At one point I said, “Why are you so resistant?” After a while he said, “Did you

\textsuperscript{xxxi} Elder Bruce. R. McConkie; Ensign, Nov. 1983.
feel the resistance go?” The Spirit was there and he liked what he saw, so much so that he said “You need to show this to curriculum.” I said “I don’t think I can overcome their resistance.” That proved to be the case.

But it was showing him how powerful this framework is that convinced him. He was not convinced we could call this “the plan.” He said, “I’ve read your article three times and I still don’t see how we can call this “the plan.”

It was hard for me. But Elder Packer forced me to stare and stare until the picture popped into 3-D. And when you see it nothing else makes sense. Indeed Isaiah sounds a little goofy if he was talking to his people and these things didn’t apply to them. And not including Zion in the plan seems nonsensical since it is second only to the atonement in the plan. Ouch, I know, sorry, but I heard Robert Millett once say something like “We need to understand the malady if we want the cure.”

Would anyone dare teach the restitution of all things, spoken of by all the holy prophets since the world began, wasn’t planned? Would anyone dare teach that Zion doesn’t have anything to do with the salvation of the human family?

Now the best argument against us has been my argument all along. We don’t teach this very often. Even if we can find a verse or two to back up these things, this plan doesn’t seem to be the current
emphasis. Flying solo in doctrinal teaching is stupid and dangerous. Maybe the Brethren don’t want this emphasis regardless if it’s true. So I got a few things cleared.

I wrote a chapter for the 28th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium book on these things being in the plan (The Book of Mormon: The Foundation of Our Faith, Deseret Book, 1999). I don’t know what kind of screening process such books go through. But they cleared these things.

Brother Joseph Fielding McConkie was in charge of the committee compiling that book. He called and said “Fotheringham we need this.” That was cool because he sounded just like his dad. And I relate that because I have no credibility of my own. Nevertheless when he said that, I wasn’t surprised. I know we need this. But my point is they had no problem with any of this.

I also made a handout for a BYU Symposium making these same points regarding the plan. All handouts had to be approved. I got a letter that said, “This has been cleared through correlation and is approved to hand out.” I don’t know if that was Correlation with a capital C. But I know Church Education at least was saying I was on safe ground.

In that Sperry book, concerning the Millennium, I wrote, “As the sheep come to know the shepherd and are fed by him, they will be prepared to inherit the celestial world (see D&C 76:106-107)” (p.
108). And so I do teach that, and it does give hope. And it is indeed “far off base” with how we traditionally see these things.

Now if the reader is still here I’m impressed. I beg just two things. Prove for yourself that the Savior’s framework works in spite of me. And prove Elder Packer right on three counts; there is a framework that can work for every course, this is the most difficult but most rewarding assignment, and prove that we can call it “the plan.”

If the reader will pay the price, and go through the Doctrine and Covenants verse by verse and ask “Does this fit?” he (he or she) will be convinced that framework is from God. And he will realize that it is a marvelous framework for all scripture. Then he will realize he found a fountain of youth. This is so refreshing to students the teacher will feel he could teach forever. Elder Packer was a prophet of God. He was so right, this is so rewarding.

And so I beat my head against the wall. I’m up too early every morning because this is the most rewarding thing I’ve experienced in my career. This big picture allows me to easily expound all the scriptures in one. The Savior did that. And I know He wouldn’t be offended if we followed him. We talk about teaching like Him. Well He gave us a tool to do that. And notwithstanding my pride, I know with all my heart that my greater motivation is to share this with others. If it really improves teaching, and if it really is a
fountain of youth, and if it really is a valuable tool, how could I keep it to myself? Who would not want to share a new view?

It is the greatest gift one human being can give another, the very essence of freedom, because in seeing things differently and sharing that new view one opens up more space for communion, for confidence, and for love.
Why

The plan answers many “why” questions, but it is by definition “how.” The promises God made to Abraham are the ultimate answer to “why?”

A long time ago there was a silly song called The Hokey Pokey. I heard of a t-shirt that said “What if the Hokey Pokey is what it’s all about?”

The promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are what it’s all about. Their part of the covenant was they were to strive to be perfect (see Genesis 17:1), which means they were to be like God. And they were promised endless seed, which means they would have children after this life, which means they would be like God (see D&C 132:30).

They were also promised Land which means they would dwell in the Celestial Kingdom forever (see D&C 38:17–18 and D&C 88:17–20).

Those promises are reiterated several times at the beginning of Genesis and then throughout the scriptures. The prophets in scripture generally stop their prophecies of the future (those six
elements) with the Millennium. The Celestial Kingdom is rarely mentioned with those prophecies. It is not how. It is why. It is the destination. They seemed to focus more on how. Knowing why is also a great tool because knowing the goal is important.

It seems to me the Lord begins scripture with the creation and the fall to establish our need for salvation. He then tells us what salvation looks like by repeating the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. Then for the rest of scripture, through story and prophecy, through types and shadows, He tells us how. And “how” gives hope.

Tell me that I can become Mr. Universe and I’ll be inspired. Tell me how different exercises and diet can make that happen and I’ll have hope. Tell older members of the church that the Millennium is part of the plan to prepare them to become like God and for many that is a new thought. Then ask them “How does that make you feel?” Invariably their answer will include the word “hope.” I assume that’s because older people are more aware of their imperfections and slow progress. For them (myself included) becoming like God is quite daunting. “And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst” (John 8:9, italics added). I’m digressing. We’re talking about why.
For every significant why question in the church, land (inheriting the Celestial earth) and seed (a continuation of seed in the eternities) is the answer. Why a creation? Why the fall? Why an atonement? Why stay morally clean? Why a restoration? Why do we have basketball rims in our churches? Land and seed, the promises made to the fathers, is why.

It is impressive that one of the first things Moroni mentioned to young Joseph was concerning those promises (see D&C 2). Of all the verses in the Bible, Joseph came out of that experience with the verse that is the sum of our existence. I’ve taught thousands of our youth. The significance of those promises is generally a new thought for them. They are so much more scripturally educated than Joseph Smith was at their age.

Lehi seemed to understand them. Right before he died he told his sons the trip was horrible but worth it.

But, said he, notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever . . . (2 Nephi 1:5, italics added).
I was no different than our youth. These things were explained to me by a great teacher about five years into my teaching career. That explanation was a thrill to me. I want to explain why.

When I was eighteen I planned to go on a mission. My brother was on a mission in Sweden. Our prophet said every young man should serve a mission. All my friends were planning on serving. But it was, for me, more than the cultural thing to do. I knew the church was true. Or at least I figured it was true. It was a no-brainer. Living prophets, authority, another testament of Christ, marriage forever, you can ask God and He’ll tell you it’s true, a purpose to life, a plan that we can understand (to name a few) all meant our church was true. But I had a problem. I had never read The Book of Mormon.

I didn’t want to ask someone to read that book and then have to admit I hadn’t. Therefore out of fear of embarrassment I read the book. I want to be clear. I did not read it to find out if it was true. It took me about half a year to read it. Finally the day came when I got to the last chapter. I was upstairs, in my room, in Ephraim Utah. As I started reading I thought ‘Cool, I am finishing the book today.’ Then I came across two verses that I was very familiar with.

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even
down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

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, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost (Moroni 10:3–4).

When I read those words it was like someone picked me up and dunked me in a pool of warm water. It came over my whole body. It was a powerful (almost physical) witness. Then I really knew.

A few months later I got my mission call to Melbourne Australia. Part of my preparation included going to the Manti temple. It was a terrible experience. I had fasted and prayed. I wanted another spiritual experience. Instead I was mortified. All the people were old. There was so much symbolism. It all seemed strange to me.

At one point I was standing with a group of people and I passed out. The next thing I knew I was being woken up with smelling salts. Why does the temple have a supply of smelling salts? I later learned they discourage fasting for first timers. There’s so much to take in. And what I did take in I didn’t care for.
After the session my parents and I were eating in the cafeteria when an elderly lady (like I said they were all elderly) came to my table, looked down at me, and said, “Sonny the man who caught you when you passed out is a sealer in the temple. Had you died he could have raised you from the dead.” That didn’t help.

