

Book of Mormon Study –3 Nephi 8-11

Online zoom Sunday School, 20 Sep 2020

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

3 Ne 8:3

And the people began to look with great earnestness for the sign which had been given by the prophet Samuel, the Lamanite, yea, for the time that there should be darkness for the space of three days over the face of the land.

The sign they were looking for was darkness for the space of three days. Was the destruction that accompanied it expected? If they could anticipate the destruction that would accompany the sign, would there have been any better way to prepare for it than they would by preparing for just the sign?

3 Ne 8:5

Take note of the date this sign began. We'll bring it up when we get to chapter 11.

3 Ne 9:1

A voice is heard, Christ proclaims that he has fulfilled the law of Moses (v 17). All the people in the land hear this (see also 10:1). Later in chapter 11 the voice was repeated 3 times before being understood, not by "all", but by 2500 (see 17:25). Here in this chapter the voice tells them they have been spared because "ye were more righteous" than those who were destroyed (v 13).

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 9:1

The Hebrew word here was likely *eretz* (אֶרֶץ), which can mean "land" or "earth."

3 Ne 9:2

Wo, wo, wo...

What does a three-fold "wo" mean? Is it worse than a single "wo" or a two-fold "wo"?

3 Ne 9:3-5

Zarahemla burned with fire

Moroni sunk in the depths of the sea

Moronihah covered with earth

In the previous chapter many were carried away in whirlwinds

(I'm just noticing that all 4 elements are involved in the destruction.)

3 Ne 9:5

that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come any more unto me against them.

This phrase occurs 5 times.

3 Ne 9:13

O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they

And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; (3 Ne 10:12)

These "more righteous" were not necessarily all members of the church and could have included even those who did not believe in the teachings of any church or even God at all. Among these, we can assume, were those who would later gather in Bountiful as we will discuss shortly.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 9:17

See "What does it mean to fulfill the Torah?" footnote to 2 Nepi 11:8 [25:24].

What does it mean to fulfill the Torah? David Bivin and Roy Blizzard wrote: "'Destroy' and 'fulfill' are technical terms used in rabbinic argumentation. When a rabbi felt that his colleague had misinterpreted a passage of Scripture, he would say, 'You are destroying the Law!' Needless to say, in most cases his colleague strongly disagreed. What was 'destroying the Law' for one rabbi, was 'fulfilling the Law' (correctly interpreting Scripture) for another" (Bivin, D. and Blizzard, R. (1983) Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus. Arcadia, CA: Makor Publishing, p. 154). Yosef ben Yosef understood "fulfilled the law" to mean that Mashiach "magnified" the Torah and made it "honorable" and not that he destroyed it. He said that Mashiach himself "fulfil[ed] all righteousness in becoming obedient to the the (sic) Law which himself had given to Moses on the mount and thereby magnified it and made it honorable instead of destroying it" (Cook, L.W. & Ehat, A.F. (Eds.) (1980) The Words of Joseph Smith. Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, pgs. 162-3)."

[We discussed this in lesson on Mosiah 11-17]

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 9:18

א and ת, the first and last letters in the Hebrew alphabet, expressing the idea of the beginning and the end.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 9:19

no more the shedding of blood: The Hebrew may have been דמים שפיכות יותר לא. The Hebrew word *yoter* יותר (Strong's 3148) can mean "more" or "greater"; thus, the passage would be understood as "no greater shedding of blood." See footnotes to Alma 16:34 [34:13].

The underlying Hebrew for "stop" may have been יותר תהיה שלא, which literally means "should be no more" but could also be translated as "shall be no greater." The Hebrew word *yoter* יותר can mean "more" or "greater." Yosef ben Yosef [Joseph Smith] said: "These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi be

purified, be fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings ...” Cook, L.W. & Ehat, A.F. (Eds.) (1980) *The Words of Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, p. 43 [quote edited for grammar and punctuation]; See 3 Nephi 4:7 [9:19].

sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away: As in 2 Nephi 11:8 [25:27], the underlying Hebrew may have been chalaf חלף (Strong’s 2498), which can also be understood as “renewed.” Yosef ben Yosef [Joseph Smith] said: “These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings ... ” Cook, L.W. & Ehat, A.F. (Eds.) (1980) *The Words of Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, p. 43 [quote edited for grammar and punctuation].

