

Charlotte - hope your birthday was happy too - We did think about you. Would you remind us of the date of Bryan's birthday?

Incidentally, you can find the Hebrew alphabet in Psalm 119 - each section of which begins (in Hebrew) with its respective letter. My big project last month was to write a little "guide" for Bob and Carol Madan to the temple to help them appreciate it more when they visited the Seattle Temple prior to its dedication, and while I was reading in the DHC about the Kirtland Temple construction and dedication I was really impressed with the determination of the Prophet Joseph Smith, despite all the difficulties and hardships and demands on his time during this period, to keep to his study of Hebrew and read the Old Testament in the original. They even hired a non-member and brought him and his family to Kirtland to teach them. They felt like the school of the Prophets was to prepare them for a great spiritual outpouring when the temple was completed, and I am certain that their study contributed to that outpouring. The significance of the appearance of Moses, Elias, and Elijah to convey their keys (not ignoring the appearance of the Lord to accept the ~~Saints~~ offering and introduce those three)--and the recently discovered coincidence of that event with Passover, takes on added significance when seen in the context of the Prophet's preoccupation with the Hebrew language and scriptures, and I feel like his interest in the Jews, especially if many of us follow his example, will yet prove a great blessing in softening the hearts of many of our Jewish brethren towards the gospel.

TJV

This "guide" I proposed to organize along the lines of the temple's construction, using the building and its parts as an excuse to teach them the gospel in context of Jewish religion and tradition, starting with the building itself as a symbol of Zion and the gathering of Israel, the Statue of Moroni as a symbol of the stick of Joseph, the entrance as a symbol of priesthood keys, the baptistry and baptism for the dead, and so on, but after spending fourteen pages on the building alone, I decided I better deliver it in installments--promised over the "next few decades". The next chapter will be on the book of Mormon, and I'm going to send them a copy--you just can't imagine how much fun it's been!

Betsy recently returned from parent-teacher conferences all aglow. All that the teachers wanted to know was "how do you do it!" Tracy, Zina, and Mary have followed 1,2,3 with the same teachers, and poor Robert has really got a tradition to live up to--but he's ~~one~~ of the top readers in first grade, and we see signs of his mellowing and improving his listening and obedience skills.

Mary's baptism and confirmation were a great joy to us. She was just so eager and earnest about it! I had half a premonition that I might have a problem dunking Mary--she always does everything with such enthusiasm--but although her legs were headed up, we got her all immersed at once. And she bore a really sweet testimony afterwards. T,Z,M and I are reading the book of Mormon, fourteen pages a week, with an ice cream on Saturday for all who keep up (and for the rest, who can't read, too), and they've all kept up. Last week we were reading the mission of the sons of Mosiah and they loved it so much that Zina read it to us all Sunday night--it thrilled me, because that was the story that also got me so involved when I first read the Book of Mormon--and they also liked best the parts I liked--about the arms, and everybody conking out one after the other like dominoes when Lamoni became converted.

Betsy's been blessed with an unusually easy pregnancy and rather eggged a relatively illness-free transition to winter--probably because the fall has been so mild and prolonged. It's still fall!

Last Saturday was a perfect, mild, day, and we had such a good time on the hayride and picnic with Dad, Mom, David, Karen, Nancy, & kids. Love to you all

Tracy Jr

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