

THE GENTILES IN THE PROMISED LAND

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The destiny of America was divinely decreed. The events that established our great nation were foreknown to God and revealed to prophets of old. As in an enacted drama, the players who came on the scene were rehearsed and selected for their parts. Their talents, abilities, capacities, and weaknesses were known before they were born. As one looks back upon what we call our history, there is a telling theme that occurs again and again in this drama. It is that God governs in the affairs of this nation.¹

—Ezra Taft Benson

The patriarch Abraham was led by the hand of the Lord as he was “brought...out of Ur of the Chaldees” and given a new and promised land “to inherit it” (Genesis 15:7). Abraham was told by the Lord that this land “I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, *the land* wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, *for an everlasting possession*; and I will be their God” (Genesis 17:8). The lands promised to Abraham’s posterity were to be an ‘everlasting possession’ for them, with the stipulation “when they hearken to my voice” (Abraham 2:6). Moses, commanded by the Lord to speak to the children of Israel about the land given to Abraham their father, rehearsed the promise made to the Father of the Faithful:

Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, *I am* the LORD, and *I will bring you out* from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:

And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that *I am* the LORD your God, *which bringeth you* out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

And *I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham*, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and *I will give it you for an heritage: I am* the LORD. (Exodus 6:6–8)

The restrictions and stipulations placed upon the children of Israel for the blessing of receiving an inheritance in the land promised Abraham is emphasized throughout the Old Testament. In Leviticus, the stipulations and blessings are expressed in a way that summarizes the “if” and “then” clauses of obedience necessary to receive the blessings connected to the promised land:

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

Then I will give you *rain in due season*, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

¹ Ezra Taft Benson, *This Nation Shall Endure* [Salt Lake City:Deseret Book Co., 1977], 12.

And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and *ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.*

And *I will give peace in the land*, and ye shall lie down, and *none shall make you afraid*: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, *neither shall the sword go through your land.* (Leviticus 26:3–6)

The obedience required by God provides blessings of “rain in due season” that the land and agriculture will flourish, which, in an agrarian society, is prosperity. In these verses in Leviticus, the promise is also given of security, as Israel will “dwell in your land safely.” The Lord provides additional phrases of “I will give peace in the land,” “none shall make you afraid,” and a promise of the absence of war on the homefront in the words “neither shall the sword go through your land.”

And what happens if Israel refuses to obey the Lord? The prophecies are clear and history the witness. The Lord stated “that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD *thy God shall bless thee in the land* whither thou goest to possess it” (Deuteronomy 30:16). The consequence for disobedience is addressed in the next verse: “But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that *ye shall surely perish*, and that ye shall *not prolong your days upon the land*” (Deuteronomy 30:17–18). Moses, the prophet who led Israel to the land of promise, and Lehi (2 Nephi 1:5–9), when he landed after his ocean voyage, were both inspired as they explained the blessings and consequences to those who would live upon that chosen land. Moses continued the promise and the prophecy connected to the land.

When thou shalt beget children, and children’s children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, *and shall corrupt yourselves*, and make a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, *and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD* thy God, to provoke him to anger:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that *ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land* whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; *ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.*

And *the LORD shall scatter you among the nations*, and *ye shall be left few in number* among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you. (Deuteronomy 4:25–27)

The great blessings placed upon the promised land are those of ‘freedom, peace, and protection’ necessary for the security of one’s faith and family.

There is a level of obedience required in the worship of Jesus Christ if the land is to remain free and protected by God. Those who dwell in the land given to Lehi and his posterity have this same obligation and restriction today, as was had in antiquity, which is to recognize and accept the “God of the land, who is Jesus Christ” (Ether 2:12). Even for the protection of inherent freedoms, inalienable rights, and the security of the United States, there exists a responsibility decreed by God. This important responsibility necessitates a non-denominational—yet religious—revival and reformation in the recognition that our freedoms are a direct result of our faith. Every spiritual revival in history without exception was founded in the scriptures. It is a spiritual revival that is needed today to protect our faith, our families, and our freedoms. The Book of Mormon has within its pages the counsel and commandments, the history of a fallen people, the prophecies about this land, and the promises of blessings and cursings. The message is clear in

this sacred book that was written as a Title of Liberty for those who will accept Jesus Christ as the God of the land of promise.

