

# LIKE THE TIME OF AMOS

## The Teaching

The Lord heard the prayers of a few seekers in Brazil and sent a messenger to instruct them. One teaching revealed, *"In the days of the prophet Amos, the Lord found no person with a pure heart among the people of Israel to warn its leaders."* The angel specifically said, *"The pure heart means not to be contaminated with the traditions and precepts of men."* That includes denominational contentions that keep the Lord's people apart. For that reason, the Lord sought Amos, who lived in Judah, and sent him as His prophet to Israel. In like manner, *"Today the Lord can find no person among the people of latter-day Israel with a pure heart to warn its leaders."* He sought people in Brazil, gave them His message, and sent it to His people among latter-day Israel.

## The Background

Amos prophesied in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. That king of the northern kingdom of Israel ruled from 786 to 746 BC. He defeated the Arameans (2K 14:26, 27), conquered Damascus (2K 14:28), and extended Israel to the boundaries it enjoyed during Solomon's reign. He also developed trade with his neighboring nations, including the Phoenicians, resulting in increased commerce and affluence for his subjects. The Israelites' wealth not only led to greater differences between the rich and poor, but it increased immorality and popularized the Phoenician gods Baal and Astarte. More Israelites began worshipping them.

Amos was a shepherd and a sycamore fig farmer (Amos 7:14), who lived in Judah, the southern kingdom, when God called him. He had no credentials by which he could claim any right as a prophet: *"I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son"* (Amos 17:14). He never attended the school of the prophets and did not carry a lineage from a prophet; yet, God called and sent him with a somber message to His people in the north: *"Thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land; and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of this land"* (Amos 7: 17).

His warning offended Amaziah, who was the priest at Bethel. He banned Amos from the nation, saying, *"O thou seer, go, flee into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there; but prophesy not again anymore at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court"* (Amos 7:12-13).

Amos returned to Judah and wrote his prophecies, sending them to the northern kingdom. In them, he foretold the great apostasy (Amos 8:11-12) and the time when the Lord would *"raise up the tabernacle of David"* (Amos 9:11). In his prophecy of David's tabernacle, Amos described an unusual site: *"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper"* (Amos 9:13).

## The Tabernacle of David

When David brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, he asked permission to build a house for it. Nathan took the king's request to the Lord and returned with the answer: *"No."* The reason was: *"Thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood"* (1 Chr 28:3). The Lord's reply also contained several promises. One said, *"When thy days be*

*fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever” (2 Sam 7:12-13).*

Solomon, David’s son, succeeded his father, increased the kingdom to its zenith, and built the Temple at Jerusalem, which housed the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. David drew the plans (1 Chr 28:11-13) and gathered the precious material to decorate it (1 Chr 28:14-18), but Solomon built the Temple. It has forever been known as Solomon’s Temple, not David’s tabernacle.

What is the tabernacle of David that Amos foretold? The Lord’s answer to David’s request about building a house for the Ark contained two other promises: *“Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, and as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house” (2 Sam 7:10-11).*

The first of the two is to appoint a place for Israel from which they would never be afflicted by their enemies or removed. That place could not be the land where David established the kingdom or that Solomon enlarged. The Northern Kingdom was defeated by the Assyrians in 722 BC and its people forever expelled, being relocated *“in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes” (2K 17:6)*. About 120 years later, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem, as well as Solomon’s Temple, and took the Jews to Babylon, where they remained exiled for 70 years. While the Jews returned, the citizens of the northern kingdom did not. In 70 AD, Titus destroyed Jerusalem again, as well as the Temple, and, in 135, the Roman Emperor Hadrain banned all Jews from their Promised Land. They remained vagabonds until 1948, when they re-established their kingdom, capturing Jerusalem in 1967.

On April 6, 1630, John Cotton preached the farewell sermon on the Arabella, the flagship of the first flotilla to take Puritans to the New World. Their hope to purify the church had made them unwelcomed in England, forcing them to flee to what became a land of refuge for Christians. John Cotton took his sermon’s text from Nathan’s prophecy, highlighting the first of these two promises. Among the many facets of the Lord’s promise, he pointed out, *“God is said to plant a people more especially, when they become Trees of righteousness, Isay 61. 3: That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord. So that there is implied not onely a continuance of their former good estate, but that hee would make them a good people, a choice generation: which he did, first, by planting the Ordinances of God amongst them in a more glorious manner.”<sup>1</sup>*

