

#30: Hezekiah and Josiah

Monte F. Shelley, 15 Aug 2010

Quotes

- What kind of man was Boaz before he met Ruth? — Ruthless.
- My new low-fat diet is really working! The fat seems to hang lower every day. —Maxine
- Life is to be enjoyed, not endured. —Gordon B. Hinckley

1. Jehovah or Baal: The miracles of Elijah and Elisha

The allegiance of Israel vacillated among many gods they believed controlled the elements, but primarily between the two gods with power over water: Baal, the Canaanite storm god, and the Lord Jehovah. They also worshiped the god(s) with power over health, food and other blessings. The miracles of Elijah and Elisha show that the Lord has power over water/drought; life/death; health/sickness, food/famine; peace/war; and a fertile/barren womb. He reveals to His "seers" secret or hidden things and a knowledge of past, present, and future (Mosiah 8:17). These miracles are also types of Christ.

Miracles of Elijah: (1Kings 17—2 Kings 2)

- Causing the rain to cease for 3½ years (17:1)
- Being fed by the ravens (17:4)
- Miracle of the barrel of meal and cruse of oil (17:14)
- Resurrection of the widow's son (17:22)
- Condemned worship of false gods (18:18)
- Calling of fire from heaven on the altar (18:38)
- Causing it to rain (18:45)
- Prophecy: Ahab's sons would all be destroyed (21:22)
- Prophecy: Jezebel would be eaten by dogs (21:23)
- Prophecy: Ahaziah would die of his illness (2Kgs 1:4)
- Called fire from heaven to consume soldiers (2:10, 12)
- Parted of the Jordan River (2:8)
- Prophecy: Elisha to have a double portion of his spirit (2:10)
- Taken to heaven in chariot of fire by whirlwind (2:11)

Miracles of Elisha: (2 Kings 2-13)

- Parted the Jordan River (2:14)
- Healed the waters (2:21)
- Curse of the she bears that mauled the "youths" (NIV 2:24)
- Filled of the valley with water (3:17)
- Deception of Moabites with the valley of blood (3:22)
- Miracle of the vessels of oil (4:4)
- Prophecy: Shunammite woman would have a son (4:16)
- Resurrection of the Shunammite's son (4:34)
- Healed the deadly pot of food (4:41)
- Fed 100 with 20 loaves and some grain with extra (4:42-44)
- Healed a leper: Naaman, a Syrian general (5:14)
- Knew Gehazi took money; cursed him with leprosy (5:26-7)
- Floating of the axe head (6:6)
- Prophecy of the Syrian battle plans (6:9)
- Vision of the chariots (open his eyes that he may see) (6:17)
- Smiting Syrian army with blindness (6:18)
- Restoring the sight of the Syrian army (6:20)
- Prophecy: end of the great famine (7:1)
- Prophecy: scoffing man to see, but not eat abundant food (7:2)
- Deceived Syrians with the sound of chariots (7:6)
- Prophecy: seven-year famine (8:1)
- Prophecy of Benhadad's untimely death (8:10)
- Prophecy of Hazael's cruelty to Israel (8:12)
- Prophecy: Jehu would smite the house of Ahab (9:7)
- Prophecy: Joash would smite the Syrians (13:17, 19)
- Resurrection of the man touched by his bones (13:21)

2. Kings of Judah and Israel

Kings of Judah		Kings of Israel	
Jehoram*	853-841 BC	Elisha	
Ahaziah	841 BC	<i>Jehu</i>	841-814 BC
Athaliah	841-835 BC		
<i>Joash/Jehoash</i>	835-796 BC		
Joel?		Jehoahaz	814-798 BC
<i>Amaziah</i>	796-767 BC	Jehoash	798-782 BC
<i>Azariah/Uzziah*</i>	792-740 BC	Jeroboam II	793-753 BC
		Amos, Jonah, Hosea	
		Zachariah	753 BC
		Shallum	751 BC
<i>Jotham*</i>	750-732 BC	Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah	752-742 BC
Isaiah		Hoshea	732-722 BC
Ahaz*	735-715 BC		
Hezekiah	715-686 BC	721 Ten Tribes taken captive	
Manasseh*	697-642 BC	Micah	
Amon	642-640 BC	Samaritans	
Nahum			
Josiah	640-609 BC		
Jeremiah, Zephaniah			
Jehoahaz	609 BC	Nebuchadnezzar 604-561 BC	
Jehoiakim/Eliakim	609-598 BC		
Daniel to Babylon; Obadiah			
Jehoiachin	598-597 BC		
Ezekiel in Babylon; Habakkuk		600 Lehi leaves Jerusalem	
Zedekiah/Mattaniah	597-586 BC	*Joint rule	

