

## THIS TEXT IS HEBREW

**A**fter reading the Old Testament several years ago, I gained an interest in its teachings, especially the writings of Isaiah, and continued to study it. In 2010, I found myself seated on a flight next to a Jewish rabbi. I started a conversation by asking him about some passages in Isaiah. As our conversation progressed, we discussed the importance of priesthood authority as understood in the Old Testament.

The rabbi asked me where members of my church get their priesthood authority. I seized the opportunity

to tell him about Joseph Smith's First Vision and the restoration of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods. We discussed the translation of the Book of Mormon and its purpose as "Another Testament of Jesus Christ."

The rabbi was intrigued. He asked how old Joseph was when he had the First Vision. When I told him Joseph was 14, about the same age as Samuel of the Old Testament, he replied that many prophets were called in their youth. He said it was consistent that God would call Joseph Smith in his teen years.

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I opened my scriptures, and together we read the testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses. I told him that several of the witnesses had left the Church but that none ever denied having seen the golden plates.

"How could they leave the Church after seeing an angel and the plates?" he asked.

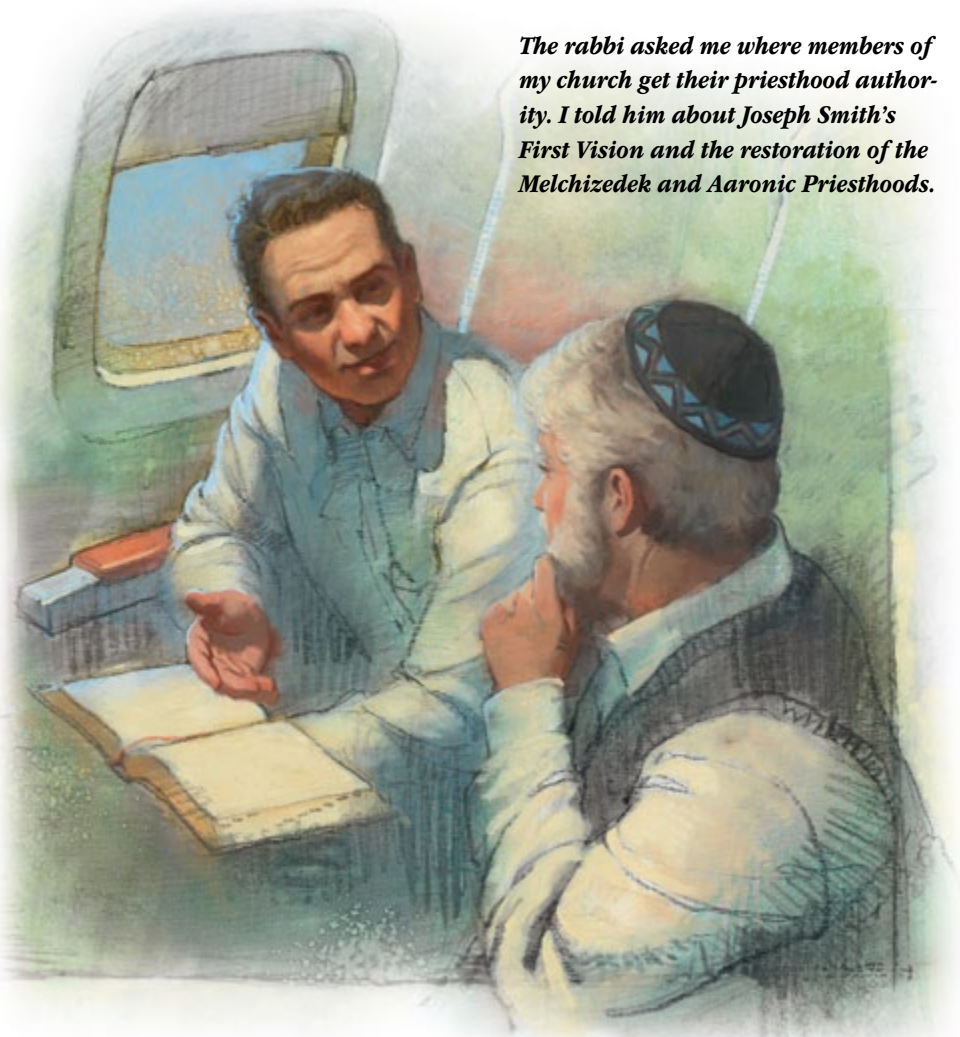
"I remember that the children of Israel built a golden calf shortly after witnessing the parting of the Red Sea," I replied.

He turned to 1 Nephi and began to read. He stopped and said, "This text is Hebrew."

He then explained why the text appeared to be an English translation of Hebrew. I told him the book was written by a tribe of Israel. I cited Ezekiel 37:15–20, which speaks of the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph. We agreed that the stick of Judah represents the Bible, and I explained that the stick of Joseph is the Book of Mormon.