While the Pilgrims and Puritans who sought religious refuge in the American wilderness did not fully understand that over two millennia ago God had ordained their new home to be the place where the Lord’s people would be safe from their enemies in the last days, the Bible also promises it elsewhere. Isaiah prophesied, *“He will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly” (Is 5:26)*. The end of the earth from ancient Israel is the other side of the globe, the American continents. That land is the place where God promised to

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<sup>1</sup> John Cotton, *Gods Promise to His Plantation*, (London: William Jones for John Bellamy, 1630) 15 at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1022&context=etas>.

lift an attracting sign. Elsewhere, the prophet announced, "*Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia . . . All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye*" (Is 18:1, 3). The rivers of Ethiopia refer to the rivers around Sheba, which Jesus said was at "*the uttermost parts of the earth*" (Matt 12:42). The land beyond the uttermost parts of earth is across the sea. The United States adopted the eagle with outstretched wings as its symbol. It is the land on which God promised to raise His ensign and blow His trumpet. It is the land of refuge from the Lord's enemies.

Nathan's prophecy attached the promise of a land of refuge to God's promise to build His house for David. The Lord added, "*Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house*" (2 Sam 7:11). The Pilgrims understood their duty to raise up that tabernacle. John Robinson, a co-founder of the Pilgrims and Pastor of the Colony, wrote in defense of their decision to sail to America, "*Now as the people of God in old time were called out of Babylon civil, the place of their bodily bondage, and were to come to Jerusalem, and there to build the Lord's temple, or tabernacle . . . so are the people of God now to go out of Babylon spiritual to Jerusalem . . . and to build themselves as living stones into a spiritual house, or temple, for the Lord to dwell in.*"<sup>2</sup> He taught the Pilgrims that their duty included building a new spiritual tabernacle in America's wilderness.

Amos foretold the remarkable condition that would exist when God lifts David's tabernacle. After promising, "*In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old*" (Amos 9:11), the Lord adds, "*Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper*" (Amos 9:13). While the vision of the sower and the reaper in the same field at the same time was a preposterous idea in ancient Israel, it is a common site on some farms today. Our modern machinery allows farmers to harvest one crop at the same time that they plant another. Combines on American plains reap vast fields of wheat as they are being chased by tractors planting soy beans. Our current productivity indicates that the time for the Lord to raise up the Tabernacle of David has come.

### **The New Temple**

When the Jews were building the second temple after returning from their Babylonian captivity, Haggi prophesied, "*The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts*" (Hag 2:9). In reality, the second temple was far inferior to the one that Solomon built. The Lord even acknowledged, "*Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?*" (Hag 2:3). If the second temple was far inferior to Solomon's, how could it become greater? The prophecy explains, "*I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts*" (Hag 2:7).

Jesus is the desire of the nations. He came on earth, took our flesh and bore our sins. The Gospel says, "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29). Jesus atoned for our sins by enduring on the cross the punishment that we deserve. There, He satisfied the demands of God's justice and offered salvation to all who will believe and follow Him. Our sins put Jesus

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<sup>2</sup> John Robinson, *Works*, Vol. 2 (London: John Snow, 1851) 304.

on the cross as surely as if we had demanded that Pilate crucify Him. When the Jews were convicted at Pentecost for their treachery in crucifying Jesus, they asked what they should do. Peter answered, *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 2:38). Despite our sins, the Savior can remove them. He promised, *“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow”* (Is 1:18). Those who are baptized secure a remission of sins. Their sins are washed away. Ananias asked Saul, *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). Those who follow Jesus and are baptized receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is the abiding Comforter that Jesus promised to His disciples. Jesus said, *“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever”* (John 14:16). Its presence within believers makes them temples of God. Paul explained, *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? . . . For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are”* (1 Cor 3:16-17). Just as the Spirit of the Lord filled the house that Solomon built, it can fill the body of every believer. That Spirit transforms each sinner and makes them into sons and daughter of God, brothers and sisters with Christ Jesus and joint-heirs to His glory.

Each of us are like rough stones, rugged and unsightly, but the Spirit of God remakes and molds us, so that we can fit together into a holy fraternity. Peter explained, *“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house”* (1P 2:5). Paul elaborated, *“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit”* (Eph 2:19-22). The work of God does not just make individual believers into children of God, but it joins believers into a holy kingdom that can fill the earth at the end of time. That goal is part of the Savior’s prayer: *“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven”* (Matt 6:10). This holy kingdom of individual believers fitly framed together into a spiritual house, living in righteousness and devotion, not only in their private and public worship, but in their daily interactions with each other is a far greater and more glorious temple than Solomon ever erected. It is the new temple that Jesus perfects through the presence of the Holy Ghost living in each believer.