Dates are approximate. (Adapted from BD and OT-I.) Righteous kings in bold italics. Only major prophets are listed.



3. Assyria conquers kingdom of Israel

While Ahaz was king of Judah, Hoshea became king of Israel. When the king of Assyria came against Israel, Hoshea became his servant and paid him tribute each year. When Hoshea stopped paying, he was put in prison and the king of Assyria conquered Israel and carried many away as captives in 721 BC.

To reduce nationalism and future revolts, the Assyrians took captive people who were royalty, priests, rich, or skilled. They replaced them with conquered people from elsewhere. When the

Assyrians conquered Israel in 722 BC, remnants of the ten tribes were preserved in three groups: (a) some moved to Judah, (b) some remained in Samaria and mixed with gentiles imported by the Assyrians, and (c) the rest were taken captive to Assyria (13,520 in 732 BC and 27,290 in 722 BC according to Assyrian records). (JWOT 289–290). Those taken captive have become known as the lost tribes of Israel.

Years earlier, Moses had said, “The LORD shall scatter [Israel] among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods” (Deut 28:64).

4. Who were the Samaritans?

²⁴ The king of Assyria brought [NIV people] from Babylon, and ... [other cities], and placed *them* in ... Samaria. ... ²⁵ They feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions ... which slew *some*. ... ²⁷ Then the king of Assyria ... [sent an Israelite priest back to teach] ²⁸ them how they should fear the LORD. ²⁹ Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made. (2 Kgs 17:23–29)

5. Which lineages remained in the country of Judah?

The Levites ... came to Judah. ... ¹⁶ And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God ... came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD. (2 Chr 11:14–19) [King Asa] gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him. (2 Chr 15:9)

Others from Israel came to Judah to escape the invasions of Assyria. This caused the city of Jerusalem to greatly expand during the time of king Hezekiah. (JWOT 288)

6. Ahaz, king of Judah, does evil

Ahaz became king of Judah when he was 20. He worshiped Baal and “burnt incense ... and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen” (2 Chr 28:2–3; 2 Kgs 16:2–4).

When Syria came to fight Jerusalem, Ahaz ignored Isaiah’s counsel to fear not and trust God (Isa 7). Instead, Ahaz sent messengers to the “king of Assyria, saying, I *am* thy servant ... come up, and save me. ... ⁸ Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in ... the king’s house, and sent *it for* a present to the king of Assyria” (2 Kgs 16:7–8).

²² In the time of his distress ... ²³ [Ahaz] sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, *therefore* will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. ... ²⁴ Ahaz ... cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. ²⁵ And in every ... city ... he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God. (2 Chr 28:22–25)

7. King Hezekiah restores temple worship (2 Chr 29)

¹ Hezekiah began to reign *when he was* [25] years old. ² And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD. ...

³ He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. ⁴ And he brought in the priests and the Levites ... ⁵ And said ... sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD ... and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. ⁶ For our fathers have trespassed, and done *that which was* evil ... and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD. ... ⁷ They have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings. ... ⁸ Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah ... and he hath delivered them

to trouble. ... ⁹ Our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives *are* in captivity for this. ¹⁰ Now *it is* in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD ... that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. ¹¹ My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.

[After 16 days, the priests began to offer sacrifices.]