I left that building thinking ‘I know the church is true. But what on earth was that?’

To regain my balance I decided to attend the temple once a week until I left on my mission. I started to get comfortable with the symbolism and the old people. They acted like it was cute this young kid kept coming back. After each session I felt good, like we do when we serve or fulfill our callings.

Then one evening I found myself alone in the Celestial room. I thought ‘I’m going to snoop around.’ I saw a few steps leading to an open door, so I went up. I looked into the small blue room that had an altar in the center and immediately realized it was a sealing room. And then I heard seven words. I know what Enos meant when he said “the voice of the Lord came into my mind” (Enos 1:10). It did not come through my ears but it was loud and clear. I heard “This is what it is all about.”

I figured that meant temple marriage is what life and the temple are all about. That comforted me, but I still didn’t fully understand. Not until after a mission and four years of Institute and five years of
teaching Seminary, and not until a great teacher taught me the significance of those promises, did I understand what those words meant.

I know these things are true like I know I have feet. I know the plan is how and the promises are why. That’s what it’s all about.

**Extra Stuff**

The cool thing about writing your own book is it doesn’t have to be academic if you don’t want it to be. My footnotes can be sloppy and my voice conversational. And I can add extra stuff.

This is one of my many introductions to this book that was scrapped. I thought if I sounded intelligent my readers would think I’m credible. To my reviewers it was pure arrogance and fluff. But there is some cool things if anyone is interested.

*Richard Dawkins Upsets a Mormon*[^xxxiii], caught my eye on Youtube.

Years ago I read Mr. Dawkins’ book, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design*. On the cover of his book we find, “As readable and vigorous a defense of Darwinism as has been published since 1859—The Economist.” I was eager to read their best arguments. My motivation was an

[^xxxiii]: Google “Richard Dawkins Upsets a Mormon”
article that said Seminary and Institute teachers were doing their students a disservice by discounting evolution. When their students went to college they’d learn the truth. Well I didn’t want to do that. So I gave Richard Dawkins equal time.

He had some good points regarding gradualism. But when he came to accounting for life arising by chance, frankly I was disappointed. Now I tell my students the theory of evolution is a joke. We laugh about it in our church. Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, a fairly educated man in his own right, taught.

Yet some people erroneously think that these marvelous physical attributes happened by chance or resulted from a big bang somewhere. Ask yourself, “Could an explosion in a printing shop produce a dictionary?” The likelihood is most remote. But if so, it could never heal its own torn pages or reproduce its own newer editions!\textsuperscript{xxxiv}

Those in the Conference Center laughed. No, the church hasn’t taken a stand on evolution. But on the origins of life we do take a stand. We laugh at the idea of chance because it is theologically and scientifically and logically absurd.

We have no problem conceding Darwin was right about things adapting to their environment. My friend mowed his lawn that had

\textsuperscript{xxxiv} Elder Russell M. Nelson, General Conference, April 2012
short and tall daffodils and soon they were all short. But that doesn’t account for “The Origin of The Species.” To believe life began by chance takes more faith than any Christian could muster. I’m no scientist. But I know saying “This is a possibility of how it all began” is not science. Nor is it an intelligent reason to deny there is a God. But those who do deny there is a God insist Darwin’s theory proves we began by a fortunate accident. I’m not sure Darwin was as insistent on that point as the atheists are.

It has been argued that the possibility of life arising by chance is analogues to a multitude of monkeys hitting keyboards and eventually ending up writing a Shakespearean sonnet. Gerry Schroeder did the math and came up with the following.

