

Notes

Building the Temple of Nephi: Early Mormon Perceptions of Cumorah and the New Jerusalem

Don Bradley

The ‘New-Jerusalem Reflector’ states that the building of the TEMPLE OF NEPHI is to be commenced about the beginning of the first of the year of the Millennium. Thousands are already flocking to the standard of Joseph the Prophet. The Book of Mormon is expected to astonish the natives!!

—Abner Cole¹

AS A NEW FAITH’S PURPORTED “Gold Bible” began rolling off the presses at the E. B. Grandin print shop, the public was curious to know the nature of that faith. Protestant sects proliferated wildly during the Second Great Awakening, particularly in the fertile soil of upstate New York’s “Burned-over District.” And restorationists, like the Christian primitivist Disciples of Christ, who aimed to restore the New Testament Church, were a familiar breed among them. Such sects provided the best model for what the public might expect Palmyra’s new faith to become, but actual information was still hard to come by.

Abner Cole, brother-in-law to an associate of Joseph Smith, and editor of a newspaper in Palmyra, was one of the few who could claim to be in the know about Mormonism. His words quoted above about the

1. Abner Cole, *Reflector* (Palmyra, NY), October 7, 1829.

new faith, published in the *Palmyra Reflector* in October 1829, gave the world one of its first glimpses of the religion being founded on the Book of Mormon—and he peculiarly claimed that it was a *temple-building* religion.

Reading Cole's statement with the benefit of hindsight, we can see that he was clearly correct in anticipating that believers in the Book of Mormon would build a temple and attempt to build a New Jerusalem. But hindsight obscures the meaning of other details offered by Cole, making them opaque, and even bizarre, to modern eyes. Cole not only anticipates that the Saints would build a temple, but he specifically expects them to build "*the TEMPLE OF NEPHI.*" The Book of Mormon describes Nephi building a temple early in the sixth century before Christ. The text says that he modeled this temple on "the temple of Solomon," except that Nephi's temple was necessarily less grandiose and ornate (2 Nephi 5:16).

The 1829 report that the Mormons were going to build "the Temple of Nephi" therefore leads us to ask why the Latter-day Saints would—according to Cole—build *Nephi's* temple given that Nephi himself had already built it some 2,400 years earlier. Cole also peculiarly states that the future building of this temple had been reported in the "*New Jerusalem Reflector.*" But, of course, there was no such newspaper. Rather, Cole appears to derive his information from a now-lost issue of another local Palmyra newspaper. Only two newspapers had thus far begun printing news about the Book of Mormon—Palmyra's *Wayne Sentinel* and *Palmyra Freeman*. And all issues of the *Wayne Sentinel* are accounted for, implying that the "*New Jerusalem Reflector*" facetiously cited by Cole was actually the *Palmyra Freeman*.² A further question, then, would be

2. The *Freeman's* information on the Book of Mormon was frequently echoed in other newspapers. For example, the second article ever printed on the Book of Mormon, published in the *Freeman* on August 11, 1829, was reprinted in the *Niagara Courier* (Lockport, NY), August 27, 1829; the *Rochester Daily Advertiser and Telegraph* (Rochester, NY), August 31, 1829; and the *New-York Telescope* (New York City), February 20, 1830. For an example of Cole's use of material on the Book of Mormon from the *Freeman*, see *Palmyra Reflector*, September 30, 1829, quoted in Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 2:227.

why Cole would refer to a rival newspaper published in *Palmyra* as if it had been published in the prophesied *New Jerusalem*.

I wish to argue here that these earliest print references to Mormon intentions of building a temple and a New Jerusalem represent a now-buried stratum in the early Mormon understanding of the New Jerusalem, a stratum we can excavate by paying careful attention to how the earliest believers perceived the hill in which the golden plates had been buried, as well as the stone vessel in which they had been housed. Excavating that stratum promises to reveal something of the early Mormon self-understanding and the vision that inspired the earliest believers.