A Land of Liberty

The Book of Mormon teaches throughout that one of the promises of the land is that it is a “consecrated” (sacred) “land of liberty” for those who will dwell on it. The land is

...consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever. (2 Nephi 1:7)

The intrinsic blessing of the promised land is to be a land of “liberty.” This promise is one that was promised not only by the Lord to Lehi (as quoted above), but also stressed by King Mosiah as he spoke about the land and its future. After speaking of inequality, King Mosiah declared:

...that this land be a land of liberty, and every man may enjoy his rights and privileges alike, so long as the Lord sees fit that we may live and inherit the land, yea, even as long as any of our posterity remains upon the face of the land. (Mosiah 29:32)

Mosiah informs the reader that the land will be a “land of liberty” as long as any of their posterity “remains” upon the land.

The freedom of the land is a blessing that is placed ‘upon the land by God.’ Mormon informs the reader that the wicked leader Amalickiah not only began to destroy the church of God, but that he began to “destroy the foundation of liberty which God had granted unto them, or which blessing God had sent upon the face of the land for the righteous’ sake” (Alma 46:10). Captain Moroni, knowing of the promises and prophecies connected to the land, understood that they existed “for the righteous’ sake” and prayed “that the cause of the Christians, and the freedom of the land, might be favored.” After pouring out his soul in this prayer, “he named all the land...A chosen land, and the land of liberty” (Alma 46:16–17).

The brother of Jared also learned as they were traveling to the land of promise that one principal and promised blessing attached to the land was that of ‘freedom’ and was guaranteed to “whatsoever nation shall possess it,” with the imperative of serving with obedience the God of the land. The Lord declared:

Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written. (Ether 2:12)

The endowment of freedom is attached to the land which Lehi received as an inheritance for himself and his posterity and “whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity” as long as its inhabitants obey the commandment to recognize and serve the God of the land. These verses confirm by context that the land of the Jaredites, Nephites, Mosiah, and Moroni was the land prophesied and promised to be a land of liberty—both for them and the Gentiles who were to inherit and inhabit that same land in the future. The Gentiles spoken of so often in the Book of Mormon are assured, by prophetic declaration, that the freedom attached to the promised land was a blessing specific to their time and purpose in the work of the Lord.

Satan's Power to Control

In the Book of Mormon, there are two ways that describe how Satan gains control or power over mankind. The first is discussed by Lehi and concentrates around an individual's desires, appetites, and passions of the flesh.

...look to the great Mediator...and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit;

And not choose eternal death, *according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein*, which giveth the spirit of the *devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell*, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom. (2 Nephi 2:28–29)

The *first* power of Satan is our own “flesh and the evil which is therein.” The *second* power explained in the scriptural text is that of knowledge, or the lack thereof. In 1 Nephi 13 and 14, the messenger introduced the concept of Babylon, or the church of the devil. The acts of the “great and abominable church” are discussed in these chapters and explain the strategies Satan will use to gain so much power over mankind through manipulating the acts and philosophies of the spiritually wicked Babylon.

Nephi recorded a revelation that explained the origin of the second form of power that the devil will wield over man:

—*because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book*, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God—*because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.* (1 Nephi 13:29)

Those who choose to reject truth—even because of ignorance or the lack of knowledge—stand at odds in open rebellion against the gospel truths and are condemned in scripture. Even “all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God...Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!” (2 Nephi 28:28–29). Because many will reject the truth by choice or because of ignorance, they “are grasped with death, and hell...and the devil” (2 Nephi 28:23) “until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance” (2 Nephi 28:22). This ignorance and lack of truth, as well as the control of knowledge disseminated or understood, give Satan his power over mankind. The best way to control man is to control what information and knowledge he is given.

A person cannot be any smarter than the person they choose to believe, and the sources used in the search of truth become paramount in the acquisition of knowledge. A “professional” or “scholar” in any field of study is determined by the sources they choose to use and rely upon in the search for the truths that might govern their profession. When searching for answers in the absence of truth, conclusions are only guesswork. The mind of man is created such that when a question arises in thought, the mind must find an answer to the question. If there is an absence of truth, the mind will search elsewhere for or make up the answer to the question. Satan's plan has been to control information, keeping those who are searching for light and truth in the dark, which causes many to “stumble” in their search (2 Nephi 28:14, 1 Nephi 13:29).

Many organizations have realized that to control the masses you must control the dissemination and interpretation of information. This is true from religious institutions or organizations, to political platforms and governments, and any type of bureaucracy in between. By the control of information and truth the masses can be steered and controlled either by forces of good and evil.

