

Book of Mormon Study –3 Nephi 12-16

Online zoom Sunday School, 27 Sep 2020

(<https://jayball.name/book-of-mormon-study-lessons>)

3 Ne 12:5

And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

This earth abides by a Celestial Law. (D&C 88:25.) Therefore, it is destined to become a Celestial Kingdom because it will be sanctified by a Celestial Law. (D&C 88:25-29.) The destiny of the earth is glory. (D&C 84:101.) Therefore, to “inherit the earth” is to inherit a Celestial Glory.

Definition of meek: (we discussed this in lesson on Mosiah 1-3)

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 12:5

Ps. 37:11; The Hebrew word for “earth” is *eretz* ארץ, which can mean “earth” or “land.” In Psalm 37:11, the verse refers to “the land of Israel.”

3 Ne 12:6

And blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

This is not about hunger or poverty. This is about fasting and seeking after righteousness.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 12:7

As the Talmud says, “...he who is merciful to others, mercy is shown to him by Heaven” (b.Shabbat 151b).

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 12:13

The word for “earth” here in the original Hebrew was *eretz* (ארץ), which can mean “earth” or “land.” In the parallel in Matthew 5:13, the phrase “salt of the earth” runs parallel to “light of the world,” where “earth” is parallel to “world.” However, in 3 Nephi “eretz” is parallel to “this people.” HaEretz (“the Land”) is a common euphemism for “the Land of Israel.” So “eretz” in this case, might be better understood as “land” in parallel to “this people.”

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 12:14

This verse runs parallel with Mat. 5:14–16, but has “light of this people” where Matt. 5:14 has “light of the world.” This points to a scribal error between the Hebrew words עולם “world” and עם “people,” which is a common scribal error in Hebrew and Aramaic. For example, in Matt. 1:21, the Old Syriac Siniatic and Aramaic Peshitta versions have “he shall save his people (לעמה),” while the Old Syriac Curetonian version has “he shall save the world (לעם).” It has also been suggested that a similar scribal error in a Hebrew or Aramaic original language source text, may have caused the variance in Acts 2:47

between the readings “finding favor before all the people” (in the Alexandrian and Byzantine text types), and “finding favor with all the world” (in the Western text type). The phrase “light of this people” seems to allude to Isa. 49:6 “a light to the Gentiles,” which reads in the Aramaic Peshitta version of Isaiah “a light to the people/nation (לעממא).” This reading of “light of this people” in 3 Nephi 5:21 [12:14], points to a Hebrew origin for both 3 Nephi and Matthew, and suggests that the reading in 3 Nephi may be the correct reading, offering a possible correction to a scribal error in our received text of Matt. 5:14.

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 12:17](#)

See “What does it mean to fulfill the Torah?” footnote to 2 Nephi 11:8 [2 Ne 25:23-27].

[This footnote was referenced in last week's lesson (3 Ne 8-11) and earlier in lesson on Mosiah 11-17]

See discussion on 3 Ne 15:2-5 below.

[3 Ne 12:21-22](#)

Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, and it is also written before you, that thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment of God; But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Christ is elevating the Law of Moses by raising the expectation for human conduct. He moves from mere outward conduct into the inner soul of the man. You are not doing as you should if all you do is refrain from killing. Instead, you need to remove anger.

The prior obligation (“said by them of old”) focused only on your conduct, now it is your motivation.

You can judge another based on conduct. They either do or do not do something. The conduct is observable, and therefore capable of being judged. Now, however, Christ moves the battleground inside a person. It is now in the heart. On such terrain as that, man is incapable of knowing, and therefore, of judging.

With anything involving truth and rules of conduct, there are always some reasons to depart from the rule. Christ departed from this rule. So we must consider the departures to understand the rule.

First, however, we need to know and understand the rule. The “judgment” which you are “in danger of” by being angry with your brother is not your brother’s anger, but God’s. The judgment of God is provoked by those who are angry with their brother.

We are not to be angry with our brother because that is the beginning of a whole sequence of events, the culmination of which may be killing. Before killing, however, there are other troubles and offenses along the way. Anger leads to abuse. It leads to discourtesy, dishonesty, and cheating. It justifies miserable conduct because you think it right to give offenses to another. It corrodes relationships and makes society sick.

If you can prevent this at the heart, you can heal society. Refrain from letting offenses turn into anger. Deal with them inside, showing forgiveness and compassion. He will stress this further in subsequent verses.

The terms “Raca” and “fool” are derisive names. Christ is saying that applying derisive names to others is wrong, even damning. He is not preventing you from identifying foolishness. He often spoke of fools and foolishness. (See, e.g., Matt. 23:17, 19; Matt. 25:2-8; Luke 12:20; Luke 24:25-after His resurrection; and 2 Nephi 29:4,6.) He would even use the term “foolish” in this same sermon. (3 Nephi 14:26.) So it is not at all inappropriate to use the term “fool” or “foolish” when discussing foolishness. What is wrong is to regard your fellow man with derision and use terms of derision to describe them.

Even with this rue of conduct, however, Christ applied a derisive term to King Herod. He called him “that fox.” (Luke 13:31-32.) This was a term of derision, but appropriately applied to a wicked king meriting derision. He was corrupt, evil and vile. Therefore, with respect to Herod, Christ’s example allows for terms of derision to be appropriately applied to those who merit them. Christ was able to weigh the heart. For Him to make that conclusion was a matter of Divine prerogative. I suppose that we are equally entitled to apply such terms of judgment and condemnation, including terms of derision, if we obtain them by inspiration from the Lord. That is, if the Lord inspires such a term of derision to be used, then it would be appropriate despite this verse. For whatever we do, even if sharpness is involved, is appropriate when moved upon by the Holy Ghost. (D&C 121:43.) So, also, even killing another can be done when the Lord is the one deciding life and death. (1 Nephi 4:10-13.)