I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings: The 1830 version has “for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings”; however, in Hebrew this could read as a rhetorical question: “for will I not accept your sacrifices and your burnt offerings?” (See footnote to Moshiah 8:1 [Mosiah 13:27].)

The underlying Hebrew might be understood as a rhetorical question rather than as a statement. Torrey states, “It sometimes happens in the O.T. Hebrew that an interrogative sentence is not provided with any interrogative word or particle. In such cases the context is supposed to leave no room for doubt, but there are some instances of resulting misunderstanding and mistranslation, more or less disturbing. The Greek translator ordinarily reproduces his original exactly, word for word, without undertaking to interpret; but in such passages as Isa. 1:18 and (more significant) Isa. 43:23a and 24a the decision between the two varieties of sentence carries much with it” (Torrey, C.C. (1936) *Our Translated Gospels*. London, England: Hodder and Stoughton, p. 55). For example, the KJV of Ex. 6:3 says, “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them” (Ex. 6:3 KJV); however, “The Scriptures” version from the Institute for Scripture Research has translated this declaration as a question, as follows: “And I appeared to Abraham, to Yitshaq, and to Ya’aqob, as El Shaddai. And by My Name, Fulness, was I not known to them?” (Ex. 6:3 ISR). Yosef ben Yosef also made use of this fact in his rendering of the same passage: “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, I am the Lord God Almighty, the Lord Jehovah. And was not my name known unto them?” (Ex. 6:3 JST). If this is a rhetorical question, it would fit the context, as Avinodi is asking a series of rhetorical questions (see Moshiah 8:1–2 [13:25-31]).

[3 Ne 9:20](#)

And ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not.

In our lesson on Helaman 1-6 we discussed this could refer to the events we read about in Helaman chapter 5.

[3 Ne 10:4-6](#)

Note past, present, and future tense, (have I gathered you, would I - twice - and will I...)

[3 Ne 10:7](#)

But if not, O house of Israel, the places of your dwellings shall become desolate until the time of the fulfilling of the covenant to your fathers.

If not, (if you do not repent) "the places of your dwellings shall become desolate." [See note on last weeks lesson Hel 15:1] Hel 15:1:

And now, my beloved brethren, behold, I declare unto you that except ye shall repent your houses shall be left unto you desolate.

In this verse (3 Ne 10:7) the words are slightly different and the Lord adds, "*until the time of the fulfilling of the covenant to your fathers.*"

This was the second time Christ's voice was heard by "all the people of the land" (verse 1). After this the voice that came unto all the people was silent for almost a year.

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 10:18](#)

The destruction at the death of Mashiach occurred "in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month" (3 Nephi 4:2). The record is then silent for approximately 11 months, resuming at this point, "in the ending of the thirty and fourth year."

[3 Ne 11:1](#)

And now it came to pass that there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple which was in the land Bountiful; and they were marveling and wondering one with another, and were showing one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place.

From a letter written to Adult Institute class instructor earlier this year:

It is fascinating to me to contemplate the audience to whom Christ appeared in 3 Nephi chapter 11.

Prior to this event, we read about tempests and earthquakes that lasted about three hours, followed by three days of darkness. The destruction at the death of Christ occurred "in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month" (3 Ne 8:5). After all this destruction, the Nephite record is silent for approximately 11 months.

When the record resumes eleven months later, we read an account of the people who migrated to Bountiful to celebrate the season's festivals. This would have happened at the year end (see 3 Ne 10:18). We know that the band who has gathered at this

place were pilgrims who had traveled to get there because of their reaction to the changes:

“And now it came to pass that there were a great multitude gathered together, of the people of Nephi, round about the temple which was in the land Bountiful; and they were marveling and wondering one with another, and were showing one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place.” (3 Ne. 11:1)

If they were residents of Bountiful, these great changes would have become less noteworthy over the preceding eleven months. Since they had only recently returned to Bountiful, however, these changes were exceptional to them and they were pointing them out to each other. All these things had changed since their last visit to the Temple town.

There were certainly local residents of Bountiful who would be among the witnesses of the Lord’s appearance. But for the most part, the people appear to be comprised of those who had weathered the difficulties of coming to Bountiful to celebrate the festival season of the year’s end. They had come to the temple precinct to be present at the year’s end for what we can assume to be some worthy observance. This original purpose is neglected in the record, because of what is about to happen.

