

## TRUTH

In any discussion of "truth", one must be careful to define the limits to the meaning. Some people say truth when they merely mean facts and information. Others try to identify theory and philosophical speculation with truth. Still others make truth so restrictive and limited that it becomes impossible to identify.

In the Church, we have some real good reasons to try to come to an understanding of truth. We are told that **"truth will make you free"**. So, also, will love, diligence patience. There are many virtues that produce freedom. What is so unique about **"truth"**?

We learn from the Doctrine and Covenants that **"all truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it..."** (*Doc. and Cov. 93:30*).

Such truth as mentioned here must be a special kind of truth. It is a kind of truth in which God takes a personal and universal interest. It is possible that there is other less universal truth which is not so independent in its own sphere. It is the kind of truth which makes it possible for each of us to share personal and enlightening experiences with others. It is a kind of truth which can come from many sources and is not limited to direct divine revelation.

Thus, in our efforts to try to know what truth is, we should be able to identify which kind of truth we are seeking.

Truth which originates with revelations from God cannot be treated lightly, nor can it be treated carelessly. It is of universal value to mankind. It cannot be made subject to opinion and selection. It must be accepted in total or rejected in total. There are no partial benefits to this kind of truth. Christ told us that if any of us were guilty of part of the law, we would be considered guilty of the whole law. It is the law derived from universal truth of which He is speaking.

On the other hand, we should not be too dogmatic about the other truth. It may have only a very limited value and application. Many of us have, for our own benefit, received a glimpse at some personal truth. If we treat it as such, it can make us free, but if we try to impose that same truth on others, without consideration of their own personal need, circumstance, and inspiration, this personal truth may be destructive.

The following story may help to explain the dangers of treating divine and universal truth too lightly.

Lucifer and the Apostle Peter both returned to the earth for a short visit to learn first hand the progress and development of mortal life. It happened that they met each other and decided to travel together for their inspection tour. One day, while walking together down the main street of a large city, they both observed a large concentration of pure truth descend out of the sky. Peter was curious to see how Lucifer reacted to this event. He was surprised to observe that Lucifer didn't even seem to be at all concerned about the presence of pure truth. Finally, he couldn't contain his curiosity any longer.

"Didn't you see that concentration of pure truth descend out of the sky?" He asked.

"Oh yes! I saw it very clearly," Lucifer responded.

"Doesn't the presence of pure truth worry you?" Peter asked.

"I'm concerned about pure truth," Lucifer responded, "but the fact that truth is among the people doesn't worry me at all."

Peter could not understand Lucifer's attitude. "Don't you know that truth will destroy you?" He asked. "Truth has always been your enemy."

"Your right that truth is my enemy," said Lucifer, 'but it can only harm me when it becomes a tool of the people. I have learned long ago that I have nothing to fear from the people. You see, people have a difficult time with truth also. First of all, when they see pure truth, they will first try to analyze it. Then they will try to systematize it. Some will try to philosophize about it, others will criticize it. People will then humanize, synthesize, liberalize, and modernize it. And then, finally, they will institutionalize it. But before any of them try to utilize it, it will become so weak and diluted that it will be no threat to me at all."

What is our source of truth? It depends on what truth we are seeking. We should all remember that we are not all puppets of God, but partners with Him. What man can learn for himself God does not need to reveal. What man cannot discover for himself, God must reveal! Perhaps this will help us to distinguish the various kinds of truth. There are no scientific formulas which will permit man to know that baptism is necessary. God cannot be discovered in a test tube or by scientific investigation. These are truths that must be revealed to us.

That honesty and virtue will produce happiness and that sin and corruption will create disorder and misery, are truths which we can discover by our own experiences, or learn from the experiences of others.

The quest for truth of all kinds is an eternal quest. It starts in young hearts and is still alive in the desires of the old. Perhaps this quest can best be exemplified in the life of Confucius.

One of his disciples asked him to explain the source of his wisdom and how he had achieved such mortal excellence. Confucius replied:

**"When I was fifteen, I had my heart set upon learning.**

**When I was thirty, I stood firm (by my convictions).**

**When I was forty, I understood the truth.**

**When I was fifty I had no doubts.( I understood the necessity for heavenly assistance.)**

**When I was sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth.**

**When I was eighty, I could follow the desires of my own heart and yet  
never transgress any principle of rightness."**

In these few words, Confucius was both describing the condition of the pure in heart, and also saying, "I have learned the truth and the truth has made me free."

