



*The New Testament,
with all its depth, breadth,
and beauty, is enhanced
with clarity and meaning
by the Restoration.*

The Restored Testament

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The New Testament is one of the most influential and life-changing texts in the history of the world, and its influence continues today. The accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, His atoning sacrifice and Resurrection, as well as the teachings of His Apostles, have indelibly shaped the course of world events and ideas. Most importantly, they have helped bring people to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

This book contains the story of our Heavenly Father's love for His children as seen in the life of His Beloved Son and in the efforts of humble disciples who did their best to follow Him. The Restoration is a continuation of that story of Heavenly Father's love for us in our day.

The fact that the Restoration clarifies and enhances New Testament teachings does not diminish the love and reverence that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints feel for the New Testament. In fact, we believe that the scriptures, revelations, and teachings we have received through the Prophet Joseph Smith and others have helped establish the truth of the New Testament record by providing additional witnesses of it (see 1 Nephi 13:35–40).

Here are just three of the many New Testament themes on which the Restoration offers additional insights.

Faith in Jesus Christ

In the Lord's preface to the Doctrine and Covenants (section 1), He declares why He called upon Joseph Smith, gave him revelations, and asked him and others to proclaim them. Among the reasons He gives is this one: "That faith also might increase in the earth" (D&C 1:21).

The New Testament teaches us the essential role of faith in our salvation. We learn there that our faith in Jesus Christ can make us whole (see Matthew 9:22), that “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17), that faith is a gift of the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:9), that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1), and that “faith, if it hath not works, is dead” (James 2:17).

The Restoration affirms all of these teachings, declaring that the first principle of the gospel is “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” (Articles of Faith 1:4). Through numerous visitations and revelations, the Prophet Joseph Smith became the preeminent witness of Jesus Christ in the dispensation of the fulness of times. As such, he taught the world about the Savior’s central role in our lives and about His true nature, correcting erroneous ideas. Because of this witness and these teachings, we can have faith in a living God and in His Son, who invites us to follow Him, become a true disciple, and receive exaltation.

Because of the Restoration, we understand that to truly have faith in God, we must have “a *correct* idea of his character, perfections, and attributes,” as well as “an actual knowledge that the course of life [we are] pursuing is according to his will.”¹

One revelation to Joseph Smith, found in Doctrine and Covenants 93, builds upon the foundation of New Testament teachings to help us develop greater faith in Jesus Christ by better understanding His “character, perfections, and attributes.”

The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith an expanded version of the testimony of John the Baptist, who declared that “before the world was,” Jesus Christ was the chosen “messenger of salvation,” the “light and the Redeemer of the world,” and the Creator of the world (see D&C 93:7–10). His testimony further states that Jesus Christ “received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness” (D&C 93:13).

The Lord then explains that He revealed this information “that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the

Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness” (D&C 93:19).

This revelation helps us see how it is possible for us to become like Jesus Christ. In it the Lord expands upon ideas from the New Testament (particularly the Gospel of John) in order to show that we “were also in the beginning with the Father” (D&C 93:23) and that because of the Savior, we too can “receive grace for grace” (D&C 93:20) and progress *through obedience* until we receive exaltation (see D&C 93:27–28).

Thus, true faith in Jesus Christ is coupled with obedience, and the result of the increased knowledge and faith afforded by the Restoration is the furthering of the Father’s work and glory, “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Grace

The doctrine of grace found in the New Testament has been given a richer explanation through the revelations and teachings of the Restoration. The Apostle Paul taught, “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). We find this teaching repeated in the Book of Mormon, with some important supplemental ideas. For instance, the prophet Jacob taught, “Reconcile yourselves to the will of God . . . ; and remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved” (2 Nephi 10:24). The Book of Mormon reinforces the truth that it is alone the gift of Christ’s Atonement that saves us, but it also reminds us that we *must* yield our wills to God by believing in His Son, repenting, keeping His commandments, and doing good works.