This audience for Christ’s coming is interesting to contemplate. It is comprised of people who self-selected. They came to observe their normal religious duties. And as a result of that intention and commitment, they are present for a much greater event.

Doing the Lord’s everyday work is more important than it may seem at times. This example from the Lord’s visit with the Nephites I think illustrates the point wonderfully. By routinely going to the Temple and keeping some observance commanded of them, as the year ended, these faithful people are selected by the Lord for His personal visit. They chose themselves by choosing the Lord and so the Lord chooses them.

There is a powerful lesson in this for all of us. How the Lord finds you spending your time is important to whether He can visit with you or not. Had they not come to Bountiful on this occasion, they would not have had an audience with the risen Christ. (email to Marcus Reed, 29 Feb, 2020)

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 11:1

3 Nefi 8:5 [17:25] “And they were in number about two thousand and five hundred souls, and they did consist of men, women, and children.”

3 Ne 11:8

they saw a man

Account of Christ appearing to Nephites (3 Ne 11), "Despite the introduction of the Son by the Father, the audience is not able to see Him as the Son of God at His appearing. There is nothing in the person which demands He be worshipped. Rather, His countenance is so unremarkable to them they conclude He is an angel.

This is consistent with the Lord's humility in showing Himself to others elsewhere. (see road to Emmaus, Luke 24). He does not demand He be accepted by the glory of His personage. Rather, He commands worship by the content of His teachings... We, like Him, should not expect others to accept what we say or teach based upon our status or standing."

3 Ne 11:13-15

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto them saying: Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world. And it came to pass that the multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come.

He tells them to come, one by one, to feel the wounds in His side, and hands, and feet. "One by one" is how He directs. No person who is present is to have this witness through another. All of them are to be equally qualified as witnesses of Him. There is nothing vicarious about this meeting. They are asked to perform a ceremony of recognition and witnessing. They first feel His side. To do this they must embrace the Lord, for you cannot feel His side without embracing Him. Embracing Him is an essential part of the ceremony of recognition. Ceremony and holiness are connected with each other. Recognize you are reading about a ceremony, as all encounters involved with God are in one way or another.

Having embraced the Lord and felt His side, the witnesses are asked to take a step back and feel His hands. Feeling the Lord's hands is also a part of this ceremonial process. At an arm's length, holding His hands, you feel the marks of the nails.

Then, having touched these sacred emblems of the Atonement, you are permitted to kneel, and feel the prints in His feet. This part of the ceremony is the easiest for men to observe. For kneeling at His feet is the natural position for anyone who has witnessed for themselves the price He paid on their behalf and feels the love within Him.

This is ceremony, and this is ritual, but it employs such rich witnesses in the body of the Lord as to be convincing beyond all doubt that He is the Christ, the Anointed One, the Deliverer, and the Holy One of Israel!

[3 Ne 11:16-17](#)

And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying: Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God! And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.

What does it mean "cry out with one accord"? Does it mean with a "single voice"? Would this be like the languid repetition in unison of:

"Hosanna ...hosanna... hosanna"

That we participated in in last General Conference?

In Webster's 1828 dictionary, Accord is defined as:

Agreement; harmony of minds; consent or concurrence of opinions or wills.

Compare with the description of an authentic outburst at the laying of the foundation of the Second Temple:

And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off. (Ezra 3:10-13)

This outburst was loud shouting, weeping, and the words "could not be discerned" because of the outcry.

I think that should there ever be an occasion for an authentic "Hosanna Shout!" among people of God, it should be rousing, loud, enthusiastic and uncontrolled. It should attract the attention of Heaven itself by the purity of the outburst from the hearts of the participants.

[3 Ne 11:21-22](#)

Nephi and twelve others were given power to baptize (see also 12:1-2).

Before Christ's visit to America, Nephi, who was an authorized minister of God (3 Ne. 8:1), preached repentance and baptized (3 Ne. 7:23-26).

Two years later Christ visited the same people Nephi had been preaching, ministering and baptizing. However, once Christ appeared, the earlier, authoritative baptisms were redone (see 3 Ne. 11:19-26).