The tendency is to always think the exceptions allow your anger. I would suspect the best approach is to do as Nephi did. That is, insist upon following the one standard of conduct and always refrain. Always. Then, if the Lord is going to have it otherwise, leave it to the Lord to make that insistence so dramatic, so undeniable, so compelling, that you know it is the Lord’s judgment and not your own. Removing anger from the heart is a difficult enough challenge to last the rest of your life. To start thinking any passing offense justifies an exception because it may be “inspired” is the way of a fool. Do as Christ bids you to do in this sermon. If He wants a different approach, you ought to require that to be made absolutely clear by Him before you depart from this standard.

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 12:22](#)

angry with his brother: The KJV of this sermon renders the phrase, “whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause”. The Stick of Joseph version eliminates the phrase “without a cause,” agreeing with the Hebrew manuscripts of Matthew (Shem Tob, DuTillet, and Munster), which also lack the phrase. Some Greek manuscripts of Matthew have subscriptions referencing alternate readings from a standard version “on Zion the Holy Mount” called “The Judaikon” (Jewish version). One of these subscriptions is to Matthew 5:22 and says “The phrase ‘without cause’ is not written in some copies, nor in the Judaikon (Jewish version).”

Raca: The Aramaic word raka רָקָא is here transliterated into English. This Aramaic word means “worthless, empty, a fool.”

3 Ne 12:27-29

Behold, it is written by them of old time, that thou shalt not commit adultery; But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart. Behold, I give unto you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart;

Here it is again – the heart. It is the intent and not just the act. It is not enough that you stop short of doing the thing commanded in the Law of Moses. Christ is attacking the root cause, the internal trouble which causes the mistakes.

The Law of Moses is not being replaced with a new era of easy grace triggered by confession for salvation. The Head of the new Dispensation, Christ, is instead providing a much higher standard for mankind to adopt in place of carnal commandments.

You must raise your thoughts to a higher level. Sexual appetites and passions must be kept within the bounds the Lord has prescribed. For this new, higher standard, it is not enough to just refrain from immoral acts, but you must purge thoughts. Neither lust of a woman, nor any of “these things” should “enter into your heart.” This uniform standard applies to all: male and female, married or single, without regard to who or what causes your lusts. It is universal.

The heart is where sin begins. So it is the heart which Christ would have us cleanse. All else will follow.

[Sidenote: This is a deviation, so I won't spend time on it in this lesson, but this topic raises the question about the church's statement on same sex attraction, “Identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual or experiencing same-sex attraction is not a sin and does not prohibit one from participating in the Church, holding callings, or attending the temple.” - Same-Sex Attraction, Gospel Topics, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/gospel-topics/same-sex-attraction?lang=eng>]

No one knows how formidable an obstacle this is until they have confronted it themselves. Nor can a person who confronts this challenge succeed at the first attempt. C.S. Lewis made such a profound observation on this subject it is worth quoting here:

“No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good. A silly idea is current that good people do not know what temptation means. This is an obvious lie. Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in. You find out the strength of a wind by trying to walk against it, not by lying down. A man who gives in to temptation after five minutes simply does not know what it would have been like an hour later. That is why bad people, in one sense, know very little about badness. They have lived a sheltered life by always giving in. We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because he was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means—the only complete realist.” (CS Lewis, Mere Christianity, Chapter 11.)

3 Ne 12:30

For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell.

The last lesson given in our ward before the Chinese Virus shut everything down was given by me. It was on this topic. I recorded the lesson and have included it in a link with the notes.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 12:30

Cross/Tz'lav: A wooden instrument of execution by hanging or crucifixion, translated “cross” or “gallows.” In this case it implies carrying a burden, as Yeshua carried the burden of our sin in his suffering and death.

3 Ne 12:31-32

It hath been written, that whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whoso shall marry her who is divorced committeth adultery.”

First and foremost, this is a verse dealing with male conduct. The verse is masculine in orientation and word usage, and deals with a male’s prerogative under the law that existed then. So applying this new, higher law, beyond that is not warranted, as will be more clearly seen in the discussion below.

The ease with which a divorce could be granted made the serious nature of the act unappreciated. Today it is still unappreciated. Divorce rates among Latter-day Saints have risen to practically mirror the population at large. We follow all the surrounding social trends, but are a little slower in getting there. We are not “peculiar” any longer. We are just slower.

Christ was re-enshrining the significance of marriage. It should not be easy to end a marriage. But, then again, perhaps the kind of marriage Christ is speaking of is one of a higher order and rarely exists here.

Although there are reasons for every marriage to be treated as sacred and worth preserving, it was always intended for there to be a higher purpose in marriage. It was intended to be an eternal union, inside of which sacred acts mirroring heaven itself take place. Bringing into this world new life by the loving union of two partners is a mirror of heaven. Such things are, or ought to be, most sacred.

But a higher kind of union, where love is the prevailing rule, is not often established here. More often than not, the marriages of this world are corrupted, just as society itself is corrupted.

There are those who have offered their ideas on the meaning of these verses. I’m not sure we have ever seen what Christ is actually speaking about. I’m going to go ahead and offer a different view.

First, this is always interpreted to be discussing things which are coarse or material, but it comes immediately following a discussion about the inner or spiritual self. This suggests our normal reading of this language may be incorrect. When the focus of Christ’s new and higher law is the inner man, then to read this as applying to outward behavior (fornication/adultery) may miss the point.

