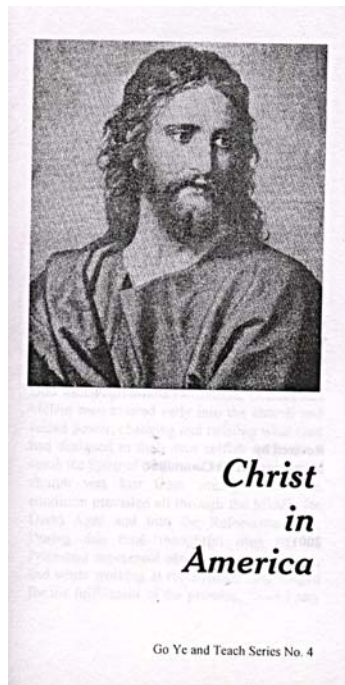


# Christ in America



## Remnant **CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST** of Latter Day Saints

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## CHRIST IN AMERICA

When the prophet Joseph Smith announced the restoration of Christ's church in its fullness in 1830, he also announced the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. These two, the church and the book, are each important to the other, for each has a part in carrying out the same great work.

### THE FALL AND RISE OF CHRIST'S CHURCH

Jesus built his church while he was here on earth and sent it forth with the words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This is the great work of God which still awaits fulfillment. Corrupt and violent men entered early into the church and seized power, changing and twisting what God had designed to their own selfish ends. As a result the Spirit of Christ was withdrawn and his church was lost from among men. This condition prevailed all through the Middle (or Dark) Ages and into the Reformation era. During this time thoughtful men of the Protestant movement observed the conditions, and while working at reformation they longed for the fulfillment of the promise, "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Rev. 14:6).

When the preparatory work of the Reformers had been completed it was this angel that appeared to Joseph Smith to instruct him concerning the restoration of Christ's church, actually delivering the "everlasting gospel" to earth as the revelation states. He instructed Joseph in many things pertaining to the coming forth of the true church and at the same time revealed to him the place where the plates of the Book of Mormon were concealed. Over a period of four years he prepared Joseph to receive the plates and finally delivered the record into his hands for translation. When the translation was finished the book was published and the church was organized. This record containing a further testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is being carried by the church into the world to call mankind from the folly of sin to the service of God.

### A VISIT OF CHRIST

While the Book of Mormon is a record of the inhabitants of ancient America, the most important part of the record is indeed that which tells of the visit of Christ to these ancient people after his resurrection from the dead. In the Bible Jesus spoke of his intention to visit his sheep in America when he said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd" (John 10:16). In order to receive his personal ministry, the members of that fold had to be of the house of Israel; for Jesus taught that only to them had he been sent in the flesh (Matt. 15:24). The Book of Mormon reveals that the ancient Americans were "lost sheep" or scattered members of the house of Israel, divinely led from Jerusalem to this land of promise. They were prepared for the visit of Christ over the years by the various prophets who ministered in their midst as did the prophets in Palestine.

When Jesus visited these people he descended out of heaven after his resurrection in Pales-

tine and they eagerly received his ministry. He showed them the marks of his crucifixion and they knew him to be the resurrected Christ. He taught them his gospel just as he had taught the sheep in Palestine. He organized his church among them, choosing disciples to remain to teach and minister. Then he ascended again into heaven promising that he would return at some future day. With the church and gospel of Jesus among them, these people entered into a period of two hundred years of peace and prosperity during which ideal conditions of brotherhood and good will existed throughout the entire land.

After almost four hundred years of obedience and blessings, this people fell from their happy estate. Because of wickedness their record was hidden away. Ten centuries passed in barbarism and spiritual darkness before the coming of the Europeans and the complete uprooting of their former culture. In spite of these intervening conditions, in broken fragments and with refracted light, the archaeologist and historian are able to trace the profound influence of a great bearded white deity who the Indians declare formerly ministered to them. The Book of Mormon identifies him as Jesus Christ.

#### SUPPORTING EVIDENCE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Groping back through the centuries of barbarism and darkness, and piecing together the fragmentary record of archaeology, those who have studied the surviving literary resources, beliefs, and physical remains of the ancient Mexican civilizations have been amazed by many indications that these people had believed many doctrines which are distinctively Christian. Kingsborough recorded this fact in the following statement:

“It is so singular a fact that the Indians of Mexico and Peru should have believed with Christians in many doctrines which are held to be peculiarly and exclusively Christian and to constitute a line of demarcation between Christianity and all other religions, that it appears a convincing proof that Christianity must, in early ages, have been established in America” (*Antiquities of Mexico*, Vol. 6, p. 490).

Coupled with these religious beliefs, confirming the fact that Jesus had anciently visited their forefathers, was their use of the symbol of the cross long before the European “Christians” conquered and looted their land. Evidence of this had been noted by numerous historians. We quote the following:

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“In a tablet on the wall of a room at Palenque is a cross surmounted by a bird. . . . One of the most remarkable emblems of the Maya worship, in the estimation of the conquerors, was the cross, which had also been noticed in other parts of Central America and Mexico” (*Native Races*, Vol. 3, pp. 135, 467, 468).