²⁴ The priests killed [the animals], and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: ... ³⁰ And [the Levites] sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped. ³¹ Then Hezekiah ... said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank offerings; and as many as were of a free heart burnt offerings.

8. Hezekiah invites Israel for Passover (2 Chr 30)

¹ Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel. ... Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. ... ¹⁰ So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. ¹¹ Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. ... ¹⁷ [NIV Since many in the crowd had not consecrated themselves, the Levites had to kill the Passover lambs for all those who were not ceremonially clean and could not consecrate their lambs to the Lord.] ¹⁸ For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the Passover. ... But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one ¹⁹ *That* prepareth his heart to seek ... the LORD ... though *he be* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary. ²⁰ And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

9. Hezekiah removes high places (2 Chr 31; 2 Kgs 18)

¹ Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all.

In 2 Kings 18:3–4 stress is laid on [Hezekiah’s purge]. The purge included the removal of cultic objects with a long history in Judah, such as the “high places,” the pillars, the Asherah cult pole, and the copper serpent whose creation was attributed to Moses in the desert (Num. 21:5–9). ... Hezekiah abolished the cult of the high places, which had always been practiced in Jerusalem and the provincial towns, and concentrated the religious activity in the Temple of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:22). It was his intention to raise the Jerusalem Temple to the status of the only legitimate cult place. (EJ- Hezekiah)

10. Hezekiah prepares to defend Jerusalem (2 Chr 32)

² When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come ... to fight against Jerusalem, ³ He took counsel with his princes ... to stop the waters ... which *were* without the city. ... ⁴ Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water? ⁵ Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, ... and made darts and shields in abundance. ⁶ And he set captains of war over the people ... saying, ⁷ Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the

multitude that *is* with him: for there be more with us than with him: ⁸ With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

Hezekiah prepared to defend Jerusalem.

1. He covered a spring outside Jerusalem's walls to deprive the Assyrians of water. He built a 1770' tunnel to bring spring water inside the walls. (2 Kgs 20:20; Isa 22:9–11; 2 Chr 32:30)
2. He fortified the city, building a wall and towers (v. 5)
3. He made weapons and armed the people (v. 5)
4. He organized the military with captains of war (v. 6)
5. He encouraged the people to have faith because "there be more with us than with him" (v. 7; see also 2 Kgs. 6:16)
6. He built towns for storage of grain, wine, oil (2 Chr 32:28–29)

11. Assyrians promote fear during siege (2 Chr 32)

First Stage: In the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did ... [the] king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. ... ¹⁴ And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah ... three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. (2 Kgs 18:13–16) Hezekiah paid the tribute.

Second Stage: [The Assyrians said to the people] ¹⁰ Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem? ¹¹ Doth not Hezekiah persuade you ... to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The LORD our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria? ... ¹⁵ Let not Hezekiah deceive you, ... neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation ... was able to deliver his people out of mine hand... how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand? ... ¹⁸ Then they cried with a loud voice in the Jews' speech unto the people of Jerusalem ... to affright them, and to trouble them; that they might take the city.

12. Hezekiah and Isaiah promote faith (2 Chr 32)

Hezekiah prayed and asked God to save them. Isaiah said to Hezekiah: "That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard." Isaiah said the Assyrians were a tool in God's hands. "Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it. In days of old I planned it; now I have brought it to pass, that you have turned fortified cities into piles of stone." (NIV). ²⁸ Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest. (2 Kgs 19:20–28)

Isaiah said unto [the king's servants], Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall ... return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land ... The king of Assyria ... shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there. ... By the way that he came, ... shall he return, and shall not come into this city ... For I will defend this city. (Isa 37:1–7, 33–35)

13. The LORD delivers Jerusalem (2 Chr 32)

Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians [185,000] and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that ... his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esar-haddon his son reigned in his stead. (Isa 37:36–38)

Jewish tradition maintains that archangel Gabriel (along with Michael in the Targum's version) was the angel sent to destroy the Assyrian troops, and that the destruction occurred on Passover night. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sennacherib)