Myth: #5 Very occasionally monkeys hammering away at typewriters will type out one of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

Not true, not in this universe. But it is a popular assumption that the monkeys can do it, a wrong assumption that randomness can produce meaningful stable complexity. But let’s look at the numbers to see why the monkeys will always fail. I’ll take the only sonnet I know, sonnet number 18, “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day . . .” All sonnets are 14 lines, all about the same length. This sonnet has approximately 488 letters (neglect spaces). With a typewriter or keyboard having 26 letters, the number of
possible combinations is $26$ to the exponential power of $488$ or approximately ten to the power of $690$. That is a one with $690$ zeros after it. Convert the entire $10$ to the $56$ grams of the universe (forget working with the monkeys) into computer chips each weighing a billionth of a gram and have each chip type out a billion sonnet trials a second (or $488$ billion operations per second) since the beginning of time, ten to the $18$th seconds ago. The number of trials will be approximately ten to power of $92$, a huge number but minuscule when compared with the $10$ to power $690$ possible combinations of the letters. We are off by a factor of ten to power of $600$. The laws of probability confirm that the universe would have reached its heat death before getting one sonnet. We will never get a sonnet by random trials, and the most basic molecules of life are far more complex than the most intricate sonnet.\textsuperscript{xxxv}

Richard Dawkins suggests the only problem with such astronomical odds is our brains. He argues Evolution didn’t give us the right brains for numbers that big. “If we were biologically capable of living millions of years, and wanted to do so, we should assess risks quite differently.” His answer to this problem is we need alien brains that have the long view. He continues,

\textsuperscript{xxxv} GeraldSchroeder.com/ScientificMyths.aspx#h5
How can we decide whose point of view is the right one, ours or the long-lived alien’s?

There is a simple answer to this question. The long-lived alien’s point of view is the right one for looking at the plausibility of a theory like Cairns-Smith’s or the primeval-soup theory. This is because those two theories postulate a particular event—the spontaneous arising of a self-replicating entity—as occurring only once in about a billion years, once per aeon. One and a half aeons is about the time that elapsed between the origin of the Earth and the first bacterialike fossils. For our decade-conscious brains, an event that happens only once per aeon is so rare as to seem a major miracle. For the long-lived alien, it will seem less of a miracle than a golf hole-in-one seems to us.xxxvi

That’s the kind of scientific thinking that Institute teachers need to be acquainted with? If we could only live longer, then ridiculous odds wouldn’t be ridiculous. Anthony Flew, the world’s most notorious atheist who changed his mind, said it well, “Since we cannot accept a transcendent source of life, we choose to believe the

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impossible; that life arose spontaneously by chance from matter.”

I like the answer one of my students gave. “If having enough time is the answer that works for us as well. In only a few decades we have learned how to amass huge amounts of data on things as small as thumb drives. We are also reversing the aging process. We are living longer. Give us a mere million years (something our decade-conscious brains can comprehend) and we will be all knowing and eternally young. Give us that kind of time and we will evolve into gods.”

Speaking of golf, let’s say our God likes the game. And one day while He’s preoccupied with his favorite pastime, a random lightning bolt strikes some primeval-soup, and, by chance, initiates life. How does that prove He doesn’t exist?

This is the Dawkins who upset our Mormon friend. Here’s what he said on that YouTube video.

“There is far more beauty in the real understanding of the reality of nature than there is in reading some ancient book, or than reading some modern book which is what The Book of Mormon is. And I have to say when I read The Book of Mormon recently, (I didn’t read it all) what impressed me

xxxvii Anthony Flew, There is a God; How the World's most notorious atheist changed his mind; HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY, p. 86.
is it’s an obvious fake. This is a nineteenth century book written in sixteenth century English. “And it came to pass,” “verily I say unto you,” things like that. That’s not the way people talked in the nineteenth century. It’s a fake. So, it’s not useful. It’s a work of charlantry.”

In his book *The Adventure of English; The Biography of a Language*, Melvyn Bragg, speaking about the King James translators, wrote,

> The fifty-four translators made very little attempt to update his [Tyndale’s] language, which was now eighty years old. Even though by 1611, English had undergone further revolution, the King James translators would still use “Ye” sometimes for “you,” as in “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon,” even though very few said “Ye” in common speech any more. They used “thou” for “you,” “gat” for “got,” “spake” for “spoke” and so on. Either they were too struck by the beauty and power of Tyndale’s prose to want to interfere with it, or this was a deliberate act of policy. They may have chosen to keep archaic forms. They make the Bible feel ancient, mysteriously spiritual, out of the past, imbued with deeply rooted traditional authority.