After our three-hour conversation the rabbi expressed an interest in obtaining a copy of the Book of Mormon. When I returned home, I sent him a copy personalized with my written testimony. I am thankful that my efforts to study the Old Testament had prepared me to discuss the scriptures and share my testimony with my new friend, a rabbi. ■

Derk Palfreyman, Utah, USA



## YOU'D BETTER PRAY FIRST

I almost left the Church over a disagreement with my stake president. I felt he had done something that was not right. His actions did not reflect the way I thought things should happen, so I stopped going to church.

My wife told me, "You can't make a decision like that without some serious prayer and fasting."

She was right. After I had prayed for some time, the following words came to me clearly and directly: "The servant of God is called of God."

That night I had a dream. In my dream my grandfather rebuked me for fighting against my leader. I then woke up from my dream and could not sleep for the rest of the night. After a long night of deep pondering, I knew what I needed to do. I went to my stake president and apologized. He happily accepted my apology, and we prayed together.

Immediately I returned to church. Two weeks later my company transferred me to Abuja, the capital of Nigeria. Baffled, I wondered why I was being pulled out of the stake after my efforts to reconcile myself.

I soon learned that the Lord was preparing me. During my second month in Abuja, I was called as a branch president.

I'm sure that Heavenly Father wanted to teach me the importance of sustaining Church leaders before He called me to be a leader. This



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experience strengthened my testimony. Now I try my hardest to listen to the counsel of my leaders because I know they are called of God. And anyone He calls, He qualifies.<sup>1</sup>

Our leaders are human beings. Though they are inspired, they are not perfect. I learned that if we disagree

with them, we need to support, encourage, and pray for them and for ourselves so that we may trust God and the servants He has chosen. ■

Martins Enyiche, Nigeria

#### NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, "Duty Calls," *Ensign*, May 1996, 44.



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## ARE YOU GOING TO BEAR YOUR TESTIMONY?

I recently had the opportunity to attend sacrament meeting in another state with Church members I did not know. To make conversation with the brother next to me, I asked if he was planning to bear his testimony when the time came. He said yes and then asked, “Are you?”

“No, probably not,” I answered. Then I added, “But the Church is true, and the gospel is true.”

I soon forgot about our short conversation. When the opportunity for testimony bearing began, we were

encouraged to keep our time short so that many could have the opportunity to share their testimonies. When the brother I had talked to got up and shared his testimony, he acknowledged that there was not enough time to share all he wanted to about the gospel and the happiness it brings. Instead, he shared the words of his conversation with me, someone he had just met, and how my simple statement summed up everything: the Church is true, and the gospel is true. That’s what is important.

Reflecting on that experience, I understand that we can bear our testimonies in many ways, and we can have a positive influence on others in just a short time. No matter how briefly we interact with someone, we can leave a positive impression of the gospel and ourselves.

I did not bear my testimony on the stand that day, but my short testimony was shared and my influence felt both by the brother I talked with and by those who heard his testimony. ■

LaReina Hingson, Indiana, USA

## I WANT TO SIT ON JESUS'S LAP

**O**ur grandson was only four when a policeman picked him up on the side of the highway. He said he was headed to Grandma's house, about five miles (8 km) away.

It was the second time he had run away from the unhappiness at home, trying to get to me. Over the next few months, I came to realize that the responsibility of raising my grandson and his two younger sisters was probably going to fall on my shoulders—an idea I did not readily embrace.

My husband and I had done our best to raise our children with gospel principles, but they eventually rejected those principles. I was in my 50s and felt that I had finally earned the right to pursue my own interests. I cherished the goal my husband and I shared of serving a mission together when he retired. The notion of going grocery shopping with preschoolers, organizing mealtimes, doing thousands of loads of laundry, and someday again mothering teenagers reduced me to tears.

One afternoon, however, something changed my heart. A small thing had upset my grandson, so I took him onto my lap and wiped away his tears. As I held him, we talked about how much Jesus loved him. Nearby I had a wall calendar featuring paintings of the Savior, so we looked at those beautiful images one by one.

My grandson was especially interested in a depiction of the Savior

sitting in a stone doorway with a small, brown-haired girl on His lap. In the painting, both the Savior and the child radiate peace. My grandson looked closely, pointed to the girl, and called her by his sister's name.

"How can Katie sit on Jesus's lap, Grandma?" he asked. "I want to sit on His lap too!"

"You can't sit on Jesus's lap now, sweetheart, but you can sit on my lap," I said. "Jesus gives little children grandmas to love them and hold them and

take care of them when they need it."

Suddenly my heart embraced a future of loving—as the Savior would love—three beloved children who needed me. They were no longer a burden but a wonderful blessing and opportunity to serve our Lord.

I will be forever grateful for the tender mercy of the Lord given to me that afternoon. It changed my life and continues to strengthen and bless our home. ■

Name withheld

***As I held my upset grandson, we talked about how much Jesus loved him.***