## **MAN: SPIRIT V.S. KNOWLEDGE**

### **1 Corinthians 2:9-13**

**(9) But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**

**(10) But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.**

**(11) For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.**

**(12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.**

**(13) Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth. but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.**

**(14) But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

**(15) But he that is spiritually judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.**

### **JOB 32:8**

**(8) But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the almighty giveth them understanding.**

### **JAMES 1:5-9**

**"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."**

*(Need of being dominated by the spirit, against worldly detractions.)*

**H. Grant Heaton**

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## **BOOK OF MORMON WITNESSES**

To members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Book of Mormon is a Holy Book of scripture equal in importance to the Bible. >From the Book of Mormon the members are able to understand the Bible. The teachings of Christ become plain and simple to the reader of the scriptures when both the Bible and Book Of Mormon are used. One does not substitute for the other, however, they both compliment and help each other in teaching the messages of salvation which God has established on the earth.

Many people in the world deny the fact that the Book of Mormon is a book of Holy Scripture. They claim it was written by man and is a fraud and an invention of Satan. These statements are easily proven false because of the many witnesses which the Book of Mormon has in the world today. For the purpose of showing how much strength these witnesses have in proving the Book of Mormon to be true, let us discuss some of the which have been given to us through the world of science and other fields of study.

### **BOOK OF MORMON PEOPLE:**

The Book of Mormon is a history of the civilization which existed on the American continent during the period of time from 2200 BC to 400 AD. Most of this record was written from 600 BC to 400 AD, a period of 1000 years. At the time when the Book of Mormon was published in the United States in 1830, there was no knowledge of the early American civilization. The study of Archaeology was just beginning, and none of the scientists in this field of study had any information regarding the civilizations which had formerly existed on the American continent. When the Book of Mormon stated that the American Indians were once a very highly civilized people, the scientists and students of the world laughed and ridiculed Joseph Smith. At that time the Indians were nomadic tribes of uneducated natives who did not have any civilization nor civilized habits. They lived nomadic lives and moved from place to place. However, even though the world of science would not accept the information in the Book of Mormon regarding the early history of these people, many people, after reading the Book of Mormon are convinced that it is the word of God. They were willing to join the Church, established by God in these latter days, because of this testimony, regardless of the fact that the learned men and women of the world denied the story of the Book of Mormon.

Today the situation is somewhat different. The archaeologists of the world during the past twenty years, have discovered the remains of great cities and centers of culture in the jungles of South and Central America. Ancient records have been discovered which tell in great detail the same story which the Book of Mormon told many years ago. The traditions and legends of the American Indians have been found to be similar to those found in the Book of Mormon. The discovery of a connection between the American Indians and the natives of the South Pacific Islands, by a man from Sweden, was also part of the information which the Book of Mormon gave to the world. Even with all this information, many people still reject the Book of Mormon as a religious book. Many will agree that it is an accurate history of America from 600 BC to 400 AD, but few will accept that it was given to us by God.

The Book of Mormon history begins in Jerusalem. It records how a group of people led by a Prophet of God, named Lehi, was led by God from Jerusalem to the American continent about 600 BC. When they arrived in America, they divided into two groups, one was a righteous group and one was a wicked and rebellious group. Because of their wickedness, God cursed the one group of people with a dark skin. This was not a black skin like the Negro, but a red, or a bronze colored skin of the American Indians. Thus, there were two groups of people. One was a light skinned people and one was dark skinned group. These two groups were continually fighting and many wars and struggles were fought between them. The righteous group of people, led by men of God, established great cities and highways. They understood writing and recorded their

Christ was resurrected in Jerusalem, he visited the American Continent and established His Church there. He told the people how he had been crucified on a cross and had been buried and resurrected. He established the ordinance of the Sacrament among the people on the American continent. This ordinance consisted of eating bread and drinking water in memory of his flesh and blood. After he left, His Church remained for almost 200 years and many people received baptism and obeyed God. Finally, however, the people forgot the commandments of God and again became wicked. In about 400 AD the white skinned people were all killed by the dark skinned race and since that time only the dark skinned people remained. Thus when Columbus discovered the American Continent he found only the dark skinned people and thought they were the people of India and called them Indians.

This briefly is the story recorded in the Book of Mormon and translated into English in 1830. Because of this story, it was called a fraud, and an invention of Satan.

Let us now look at some of the evidences which have been discovered in the world today which prove that the record of the Book of Mormon is accurate. From this we might be able to more easily accept the Book of Mormon as a book given to us by God for the purpose of helping us to gain salvation.

## ANCIENT RECORDS

In the year 1554, a history was written in a city in Central America which contained the histories of the early people of the American continent. The name of this history was the Totonacapan Account. In this record, the historian made many very startling statements. He said that the people of the American continent were *Descendants of Israel* and came from where the sun came up. In this reference to Israel coming to America from the East is exactly the same as the Book of Mormon account. This history was discovered long after the Book of Mormon was first published and after Joseph Smith was dead.

