



# **Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-day Saint Approach**

*John W. Welch*

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The Sermon on the Mount has had greater influence on the history and character of Christianity than any other text in the Bible. Yet as biblical scholar Hans Dieter Betz has recently lamented, "New Testament scholarship up to the present has offered no satisfactory explanation of this vitally important text." The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount, by John W. Welch, offers, for the first time, a thorough Latter-day Saint interpretation of Jesus' famous sermon. The author relies especially on crucial information and details that only the Book of Mormon can supply. In New Testament Palestine, Jesus gave the Sermon on a mount. In the Book of Mormon's Bountiful, he gave it at the temple (see 3 Nephi 11—18). Close examination of the Savior's words spoken in Bountiful reveal that they have temple significance, particularly for Latter-day Saints. The relationship of the Sermon to the temple generates an extraordinary explanation of the Sermon on the Mount as a sacred and holy text. While it remains possible to understand the Sermon on the Mount in many different ways, the unique Book of Mormon approach offers insights that make consistent sense of the Sermon as a whole and, at the same time, gives clear meaning to each of its parts. Chapters in this study of the two sermons include "The Temple Context and Unity of the Sermon at the Temple," "Joseph Smith and the Sermon at the Temple," "The Common Israelite Background," "The Sermon at the Temple and the Greek New Testament Manuscripts," and "Toward an Understanding of the Sermon as a Temple Text." Some have seen the presence of the Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi as a problem for the Book of Mormon. Now the Savior's words emerge, not as a mere copy of several chapters from the King James Version, but as a profoundly constituted text. The Sermon at the Temple is one more way the Book of Mormon restores plain and precious covenants pertaining to the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ that were once lost.

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