Second, notice the contrast between the only justified reason for terminating the marriage (fornication) and the subsequent results (adultery). Two different words are used, suggesting two different meanings are present.

In the New Testament language in the Matthew account of this sermon, “porneia” is the typical rendering. There the meaning of the first word which we render “fornication” could be a variety of

things including: prostitution, sexual permissiveness or merely a sexual act. But, if the word was “poneria” then it could, by broad measure, mean bad acts (with no sexual connotation at all).

There is a possibility that the correct way to read this could be rendered in this way: “Whoever puts away his wife for any reason other than the lack of marital intimacy...” That would mean the only justified reason to end the marriage is that the marriage has ended within the heart. There is no longer any love in the relation. It has died. It is no longer worthy of preservation, and therefore, the death of the heart justifies the death of the relation.

However, the focus is on the woman’s heart. That is, if the woman still retains marital intimacy for the husband, he cannot be justified in putting her away. He is obligated to retain as his wife the woman who loves him. If he puts away such a wife, then he causes her to commit adultery.

This, then, raises the issue of the meaning of adultery. We tend to view it as a physical act involving sexual union with another. But adultery also holds the connotation of unfaithfulness, as in Israel becoming unfaithful and playing the part of an adulteress, worshiping other gods. (See, e.g., Jeremiah 3:8.) When forced away by the man she loves, a woman is then “adulterated” by the act of the man. He is accountable for the treachery involved in dissolving the marriage which the woman wanted, and forcing her into the relation with either no one, or with another man. Either one is “adulterating” the marriage which she had with him. He is accountable for that uncharitable, unkind, and unjustified treatment of the woman.

On the other hand, when she has lost affection for him, and the union has become hollow and without love, then the marriage is dead and continuation of the relation is a farce. It is not a marriage. In fact, it is a pretense and an abomination unworthy of preservation. It will not endure. It is not eternal and not possible to preserve beyond the grave.

No union that has not been sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise will endure beyond the grave. (See D&C 132:7, 18, among other places.) The reason for sealing such a marriage by the promise of the Spirit is because it replicates the kind of holy union found in heaven. It is like unto the unions between gods and goddesses. It is worthy of preservation because it is eternal. It is enduring. It is worth preserving into all eternity. It is sealed because the gods recognize on the earth a mirror of what is found in heaven itself. Therefore heaven ratifies and approves the relationship. They do not create such relations in heaven, but instead recognize them here, and approve them for eternal duration. Without such a relationship, the parties are worthy of continuation as angels, but not as spouses, as Christ would put it elsewhere. (Matt. 22:30; see also D&C 132:17.)

It is true enough that the restored Gospel allows everyone the opportunity to come to the Temple and receive ordinances which hold the promise of an eternal union. But those are relationships where the parties are on probation. They are given as an opportunity to work out your salvation before God. They are given so that if you are true and faithful, the time may come when you are called up and chosen by the Holy Spirit of Promise to be kings and queens, priests and priestesses, whereas now you are only given opportunity to prove yourself worthy to become such.

There are many unhappy Latter-day Saint marriages which exist in name only. The notorious high record use of anti-depressants by women in Utah is driven in large part by unhappy marriages they believe ought to be preserved because of a misunderstanding of these verses. Yet the underlying reality that the

union causes suffering rather than rejoicing cannot be escaped. So they alter their natural reaction to the unhappy union by altering the brain with chemicals. Such a marriage cannot endure into eternity. Though the woman may sacrifice herself to preserve her heart's desire to be a faithful, married mother, her unworthy marriage is not what will endure. It cannot be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, though she may be otherwise qualified.

Now, to be clear, I do not advocate divorce, particularly where minor children are involved. But I do advocate a higher view of the marital union where the prevailing reason for the union is love. This should be the whole preparation for marriage. Before contracting the union, the parties should look for that spouse with whom they can find heaven on earth. Unhappy marriages might all be saved if the parties would repent. The higher ideal is not impossible for any union to seek and find. That is the right of every party here, if they will but seek after it. If however, after every effort has been made to both find, and cultivate such a union, it proves to be an impossibility, then the parties ought to use the precious time allotted to them in mortality to find a union which will be worthy of continuation. Not at the expense of their children, who are entitled to have both parents raise them. The Holy Spirit of Promise was intended to be shed upon many marriages, rather than a comparative few. Happiness was the design of our creation. When we avoid it by our misconduct and foolishness, we do not please heaven. Nor does gritting our teeth, putting up with miserable relationships, and enduring an unholy union please heaven or merit some eternal reward.

These words of Christ are speaking of a higher way to conduct our lives. To read into them exclusively outward behavior, when the whole import of the sermon addresses the inner-man, is out of context. I think we hardly understand the Lord's meaning. But, then again, perhaps it is best if we do not understand His full meaning until we are ready to see for ourselves what great things the Lord has in store for those who love Him. (D&C 76:114-117.) Perhaps it is best that man is not capable of making them known.

Now, as to the woman, there is another standard. He does not articulate it here, but can be found throughout scripture. A woman's love of and fidelity to her husband is more often than not a product of her nature. It takes quite a fool to turn a wife's natural affection for him into distrust and bitterness. But there are churlish men, as we know from scripture. Sometimes they marry an Abigail. (See 1 Sam. 25:3.)

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 12:31](#)

writing of divorcement: A get (טג) is a divorce document that a husband must give to a wife to make a divorce valid. See Deut. 24:1

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 13:1](#)

alms/tzedakah: This Hebrew term (צדקה) means "justice" or "righteousness" and signifies the obligation to help those in need.

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 13:10](#)

Similarly, the Tosefta says, "May your will be done in Heaven and also on earth" (t.Berakhot 3:7).