Alma spoke of the search for light and truth, recognizing that Satan has a heavily vested interest in keeping truth from all individuals:

And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

And therefore, *he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word*; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

And *they that will harden their hearts*, to them is given the lesser portion of the word *until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.* (Alma 12:9–11)

Alma described that knowing nothing concerning “his mysteries” is to be “taken captive by the devil,” explaining that spiritual ignorance is “what is meant by the chains of hell” in the scriptures. Alma and Nephi understood that when there is an absence of truth that Satan will run rampant, causing many to err binding them in the chains of hell. The prophet Joseph Smith stated that “a man is saved no faster than he gains knowledge.”²

This is true because if one does not get knowledge, he will be brought into captivity by some evil power in the other world, as evil spirits will have more knowledge—and consequently more power—than many men who are on the earth. Hence we need revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God.³

The first weakness of mankind is the “flesh and the evil contained therein.” The second weakness is in the mind or spirit, because of ignorance or the lack of truth. Satan gains power over the individual *by the body and by the mind*. These points of pride (the body and mind) become the weaknesses of the natural man; each becomes a stumbling block because of pride and trusting in the arm of flesh. The conflict between pride and humility is a battle between the “wills.” Pride seeks to satisfy the desires, appetites, and wants of the flesh—the will of the natural man. Humility is subjection of the flesh to the spirit—the will of God. Those who are proud trust in their own arm of flesh, because of; personal education, opinion, judgment, and intellectualism. The humble put their trust in God and the standards He has set forth, using faith as required in their understanding. To review, pride is the satisfaction of personal will. Humility is the submission of personal will to the will of God.

The body and the mind can become tools for Satan to captivate and *bind* man—or, the same body and mind can become the tools of the individual to *bind* Satan in their lives. Binding Satan is done by the flesh becoming subject to the spirit and doing as all prophets have done in the past, which is seeking to become a “greater follower of righteousness, and to possess greater knowledge” (Abraham 1:2).

² *History of the Church* 4:588.

³ Joseph Smith, *Encyclopedia of Joseph Smith's Teachings*, edited by Larry E. Dahl and Donald Q. Cannon [Salt Lake City:Bookcraft, 1997], under the section on “Revelation.”

The great and abominable church of Babylon, in the past, has held control of spiritual knowledge because of the plain and precious truths that were taken out of the Bible. Because “*of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them*” (1 Nephi 13:29). A plan for the restoration of the simple truths of salvation and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ was needed to combat the forces of spiritual wickedness brought about through ignorance and the calculated loss of these truths. The plan of restoration consisted of keeping a record that contained these sacred, yet plain and precious truths. This restoration of knowledge and truth was to be accomplished through righteous prophets who lived and taught on the promised land, and a Gentile force who would prepare the way and participate in that restoration. The battle between Babylon and Zion continues, and the record containing the necessary truths has been preserved by the Lord for the “wise purpose” and for the establishment of Zion. One of the central players in this spiritual drama are the Gentiles who play an integral part in the restoration of the gospel and church of Jesus Christ. These Gentiles—who, like the Jaredites, and Lehi and Mulek before—were led to the promised land to establish a nation that could, by government and constitutional law, hold at bay the forces of Babylon and her total control of worship and knowledge. These Gentiles established a land of freedom conducive to the restoration of sacred truths that could be taught freely nowhere else in the world.

Speaking of the Gentiles, the Savior explained best the need for them in the *plan of restoration*. After His resurrection, Christ appeared to those who had gathered in the land of Bountiful and taught them about the restoration of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He taught that this restoration will include the descendants of Lehi as part of the house of Israel. The Savior then outlined the process of restoration of the gospel and the covenants of the fathers being restored by the Gentiles. The leaders are given this injunction, by Christ, to prepare for this future restoration:

And I command you that *ye shall write these sayings* after I am gone...*that these sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed, who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer.* (3 Nephi 16:4)

The Savior explained that the gospel He taught the people must be written and prepared for the Gentiles who will become an instrument in His hands for the restoration of the covenants of the fathers. This restoration is connected to the spiritual and physical “gathering of Israel” and the “remnant” being restored to their lands of inheritance. Because of the faith of the Gentiles, Christ declared that “blessed are the Gentiles, because of their belief in me...and because of their belief in me, saith the Father, and because of the unbelief of you, O house of Israel, *in the latter day shall the truth come unto the Gentiles, that the fulness of these things shall be made known unto them*” (3 Nephi 16:6–7). Once the Gentiles have received the record and the gathering begins, Christ stated, “then will I fulfill the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel” (3 Nephi 16:5).

The Gentiles will begin the restoration of the blessings promised to the descendants of Lehi, as this record will come “by way of the Gentile” (Title Page) to the remnant of Israel and, in particular, to the remnant of Lehi upon the promised land.