In addition, the Restoration clarifies the New Testament’s teachings regarding the power of grace. The Apostle Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Philippians 4:13). Through modern prophets we have learned that grace is not only the power that brings about our ultimate salvation and exaltation but also “an enabling power” that can strengthen us now (Bible Dictionary, “Grace”). As Elder David A. Bednar of



Through numerous visitations and revelations, beginning with the First Vision, the Prophet Joseph Smith became the preeminent witness of Jesus Christ in this last dispensation.

of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance” (1 Nephi 1:20). This “power of deliverance” is God’s grace, His enabling power. As Nephi and others turned their lives over to the Lord, they received this power. For example, when Alma the Elder’s people were in bondage, they did not cease to pray and have faith, and then “the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease” (Mosiah 24:15).

Thus, Restoration scriptures support the New Testament’s teachings on grace and also expand our view of it, helping us see the hand of the Lord in our lives and how we can access His power here and now.

Covenants

As mentioned before, Doctrine and Covenants 1 lists some reasons why the Lord brought about the Restoration, among which is this one: “That mine everlasting covenant might be established” (D&C 1:22).

The word often translated as “testament” in the New Testament means “covenant” (see, for instance, Matthew 26:28). When covenants are spoken of in the New Testament, they are often mentioned particularly in relation to the old covenant (kept through the law of Moses) that was done away and the new covenant that was established through Jesus Christ in the meridian of time (see Hebrews 8–10). The Restoration of the gospel is the reestablishment of the new and everlasting covenant and helps us see how the concept of covenants permeates all of the Savior’s teachings and is central to our understanding of discipleship.

The Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5–7 is a good example of how the Restoration places the Savior’s teachings in a covenant context. When the resurrected Jesus Christ appeared to the Nephites (see 3 Nephi 11), He called twelve disciples and gave them authority to baptize; taught the people His doctrine (the gospel of faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost); told them the purpose of His doctrine (to be saved and inherit the kingdom of God); and then delivered a sermon nearly identical to the Sermon on the Mount (see 3 Nephi 12–14). Significantly, though, He introduced that sermon with these words:

the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, “Not only does the Atonement of Jesus Christ overcome the effects of the Fall of Adam and make possible the remission of our individual sins and transgressions, but His Atonement also enables us to do good and become better in ways that stretch far beyond our mortal capacities.”²

This idea that God grants people His enabling power here and now is a theme that runs throughout the Book of Mormon, which contains numerous stories of people who are strengthened to overcome life’s difficulties. Even though the Book of Mormon doesn’t often use the word *grace* in describing such events, it contains multiple accounts in which the Lord strengthens people who humble themselves and exercise faith in Him.

In the very first chapter of the book, Nephi explains that his record “will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because



“Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen . . . ; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are baptized with water, behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost. . . .

“ . . . Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins” (3 Nephi 12:1–2; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 5:3–4).

This introduction suggests that the sermon that follows is for disciples—those who have made a covenant through baptism and have received certain promises. The remainder of this sermon, then, rather than simply being seen as good moral or ethical teachings, can be seen in the context of covenant making. It shows us the requirements and the promises associated with entering into these covenants.

For instance, when the Savior says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me,” and “Blessed are the meek” (3 Nephi 12:3, 5), He is telling us what is required of us and what we will receive as a result of entering into the baptismal covenant. As we learn in Moroni 8:26, “Remission

of sins [through baptism] bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the Holy Ghost.” We are “blessed” when we receive the Holy Ghost, which is one of the greatest gifts we can receive in this life and comes as a result of making and keeping covenants.

“Blessed are all they that mourn” (3 Nephi 12:4) reminds us that we must feel sorrow for our sins and repent and that part of the baptismal covenant is to “mourn with those that mourn” (Mosiah 18:9). We are told that those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness . . . shall be filled *with the Holy Ghost*” (3 Nephi 12:6; emphasis added). That last phrase is added in the sermon to the Nephites, emphasizing again the result of keeping the baptismal covenant.

