

AND
NOW
I SEE

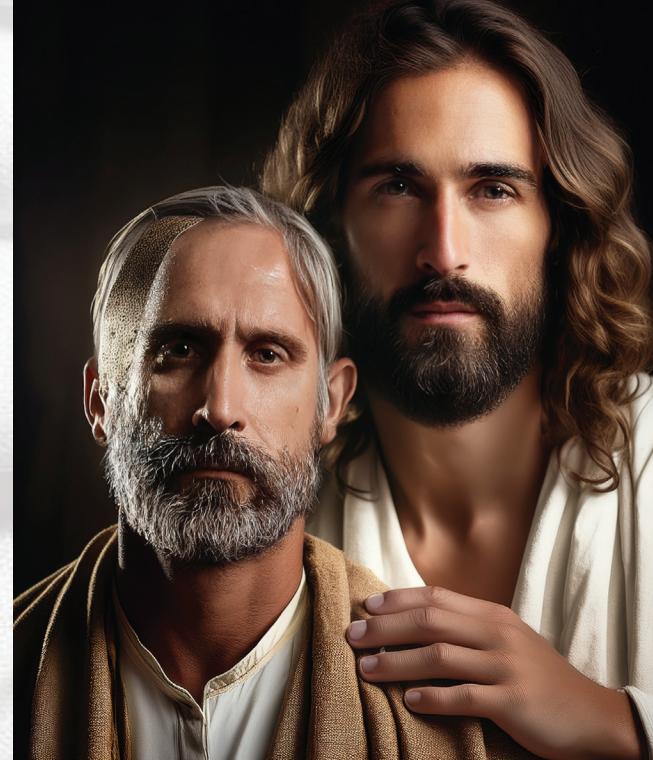


The impact of the Book of Mormon in my life is no less miraculous than was the application of spit and dirt placed on the blind man's eyes.

With love unfeigned we all echo President Oaks's tribute to the passing of President Russell M. Nelson. And with equal love and deep mourning, we all acknowledge the tragedies in Michigan recently and almost daily around the world. We acknowledge these things with love and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The ninth chapter of John records the experience of Jesus and His disciples passing near a beggar, blind from birth. This led the disciples to ask Jesus several complex religious questions regarding the origin and transmission of this man's

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limitation. The Master responded by doing something very simple and very surprising. He spit into the dirt and stirred a small mixture of clay. He then applied this to the eyes of the man, instructing him to wash in the pool of Siloam. All this the sightless man obediently did and "came [forth] seeing," the scripture says. How important evidence is, as opposed to wishes or argument or even malice in opposition to the truth.

Well, afraid this miracle would again add to the threat Jesus already posed to their presumed authority, the enemies of the Savior confronted the newly sighted man and said in anger, "We know [Jesus] is a sinner." The man listened for a moment, then said, "Whether he be a sinner ..., I know not: [but] one thing I [do] know, ... whereas I was blind, now I see."



Jesus gave the first meaning to this exchange, telling His disciples that all this had happened “that the works of God should be made manifest.” Remember that twice in this narrative the Savior’s action was referred to as “anointing” the blind man’s eyes, an act to be completed by washing. This description of “the works of God [being] made manifest” could possibly suggest the unfolding of an ordinance.

Another truth that is evident here are the instruments the Creator of heaven and earth and all that in them are used to provide this miracle: spit and a handful of dirt! These very unlikely ingredients declare that God can bless us by whatever method He chooses. Like Naaman resisting the River Jordan or the children of