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 13:11](#)

As we read in the Talmud, "Also all who have trespassed against us...even as we also forgive all" (b.Megillah 28a).

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 13:12

“And lead us not into temptation” is a KJV -ism from Matt. 6:13. This is actually a Hebrew idiom by which an active verb is used to indicate not that Elohim does a thing but that, in his sovereignty, he allows it to happen. The Yosef ben Yosef translation of Matthew gets the idiom correct with, “And suffer us not to be led into temptation” (JST Matt. 6:14).

3 Ne 13:19-21

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal; But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Things here are in constant change. There are two great forces always at work. Entropy and decay are affect everything. All things grow distant, cold and less organized. The opposite is the force that creates and brings anew. Between decay and recreation, we find ourselves in a world where our hold will eventually slip away, and we will no longer be found among the living.

What will endure?

The monuments men build to themselves and their causes break down, decay, rust, erode and fade. They all pass away. The most enduring things are not what we build with our hands, but the truth that we teach. Truth will endure for eternity. It may be lost, fought or suppressed, but it will return. Truth will triumph.

The closest thing we have to eternal living is found in the great ideas and great revelations of the prophets and poets, philosophers and sages. The things made in our minds are what change humanity and elevate us to be more godlike. It is not the structures where men craving immortality engrave their names. It is not the statues in bronze and marble where because of vanity they enshrine their images. They will all pass away.

But an idea, a truth, a testimony from heaven – those will endure despite all hell raging. Send the moths, the rust and thieves against truth, and the truth will prevail despite this fallen world’s conspiracy against it.

Where is your heart? What do you meditate on day and night? Do you dream of wealth and power, of fame and recognition? Do you ponder how you might acquire more and receive more? Do you meditate on the lusts of the body? What occupies the spare moments of your life?

Do you let virtue garnish your thoughts so that your confidence may be strong in the presence of the Lord? (D&C 121:45.) Do you meditate constantly on the things God has shown to you? (2 Nephi 4:16.)

Have you prayed and pondered so you may understand a great mystery? (D&C 138:11.) Have you prayed and fasted so as to be filled with the spirit of revelation? (Alma 17:3.)

Where your heart is, there is your treasure. Where your treasure is, there is your heart. They are linked. You can tell what is treasured and where the heart is by what things you meditate upon night and day with idle moments.

3 Ne 13:22-23

The light of the body is the eye; if, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

The “eye” is better put “your mind’s eye.” It is what you meditate on, what fills you. You choose what you fill yourself with by what you give attention. What you notice is what you care to notice.

Christ’s admonition is troubling because the cares of this world distract us all. They impose upon us all. But Christ advises us to search endlessly for light.

The difference between filling yourself with light and filling yourself with darkness is what thoughts you entertain.

Everything begins in the mind. Words and works flow from thoughts. (Alma 12:14.) While all three will be judged, it is in the mind where all else begins.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 13:22

if your eye be single: The underlying Hebrew may have been “good eye,” a Hebrew idiom meaning to be generous. In Matt. 6:22, the Jewish New Testament says “good,” where the KJV says “single.” David Stern writes in his “Introduction” to the Jewish New Testament: “ ... much of what is written in the New Testament is incomprehensible apart from its Jewish context. Here (Matt. 6:22–23) is an example, only one of many ... in Hebrew, having an ‘ayin ra’ah, an ‘evil eye,’ means being stingy; while having an ‘ayin tovah, a ‘good eye,’ means being generous” (Stern, D. (1989) Jewish New Testament: A Translation of the New Testament that Expresses its Jewishness. Jerusalem, Israel: Jerusalem New Testament Publications, p. x). See also M’raman 4:3 [Mormon 8:14-16], where the Hebrew idiom is used correctly, according to the “Jewish context” of this idiomatic phrase (compare Prov. 23:6; 28:22). See footnote to M’raman 4:3.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 13:24

mammon: The Aramaic word mammon ממון is here transliterated into English. This Aramaic word means “money, accumulation of wealth.”

3 Ne 13:25

And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he looked upon the twelve whom he had chosen, and said unto them: Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, ye are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

The preceding teachings were given to all who were there. Christ changes the audience at this point, and addresses the twelve whom He had given power to baptize.

It is the chosen twelve, and not the the multitude, who are told to “take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what he shall drink.” It is those who are to minister who are freed from the earthly cares of providing for their needs. Their lives are to be given over to ministering to others, and not to work for their support. The Lord intends to provide for them.

This is a very narrow group to whom this promise is made. It does not include others in the audience. For the rest, we are required to provide for our families. If we fail to provide for them by laboring for their support, we have denied the faith. (1 Tim. 5:8.) Wives are to be supported by their husband’s labor. (D&C 83:2.) Children are to be supported by their parents. (D&C 83:4.) This requires all to labor. (D&C 42:42.) But as to these twelve, their labor is the ministry and their support will come from the Lord.

Why would the Lord give this commandment to the twelve? Why would He do it publicly? What responsibility does that impose upon the twelve? What responsibility does it impose upon the audience? If the twelve today were to be supported by only food given them by believers, clothes provided by followers, material given through donations from those to whom they ministered, would it be different than the system we have in place today?

3 Ne 14:1-2

And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he turned again to the multitude, and did open his mouth unto them again, saying: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

This reiterates the doctrine in the Lord’s instruction on prayer. Your judgment of others will become the basis for your own judgment by the Father. Apply mercy to receive mercy. Apply forgiveness to merit forgiveness. Act harshly to receive harsh treatment. Show strict judgment, and receive it in return. It is the perfect balance. What you send out returns to you. It is karma. The words are right out of Christ’s own mouth.