In May 1829, Smith translated the narrative of the Nephites' destruction in "the land Desolation" at the hill "Cumorah" (Mormon 6:1–15). After this narrative became known, early Mormons came to understand the Manchester hill on Canandaigua Road where Smith unearthed the plates as the Cumorah of the text. This name and its associated narrative, when applied to the Manchester hill with the Nephite reliquary, give the place a very definite geographical identity: it is the final battleground and graveyard of a once great nation, a place of destruction and mourning. But the evidence I will review here suggests that before the name and narrative of Cumorah were applied to the Manchester hill—an identification that still holds in the twenty-first century—believers held a much different interpretation of the hill and the stone box that held its sacred relics. Consequently, Abner Cole's earliest extant references to Mormon intentions of building a temple and a New Jerusalem puzzle us because they reflect an earlier understanding. To grasp the meaning that the hill-top reliquary would have had for Smith and his contemporaries before the narrative of the Book of Mormon was available, we need to "read" the meaning of the golden plates hill and its stone reliquary through the lens of events before that point. We need to temporarily set aside later narratives they did not encounter until May 1829 and did not generally apply to the Manchester hill until still later.³

3. Early Mormon understandings of Nephi's temple and of the New Jerusalem would have been shaped by the content of the initial, later lost, Book of Mormon

When viewed through the lens of what Joseph Smith, Martin Harris, and their associates demonstrably knew during the early period, the hill takes on a very different signification from that of mass grave. Among the data that crucially informed the early Latter-day Saints' understanding of the hilltop reliquary were the characteristics of its sacred relics. This collection of relics did not evoke or associate the reliquary with wars of annihilation. Rather, the relics associated the reliquary with a temple.

Martin Harris and other early believers appear to have understood the hilltop reliquary as an American Israelite counterpart to the biblical Ark of the Covenant, which held Moses's stone tablets and embodied the presence of God to the early Israelites. Two years after the Book of Mormon was published, the "Gentile" press suggestively reported that the book's adherents claimed to know where the Ark of the Covenant and its relics were hidden.⁴ Further analysis of early Mormon perspectives suggests this was a misinterpretation of the actual claim—which was not that Smith had discovered the *biblical* ark, but that he had located a *new* "ark."

For instance, Palmyra minister John A. Clark, conveying the gold plates narrative as he had heard it from Harris in 1828, reported that the plates were found in an "ark."⁵ Other Latter-day Saints, among them

manuscript, translated in 1828. The contents of the lost manuscript, so far as they can presently be reconstructed, are discussed in Don Bradley, *The Lost 116 Pages: Rediscovering the Book of Lehi* (Sandy, UT: Greg Kofford Books, forthcoming).

4. The Rev. B. Pixley (Independence, Jackson Co., MO) to the editor of the *Christian Watchman*, October 12, 1832; published in the *Christian Watchman* (Boston, MA), November 9, 1832. <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/ne/miscne01.htm>.

5. John A. Clark, reporting on detailed 1828–1829 narrations by Martin Harris, wrote of Joseph Smith's discovery of the plates: "This book, which was contained in a chest, *or ark*, and which consisted of metallic plates covered with characters embossed in gold, he must not presume to look into, under three years" (John A. Clark to "Dear Brethren," August 24, 1840, in the *Episcopal Recorder* (Fairfield, PA) 18 [September 5, 1840]: 94, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:264; emphasis added). The term "ark" as used here was an accurate one. The primary definition given for "ark" in the 1828 Webster's dictionary was "a small close vessel, chest or coffer, such as that which was the repository of the tables of the covenant among the Jews" and another definition was "a depository." The stone vessel in which the plates had been deposited fits both (Noah

John Taylor, would also perceive the parallel between the stone cache of Nephite relics and the Ark of the Covenant:

As ancient Israel preserved in the Ark of the Covenant memorials of God's power, goodness and mercy, manifested during the exodus from Egypt, in the two tablets of stone and the pot of manna; and of the recognition of the Aaronic Priesthood in Aaron's rod that budded; and as the sword of Laban, the sacred plates already revealed, as well as numerous others yet to be made manifest, and a Urim and Thummim were preserved on this continent; so will there be an exhibition an evidence, a memorial . . . preserved and manifested in the dispensation that the Lord in His loving kindness has now inaugurated.⁶

The reliquary's contents, moreover, fit with its characterization as an "ark." All the objects Smith reported finding in it parallel and evoke either the biblical Ark of the Covenant—the heart of the First Temple—or the vestments of the biblical high priest, who presided over sacrificial worship in the temple and had exclusive annual access to the Ark on the Day of Atonement. These points deserve attention as they highlight parallels early believers were likely to recognize between the contents of the New York reliquary and the biblical Ark of the Covenant.