The Gentiles and the Restoration

1 Nephi 13 and 14 speak of the power of the “great and abominable church” and her control over light and truth. In the context of this discussion, through Nephi the Lord explained how this control of Babylon would be overcome in order to restore the truths taken out of the scriptures and ensure the freedom necessary for this restoration. It would be accomplished by the Gentiles spoken of throughout the book, but covered in-depth in these two chapters. The Gentiles are led to the same promised land that Lehi was led, which land has a promise of freedom connected to it for the specific purpose of righteousness and restoration. During the visit of the Savior to those at Bountiful, the Lord taught the people (and the reader) how to recognize when the work of the restoration of the gospel and gathering of Israel is about to take place. Christ discussed the record that was to come forth in the latter-days by a requirement that commanded the Nephites that “you that ye shall write these sayings after I am gone...” (3 Nephi 16:4) and include these sayings of the Lord in their record.

...that these sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed, who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer.

And then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then will I fulfill the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel. (3 Nephi 16:4–5)

These verses, historical record, that the Nephite involvement in the preparation of the Book of Mormon was arranged for a Gentile involvement with the restoration of the gospel that will facilitate the gathering of Israel. Again in 3 Nephi 21, the Savior taught more in-depth the connection of the promised land to the Gentiles. In these verses, Christ addressed three primary aspects of the Book of Mormon: (1) the gospel taught in the Book of Mormon; (2) the Gentiles who facilitate the restoration through the freedom granted them; and (3) the promised land of Lehi being the same land of the Gentiles—a land of freedom.

And behold, this is the thing which I will give unto you for a sign—for verily I say unto you that when these things which I declare unto you, and which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself, and by the power of the Holy Ghost which shall be given unto you of the Father, shall be made known unto the Gentiles that they may know concerning this people who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, and concerning this my people who shall be scattered by them;

Verily, verily, I say unto you, when these things shall be made known unto them of the Father, and shall come forth of the Father, from them unto you;

For it is wisdom in the Father that they (the Gentiles) should be established in this land, and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father, that these things might come forth from them unto a remnant of your seed, that the covenant of the Father may be fulfilled which he hath covenanted with his people, O house of Israel;

Therefore, when these works and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter shall come forth from the Gentiles, unto your seed which shall dwindle in unbelief because of iniquity;

For thus it behooveth the Father that it (the Book of Mormon) should come forth from the Gentiles, that he may show forth his power unto the Gentiles, for this cause that the Gentiles, if they will not harden their hearts, that they may repent and come unto me

and be baptized in my name and know of the true points of my doctrine, *that they may be numbered among my people*, O house of Israel; (3 Nephi 21:2–6)

Important elements are found in these few verses that should be emphasized and will facilitate letting the scriptures speak for themselves. In 3 Nephi 21:2 and thereafter, the words of Christ are given that will be made manifest through the Book of Mormon:

1. when these things which I declare unto you, and which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself,
2. shall be made known unto the Gentiles that they may know concerning this people when these things shall be made known unto them of the Father
3. and shall come forth of the Father, from them [the Gentiles] unto you;
4. they [the Gentiles] should be established in this land,
5. and be set up as a free people by the power of the Father,
6. that these things might come forth from them [the Gentiles] unto a remnant of your seed,
7. when these works and the works which shall be wrought among you hereafter shall come forth from the Gentiles
8. that it [the Book of Mormon] should come forth from the Gentiles,
9. that they [the Gentiles] may be numbered among my people.” (3 Nephi 21:2–6)

One essential truth that should be understood involves the statements made in numbers 4, 5, and 6 above. These statements say without needing to read between the lines that the Gentiles will be established in “this land”—the same land where Christ was speaking. These Gentiles must be set up as a free people by the Father in order that the Book of Mormon could come forth. The United States, its Constitution, and the Bill of Rights exist “by the power of the Father” to allow the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the plain and precious truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the establishment of His Church. Understanding that this nation exists specifically for a spiritual purpose should awaken all to the tremendous responsibility to “talk of Christ, rejoice in Christ, preach of Christ, and prophesy of Christ...that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins” (2 Nephi 25:26) and their freedom.

As the Prophet Joseph Smith was translating the plates, he reluctantly allowed Martin Harris to take 116 pages of the translated manuscript that had been completed. Martin Harris, having lost the manuscript that he had been granted permission to borrow, returned empty-handed to the Prophet shortly thereafter. The Doctrine and Covenants records the chastisement from the Lord as he taught Joseph about the importance of the text that he had been translating. At this point, only having translated to the reign of King Mosiah, the Lord taught the sacred truths, prayers, and promises that would be found in the remainder of the record.