14. Hezekiah illness (2 Chr 32)

¹ In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. ... Isaiah ... said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die. ... ² Then he ... prayed unto the LORD. ... Afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁵ Turn again, and tell Hezekiah ... I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. ⁶ And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria. (2 Kgs 20:1–6)

On the night of Passover, in the middle of the night, an angel smote the army of Assyria and 185,000 died from a plague. ... Three days later, before the end of Passover, Hezekiah became ill. According to Tradition, it was a terminal illness that no one had ever recovered from. Worse, the prophet Isaiah told him that he was going to die from this illness. Hezekiah was not fazed, and gave the prophet an answer for the ages that became one of the more famous lines in the Talmud ...: "Never give up hope even when there is a sword on your neck." (JH)

Hezekiah's dangerous illness was caused by the discord between him and Isaiah, each of whom desired that the other should pay him the first visit. ... To reconcile them God struck Hezekiah with a malady and ordered Isaiah to visit the sick king. Isaiah told the latter that he would die, and that his soul also would perish because he had not married and had thus neglected the commandment to perpetuate the human species. Hezekiah did not despair, however, holding to the principle that one must always have recourse to prayer. He finally married Isaiah's daughter, who bore him Manasseh. (JE- Hezekiah)

There is evidence ... that the Talmud is right in reporting that King Hezekiah actually married Isaiah's daughter after the Assyrian danger was over. (Nibley, "Politics in Jerusalem")

15. Hezekiah shows Babylonians his treasures

⁵ Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah ... ⁶ the days come, that all that is in thine house ... shall be carried to Babylon. ... ⁷ And of thy sons ... shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. (Isa 39:5–7; 2 Kgs 20:16–18)

16. Manasseh restores Baal worship (2 Chr 33; 2 Kgs 21)

¹ Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he began to reign. ... He built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. (2 Kgs 21; 2 Chr 33)

Manasseh's mother was the daughter of ... Isaiah, and married King Hezekiah after his miraculous recovery. (EJ- Manasseh)

17. Josiah purges Baal worship (2 Chr 34; 2 Kgs 22)

¹ Josiah *was* eight years old when he began to reign. ... ² And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD. ... ³ For in the eighth year of his reign ... he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. ... ⁸ Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land ... he sent Shaphan ... to repair the house of the LORD his God.

18. “Book of the law” is found (2 Chr 34; 2 Kgs 22)

¹⁵ Hilkiah ... said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. ... ¹⁸ And Shaphan read it before the king. ... ¹⁹ When the king had heard the words of the law ... he rent his clothes. ... ²¹ Great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.

19. Josiah and people renew covenant (2 Chr 34; 2 Kgs 23)

The king went up into the house of the LORD, ... and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.

³¹ And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant ... to walk after the LORD, and ... to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.

³² And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. ³³ And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that *pertained* to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God.

20. What was the book of the law that was found?

The ‘Book of the Law’ is identified with Deuteronomy because:

- The term ‘the Book of the Law’ is only in Deuteronomy, where it refers to the Book of Deuteronomy itself.
- The abolition of high places and the centralization of temple worship are prescribed only in Deuteronomy.
- The prohibition against pillars in worship (Deut 16:22) was legitimate and desirable (Gen 28:18; 35:14; Ex 24:4; Josh 24:26).
- Profane slaughtering which had been forbidden is now allowed (Deut 12:13–19) because of the law of centralization.
- Star worship purged by Josiah (2 Kgs 23:5, 11–12), is only condemned in Deuteronomy: ‘the host of heaven’ (4:19; 17:3).
- Passover is celebrated in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 23:21–23) according to Deut 16:1–8, instead of in the home as directed in Exodus 12.
- The covenant made by the people to keep the law of this book (2 Kgs 23:3) is styled after the injunctions of loyalty and allegiance to God found in Deuteronomy.