Among the relics Smith recovered from the Nephite "ark" were "the interpreters" and a breastplate. The interpreters were, like the biblical high priest's Urim and Thummim, two sacred stones used to divine God's will. And, also like the Urim and Thummim, these attached to their accompanying breastplate. The parallel between the interpreters and the Urim and Thummim is sufficiently obvious such that believers, including Smith, began calling the interpreters "the Urim and Thummim" no later than 1832.⁷ A revelation shored up the connection, also

Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, s.v. "ark," 2 vols. [New Haven, CT: S. Converse, printed by Hezekiah Howe, 1828].

6. John Taylor, *The Mediation and Atonement* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1882), 122–23.

7. When Orson Hyde and Joseph Smith's brother Samuel Harrison Smith were questioned in 1832 about the translation of the Book of Mormon, they referred to the

referring to the interpreters as "the Urim and Thummim" (Doctrine and Covenants 17:1).⁸

The interpreters were not, of course, the sole contents Smith found in the stone "ark." Most prominent among the artifacts of the stone box were the golden plates. Interestingly, Smith's new "ark" with its plates paralleled but inverted the pattern of the biblical ark: in place of stone tablets in a golden ark, the Nephite sacred cache consisted of golden tablets in a stone ark.⁹

The Manchester "ark's" connection to the biblical temple relics is made yet stronger by Smith's description of the golden plates as having been engraved with linguistic characters. The Hebrew Bible only once describes an engraved gold plate. This plate appears as part of the sacerdotal vestments that the high priest wore—along with the breastplate and Urim and Thummim—and was engraved with sacred words (Exodus 39:30; Leviticus 8:9).¹⁰

interpreters as "the Urim and Thummim." See "Questions Proposed to the Mormonite Preachers and Their Answers Obtained Before the Whole Assembly at Julian Hall, Sunday Evening, August 5, 1832," *Boston Investigator* 2, August 10, 1832. This usage was also adopted in Latter-day Saint publications, such as *The Evening and the Morning Star*, edited by W. W. Phelps, which equated the interpreters with the Urim and Thummim ("The Book of Mormon," *Evening and the Morning Star*, January 1833, 2).

8. This revelation is dated June 1829. But because the earliest known version of the revelation is that published in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, it is unclear whether the original text contained the term "Urim and Thummim," as opposed to the more standard 1829 term "interpreters." In either case, Smith's prophetic text, whether in 1829 or 1835, shows that the interpreters were identified strongly enough with the biblical Urim and Thummim that the term "Urim and Thummim" was thought appropriate to use for the interpreters themselves.

9. The biblical Ark of the Covenant was plated with gold, befitting the ornate temple of Solomon in which it was housed. Nephi's temple is described in the Book of Mormon as less ornate, decorated with fewer "precious things" (2 Nephi 5:16), making a stone "ark" appropriate to this temple.

10. The words on the high priest's gold plate were "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Exodus 39:30; emphasis in the original). The only other biblical mention of gold plates in the King James Bible is also with reference to the high priest's vestments, gold plates being included as part of the ephod, on which the Urim and Thummim were worn (Exodus 39:2–3).

Other relics reportedly transmitted with the interpreters and plates were also found in the stone box: the Liahona and sword of Laban.¹¹ Even these items evoke biblical relics said to have been stored in or with the Ark of the Covenant. They systematically parallel the memorials of the Exodus associated with the biblical Ark of the Covenant. The brass ball “compass,” or Liahona, parallels the pot of manna and “Aaron’s rod that budded,” two relics from the Exodus narrative that the biblical Epistle to the Hebrews places *inside* the Ark (Hebrews 9:4; cf. Exodus 16:33; Numbers 17:10). And the “sword of Laban” rather obviously parallels the “sword of Goliath,” which eventually became part of the paraphernalia associated with the biblical high priest (1 Samuel 21:9; discussed below).

The Liahona, found by Lehi, was a “compass” or divinatory pointing device that revealed the will of God (1 Nephi 16:10–33; 18:12). The Liahona parallels the pot of manna and Aaron’s rod both in function and in how it enters the narrative. “Aaron’s rod that budded” was a staff used for divinatory purposes (Numbers 17:1–10). Manna, which the Israelites found in round clumps on the ground each morning, provided their sustenance during the Exodus to their Canaanite “Promised Land” (Exodus 16:14–21). Similarly, the Liahona pointed the way to food and Lehi’s New World “Promised Land” (1 Nephi 16:10, 23–32). And Lehi found this round “ball” on the ground in the morning, just as the Israelites did the manna (1 Nephi 16:10). It is not difficult to see how early followers of Smith would have seen biblical parallels for the items found on the hill.