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Google “Richard Dawkins Upsets a Mormon”
We are told that men who made the final drafts read them aloud over and over again to make sure that they had the right rhythm and balance, matters which Tyndale, a preacher as well as a scholar knew about well. The English Bible has often been called a preacher’s Bible. Written to be spoken, written to spread the word in the language of the land, a cause for which Wycliffe and Tyndale’s and hundreds of other English Christians had lived and died.

In the beginning was the Word, & the Word was with God,
And the Word was God.
All things were made by him;
And without him was not anything made that was made.
In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
And the light shineth in darknesse, And the darknesse comprehended it not.
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.
English at last had God on its side. The language authorized by the Almighty Himself.xxxix

A student of mine was fond of saying “Good guess Joseph.” And so Joseph Smith was a “fake” because he was inspired to use the same language the King James translators were inspired to use. When someone accuses you of being like 54 inspired men Joseph, take the compliment. It reminds me of Nephi’s brothers’ complaint against him, “And thou art like unto our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart” (1 Nephi 17:20). When someone accuses you of being like a prophet of God Nephi, take the compliment.

The Bible was translated between 1604 and 1611. That makes it a seventieth century translation. But Dawkins knew it was sixteenth century English. We have to admit he knows his English. I’ve never even heard, let alone used, the word “charlantry.” But Joseph saw him coming. Of the anti-Christ Sherem, we read,

And he was learned, that he had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people; wherefore, he could use much flattery, and much power of speech, according to the power of the devil (Jacob 7:4).

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Thirty years before Charles Darwin published his theory on evolution, Joseph Smith (the Lord) predicted it and showed how atheists would employ it in their arguments. Referring to the atheist Korihor, Alma reported,

And many more such things did he say unto them, telling them that there could be no atonement made for the sins of men, but every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime (Alma 30:17).

That sounds like “survival of the fittest” to me. “Herbert Spencer coined the phrase after reading Darwin’s On The Origin of Species. Darwin adopted the phrase in The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication published in 1868.” We are indebted to Darwin for his theory. But survival of the fittest is evidently a doctrine that Satan likes to exploit. Korihor confessed,

But behold, the devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me: Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God. And he said unto me: There is no God; yea,

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xl Under “Survival of the fittest” (Wikipedia).
and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind; and I taught them, even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true; and for this cause I withstood the truth, even until I have brought this great curse upon me (Alma 30:53)

Furthermore the Lord (this was obviously not Joseph) exposed why men would want to argue they’re animals—creatures without a creator.

And thus he did preach unto them, leading away the hearts of many, causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness, yea, leading away many women, and also men, to commit whoredoms-telling them that when a man was dead, that was the end thereof (Alma 30:18).

Maybe Mr. Dawkins should have read it all. I really don’t want to argue with him. I don’t have half his intelligence or education. Nevertheless I am grateful for the questions he raises. Plato attributed to Socrates: “We must follow the argument wherever it leads.” Whenever I do, I find Joseph was a prophet.

Even if he wasn’t, I might consider following him anyway, solely on account of his spunk. Who, at age 24, would have the audacity to

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xli Plato’s Republic.
speak for an aged prophet king who claimed to have intelligence from an angel? How could anyone with a straight face tell the world “I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom”? (Mosiah 2:17).

And what of that wisdom? When you serve your fellow beings you’re only serving God (see Mosiah 2:17). Frankly that sounds like “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). That’s good King Benjamin, but not very original.

At least in the Savior’s parable the people asked “When saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?” (Matthew 25:39). When Mormons get to that bar they’ll say “Yeah we knew. In fact we weren’t really serving our fellow men, we were only serving you.” How wise is that? Is that something God would even like? That word “only” is a stickler. Why did he say “only?” I’ve noticed at times we leave that word out because it’s awkward. But “only” was his point.