A fraternity of believers joined by the Holy Ghost is a light to the world. Jesus said, *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid”* (Matt 5:14). When the Puritans came to the New World, they hoped to become that city. Not only did John Robinson preach it to the Pilgrims, but John Winthrop taught it to the Puritans. In his sermon, *A Model of Christian Charity*, also preached on the Arabella, but this one during the voyage, John Winthrop said, *“For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world.”*<sup>3</sup> He admonished his hearers to worship God and discipline themselves to Christ’s precepts so that they might enjoy His favor and presence. That hope has resonated through time and still stirs Americans. President John Kennedy

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<sup>3</sup> Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *The Light and the Glory* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1977) 63.

returned the phrase “*a city on a hill*” to prominence in 1961. It was repeated by President Ronald Reagan and then by President George W. Bush. That goal, the city on a hill that Jesus called His disciples to become, is the house that God promised to build on the appointed place—a tabernacle for King David.

### **The First Invitation**

As the Reformation freed people from the apostate church and the oppressive bondage of Papal oversight, they sought guidance from the Bible. Like the time in Samuel’s youth, “*The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision*” (1 Sam 3:1). The reformers understood the Bible differently and their disagreements caused them to divide into different denominations. Each denomination adopted creeds that stated their particular scriptural interpretation about the Savior’s gospel and His doctrine. Those various creeds not only distinguished each from the others, but they created walls that further divided Christianity. As Americans pushed civilization westward, various denominations competed for members along the frontier in an effort to establish churches in each hamlet. Their clergy all began with the same message, the redeeming atonement of Jesus Christ, but each deviated from their common testimony to prove their particular sect right. Their debates only further separated Christians in a nation that could only become a holy kingdom by uniting under the presence and power of the Holy Ghost.

The denominational interest in America’s frontier was a reaction to the Second Great Awakening that began in Logan County, Kentucky during June 1800. Barton Stone, who traveled an entire week to attend, described the baffling sight: “*Many, very many, fell down as men slain in battle, and continued for hours together in an apparent breathless and motionless state . . . After lying there for hours, they obtained deliverance. The gloomy cloud that covered their faces seemed gradually and visible to disappear, and hope in smiles brightened into joy. They would rise, shouting deliverance, and then would address the surrounding multitude in language truly eloquent and impressive. With astonishment did I hear men, women, and children declaring the wonderful works of God, and the glorious mysteries of the Gospel.*”<sup>4</sup> A year later, the largest camp meeting convened at Cane Ridge, Kentucky and drew 10,000 to 20,000 participants. The subsequent revival spread through the Cumberland Gap, into Southwest Kentucky, Tennessee, and across the River into Ohio.

The revival was without denominational distinction and appeared as an inter-faith experience. God was pouring out His Spirit without regard to sectarian views and creedal statements. In 1804, Barton Stone renounced his membership in the Presbyterian Church. He and four others from the Washington Presbytery formed the Christian Church and based it on scripture rather than a creed representing men’s opinions. He later allied with Alexander Campbell in the American Restoration Movement. It sought “*the unification of all Christians in a single body patterned after the church of the New Testament.*”<sup>5</sup> In the title of one of his books, Alexander Campbell explained his goal: “*The attempt to restore the original gospel and order of things.*”<sup>6</sup> Inside, he wrote, “*We want the old gospel back, and*

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Marshall and David Manuel, *From Sea to Shining Sea* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1986) 63.

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restoration\\_Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restoration_Movement).

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Campbell, *A Connected View of the Principle and Rules by which the Living Oracles may be Intelligibly and Certainly Interpreted* (Bethany, VA; McVay and Ewing, 1835) 1.

*sustained by the ancient order of things; and this alone, by the blessing of the Divine Spirit, is all that we do want, or can expect, to reform and save the world.”*<sup>7</sup> American Christianity was again seeking the purified church for which the Pilgrims and Puritans came to America.