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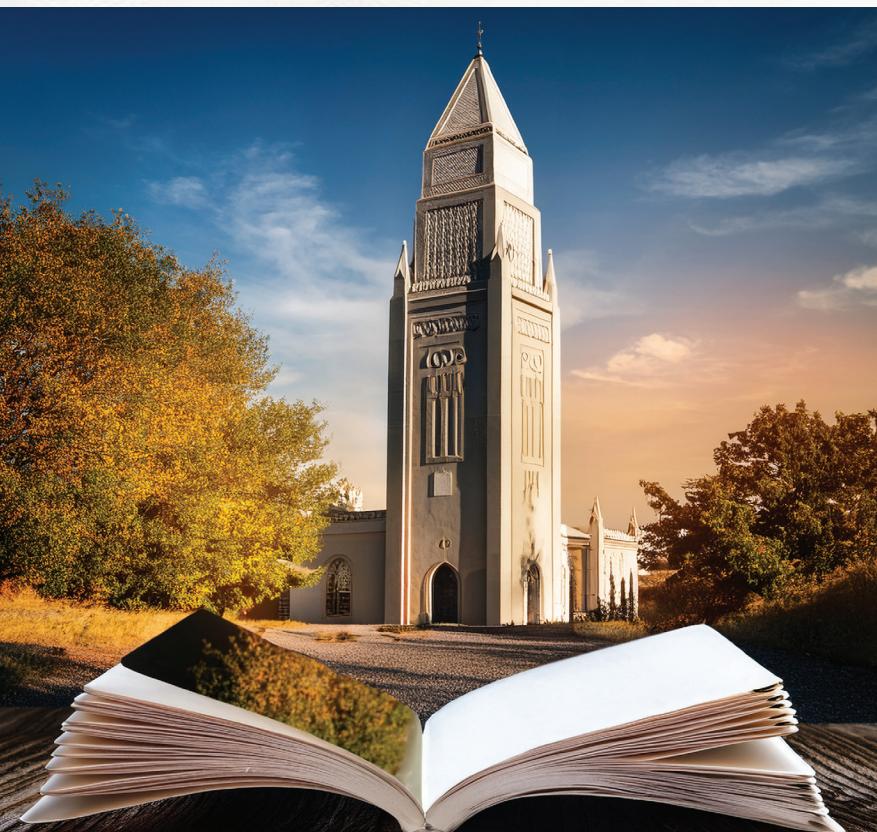
Israel refusing to look at the serpent on the staff, how easy it is for us to dismiss the source of our redemption because the ingredients and the instruments seem embarrassingly plain.

But we remember from the Book of Mormon that some things are both plain and precious and that prior to Jesus's birth, it would be prophesied that "he [would have] no form nor comeliness; and when we [should] see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." How often God has sent His majestic message through a newly called and very anxious Relief Society president or an unlearned boy on a New York farm or a brand-new missionary or a baby lying in a manger.

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So what if the answers to our prayers come in plain or convoluted ways? Are we willing to persevere, to keep trying to live Christ's gospel no matter how much spit and clay it takes? It may not always be clear to us what is being done or why, and from time to time, we will all feel a little like the senior sister who said, "Lord, how about a blessing that isn't in disguise?"

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Consider the evidence of another truth, this one regarding the holy priesthood. In documenting the organization of the meridian Church, Luke's first line reads, "Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority," gifts not granted on the basis of impressive credentials nor determined by tradition or birthright. They are not bestowed by a divinity school or a theological seminary. They are conferred only by the laying on of hands by one who has had authorized hands laid on him in an unbroken sequence back to the source of all divine authority, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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And in a church that understands the gift of mercy, wouldn't it be another marvelous evidence of that church's truthfulness to see these blessings and covenants go to our deceased kindred, those of our families who have gone before us? Should they be penalized because they did not have access to the gospel or because they were born at a time or in a place when divine ordinances and covenants were not available to them? The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

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has sacred, dedicated houses of the Lord in which merciful, salvific work is being done vicariously every day and night for these deceased, as well as offering worship opportunities and ordinances for the living. To my knowledge, this particular evidence of God's truth, His universal love for the living and the dead, is not seen elsewhere in the world—except in one church that demonstrates truth in this particular regard: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

My first sight-giving, life-giving encounter with real evidence of truth did not come with anointing clay or in the pool of Siloam. No, the instrument of truth that brought my healing from the Lord came as

pages in a book, yes, the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ! The claims about this book have been attacked and dismissed by some unbelievers, the anger often matching the vitriol of those who told the healed man that he could not possibly have experienced what he knew he had experienced.

It has been hurled at me that the means by which this book came to be were impractical, unbelievable, embarrassing, even unholy. Now, that is harsh language from anyone who presumes to know the means by which the book came to be, inasmuch as the only description given about those means is that it was translated “by the gift and power of God.” That’s it. That’s all. In any case, the impact of the Book of Mormon in my life is no less miraculous than was the application of spit and dirt placed on the blind man’s eyes. It has been, for me, a rod of safety for my soul, a transcendent and penetrating light of revelation, an illumination of the path I must walk when mists of darkness come. And surely they have, and surely they will.



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Now, brothers and sisters, I came to my whole-souled conviction that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a true restoration of the New Testament Church—and more—because I could not deny the evidence of that restoration. Since those first experiences, I suppose I have had a thousand—ten thousand?—other evidences that what I have spoken of today is true. So I am delighted now to join my friend huddled on the streets of Jerusalem, where with my diminished voice I sing:

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—

That saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see.

And given the view it has granted me of my Savior's universal love and redeeming grace, I share with you my witness, justified here as the newly blessed man's parents said their son should be heard because he was "of age." Well, so am I. He was old enough to be taken seriously, they implied. Well, so am I. I am two months away from my 85th birthday. I have been at the edge of death and back. I have walked with kings and prophets, with presidents and apostles. Best of all, I have at times been overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit of God. I trust that my witness should be given at least some consideration here.



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*By Elder Jeffery R. Holland
of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles*