More importantly, notice how He transitions from speaking to His twelve about their new, spontaneous ministry into the public judgment of what was to follow? In other words, if these thoughts are related, (and I think they are) then He is saying His twelve disciples may take a while to get to the needs of those assembled. Therefore, be patient. This new lifestyle for the disciples will be difficult on them. In order to receive a reward, those who are being ministered to need to bear patiently with the ensuing efforts of the twelve.

This was to be a new community formed among these people. In it, there will be servants called to minister (the twelve), who will be limited in what they are able to do. They will be needy, dependent, and vulnerable. They will have needs. Supply the needs without being put off by what they are not able to do. View them with compassion as they seek to do as they have been told. Don’t withhold substance, food, raiment, or housing from them because you are unhappy with what little they have been able to do. Show them kindness.

The statement is broader than that, of course. It implies similar patience with everyone. But the point that this practice should begin with these twelve ministers ought not be lost.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 14:2

As we read in the Mishnah, “By the same measure by which a man metes out, they mete out to him...” (m.Sotah 1:7).

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 14:12

The Talmud records a similar saying of Hillel: “What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbor, this is the whole Torah” (b.Shabbat 31a).

3 Ne 15:2

And it came to pass that when Jesus had said these words he perceived that there were some among them who marveled, and wondered what he would concerning the law of Moses; for they understood not the saying that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new.”

In the preceding verse we read that Christ “cast his eyes round about on the multitude”. Why is that in the record? He looked about at those who listened to Him because He was taking in their presence. He was listening to them. Not with the ears, but with His eyes and His heart. He “perceived” what concerned them.

These people derived their security from the Law of Moses. It was the tradition they were raised with; it was what they understood. The Lord’s declaration that it had “passed away” was disorienting.

It is troubling to find your religious tradition has run its course, and will be replaced. People crave certainty and order. This desire is so strong in people that they will endure almost anything in order to keep what is familiar to them.

Once the Lord declared that the law of Moses was fulfilled it raised concerns about how, if at all, the Sabbath was to be kept. How were disputes to be managed? What were the laws respecting interest or usury? Servitude for debt? Punishment for certain crimes? What were the rules to govern society as life went forward?

What does it mean that “all things had become new?” Were the things He just said to take effect now? What of animal sacrifice? What of the other offerings? How were religious festivities to be kept, if they were to be kept at all? Which? When?

The Lord recognized these people did not understand what the old things passing away meant. He realized there was fear and confusion because of the statement. They needed more teaching. They needed further explanation.

3 Ne 15:3-5

And he said unto them: Marvel not that I said unto you that old things had passed away, and that all things had become new. Behold, I say unto you that the law is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he

who covenanted with my people Israel; therefore, the law in me is fulfilled, for I have come to fulfil the law; therefore it hath an end.

Here is the Lord's announcement that it was He who gave the law to Moses. He was on the mount. He was the great I AM of the earlier covenant. He is Jehovah. He covenanted with "[His] people Israel." Indeed, it was He who both made the covenant, and then fulfilled it. He is the one who went before and the one who came after. He was the beginning and the end of the law of Moses. In Him it was fulfilled.

All the sacrifices offered in the Mosaic system of worship were designed to point to, and testify of Christ's ministry. He established the system beforehand to point to His mortal life. They testified of Him as the great and final sacrifice. From the Passover sacrifice of an unblemished lamb, to the altar of incense before the Holy of Holies, the entire Mosaic covenant was made to symbolize His life.

This was the reason He spent most of the day of His resurrection on a seven mile walk explaining to two of His followers that the entire system of worship they followed pointed to Him. His sacrifice was necessary because Moses and the prophets all pointed to Him. (Luke 24:13-27.)

When the original revelation was given to Moses, it pointed to His great mortal ministry. This is His way. He will tell us beforehand so that when the events occur we can recognize His hand. (Amos 3:7.)

These Nephites are not unlike us. They wondered at the transition from one era or dispensation to another. So also in our day there is to be a transition from the original message and promise into the fulfillment of the revelation and promise. The revelation given to us in 1830 when the Book of Mormon was published to the world was intended to inform us about the coming changes we will see through the Lord's hand. We have yet to see the larger fulfillment of the promised events contained in the Book of Mormon. Gentiles are in the spotlight. But as they fade economically, militarily, socially and politically from center stage, they will fade in significance from the Lord's final great work, as well. As the prophesied promises come to pass, false traditions will not be able to keep pace with the rapid changes to come. The law given to Moses served to point to a greater work. The Book of Mormon prepares and points to another greater work soon to come, as well.

Do not think the Lord changes. He is ever the same. As a result, the tests, trials and experiences of believers in any generation will mirror one another. Some wondered at the Lord's fulfillment of the earlier law. There will also be those who are struck with wonder as the Book of Mormon prophecies unfold. If there was ever a time when the caution to be careful about false prophets pretending to be sheep, it is certainly in our generation. Keeping your eye on the Lord, and His promises is more important now than ever before. He is reliable, even if governments, others and institutions fail you.

The fulfillment of the Lord's covenants is a wonderful thing. When it happens it proves He cares (D&C 133:52), He keeps covenants (Deut. 7:9), and He is in control (Psl. 93:1-5). It is not something to fear, but instead to welcome. As things change, and the pace of change itself accelerates, take heart. Though there will be perplexities of nations with distress (Luke 21:25), there is still the promise Abinadi reminded us of that the Lord will bring again Zion. (Mosiah 15:29-31.)