In 1948 the University of Oklahoma published a book called the "Popul Vuh" This book was an ancient record from Central America translated into English by a Miss Gomez who was employed by the American Embassy in Guatemala. This record stated that the people of the American Continent were **the Sons of Abraham and Jacob**. It also recorded a visit to the American Continent of a Great White God who descended from heaven, healed the sick and established a church among the people.

Still another record called **Ixtlilxochitl**, written about 1660 AD, records the visit of Christ to the American Continent. This record states **"And when they were in the height of their power, there arrived in this land a man whom they called Quetzalcoatl (the name used for Christ) on account of his great virtues, considering him as just, saintly and good. He taught them by deeds and words the path of virtue and He forbid them their vices and sins, giving laws and good doctrine. And in order to refrain them from their pleasures and dishonesties, He established fasting among them."** This record also states, **"He was the first who worshiped and placed the cross among them. The tree of sustenance or of life."**

Again it records, **"Quetzalcoatl was a favorably disposed man of grave aspect, white, and bearded. His dress was a long tunic."** There are other records which have been discovered in South and Central America which also give accounts of this people and their origin. They give strength to the claim that the Book of Mormon is a book of true history. Many of these records have only recently been translated and, therefore, none of the information contained in them was available to Joseph Smith or anyone else at his time.

It is very interesting and important to notice that the records found in America during recent years have used the names of Abraham, Jacob and Israel. This gives absolute evidence that there was some connection between the American civilization and the Children of Israel which is recorded in the Bible.

After careful consideration, we should not find it strange nor difficult to believe that the Children of Israel were led to another place to live. The Prophet Isaiah, writing about 750 BC, warned the people that Jerusalem would be destroyed and that at that time, a group of people would escape and be led to another land to establish themselves as a great nation. Isaiah said, **"And a remnant that is escaped out of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and shall bear fruit upward: For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of Mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this."** (*Isaiah 37:31-32*) Because Isaiah spoke under the inspiration of God, we should expect to find the descendants of Israel in some other place than round the area of Jerusalem.

Likewise, it should not be difficult to accept the fact that Christ visited other people than those in Jerusalem. While He was still among the people there, He told them that He must visit other people and establish His doctrine among them. He said, **"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also must I bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."** (*John 10:16*). These Bible prophecies and statements, together with the records which have been found in America, should be enough evidence to convince even the most doubtful person that the Book of Mormon is a true record.

## **CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS AND LEGENDS**

There is still another witness to these facts which we will now discuss. That witness is the existence of many legends and customs which are similar to the Children of Israel, and of people who believe in Christ.

When the Catholic Fathers first went to the American Continent with the Spanish armies, they were surprised to find the natives of the new world practicing a ceremony similar to the Sacrament in the Christian world. Although the ceremony had been altered and some new ceremonies were added, yet they could recognize it as being the symbol of the same thing which the Sacrament of the Lords supper represented. The ceremony conducted by the natives of America consisted of making a bread man or molding some dough into the shape of a man. They would then take this piece of dough, which had been molded, and dip it into small dishes of blood and then each member of the congregation would eat a piece of the dough with the blood. It is easy to recognize from this ceremony that the people had knowledge of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper which Christ established. Although it had been changed in form, the symbols and emblems were the same.

When the pioneers in the United States went to the Western part of the country to establish their homes in the middle of the 19th century, or about 1850, they observed a very strange ceremony among one of the native American Indian tribes. Each spring, the Indians would choose one member of their tribe to be a living sacrifice for the people. On a certain day each year the people of that tribe would gather together and watch while this man was crucified on a cross in the same manner in which Christ was crucified. Also this same group of people had the custom of watching the East to watch for their God to return. Each morning as the sun rose, they would send one man to watch the sun come up and warn them if their God was approaching. This undoubtedly was a symbol that these people knew of the second coming of Christ and were keeping guard so they would not be unprepared

Among all the native Indians of the American continent, the term they use for their God is the "**Great White Spirit.**" It is unusual that they would not refer to God as being the same color as their own skin. Men of science claim that each race of people think that God is their same color .and looks like them. The American Indians, however, do not hold this opinion..They call God the "**Great White Spirit**" because they have preserved the legends of Christ coming to them as a great White God from heaven. Even though they have lost the real knowledge of Christ's visit, nevertheless, they have preserved the legends about this visit which have continued until the present day. The legends, customs and traditions of the people are the same as those described in the Book of Mormon. These customs and legends were also not available to the Prophet Joseph Smith at the time the Book of Mormon was published. They are, therefore, evidence that the Book of Mormon is an actual record of the American inhabitants before, during and after the time of Christ.