11. Descriptions of the contents of the stone box vary. The Nephite set of sacred treasures clearly consisted of the brass plates, various sets of golden plates, the sword of Laban, the Liahona, and, eventually, the interpreters and accompanying breastplate. No early historical sources of which I am aware place the brass plates or Nephi’s large plates in Cumorah’s stone box. But the remainder of the Nephite relics are reported to have been in the box. For a description of the Liahona and sword of Laban appearing in the box, see Fayette Lapham, “Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, Forty Years Ago: His Account of the Finding of the Sacred Plates,” *Historical Magazine and Notes and Queries concerning the Antiquities, History, and Biography of America* [second series] 7 (May 1870): 305–09, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:462.

The sword of Goliath was used by the young David to behead its famed owner. In a parallel story, Nephi beheads Laban with his own sword—and takes the sword (1 Nephi 4:6–21). Several scholars, especially Benjamin McGuire, have examined how the story of Nephi and Laban parallels that of David and Goliath. McGuire has found distinctive phrasing from the Goliath narrative in the Laban narrative and has found several thematic elements of the narrative that repeat—in the same order—in the Laban narrative.¹²

The sword of Goliath is probably less familiar to readers as a temple relic. But its preservation in the biblical Tabernacle is attested to in 1 Samuel's narrative of David's flight from Saul. When David enters the Tabernacle for asylum and asks the high priest Ahimelech for a sword to defend himself against Saul's men, Ahimelech answers: "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. The "ephod" was the vestment on which the high priest wore the breastplate to which the Urim and Thummim were attached (1 Samuel 21:9), such that "behind the ephod" indicates that the sword was kept in the Tabernacle along with the sacred priestly vestments. Here again, those familiar with the Bible among Smith's followers would easily have seen parallels with the biblical temple tradition.

Later in the Nephite narrative, a parallel to the biblical Urim and Thummim appears in the form of the Nephite "interpreters," which also attached to a breastplate (Joseph Smith—History 1:35). These interpreters also, by virtue of having been touched by God (see Ether 3:23; cf. Ether 3:4–6), parallel the stones residing inside the biblical Ark of the Covenant (see Exodus 25:21; 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10; 10:2, 5).

Given all these potential connections and parallels, it is unsurprising that the earliest Mormons appear to have understood the stone box from the Manchester hill containing the golden plates as an "ark" paralleling the biblical Ark of the Covenant. The biblical high priest's

12. See Benjamin McGuire, "Nephi and Goliath: A Case Study of Literary Allusion in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 18/1 (2009): 16–31.

relics and the Ark of the Covenant had been kept in the inner chambers of the First Temple, which stood in Jerusalem atop the Temple Mount, Mt. Moriah. The Nephite stone box reliquary was similarly situated atop a hill, evoking the original Jerusalem model. And the early believers' identification of that reliquary as an "ark" indicates that they recognized the parallel.

If the reliquary atop the hill evoked the Ark of the Covenant for the earliest believers, the hill itself would have evoked the site of the First Temple—the Jerusalem Temple Mount. Believers would subsequently encounter the Cumorah narrative and then apply it to this hill, changing the hill, in its perceived significance, from a "Moriah" to a "Gomorrah"—the probable source, according to students of Book of Mormon names, for the name "Cumorah."¹³ But it is the earlier meaning of the Manchester hill, as an American temple mount, that illuminates Abner Cole's report of Mormon plans to build a New Jerusalem, and in it the "temple of Nephi." As a new "Ark of the Covenant" that preserved high priestly vestments and temple relics and rested on a high place, the Nephite "ark" has the appearance of being the heart of a temple complex. For early believers this "ark" marked the site of an ancient temple built by Jews in exile, and thus of an ancient temple city—a new American Jerusalem.

The parallels of the interpreters to the Urim and Thummim and of the hilltop reliquary to the biblical Ark of the Covenant did not remain merely implicit, and neither did the parallel of Palmyra-Manchester to Jerusalem. As we have seen, the earliest extant indication that the Mormons expected to build a temple calls the anticipated edifice "the temple of Nephi" and implies that it would be built in a New Jerusalem located at or by Palmyra.