And, behold, all the remainder of this work *does contain all those parts of my gospel* which my holy prophets, yea, and also my disciples, desired in their prayers *should come forth unto this people*.

And I said unto them, that it should be granted unto them according to their faith in their prayers;

Yea, and *this was their faith—that my gospel*, which I gave unto them that they might preach in their days, *might come unto their brethren the Lamanites*, and also all that had become Lamanites because of their dissensions.

Now, this is not all—*their faith in their prayers was that this gospel should be made known also, if it were possible that other nations should possess this land*;

And thus *they did leave a blessing upon this land* in their prayers, that whosoever should believe in this gospel in this land might have eternal life;

Yea, that *it might be free unto all of whatsoever nation, kindred, tongue, or people they may be*.

And now, behold, *according to their faith in their prayers will I bring this part of my gospel to the knowledge of my people*. Behold, I do not bring it to destroy that which they have received, but to build it up.

And for this cause have I said: If this generation harden not their hearts, *I will establish my church among them*. (D&C 10:46–53)

This passage, like the one in 3 Nephi, spoke about the gospel, the Gentiles, and the *freedom* placed upon the land for the benefit of the restoration. Each passage also addresses the blessing promised the Gentiles in receiving an inheritance on the land with the descendants of Lehi and the establishment of the church among them. It is easy to see that the land where Christ taught is the land that the Gentiles are promised by the use of the demonstrative phrase “this land.” It is the same land that has been set apart as a “free land” specifically to accommodate the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ through the Book of Mormon. This land of freedom that is preserved and set up by divine authority is not outside the boundaries of the United States. The promise and prophecy about the Gentile nation is that there would be no ‘kings upon the land’ that would rule over the Gentiles. This prophecy then rules out the theory that the promised land of freedom is the whole Western Hemisphere.

Lehi rehearsed to his family the promise he had received from the Lord upon arriving at, and standing on, the promised land. This land of their inheritance is connected to the Gentiles here:

The Prophecy to Lehi	The Prophecy to Nephi
<p>But, said he, notwithstanding our afflictions, we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is <i>choice above all other lands; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed</i>. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me, and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of other countries by the hand of the Lord. (2 Nephi 1:5)</p>	<p>Nevertheless, thou beholdest that <i>the Gentiles who have gone forth out of captivity</i>, and have been lifted up by the power of God above all other nations, upon the face of the land which is <i>choice above all other lands</i>, <i>which is the land that the Lord God hath covenanted with thy father that his seed should have for the land of their inheritance...</i> (1 Nephi 13:30)</p>

These verses clearly teach by prophetic statement that the land Lehi was standing on—a land promised to him and his posterity as an inheritance—was the same land to which the Gentiles that *came out of captivity* were led. To make sure the reader knows without doubt the land of Lehi is the land of the Gentiles, the Lord affirms that the Gentiles came to the land “which is the land that the Lord God hath covenanted with thy father that his seed should have for the land of

their inheritance.” The prophet Mormon reaffirmed that the land of the Nephites was the same land that the Gentiles would receive, and stated that “the Lord hath reserved their [the Nephite’s] blessings, which they might have received *in the land*, for *the Gentiles who shall possess the land*” (Mormon 5:19). There need be no lesson in United States or Mesoamerican history, to know what land the scriptures are talking about.

Just these few verses alone convey a location and setting of the land of promise to which Lehi was led. Many may say the prophecies and promises about the land and the Gentiles are hemispherical in interpretation. Others may try to convince the casual reader of the Book of Mormon that the land of promise and promised land are two different places—one land for Lehi and different land for the Gentiles. However, this notion is based on a liberal interpretation of scripture to support a presupposed theory, rather than a theory founded in scripture or the words of Joseph Smith.

History is prophecy in reverse and, of the two, prophecy is always more sure. The Book of Mormon contains not only the gospel of Jesus Christ, but is also a record about the choice and chosen land. It contains the history of those who were led to this land by the ‘hand of the Lord’ and also the prophecies of those who were going to be led to the same land by God, to accomplish his purposes. The Gentiles who come to this land of promise are discussed in prophetic detail throughout the text so the reader would make no mistake as to where that land of freedom was and would be. This discussion of the Gentiles by the ancient prophets in the Book of Mormon could only come through the more sure word of prophecy and revelation, giving the latter-day reader insights into the ancient and, even more important, the modern history—current concerns and the contemporary responsibilities of those now living on this land of promise.