Nephi had authority to baptize before Christ came. When Christ came, He gave Nephi the authority to baptize again. Nephi baptized a group of people, then he baptized the same group of people a second time. Why the need to rebaptize them? (email to Marcus Reed, 2 Feb, 2019)

3 Ne 11:25

Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Why does this prayer differ from the baptism prayer in D&C 20:73?

Instead of: "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ" we say instead: "Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ."

This is a word change instituted by Joseph Smith, and gives us confidence, that since the Lord in the first instance commissioned the organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which was done at a time before priesthood was generally disseminated into the Church, that it is acceptable to God to allow the Church to baptize in His name. By commissioning the Church, and giving to it the authority and commission to go out and baptize, the Church possessed the authority to baptize.

After giving these disciples "power to baptize" Christ's instructions require them to say they have "authority" (in 3 Nephi) or today, hold a "commission" (in D&C 20). Is there a difference between "authority" to baptize and the "power" to baptize?

Why does the authorization come from Jesus Christ, but the ordinance get performed "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" The power to do the ordinance comes from the Son, but the ordinance is in the name of each member of the Godhead. Why?

Though they are one, the names show they occupy different roles and hold different responsibilities. (As to following and being sanctified by different laws and receiving different kingdoms, see D&C 88: 21-26.) We are in the fallen world where the primary means God communicates with man is through the Holy Ghost. (D&C 14: 8.) When, however, a person rises up through the merits of Jesus Christ to receive Him as a minister, they are living in a Terrestrial law and inherit Terrestrial blessings. (D&C 76: 77.) When He has finished His preparations with the person, and can bring them to the Father, the person is brought to a point where the Father can accept and acknowledge them as a son. (See D&C 76: 54-59, 92.) They are then begotten of the Father. (Psalms 2: 7.) Through each of these steps, does baptism matter? Does one receive the companionship of the Holy Ghost without baptism? Do they come to Christ without baptism? Do they inherit what the Father has without baptism? Is baptism critical to the association with each member of the Godhead?

Note also the person cannot receive the ordinance without also having their name stated. Why do you suppose it is necessary to first call out the name of the person before they receive an ordinance? Why would the Lord's instruction require a person to be "called" first? Though they are submitting to the ordinance voluntarily, why call their name?

3 Ne 11:26

And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water.

The manner of baptism is clearly by immersion. To perform the ordinance, they must be put under the water and then “come forth again out of the water” to follow the instruction given by Christ.

The purpose of baptism is to follow Christ’s example. (John 10: 27, John 14: 15.) It symbolizes the death of the old man of sin, and the resurrection into a new life in Christ. (Romans 6: 4.) That symbol cannot be mirrored by sprinkling. It must involve immersion.

In immersion we are placed below the surface of the water, in the same way as the dead are buried below ground.

In immersion the breath of life is cut off while under the water, and restored anew when you “come forth again out of the water.”

In the case of the officiator, they are the one who immerses and then brings the recipient up out of the water. Performing this ordinance puts the officiator in the role of the Lord who holds the keys of death (Rev. 1: 18) and resurrection (2 Nephi 2: 8).

Those who are baptized, and those who officiate, enact, by symbol, some eternal truths regarding the plan of salvation. In the very moment the ordinance is performed there is a renewal in symbol of life, innocence, forgiveness and resurrection. The earth itself is blessed by such things as baptism and other ordinances. The earth itself is defiled when the ordinances are not kept exactly as prescribed. (Isa. 24: 5; Moses 7: 28.)

The earth knows that God ordained the ordinances of heaven and earth. (Jeremiah 33: 25.) As regular and reliable as the movements of the sun and moon are, so too should the ordinances of the Lord be kept in their appointed ways. (Jeremiah 31: 35-36.)

The heavens and earth rejoice when the ordinances are kept. They symbolize eternal hope, man’s acceptance of God’s plan, and a presence of righteousness in a fallen world. Our own participation in ordinances are vital to our own renewal, and the renewal of all creation through redemption of each individual soul.

The baptism ordinance, like all those that follow after, is intended not merely to fulfill an initiation rite. It is intended to communicate light and truth into the mind of the individual who is performing and receiving the ordinance. It is meant to enlighten.