When Jesus Christ called His disciples the “salt of the earth” (3 Nephi 12:13), He was again teaching them about the role of disciples who have made covenants. As the Lord taught in Doctrine and Covenants 101:39, “When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant, they are accounted as the salt of the earth and the savor of men.” And one way we fulfill our baptismal covenant is to become “the saviors of men” (D&C 103:9–10) by bringing the gospel to others through missionary and temple work.

The resurrected Savior's sermon at the temple in the Book of Mormon underscores how His teachings, including the Sermon on the Mount, point us to the making and keeping of covenants as the means of becoming like Him and the Father.

The setting for the Savior's sermon to the Nephites also underscores its covenant context. It is given at "the temple which was in the land Bountiful" (3 Nephi 11:1). This setting helps us see, perhaps, why the original sermon was given on a mount—a place often associated with the Lord's house, where covenants are made (see Psalm 24:3; Isaiah 2:2).³

So, rather than its simply being a catalog of ethical teachings or a list of things a good Christian should do, this sermon becomes for us a description of covenant discipleship, a covenant that can lead us to move beyond our initial following of the Savior to becoming like Him.

The key may be in 3 Nephi 12:48: "Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect." To be perfect means to be complete or whole. The Lord's teachings in the sermon are designed to help us do and become those things that will help us be whole in the covenant.⁴

MODERN REVELATIONS SPURRED BY STUDYING THE NEW TESTAMENT

The First Vision—A 14-year-old Joseph Smith read James 1:5 ("If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God"), which "seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of [his] heart" (Joseph Smith—History 1:12). He then decided to kneel in prayer among a grove of trees, where the Father and the Son appeared to him.

Doctrine and Covenants 7—The Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery sought clarification of John 21:20–23 and received this revelation, which "is a translated version of the record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself" (D&C 7, section introduction).

Doctrine and Covenants 76—The Prophet Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were working on the inspired translation of the Bible and came to John 5:29, which they were inspired to render with slightly different wording ("resurrection of the just; . . . resurrection of the unjust"). "This caused us to marvel. . . . And while we meditated upon these things, the

The Fulness of the Gospel

Latter-day Saints admire and are grateful to the many people who recorded, preserved, and translated the New Testament so that it could be available to us and help us gain faith in Jesus Christ and taste of His grace. Accepting the added light and knowledge of the Restoration enhances rather than diminishes their contribution.

As we study the New Testament, the Spirit testifies to us of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the truthfulness of His message. And because of the Restoration, we see better how several of the threads of the New Testament fit into the greater tapestry of the fulness of the gospel. ■

NOTES

1. *Lectures on Faith* (1985), 38.
2. David A. Bednar, "Bear Up Their Burdens with Ease," *Ensign*, May 2014, 89.
3. For possible associations with the temple in the Sermon on the Mount, see John W. Welch, *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-day Saint Approach* (1990).
4. For more on the responsibilities and blessings of covenants, see Russell M. Nelson, "Covenants," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 86–89.

Lord touched the eyes of our understandings" (D&C 76:18–19). They then beheld a vision of the celestial, terrestrial, and telestial kingdoms.

Doctrine and Covenants 77—While he was working on the inspired translation of the Bible, the Prophet Joseph Smith was reading the book of Revelation and had questions. He then received this explanation.

Doctrine and Covenants 138—While Joseph F. Smith "sat in [his] room pondering over the scriptures" and "reflecting upon the great atoning sacrifice that was made by the Son of God" (D&C 138:1–2), he read 1 Peter 3:18–20 and 1 Peter 4:6, which mention the preaching to the spirits in prison. He then received a revelation regarding the Savior's ministry to the spirits of the dead and the continuing ministry among those spirits.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT

You can find further insights in the new manual for institute classes on the New Testament at lds.org/manual/new-testament-student-manual.