

## Summary Handout

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# “Remember the New Covenant, Even the Book of Mormon”

Lesson

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Summary

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### Scripture Summary:

*Joseph Smith History 1:27-65; Moroni appears to Joseph Smith—Joseph’s name is to be known for good and evil among all nations—Moroni tells him of the Book of Mormon and of the coming judgments of the Lord, and quotes many scriptures—The hiding place of the gold plates is revealed—Moroni continues to instruct the Prophet. Joseph Smith marries*

*Emma Hale—He receives the gold plates from Moroni and translates some of the characters—Martin Harris shows characters and translation to Professor Anthon, who says: “I cannot read a sealed book.”*

*Doctrine and Covenants 3; Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, July 1828, relating to the loss of 116 pages of manuscript translated from the first part of the Book of Mormon, which was called the “Book of Lehi.” The Prophet had reluctantly allowed these pages to pass from his custody to that of Martin Harris, who had served for a brief period as scribe in the translation of the Book of Mormon. The revelation was given through the Urim and Thummim. HC 1: 21—23. See also Section 10. 1—4, The Lord’s course is one eternal round; 5—15, Joseph Smith must repent or lose the gift to translate; 16—20, The Book of Mormon comes forth to save the seed of Lehi.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 5; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, March 1829, at the request of Martin Harris. HC 1: 28—31. 1—10, This generation shall receive the Lord’s word through Joseph Smith; 11—18, Three witnesses shall testify of the Book of Mormon; 19—20, The word of the Lord will be verified as in previous times; 21—35, Martin Harris may repent and be one of the witnesses.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 10; Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1828. HC 1: 20—23. Herein the Lord informs Joseph of alterations made by wicked men in the 116 manuscript pages from the translation of the “Book of Lehi,” in the Book of Mormon. These manuscript pages had been lost from the possession of Martin Harris, to whom the sheets had been temporarily entrusted. See heading to Section 3. The evil design was to await the expected retranslation of the matter covered by the stolen pages, and then to discredit the translator by showing discrepancies created by the alterations. That this wicked purpose had been conceived by the evil one, and was known to the Lord even while Mormon, the ancient Nephite historian, was making his abridgment of the accumulated plates, is shown in the Book of Mormon (The Words of Mormon 1: 3-7). 1—26, Satan stirs up wicked men to oppose the Lord’s work; 27—33, He seeketh to destroy the souls of men; 34—52, The gospel is to go to Lamanites and all nations through Book of Mormon; 53—63, The Lord will establish his Church and his gospel among men; 64—70, He will gather the repentant into his Church and will save the obedient.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 17; Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet to Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, at Fayette, New York, June 1829, prior to their viewing the engraved plates that contained the Book of Mormon record. HC 1: 52—57. Joseph and his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, had learned from the translation of the Book of Mormon plates that three special witnesses would be designated. See Ether 5: 2—4; also 2 Nephi 11: 3 and 27: 12. Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris were moved upon by an inspired desire to be the three special witnesses. The Prophet inquired of the Lord, and this revelation was given in answer, through the Urim and Thummim. 1—4, By faith the Three Witnesses shall see the plates and other sacred items; 5—9, Christ bears testimony to the divinity of the Book of Mormon.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 20:5—15; Revelation on Church Organization and Government, given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, April 1830. HC 1: 64—70. Preceding his record of this revelation the Prophet wrote: “We obtained of him [Jesus Christ] the following, by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to his will and commandment, we should proceed to organize his Church once more here upon the earth.” 1—16, The Book of Mormon proves the divinity of the latter-day work.*

*Doctrine and Covenants 84:54—62 Revelation given through Joseph Smith the Prophet, at Kirtland, Ohio, September 22 and 23, 1832. HC 1: 286—295. During the month of September, elders had begun to return from their missions in the eastern states and to make reports of their labors. It was while they were together in this season of joy that the following communication was received. The Prophet designates it a revelation on priesthood. 54—61, The saints must testify of those things they have received.*

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### Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**Pattern of Preparation:** The preparation that Joseph Smith went through is part of a pattern identified throughout the scriptures and evident in Jewish tradition. Many of the Jewish holidays have extensive preparations that are as important as the holy day itself. “The Sabbath before Passover is known as Shabbat ha-Gadol . . . the day on which the Israelites in Egypt set aside the lamb that they were to slaughter on the first Passover (Exodus 12:3). On Shabbat ha-Gadol a . . . [reading from the Prophets] taken from the Book of Malachi and referring to the day on which Elijah the Prophet will reappear as forerunner of the great day of the Lord, is read.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) (Malachi 4:5-6)

**Elijah’s Coming Implies a Unique Preparation for Salvation:** Elijah’s mission, reflected in temple ordinances, is part of the preparation for mankind to be completely saved in the life to come. Anciently, temple sacrifices had a preparation period. “During the period of the Second Temple . . . pilgrims would arrive several days before . . . and would prepare for their entry into the Temple to offer there the obligatory sacrifices . . .” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**The Creation Had a Preparation Period:** “. . . almost all scholars agree . . . that each of the first three days is used to prepare the work for the next three days.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) Although Jews generally do not refer to a life after death, sages have taught that our earth life is a preparation for the life to come. “. . . according to rabbinic theology, the physical life a person has is a kind of trial period for his ‘real’ life which comes after death. Indeed, in rabbinic parlance, the life after death is known as ‘the world of truth.’” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Preparation for Additional Scriptures:** The preparation of scriptures for later use is definitely a pattern seen in the Bible as well as the Book of Mormon. Some of the witnesses for the Book of Mormon are the previous prophets who foresaw its coming and its value in the restoration of all things. “And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned . . . Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work . . .” (*Isaiah 29:12-14*)

**Principle of Witnesses:** Starting with the ancient prophets, the function of witnesses is very established. Some modern/biblical considerations of the legal term “witness” follow. “*Kiddushin* is a legal act of acquisition of the bride by the groom . . . in the presence of two witnesses . . .” The laws involving witness are many. Not all people are qualified to testify before the court. “The court warns the witnesses that bearing false witness is a serious crime and each witness is investigated and interrogated separately in order to make sure that he is not lying. “In Jewish law, perjury can only be proven by the evidence of two other witnesses who both testify that the perjurer could not have been present at the time and place he claims. “. . . perjurers were . . . never allowed to act as witnesses again . . . convictions for perjury were widely publicized.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Reason for Ancient Witness of Future Events:** One of the reasons witness for the restoration could be given in ancient times is because the Old Covenant was the same as the New Covenant. “It was the design of the councils of heaven before the world was, that the principles and laws of the priesthood should be predicated upon the gathering of the people in every age of the world . . . Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world . . . for the salvation of men, are not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Section Six 1843-44, Pg.308*)

**Old/New Covenants Are the Same:** “Actually, of course, the law of carnal commandments, the law of performances and ordinances revealed through Moses, was an old covenant as compared with the gospel restored by Jesus and his apostles. But this new testament or covenant, this restored gospel, was the same testament that had been in force between God and his people from Adam to Moses in both the old and the new worlds.” (*Mormon Doctrine, Bruce R. McConkie, Pg.543*)

**Similarities Still Evident:** Religious Jews still practice many forms of ancient rites and rituals whose meanings may have become distorted or lost over many years without priesthood guidance. Now that the priesthood has been restored, we can learn about the old practices in order to better understand the “Old Covenant,” which was true and how the “New Covenant” restored the ancient practices with true doctrine.

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