## **ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE**

The science of archeology has existed in the world for centuries, however, it has only been in recent years that it has discovered any important ruins in America. However, during the past century there have been many people become interested in the early American civilizations and as a result, many millions of dollars have been spent in doing research work in the jungles of Central and South America. Some of the most important discoveries in the field of archaeology have been made in these American locations.

Since the beginning of this work to the present time, great cities have been discovered and great highways and waterways have been uncovered. Remnants of a culture which equals that in ancient Egypt have been discovered. These discoveries have greatly puzzled men of science because they do not know where this civilization had its origin. We will discuss some of the more important discoveries and compare them with the story of the Book of Mormon.

### **BUILDINGS :**

According to the Book of Mormon, Lehi and his followers left Jerusalem about 600 BC. From history records we can learn that at that time Jerusalem was under the influence of Egypt and most of the people who had been educated ,went to Egyptian schools to gain their education. In fact the Book of Mormon was written in an reformed Egyptian language. The discoveries in America have given evidence that this was actually true. Many of the buildings which have been uncovered are found to be of Egyptian architecture. The manner in which they built buildings is the same as those built in Egypt. The ruins of temples and pyramids found in South and Central America resemble those found in Egypt. The early Hebrews understood the value of the arch in their buildings. This same principle of architecture is also found among the buildings found in America.

### **ART AND CARVINGS :**

Many pieces of art and stone carvings have been discovered among the ruins of the cities which have been uncovered. Special items are very important for us to notice.

(1) In many of the buildings and many of the carved statues the symbol of the cross is shown. There are a large number of examples of the cross, shown as a part of the worship of these people in America. Several statues and pictures of religious officers, priests and other men of religious significance have been found. In most cases these men used, as their symbol of authority, the cross. The existence of the cross among these people gives evidence that they have had the knowledge of the crucifixion of Christ and have reverence for the cross just as Christians do today.

(2) Among the paintings which have been uncovered in the buildings of these ancient cities, there is one of special importance. It is picture of both white men and black men working together. The discovery of this picture gives evidence of the fact that two colors of people lived in America before the time of Columbus.

In very recent years, a man by the name of Thor Heyerdahl has written and published a book which he proves that there were both white and dark skinned people in America about the time of Christ. He has no connection with the Book of Mormon and even denies that the Book of Mormon is a book of Scripture, but nevertheless his scientific discoveries have given the world another evidence that the Book of Mormon is true

(3) Discoveries of statues and busts of people who lived in America many hundred years ago have .also helped to show us that these people are really descendants of Israel. Many of the figures which have been found show that the facial characteristics of the natives of America and



that of the present day Jews is very much the same. Pictures of their clothing show that the early people in America used the same type of clothing as did those in Jerusalem. The large nose which is a characteristic of the Jews is also found among the stone carvings uncovered in America. The wearing of the pointed beard and peculiar stocking cap which only the people of Israel have been known wear has been found to be part of the custom of the ancient inhabitants of America.

### **ADDITIONAL WITNESSES :**

There are many other witnesses which help to establish the truths of the Book of Mormon record. The discovery of a large highway, water canal, irrigation waterways and many other great projects which were recorded in the Book of Mormon have helped us to know that the Book of Mormon is from God. As each year passes, more and more evidence is given to us about the similarity between the discoveries of science and the record of the Book of Mormon. However, our greatest witness of the Book of Mormon is still the story of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Because this book was delivered to mankind by an angel of the Lord, we know that its record is true and that it is a Holy Book of scripture.

We should also remember that the message of the Book of Mormon is not to show us who the forefathers of the American Indians are. This is interesting to know, but the real message of the Book of Mormon is the Gospel of Christ. If we do not gain a testimony of Christ and a knowledge of the Gospel from the Book of Mormon, it has no value to us. We should not try to glean the bits of historical information which the Book of Mormon gives and then deny the religious testimony which it offers. The Book of Mormon was given by God for the benefit of mankind in seeking the way to salvation. It was given to be a witness to Christ and His work. and also another witness of the Bible

We are fortunate in these recent times to have so many witnesses to the fact that the Book of Mormon is a true record, however, all the scientific evidence cannot prove to us that this book was given by God. That evidence will come through the inspiration of God and the guidance of the Holy Ghost. The Book of Mormon gives us a way in which we can test its divinity, **"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God the Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus 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. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things."** (*Moroni 10:4-5*)

This is the final and most valuable test of the Book of Mormon. The members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have received this witness from the Holy Ghost and urge and encourage you to receive this witness also, through sincere prayer.

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**Southern Far East Mission**

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