The apostolic church could not be recovered by purifying existing churches. It needed to be restored. Neither could the Savior’s gospel be discovered in the maze of Biblical interpretations and analyses. It had to be revealed. As the Second Great Awakening prepared people, the Lord spoke from heaven. He not only answered the growing anticipation for the New Testament church, but He provided an ensign, a standard around which believers could gather. On September 23, 1823 an angel named Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith. Not only did the angel teach the lad the meaning of several Old Testament prophecies, but he revealed the existence of ancient scripture written on golden plates. Moroni specifically said, *“that the fullness of the everlasting gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants.”*<sup>8</sup>

The plain and simple explanation of the Savior’s gospel and His doctrine contained in the Book of Mormon converted a number of Americans, who saw it as the answer to sectarian confusion. They also received the restored church as the long expected New Testament church. Others, in fact the majority, regarded it as a hoax perpetrated by devious, perhaps devilish men, who took advantage of the more ignorant. Instead of accepting the Book of Mormon as God’s answer to the confusion caused by perplexing creedal Christianity, Alexander Campbell, like so many others, dismissed it specifically because it addressed all those controversies. He said, *“This prophet Smith, through his stone spectacles, wrote on the plates of Nephi, in his book of Mormon, every error and almost every truth discussed in N. York for the last ten years. He decides all the great controversies—infant baptism, ordination, the trinity, regeneration, repentance, justification, the fall of man, the atonement, transubstantiation, fasting, penance, church government, religious experience, the call to the ministry, the general resurrection, eternal punishment, who may baptize, and even the question of freemasonry, republican government, and the rights of man.”*<sup>9</sup>

Not only did most Americans disbelieve the Book of Mormon and ignore the invitation to gather to the appointed place, which was called the land of Zion, where they were to build up a holy kingdom in preparation for Jesus’ return, but many who joined the movement disobeyed the divine instructions that they received. The Lord complained: *“There were jarrings, and contentions, and envyings, and strifes, and lustful and covetous desires among them; therefore by these things they polluted their inheritances”* (D&C 98:3a). As punishment, they were driven from Jackson County, Clay County, Kirtland, the state of Missouri, and Nauvoo. Their lack of repentance caused the Lord to reject them *“as a church”* (D&C 107:11a), after which they fulfilled His warning. It foretold that their adulterous *“folly shall be made manifest, and their works shall follow them in the eyes of the people”* (D&C 63:4c). The subsequent polygamist practices, as well as other added teachings, shrouded the first invitation to build up the holy kingdom on earth with an infamy that haunts it until today.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>8</sup> *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints*, Vol. 1 (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1967) 13.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Campbell, *Delusions: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon* (Boston: Benjamin H. Greene, 1832) 13.

The Lord promised, *“Notwithstanding her children are scattered, they that remain and are pure in heart shall return and come to their inheritances; they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy; to build up the waste places of Zion”* (D&C 98:4g). Although the restored church fragmented into more than twenty groups at Joseph Smith, Jr’s death, with other members being scattered, Joseph Smith III succeeded his father, returned a portion of the faithful to the land of Zion, and extended the invitation to both obey the gospel and build up the kingdom of God. New contentions erupted, first within the leadership and then among the members. In 1925, 3000 left and joined the Church of Christ, Temple Lot. Dissent continued until it rose to unbearable heights and fragmented the Reorganization about 30 years ago. The Lord had warned, *“If they pollute their inheritances, they shall be thrown down; for I will not spare them if they pollute their inheritances”* (D&C 100:3c). The Reorganization polluted its inheritances in the same way that the first saints who came to Independence did.

No church nor group of people, whether speaking of the Restoration movement, established denominations, or evangel Christianity, remains untainted from the debates and controversies that have divided Christianity into its various sects. Isaiah foretold our plight: *“The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgement. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean”* (Is 28:7-8). Although most believers long for unification, it now seems so illusive. If the Lord chose to set His hand among one group, some, especially those within that group, would consider His intervention their vindication. God is only interested in vindicating His Son. American Protestantism and the Restoration in particular has failed to unite believers into one body or fitly frame them into the spiritual house that the Lord promised to build in the appointed place.

### **The Second Invitation**

The Lord promised to set His hand a second time to gather His people who have been scattered. Isaiah prophesied, *“It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people”* (Is 11:11). When America, like ancient Israel under King Jeroboam II, reached its zenith and extensively developed trade so that its citizens enjoy never-before-seen affluence; and when the accompanying immorality both popularized disbelief and introduced the false religion, the Lord chose one like Amos. He is not an American; neither is he familiar with American culture. He is not the son of a prophet nor a member of the school of prophets, but he is untainted by the divisive issues that separate the true followers of Jesus Christ in America. Like Amos, who was barred from Israel and sent letters to its citizens that prophesied the raising of the tabernacle of David, this Amos is sending news that the time of Zion’s redemption is at hand and all believers are called to join in building up of the spiritual temple, that holy house that the Lord promised to erect for King David.