13. Gomorrah is the likely source for the name "Cumorah" both on linguistic grounds and in light of metonymic (meaning-based) naming in the Book of Mormon. See Paul Y. Hoskisson, *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 13/1–2 (2004): 158–75; and Gordon C. Thomasson, "What's in a Name? Book of Mormon Language, Names, and Naming," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3/1 (1994): 1–27.

Thus, like the contemporary Jewish publisher and proto-Zionist Mordecai Noah—who called for a gathering of the Jews in America during the 1820s—the earliest Mormons seem to have anticipated establishing a New Jerusalem in western New York.¹⁴ However, unlike Noah, who proposed his new Zion on an island situated where the Niagara River emptied into Lake Erie, they apparently intended to build theirs around a temple they expected to erect on the hill of the golden plates, their American Mount Moriah.

Of course, this might surprise Latter-day Saints and students of Mormon history, who will recall that Smith's revelations identified Independence, Missouri, as the location for Zion. But this identification was not made until 1831 (see Doctrine and Covenants 57:2–3). An earlier September 1830 revelation implies that the location of the New Jerusalem had been a subject of disagreement and controversy among the Saints. When Book of Mormon witness Hiram Page wrote revelations regarding the building of the New Jerusalem, Smith's September 1830 revelation countered, dismissing Page's revelation as unauthorized and declaring that "it is not Revealed & no man knoweth where the City [Zion] shall be built But it shall be given hereafter." Smith's revelation excluded a Palmyra-Manchester location for the city by identifying the proper location as being in the vicinity of Indian Territory—"on the borders of the Lamanites" (Doctrine and Covenants 28: 9–11).¹⁵

The identification of the Manchester hill as Cumorah, and of Independence, Missouri, as the New Jerusalem, occurred so early in Mormon history that the earlier understandings of the hill as ancient

14. For information on Noah and his "New Jerusalem" or "city of refuge," Ararat, on Grand Island, see Jonathan D. Sarna, *Jacksonian Jew: The Two Worlds of Mordecai Noah* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1981). The relationship of Noah's project to early Mormonism will be addressed by Don Bradley in a work in progress tentatively titled *Joseph's Ark: American Proto-Zionism, the Book of Lehi, and the Rise of Mormonism*, an adaptation of the author's MA thesis.

15. The word "Zion" was later added to this revelation for clarity. For the earliest extant version of this revelation, see "Revelation, September 1830–B [D&C 28]," p. 40, The Joseph Smith Papers, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-september-1830-b-dc-28/1> (accessed January 4, 2018).

temple site and of Palmyra-Manchester as the New Jerusalem were overshadowed and must now be inferred from early historical records. But they can be inferred from converging lines of evidence. John H. Gilbert recalled Harris stating at the E. B. Grandin print shop in Palmyra that the New Jerusalem was to be built there.¹⁶ This claim by Harris, made during the negotiations for printing the Book of Mormon, was independently recalled by William Van Camp, editor of the *Lyon's Gazette*. Van Camp remembered Harris identifying Palmyra as the New Jerusalem in conjunction with a nearby hill, presumably the golden plates hill, at Grandin's shop while he (Van Camp) worked there as an apprentice.¹⁷

Closer to the events, one of the earliest newspaper articles on Mormonism, published in August 1829, expressed the same understanding. A now lost piece, published by Jonathan A. Hadley in his anti-Masonic newspaper the *Palmyra Freeman*, appears to have described Mormon plans to build or rebuild "the Temple of Nephi." As we have seen, Abner Cole echoed Hadley's information concerning the Mormons building "the Temple of Nephi" in an article of his own while facetiously referring to the *Palmyra Freeman* as "the *New Jerusalem Reflector*." Cole's equation of "Palmyra" with "New Jerusalem" treats these designations as interchangeable and implies that the *Freeman* article had announced that the New Jerusalem "Temple of Nephi" it referenced would be built at Palmyra.¹⁸

From whom did the *Freeman's* editor acquire his information? Hadley's source was likely the same as that of John H. Gilbert and William Van Camp: Martin Harris. In the summer of 1829, Harris visited

16. "Martin . . . said that Palmyra was to be the New Jerusalem" (John H. Gilbert, "Memorandum, Sept. 8th, 1892[,] Palmyra, N.Y.," Palmyra King's Daughters Free Library, Palmyra, NY, as quoted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:547–48).