“It seems ... that the book ‘discovered’ was not identical with Deuteronomy in its present form.” Of the ‘good kings’ only Hezekiah and Josiah are credited with both cult-purification and cult-centralization. “The attribution of the book to Moses (2 Chr 34; 2 Kgs 22) would enable the proponents of centralization and purification to claim that their program was a restoration rather than an innovation.” (adapted from EJ- Deuteronomy)

Other unique characteristics in Deuteronomy

The sanctuary is presented as a dwelling place of *the name* of God (e.g., 12:5, 11, 21), rather than the domicile of God Himself as in the ancient sources (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:13). Similarly the ark which in the previous sources is regarded as the seat of God or His chariot (e.g., Ex 25:22; Num 10:33–36; 1 Sam 4:4) is seen in Deuteronomy only as the receptacle for the tablets (10:1ff.). ... According to Exodus 19, God went down to Mt. Sinai and from there made His voice heard to Moses and the people, whereas in Deuteronomy, God proclaimed His word from His seat in heaven, but it was transmitted to Israel through the great fire on the mount. ... Israelites must worship Yahweh exclusively (Deut 5:7, 8; 6:4; 13:3–18; 28:15–20, 23–25; 30:17–18, etc.) (EJ- Deuteronomy)

Deuteronomy focuses on knowing and keeping The Law of Moses and minimizes or omits temple related things done by priests (e.g., vail, Day of Atonement, atonement, mercy seat, cherubim, music). Deuteronomy denies that any vision of God was seen when the Law was given: “You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice” (NIV Deut 4:12), and yet Exodus

says that Moses went up the mountain with the leaders and elders of Israel “and they saw the God of Israel” (Ex 24:10). Isaiah “saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple” (Isa 6:1). (see Barker 2003)

The plates of brass: When Lehi left Jerusalem about 600 BC, they took “the plates of brass ... [which] did contain the five books of Moses” (1 Ne 5:10–11). Scholars have found other evidence in the Book of Mormon that the Nephites did have and refer to Deuteronomy.

21. Key ideas related to Hezekiah and Josiah

- Open the doors of the temple
- “Sanctify now yourselves”
- “Turn again unto the LORD”
- Pray as if everything depended upon God. Work as if everything depended upon you.
- “Be strong and courageous, be not afraid”
- “Never give up hope even when there is a sword on your neck”
- “Do all that is written”

Quotes

Two young men were canoeing down the river to Niagara Falls. Although the water was calm, they were approaching the area where the water began to pick up speed as it headed for the falls. A man on the shore called out, “Ahoy, the rapids are below you!” But they did not heed the warning. Instead they went on laughing and joking. On the shore, the man ran and shouted in desperation, “Ahoy, the rapids are below you!” Still they did not heed his warning. Soon they were caught in the rapids and began to fear. They tried to turn the canoe but it was too late. Over the falls they went—all because they refused to heed the warning voice. (Adapted from **David O. McKay**, *Gospel Ideals*, 512)

Spencer W. Kimball: Perspiration must precede inspiration; there must be effort before there is the harvest. (*Ensign*, 9/1983, 5)

Spencer W. Kimball: I feel strongly that each of us must return to the scriptures just as King Josiah did and let them work mightily within us, impelling us to an unwavering determination to serve the Lord (*Ensign*, July 1985, 3).

Howard W. Hunter: “Let us be a temple-attending people.

Attend the temple as frequently as personal circumstances allow. Keep a picture of a temple in your home that your children may see it. Teach them about the purposes of the house of the Lord. Have them plan from their earliest years to go there and to remain worthy of that blessing. If proximity to a temple does not allow frequent attendance, gather in the history of your family and prepare the names for the sacred ordinances performed only in the temple. This family research is essential to the work of the temples, and blessings surely will come to those who do that work.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 8)

Ezra Taft Benson: In 1832, as some early missionaries returned from their fields of labor, the Lord reproved them for treating the Book of Mormon lightly. As a result of that attitude, he said, their minds had been darkened. Not only had treating this sacred book lightly brought a loss of light to themselves, it had also brought the whole Church under condemnation, even all the children of Zion. And then the Lord said, ‘And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon’ (D&C 84:54–57). ... If the early Saints were rebuked for treating the Book of Mormon lightly, are we under any less condemnation if we do the same?” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 4–5).