That word “only” is so brilliant it is over most of our heads. Let’s be honest. We often use that verse to help our youth feel good about themselves, like “Remember you guys when you’re serving these people you’re in reality serving God.” That was the opposite of King Benjamin’s point. If we read that verse in context we’ll realize he used that word like we do. “Only” means “No big whoop,” like, “He’s only a freshman.” His point was service is debt and duty. He
was saying “because [we] have been given much [we] too must give.” It is to render thanks, not boast.

To me such witnesses are like candy. I know the church, but I do like things that vindicate Joseph Smith and the church he restored.

Even our enemies won’t ascribe such brilliance to Joseph. I have a cousin who knows more about church history than anyone I know. You’ll find his picture in the dictionary next to “Those who leave the church but can’t leave it alone.” I once asked him “Then how do you account for The Book of Mormon?” He said, “I can’t.” It is indeed, as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught, “a barrier in the path of one who wishes not to believe in this work.”

Here’s another one of Joseph’s lucky guesses. A friend of Richard Dawkins, Steven Pinker, in *The Better Angels of Our Nature; Why Violence Has Declined*, quoted “an astute mathematician” who wrote “There is a suggestion, but not a conclusive proof, that mankind has become less warlike since A.D. 1820.” Go figure.

Joseph was indeed a prophet. But the Savior warned against “false prophets” (Matthew 17:15). If there were to be no prophets He could have saved us a lot of trouble by telling us that. But there were to be

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xlii Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, October 2009, General Conference.
xluii Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature; Why Violence Has Declined*, I heard it on an audio book and found the PDF on Google. That PDF has no page numbers. The reader can easily search this phrase “Mankind has become less warlike since a.d. 1820.”
prophets, so He continued, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matthew 17:16). Notice He didn’t say by their history. Everyone can look bad historically. Good pears means good tree. It’s that simple. The fruits of the prophet Joseph Smith are another powerful witness. And so many schools and employers love the fruit, even though many hate the tree. Follow that argument and it will lead to a prophecy given to an obscure farm boy in 1823 (JS-History 1:33).

One of the better proofs in our day was the discovery of Chiasmus in The Book of Mormon. Chiasmus is a Hebrew style of writing. We have considerable evidence that Joseph didn’t know Hebrew—let alone any literary style, when he translated that book. It is another good guess.

We have so many witnesses. In this book I offer one more.

Those Book of Mormon authors who saw our day must have seen our temples. Did they know what they would be for? Did they know our church would help save the dead? I think we can show they did. And we have evidence Joseph Smith didn’t know these things until many years after that book was printed.

But I would not write a book just to add to that mountain of witnesses. The real value of Chiasmus is that it centers us on the point of the authors who used that style—like X marks the spot. The value of what follows is that it centers us on the message of every author in scripture. I hope to show that, in this way, there is a tool a
hundred times more useful than Chiasmus. And I can show we got this tool from God.

**More Stuff**

I once tried this introduction. I like the story and I thought it was an effective way to say we ought to consider things even though they come from nobodies. But a review responded, “This is going to be good. You think this find is as important as a cure for ulcers.” No, my point was I’m a nobody and nobodies can find things. So I scrapped this intro. But the more I thought about it, I do think this is as important as the cure for ulcers. That framework can help us be on the same page. Enoch’s people were not only of one heart they were also of one mind. And who can estimate the value of understanding the scriptures clearer? Anyway I think the reader will like this story. It is from the book *Made to Stick, Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die*.

“Over the course of a lifetime, one person in ten will develop an ulcer. Duodenal ulcers, the most common type, are almost never fatal, but they are extremely painful. For a longtime, the cause of ulcers was a mystery. Conventional wisdom held that ulcers developed when surplus acid built up in the stomach, eating through the stomach wall. Such surplus acid could be caused, it was thought, by stress, spicy foods, or lots of alcohol. Ulcer treatments
traditionally focused on mitigating the painful symptoms, since there was no clear way to "cure" an ulcer.