17. "According to Harris' prophecy, a certain hill, about three fourths of a mile east of Palmyra, was or is, to open, out from which was to come an angel who would put one foot upon the sinful village and sink it. The site was subsequently to become the 'New Jerusalem,' into which the righteous (all the Mormons, of course) were to be gathered" (William Van Camp as editor, *Lyons Gazette* [Lyons, NY], August 9, 1854).

18. *Reflector* (Palmyra, NY), October 7, 1829.

various newspaper printers in the Palmyra area, including the Grandin shop where Gilbert and Van Camp worked, to persuade these establishments to print the Book of Mormon. Gilbert and Van Camp both heard Harris identify Palmyra as the site for the future New Jerusalem at E. B. Grandin's print shop. But Grandin was not the only printer Harris visited to negotiate the printing of the Book of Mormon. Harris, who was an anti-Mason and a subscriber to the *Palmyra Freeman*, may have preferred to have the book printed by Hadley, instead of by the pro-Masonic Grandin. Hadley refused. But Harris had visited Hadley in an attempt to persuade him around the same time he first visited the Grandin shop—just two months before Hadley published his article identifying Palmyra as the site for the Mormons' New Jerusalem.¹⁹ Harris thus appears to have told Hadley, in addition to Gilbert and Van Camp, that Palmyra, or Palmyra-Manchester, was to be the site of the New Jerusalem. Harris doubtless thought sharing this information would help persuade them to publish the book, since having their city transformed into the biblical New Jerusalem would surely have been good for business.

Hadley was thus able to provide the earliest glimpse of Mormon intentions to build a New Jerusalem and a temple—information echoed by Cole. The information they passed on from Harris discloses what believers in the Book of Mormon apparently initially expected with regard to this temple and the New Jerusalem: that they would rebuild a temple that had first been built millennia earlier by Nephi, placing it atop the Manchester hill, and would then build the New Jerusalem around it. These understandings would ultimately be corrected by further revelation through the prophet Joseph Smith, but their presence in an early stratum of Mormon history demonstrates that from the beginning, Mormons were not what their neighbors expected them to be.

19. Michael Hubbard MacKay and Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, *From Darkness unto Light: Joseph Smith's Translation and Publication of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 163–79.

Early Latter-day Saint faith is often understood by scholars today, as it was by Smith's contemporaries at the time the Book of Mormon was published, as quasi-Protestant and as an expression of nineteenth-century Christian primitivism. The extant Book of Mormon text certainly does point toward a restoration of primitive Christianity, but the earliest historical sources on Mormonism reveal a more complex vision of restoration, one that reaches beyond the aspirations of Protestantism, or even of traditional Christianity. From the earliest mention of Book of Mormon believers' intention to build a temple, the temple they have in mind flouts both a Protestant identity and a narrowly conceived Christian primitivist objective.

The Latter-day Saints' first anticipated temple, which they expected to build around an "Ark of the Covenant," was apparently intended to be rich in symbolism from the Hebrew Bible and in physical representations of the sacred. This would not be a quintessential Protestant house of worship, designed principally for praise and preaching, but rather would act as a sanctuary for the performance of sacred rites and the experience of divine presence. That the Latter-day Saints intended to rebuild Nephi's *Jewish* temple and build a New Jerusalem around it reflects a restoration vision that does not limit itself to the New Testament but instead encompasses the whole Bible. In addition to the restoration of primitive Christianity, Mormonism aimed at the restoration of *Israel* from the very outset.

The ideology of primitivism harks back to a movement's "primitive" days as normative—as reflecting what it fundamentally is and should be. If we look at Mormonism's own "primitive" phase as a key to its nature, we find that already during the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, Mormonism not only sought to restore primitive Christianity but also primitive Israelite faith. All Christian primitivists have harked back to Christianity's glory days under the Apostles. The early Mormon movement also harked back to Israel's glory days under Solomon. Even before the Book of Mormon came off the press, Mormonism had discovered that it was to transcend its Protestant context and seek a "restoration of all things." Mormonism's own primitive vision is to restore primitive

Judeo-Christian worship from the ancient worlds of Christ and Peter, Lehi and Nephi, David and Solomon, Adam and Eve.

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