When the Lord extends the second invitation, He will also raise an ensign. Isaiah continued, *“He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth”* (Is 11:12). The ensign for the first invitation was the Book of Mormon, translated from the golden plates. The ensign for the second invitation is part of the sealed portion of the golden plates. Today’s Amos has access to those plates and will translate part of the sealed portion when

told to break the seals. Afterward, he will send the translation to latter-day Israel. It will tell them all the things that they will need to live righteously in the holy kingdom.

Before believers in the land of Zion can receive any part of the sealed portion, they must be unified; not just joined under a common viewpoint, but united under the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. Moroni expressly stated the requirements: *“The Lord said unto me, They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord; and in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the Brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the Brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are”* (Eth 1:100-101).

The iniquity that caused the saints to pollute their inheritances in the land of Zion, in both the first organization and the Reorganization, are the contentious and divisive arguments that keep believers apart. Those barriers are often fueled by congregational and church leaders, who sometimes in their effort to protect their members, scrutinize any invitation, including ones from the Lord. The prerequisites for receiving any part of the sealed portion include laying aside those differences. Believers must discard their private interpretations and various opinions. They must lay aside their sectarian perspectives and submit to the purifying power of the Holy Ghost, whose work is to mold believers into the spiritual house of the Lord.

Now that the time for the second invitation has come and the groundwork for the translation of part of the sealed book has arrived, the Lord is sending the testimony of these pending events among believers in the land of Zion. He has commissioned Joseph F. Smith to bring believers together, with the promise that the Lord will pour His righteousness on those who do. That outpouring will unify them. Nephi foresaw it: *“I beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together in multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory”* (1N 3:229-231).

Today, advocates of the false religion permeate every nation, even the Gentile ones. Their aggressive attack on the testimony of Jesus Christ—His gospel and His doctrine—is part of a world-wide effort to resist the Lord’s work and destroy His kingdom before it emerges on earth. During its advance, true believers have concentrated on defending their sectarian differences and failed to work together to build up the kingdom of God as the Lord repeatedly asked them. Their disobedience and subsequent fragmentation has not only weakened their ability to stop the successes of the present anti-Christian efforts, but allowed it to accumulate momentum and develop networks that threaten believers everywhere. Only the Lord can save His work now and He will. He promised to send righteousness down to arm His saints in their departed condition. That descent of righteousness is connected to the golden plates: *“My people will I preserve; and righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of my Only Begotten”* (D&C 36:12f). Note the order. Righteousness will come down from heaven before truth comes out of the earth. This order is the reverse of what happened in 1830. Then, *“Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall*

*look down from heaven*" (Ps 85:11). The Book of Mormon came first and then righteousness came down to cover those who believed.

According to Moroni, before truth can spring out of the earth for the second invitation, believers must repent and exercise faith. The Lord taught Nephi, "*I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will shew unto the world that I am the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and I work not among the children of men, save it be according to their faith*" (2N 11:145). Faith motivates believers to do what God demands under the assurance that He will hold up His end of the bargain. Moroni explained, "*Wherefore I would exhort you, that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men, the same to-day and to-morrow, and for ever*" (Mor 10:7). As people exercise their faith to do what the Lord asks, He moves in miraculous ways to complete His promises. His powerful fulfillment increases their faith and opens the fountains of heaven, which cover the faithful in righteousness. Paul explained that Abraham "*was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness*" (Rom 4:20-22). When Jesus' followers exercise faith in Him, repent of their sectarian attitude and look for ways to work with fellow believers to build up God's kingdom, the Lord will reward their faith by pouring His righteousness on them. The unified people that results will form the spirit-filled stones out of which the Lord will frame the spiritual house that He intends to build in the appointed place.

The invitation to exercise faith is now being extended to latter-day Israel in the land of Zion. That testimony is coming from Brazil. It originated from one who is not from the land of Zion, who is not the son of a prophet, and who is not a member of the school of the prophets. Like Amos, he is sending the word of the Lord to the people of latter-day Israel via messengers. That message announces good news. It bears glad tidings: the time to redeem Zion and translate the sealed book is at hand. Those who exercise faith, even if it is no more than to let a desire to believe work within until they believe (Alma 16:151), will become sanctified as the Lord sends His righteousness on them. Isaiah prophesied of this moment: "*Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness*" (Is 1:27). The Hebrew word "*convert*" in this verse means to "*turn back*," to repent. The unification of the repentant that the Lord's righteousness brings will transform believers into His spiritual house, prepare them to receive part of the sealed portion when it is translated, and equip them to build the House of the Lord on the appointed spot.