We ought to identify with the message Christ gave these Nephites. We are going to see similar fulfillment of covenant promises made by Him in the not so distant future.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 15:5

therefore, it has an end: In the “Introduction” to his Jewish New Testament, Jewish writer David Stern writes concerning a parallel verse in Rom. 10:4: “But Greek telos, which gives the English word ‘teleology,’ usually means ‘goal, purpose, consummation,’ not ‘termination.’ The Messiah did not bring the Torah to an end. Rather, as the Jewish New Testament renders it, ‘the goal at which the Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts’” (Stern, D. (1989) Jewish New Testament: A Translation of the New Testament that Expresses its Jewishness. Jerusalem, Israel: Jerusalem New Testament Publications, p. xxiii). James Murdock S.T.D. (who translated the Aramaic Peshitta New Testament into English for the first time in 1893) translated the Aramaic word (used in the Aramaic Peshitta in Rom. 10:4) as “aim.” A note in the margin shows that the Aramaic word is saka and can also be understood as “end, scope, summary.” The word “end” was likely tak’lit תכלית (Strong’s 8503), which can mean “end” but can also mean “purpose, aim, intention, or goal.” There are several other passages in The Stick of Joseph that confirm that Yeshua HaMashiach is the “end of the Torah,” not because He is the termination of the Torah, but because He is the goal of the Torah: “ ... for this end [‘goal,’ not termination] has the Torah of Moshe been given.” (2 Nefi 8:2 [11:4]); “Behold, he offers himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the Torah unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and unto none else can the ends of the Torah be answered.” (2 Nefi 1:6 [2:7]).

3 Ne 15:6-8

Behold, I do not destroy the prophets, for as many as have not been fulfilled in me, verily I say unto you, shall all be fulfilled. And because I said unto you that old things have passed away, I do not destroy that which hath been spoken concerning things which are to come. For behold, the covenant which I have made with my people is not all fulfilled; but the law which was given unto Moses hath an end in me.

The Lord does not make a promise and fail to fulfill it. (D&C 1:38.) Therefore, when a promise has been made by Him, it will come to pass. But the promise must be His. No agent or spokesman can speak in His name and obligate Him to perform unless the words spoken are His. Even if a man should qualify to hold sealing power, that power will only bind what is in conformity with His word. (Helaman 10:5.) There is no obligation on Him to perform what is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. (See, e.g., D&C 132:18 and D&C 88:3.) So it is not every person who speaks, even if in a position of leading others, claiming “Lord, Lord” as they do, whose words obligate the Lord to fulfill. But the opposite is also true. If the person is clothed with nothing other than the Lord’s private commission to speak, if he speaks the Lord’s words they will “all be fulfilled.” Abinadi was so obscure a character that we don’t know if he was Lamanite or Nephite. He is the only person in the entire Book of Mormon record with the name Abinadi. He came from nowhere, was imprisoned by the leading authorities of the church, and was killed by those who presumed to exercise judgment over him. Yet it was he who bore the Lord’s words. The entire society he preached to were held to account for both his words and how they reacted to them (and him).

When the Lord speaks of fulfilling the things to come, He is both ratifying the past prophets whose words have not come to pass, and He is establishing an eternal principal. It is as true today as it was anciently. When a message comes from Him, it is binding. The message is His. The power to make His message binding upon mankind is His. The right to govern all mankind is His.

The first clarification the Lord wants the people to understand is that His words are, and will remain sovereign. They will not be rescinded. It is not the prophets, nor the promises of His great unfolding work foretold by prophetic messages that will end. It is only the law of observances given through Moses that has now been fulfilled. It is not abandoned, but rather it is fulfilled. It pointed to Him. He lived it. He fulfilled every foreshadow, every type, every promise under that law. It was His to give, and it was His life that fulfilled it.

Other Sheep

3 Ne 15:16 - 16:5

For I command all men, both in the east and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them; for out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written. For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it. (2 Ne 29:11-12)

We have no concept of the number of sacred records that exist somewhere among unknown others, nor any idea what truths they were given that we lack.

These “books” hold terrible importance for Mormons because we are going to be judged by God based on a comparison between our “works” and “that which is written.” With such a warning we Mormons ought to be humble about our claims to know more than other faiths. We should be modest in thinking we are especially graced by Gods’ words and should be anxious to scour the globe to discover the sacred texts of other cultures. In humility, we should invite them to share the truths they value most with us because we have shown that we will respect what they regard as sacred.

An unfortunate Mormon truism is the mistaken idea that we have a better and more complete religion than all others. ‘WE have the most recent revelation, because God spoke last to us’ (... uh, well, so far as we know). Therefore, we can be prone to think of “the least of these” as all others who have failed to embrace Mormonism.

Christ’s visit to the Nephites was over eleven months after His crucifixion. He ministered for 40 days around Jerusalem after His resurrection, but He had nearly eleven months to visit undisclosed other sheep before the people of the Book of Mormon. We have no basis for thinking we have the record of those the Lord visited first, after His resurrection. For all we know we have the record of those He visited tenth, maybe eleventh. If He took as long with each group as He took with the Nephites, He had time to visit with dozens of other unidentified flocks of His sheep.

Following His resurrection, as Christ visited with the Jews and Nephites, none of them had enough curiosity about “other sheep” to inquire about them. The account continues, “*And I command you that ye shall write these sayings after I am gone, that if it so be that my people at Jerusalem, they who have seen me and been with me in my ministry, do not ask the Father in my name, that they may receive a knowledge of you by the Holy Ghost, and also of the other tribes whom they know not of, that these*

sayings which ye shall write shall be kept and shall be manifested unto the Gentiles, ... It is perhaps a good thing Christ commanded them to “write these sayings” so we have a record clarifying that “other sheep” are indeed people completely out of view from any scripture in our possession. They exist. They were visited by Christ. They were taught by Him. They recorded what He taught. And we know nothing about any of it, apart from Christ confirming that He did visit and minister to scattered bodies of other sheep post-resurrection. He wanted them to become “one” and understand “plain and precious things” that have been lost from our present, limited version of scripture.