In the early 1980s, two medical researchers from Perth, Australia, made an astonishing discovery: Ulcers are caused by bacteria. The researchers, Barry Marshall and Robin Warren, identified a tiny spiral-shaped type of bacteria as the culprit. It would later be named Helicobacter pylori, or H. pylori.

The significance of this discovery was enormous: If ulcers were caused by bacteria, they could be cured. In fact, they could be cured within a matter of days by a simple treatment with antibiotics.

The medical world, however, did not rejoice. There were no celebrations for Marshall and Warren, who had almost single-handedly improved the health prospects of several hundred million human beings. The reason for the lack of acclaim was simple: No one believed them.

There were several problems with the bacteria story. The first problem was common sense. The acid in the stomach is potent stuff—it can, obviously, eat through a thick steak, and it's (less obviously) strong enough to dissolve a nail. It was ludicrous to think that bacteria could survive in such an environment. It would be like stumbling across an igloo in the Sahara.
The second problem was the source. At the time of the discovery, Robin Warren was a staff pathologist at a hospital in Perth; Barry Marshall was a thirty-year-old internist in training, not even a doctor yet. The medical community expects important discoveries to come from Ph.D.s at research universities or professors at large, world-class medical centers. Internists do not cure diseases that affect 10 percent of the world's population.

The final problem was the location. A medical researcher in Perth is like a physicist from Mississippi. Science is science, but, thanks to basic human snobbery, we tend to think it will emerge from some places but not others.

Marshall and Warren could not even get their research paper accepted by a medical journal. When Marshall presented their findings at a professional conference, the scientists snickered. One of the researchers who heard one of his presentations commented that he simply didn't have the demeanor of a scientist.

To be fair to the skeptics, they had a reasonable argument: Marshall and Warren's evidence was based on correlation, not causation. Almost all of the ulcer patients seemed to have H. pylori.
Unfortunately, there were also people who had H. pylori but no ulcer. And, as for proving causation, the researchers couldn't very well dose a bunch of innocent people with bacteria to see whether they sprouted ulcers.

By 1984, Marshall's patience had run out. One morning he skipped breakfast and asked his colleagues to meet him in the lab. While they watched in horror, he chugged a glass filled with about a billion H. pylori.

"It tasted like swamp water," he said.

Within a few days, Marshall was experiencing pain, nausea, and vomiting—the classic symptoms of gastritis, the early stage of an ulcer. Using an endoscope, his colleagues found that his stomach lining, previously pink and healthy, was now red and inflamed. Like a magician, Marshall then cured himself with a course of antibiotics and bismuth (the active ingredient in Pepto-Bismol).

Even after this dramatic demonstration, the battle wasn't over. Other scientists quibbled with the demonstration. Marshall had cured himself before he developed a full-blown ulcer, they argued, so maybe he had just generated ulcer symptoms rather than a genuine ulcer. But Marshall's demonstration gave a second wind to supporters of the bacteria theory, and subsequent research amassed more and more evidence in its favor.
In 1994, ten years later, the National Institutes of Health finally endorsed the idea that antibiotics were the preferred treatment for ulcers. Marshall and Warren's research contributed to an important theme in modern medicine: that bacteria and viruses cause more diseases than we would think. It is now known that cervical cancer is caused by the contagious human papillomavirus, or HPV. Certain types of heart disease have been linked to cytomegalovirus, a common virus that infects about two thirds of the population.

In the fall of 2005, Marshall and Warren received the Nobel Prize in medicine for their work. These two men had a brilliant, Nobel-worthy, world-changing insight. So why did Marshall have to poison himself to get people to believe him?**xlv

I like the story and frankly it resonated with me a little.

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About the Author

Steve Fotheringham teaches for the LDS Church at the Institute of Religion adjacent to the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV). He has been a teacher since 1982. He has a Bachelor’s Degree in Psychology from Weber State University, a Master’s Degree in Marriage and Family Counseling and a Doctoral Degree in Educational Administration from The University of Arizona.

He is married to the former Kaylene Pace. They have six children, one of which is the most famous wheelchair athlete in the world. They call him “Wheelz.” Steve is the Gospel Doctrine teacher in his ward. And he invented lunch.