#### BALDWIN

“The cross is one of the most common emblems present in all the ruins. This led Catholic missionaries to assume that knowledge of Christianity had been brought to that part of America long before their arrival . . .” (*Ancient America*, p. 109).

These things are evidence that the Book of Mormon account of Jesus’ visit to America is true.

Even more convincing is the widespread belief among the natives of Mexico and Central America in the bearded white God, who, legend says, visited their ancestors and promised to return. That is the reason the Spanish conquerors were so feebly resisted by Montezuma at first.

Prescott, in his book *Conquest of Mexico* (on the authority of Sahagun and Torquemada), declares:

“The Mexicans looked confidently to the return of the benevolent deity, and this remarkable tradition, deeply cherished in their hearts, prepared the way (as we shall see hereafter), for the future success of the Spaniards” (*Conquest of Mexico*, p. 45, Modern Library Edition).

Because of the different dialects and languages of the various people of Central and South America this white God is called by different names in different places: Wiracocha, Kukulcan, and Quetzalcoatl. In each case he embodies the same characteristics and attributes.

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“They are all described as white, bearded men, generally clad in long robes; appearing suddenly and mysteriously upon the scene of their labors, they at once set about improving the people by instructing them in useful and ornamental arts, giving them laws, exhorting them to practice brotherly love and other Christian virtues, and introducing a milder and better form of religion; having accomplished their mission, they disappear as mysteriously and unexpectedly as they came” (*Native Races*, Vol. 5, p. 23).

#### OTHER EVIDENCE

From the *Encyclopedia Britannica* we read:

“With the Toltecs is associated the mysterious tradition of Quetzalcoatl, a name which presents itself in Mexican religion as that of a great deity, God of the air, and in legend as that of a saintly ruler and civilizer. His brown and beardless worshipers describe him as of another race; a white man with noble features, long black hair, and a full beard, dressed in flowing robes” (Vol. 16, p. 2085).

Quetzalcoatl is closely identified with the symbol of the cross in the ancient ruins of Mexico. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says:

“Christian traditions, above all, that of the veneration of the cross, date in Anahuac (Mexico), and Yucatan from the coming of Quetzalcoatl” (p. 252).

As archaeologists have uncovered the ancient ruins and entered the temples of these cities they have found many of these crosses carved in stone.

There is a great deal more evidence available to show that Quetzalcoatl of the Mexican tradition and Jesus Christ are one. The great value of this proof is that it helps to strengthen belief in the message of the Book of Mormon. God has brought this book forth in our time to witness of the “other sheep” to whom Jesus ministered in the land of America. It enriches and strengthens the testimony of the Bible and helps to reveal Jesus Christ to the world. In fact, the stated purpose of the Book of Mormon is “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ” (page iii, Preface).

To truly grasp the significance of the book it is necessary to study it carefully; but some appreciation of the quality of its teachings can be gained by reading the following references:

SUBJECT	REFERENCE
Faith in God	¶p. 220, Mosiah 2: 13-17
Prayer	¶p. 429, Alma 16:218-222
God's gifts to us	¶p. 764, Moroni 7:10-13
Prophecies of Christ's coming	¶p. 216, Mosiah 1:97-105 (compare with Isaiah 7:14, 9:6,7)
Signs at the time of his birth	¶pp. 601, 602, III Nephi 1:16-24 (compare with Luke 2:6-14; Matt. 2:1,2,9,10)
Happenings at the time of his death	¶p 625, III Nephi 4:14-20 (compare with Matt. 27:50-54; Luke 23:44,45)
His ministry in ancient America	¶pp. 631-683
Marriage	¶pp 171,172, Jacob 2:32-36
Righteous behavior	¶p. 441, Alma 17:65-67
The example of Christ	¶p. 161, II Nephi 13:7-13
Jesus as the Savior	¶p. 217, Mosiah 1:116
The Atonement	¶p. 453, Alma 19:92-97; p. 217, Mosiah 1:107
Repentance	¶p. 634, III Nephi 5:40
Baptism	
1. faith to be baptized	¶p. 634, III Nephi 5:34-35
2. first fruits of repentance	¶p. 771, Moroni 8:29
3. infant baptism	¶pp. 769-770, Moroni 8:12-14,20,21

Although the science of archaeology has proved to be a support of the Book of Mormon, the true proof of the book is found within it. The spirit of God bears witness to those who prayerfully consider its testimony. The final test for all who are seriously interested in the Book of Mormon is the invitation offered by the book itself on page 775: "And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask of God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye shall know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:4,5).

#### CONCLUSION

The Spirit of God does bear witness that he loved his "other sheep" of ancient America and that he did send his son to minister to them. Jesus Christ was in ancient America! By angelic messengers, by direction from heaven he has restored this knowledge in our day!

We urge you to continue your study and seek from God this increased testimony of Christ and of his plan of salvation. We ask you to prayerfully consider his invitation to unite with him in this marvelous work of Restoration.

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