What would it be like if Mormons sent out missionaries to inquire if others had any great truths to share with us? We cannot learn anything new when the only sound in the conversation is our own voice.

Think about the impression we have made upon the Native Americans with our traditional Christian rivalries and contentions. It was Christian behavior that provoked Nez Perce Chief Joseph to declare:

“We do not want schools: They will teach us to have churches. We do not want churches: They will teach us to quarrel about God. We do not want to learn that. We may quarrel with men sometimes about things on this earth, but we never quarrel about God. We do not want to learn that.”

Have we, as Mormons, distinguished ourselves as being any more tolerant or interested in learning Native American wisdom than the contentious general rank of Christians elsewhere?

How much might Mormons yet discover if we are open to learn! The truth is or should be our goal.

We fear what we do not understand. Mormons derive security from knowing we are better informed about God than others. No one likes the idea of being surprised by failure because we were too ignorant to avoid a cataclysm, particularly if our failure is because we thought we understood what was on the test, but in fact never studied what we were being tested on.

There are indeed other sheep who belong to God; they should be welcomed, not scorned. If we do our part, we can awaken and arise and seek for a covenant from God, and then receive in turn from them “rich treasures” of knowledge.

In their present form, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Taoism have not preserved a Christ-centered tradition. Perhaps if we were to recover earlier writings from these faiths in an unaltered form we would find Christological centers were once part of them all. The post-resurrection visit to the Nephites suggests that possibility.

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 16:4 \(Milo HaGoyim\)](#)

“Fulness of the Gentiles.” See Gen. 48:19; Rom. 11:25; 1 Nefi 4:3. This phrase (הגויים מלא) appears in Rom. 11:25 where the KJV has “fulness of the Gentiles” as part of the explanation of the Olive Tree parable. It also appears in Gen. 48:19, where the KJV translates it as “a multitude of nations” as part of Jacob’s blessing on Ephraim. Jacob plainly states that Ephraim’s descendants will become the Milo HaGoyim. Hence this work began among the Gentiles and goes to all of scattered Isra’el in the hand of Ephraim. See also Ezek. 37:19.

3 Ne 16:7

Behold, 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.

The time frame in which the Gentiles were to have “belief in [Christ,]” and merit a special blessing as a result, was the time immediately following the Judean ministry. The Gospel would be taken to the Gentiles and they would believe. The Jews were going to reject Him and oppose His faith, the Gentiles would welcome it and have belief.

Now the words Christ spoke and Nephi’s record preserved were from “the Father.” Christ’s explanation of these prophecies originate with His Father.

Gentiles will believe. Moreover, the “house of Israel” will not believe in Him. The result of that acceptance and rejection is the juxtaposition of the roles of Gentiles and Israel.

Whereas, the Gospel came to the Jews first, and by the Jews it was transmitted to the Gentiles, later the opposite will occur. The pattern will reverse. It will go from the last back to the first. (It is an historic chiasm.)

Accordingly, the Gentiles will be the ones to whom the restoration of the “fulness” will come in the latter day. The reward for earlier faithfulness is later recognition and reward.

Now, it should take no amount of brilliant insight to realize that the restoration involved Joseph Smith. A man of English descent. May have some Israelite blood in him from the earlier diaspora of the Lost Ten Tribes, but he is nevertheless the one through whom the restoration was brought. He is necessarily identified as a “Gentile” in this prophecy by Christ, given by the Father. If Joseph Smith is NOT a Gentile, then the whole promise of the Father and word of the Son is defeated. Therefore, you may know for a surety that the Gentiles are not those nasty non-members. It is US. WE are the Gentiles who receive the first offer in the last offering.

So it was that the Father determined and Christ taught that the Gentiles would be the ones to whom the Gospel message would first come in our day. Now we have it. (Or had it anyway.)

This movement from Israel to Gentile and from Gentile to Israel is evening the playing field. This is balancing out the record of history. It is not that one is more favored than another. Rather it is that each one will have a suitable turn and opportunity to receive what the Lord offers. In the end, no people will be able to say the opportunities were unfair, unequal, or more challenging for one than for another.

3 Ne 16:8

But wo, saith the Father, unto the unbelieving of the Gentiles—for notwithstanding they have come forth upon the face of this land, and have scattered my people who are of the house of Israel; and my people who are of the house of Israel have been cast out from among them, and have been trodden under feet by them;

So now the time frame is the latter day when the Gentiles have been given this restoration of the fullness. This comment moves forward from the reasons of the restoration to the Gentiles (earlier faithfulness) to the time when the Gentiles have received the fullness.

To make the time frame abundantly clear to both the Nephites and to us, the Lord explains in passing that the Gentiles will come to “this land.” The full description of them coming is set out in the earlier prophecy of Nephi as set out at length in First Nephi. (1 Nephi 13 & 14.) But here Christ reminds the audience that when the Gentiles come, they will “scatter my people who are of the house of Israel.”

Gentiles certainly did come. They did scatter the remnants who were on the American continent. Not only did they scatter them, but they also “cast out” and “trodden down” those populations who were here when the Gentiles arrived. Smallpox wiped out the Great Plains Indians. There were an estimated 20 million plus Plains Indians when Columbus arrived. Smallpox all but annihilated them. So few survived that by the time of the western push of the United States, it was believed the Great Plains had never been populated.

To say they were “trodden underfoot” is descriptive. The native populations were destroyed. They were conquered. They died. Their remains returned to the earth upon which the Gentiles trod.

You must keep this image in mind as you read about the future of the Gentiles being trodden underfoot.

3 Ne 16:10

And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you: At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; and if they shall do all those things, and shall reject the fulness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fulness of my gospel from among them.”

These words come from the Father.

The Father has commanded Christ to speak them.

This material is important to understand.

“At the day when the Gentiles shall sin against the Gospel...” Not IF. Not SHOULD THEY HAPPEN TO DO SO. It is in the day WHEN the Gentiles SHALL sin against the Gospel.

The Father has already seen this happen. (D&C 130:7.) He has told Christ to speak about it. But it is before the Father and therefore He can speak with knowledge of the coming rejection by the Gentiles.

What do the Gentiles do as they reject the Gospel? They “shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations... above all the people of the whole earth.” Read again the prior post. The Gentiles take their inheritance of the promised land as their birthright. They presume God’s favor. They mistake their probation and testing as proof of having God’s favor. They are on trial, and presume they aren’t being tested.

What, then, do the Gentiles do with their highly favored status? The list is sobering:

- Lyings
- Deceits
- Mischiefs
- All manner of hypocrisy
- Murders
- Priestcrafts
- Whoredoms
- Secret combinations

Read the list and contemplate how much of this is among us. If we do not murder, do we delight in bloodshed? Are we warlike? Are there people whom we kill daily somewhere in the world to project our national will and great power?

Notice that hypocrisy leads to murder. Murder leads to priestcrafts. Priestcrafts lead to whoredoms. Are we seeing a progression here? By the time we have whoredoms, have we already passed through murders and priestcrafts?

What are priestcrafts? (2 Ne. 26:29.) What does it mean to seek the welfare of Zion? Is “Zion” the same thing as the institutional church? What is the difference? Can a person seek the welfare of Zion without seeking to succeed inside the institutional church? What is the difference between seeking to be a “light unto the world,” on the one hand, and seeking the welfare of Zion, on the other? Can one seek to be a light pointing to Zion, and never be a “light unto the world?” What is the world? What is Zion? How are they different? Can one who seeks the welfare of Zion ever get praise from the world? Can a person curry favor with the world while also seeking to benefit Zion?

If not hiring a whore, do we nonetheless watch with delight the portrayal of sexual license to entertain us, fill our thoughts, satisfy our lusts? Do you need to hire a prostitute to be practicing “whoredoms?” Utah is one of the largest consumers of pornography in the US. Hence, the continual return to this subject in General Conference.

When they do this, in turn the Gentiles will “reject the fullness of my Gospel.” To reject the fullness is not to reject the Gospel itself. As we have seen, some fragment of the Gospel remains even when it has turned into “iniquity” and “abomination.” Without some fractured segment of the Gospel to salve the conscious and let the people feel good about their sins, there couldn’t be “abominations.”

It is not the “Gospel” which is lost. Rather it is the “fullness of my Gospel” which is rejected and then taken away. It is first rejected, then it is forfeited. The Gentiles lose their entitlement to possess what they have rejected.

3 Ne 16:11

And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them.

When the Gentiles have rejected the fullness of the Gospel, the Lord’s memory will be stirred. He will “remember His covenant” again.

Notice the covenant He will remember is for “His people,” whose interests and inheritance will now be vindicated. His words will be fulfilled. The Father’s promises will all be realized. But “His people” are not the Gentiles. His people are the remnant to whom the Gospel will come as a matter of covenant and inheritance to reclaim a fallen people. This is the re-grafting of the natural branches referred to in Jacob 5:67-75. It is important to note that the Lord of the vineyard was directly involved with the few servants assigned to accomplish this final work of gathering together. (Jacob 5:72.)

This is to be done after the Gentiles (who are the European Latter-day Saints who descend from the bloodlines that overran and dispossessed the native people in North America), have rejected the fullness of the Gospel. Therefore, you should not expect that the institutional church, controlled as it is by those very same bloodlines, will be the means through which this final effort will be accomplished.

When the time comes, the Lord will “bring [His] gospel to them.” How will He do this? What “laborers” should we expect to be sent? How, if the Gentiles have rejected the fullness of His Gospel, will the Gentiles be involved?

Can Gentiles who are lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations of the earth assist? If not, then what Gentiles can assist?

Isn’t Ephriam to be involved? After all, they have the birthright. Are they not involved?

If they are, who will it be from among Ephriam?

How can the remnant to whom these blessings are promised, have still among them a few descendants of Ephriam? Why will Mannassah, through the remnant, build the New Jerusalem, yet it will be Ephriam through whom the blessings are conferred upon the returning Lost Tribes? (D&C 133:26-34.)

How can the New Jerusalem be the property of the remnant, but there be a group of Ephriamites who bestow crowns? What must these Ephriamites possess to be able to accomplish this task? How can they possess it and not be lifted up in pride above all other people of the whole earth? How can such power be put upon some group and they remain willing to ever bend the knee and confess before Him whose right it is to rule?

How can the Gentiles both reject the fullness of the Gospel, yet there be some who are of Ephriam who are able to bestow crowns?

What an interesting picture begins to emerge. Gentile rejection, but a tiny group of Ephriamite servants whose lives are lived so as to bestow blessings upon others.

The main body in the New Jerusalem coming from the remnant, who are to build the City of the New Jerusalem, yet within that City a functioning group of Ephriamites who will crown others with glory. All this preparatory to the Lord’s return to a City set upon a hill which cannot be hid. To a location in the tops of the everlasting mountains, where all will gather from every nation.