3 Ne 11:28-30

And according as I have commanded you thus shall ye baptize. And there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been. For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold, this is not my doctrine, to

stir up the hearts of men with anger, one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away.

The Lord's elaboration on "disputations" and "contentions" is important and consistent enough that all 3 verses should be considered together.

First, He clarifies that baptism must be done as He "commanded you." Deviations are not permitted and should not be asked for, or entertained. That is the thing about ordinances. When given, they are to be kept in exactly the manner they come from Him. When we change them we risk breaking the covenant between Him and ourselves. (Isa. 24: 5.)

The Book of Mormon is silent about the "disputations" which existed among them over baptism. However, when Christ says there has "hitherto been" disputes, we know they existed. It becomes apparent from later passages that one practice which caused some of the argument was the issue of baptizing infants. There were likely others, as well. The Lord wants that to end. Perform the ordinances as He sets them out, and stop arguing about the manner.

The reason arguments arise is because men stop gathering light by righteous behavior. When they lose light they cease to understand the truth. They stray from the correct practice of the ordinance because they are unable to understand its importance. They see no reason to continue the ordinance in one form when another seems to work just as well. The result is a change to the ordinance. It is ever the same. By the time the change is made, the ones making it are unaware of any importance associated with the ordinance they change. They discard what they view is meaningless. It would require a good deal more light and truth for them to understand the importance of what was given them. But that light and truth has passed away from them because of their conduct.

Into the darkness the devil enters with arguments over the ordinances: *Why do it that way? It really doesn't mean anything. It is arcane and outdated. It doesn't really matter as long as you still have faith in Christ.* [That particular lie is very effective because it allows the person to presume they have faith, when in fact they haven't the faith sufficient to obey Christ.] *People will get more out of the changes if we make them. People will have greater peace of mind if we baptize their infants. We'll save more souls, because by baptizing them when they're infants we include everyone who would die before getting baptized. Our numbers will increase. We'll look more successful by getting more followers by adding their numbers into the group. What we change isn't important, anyway. If it were important, we would know that, and since it doesn't seem important to us, it must, in fact, not be important. Those who rebel at change are not really faithful. This shows inspiration; it's faith affirming. Change is proof that God is still leading us.** ...And other such arguments and persuasions from our adversary.

On the other hand, Christ is saying to keep the ordinances unchanged. And further, don't even begin to dispute them. They are off limits for argument, dispute and discussion. When you open the opportunity to dispute over the ordinances, you are allowing the devil an opportunity to influence the discussion and change the ordinances.

Disputes lead to contention, contention leads to anger, and anger is the devil's tool. So don't start down that road. Accept and understand the ordinances. If you are perplexed by them, then let those who understand speak, exhort, expound and teach concerning them. As they do, you will come into the unity of faith and become one. Perplexity cannot exist when there is light and truth. Light and truth comes

from understanding the ordinances, not changing them. So do not begin the process through dispute. The purpose of discussion is not to dispute, which leads to contention, which leads to anger.

When the Gospel and its ordinances turn into something angry and contentious, then the Spirit has fled, and souls are lost. It is the devil's objective to prevent you from practicing the ordinances in the correct manner. But, more importantly, it is his objective to prevent you from becoming one. When he uses arguments over ordinances to cause disunity, he is playing with two tools at the same time. First, changing the ordinances brings about cursings, and second, encouraging contention and anger grieves the Spirit, and prevents the Saints from becoming one.

As a result, disputes or discussions over ordinances, which could lead to changing them, should not be entertained. As soon as the ordinances are open to dispute, reconsideration, alteration or to being changed, then you are opening the door to this whole process. It culminates in the souls of men being lost through apostasy. Once the ordinances are changed, the earth is cursed (Isa. 24: 5) and Israel is scattered rather than gathered (Jere. 31: 36).

The devil knows this, even if men do not. Men are urged to take steps they presume have little effect, all the while being lied to by the enemy of their souls.

When men arrive at the point they are angry in their hearts with one another, they are not united by love as they are intended to be. These are the end results of the two paths. One leading to love and joy (Hel. 5: 44), and the other to anger and wrath (D&C 76: 33).

Disputes over ordinances are caused by the devil. Ordinances that preserve symbolic truths and have the power to save are turned into tools for the devil by disputations. It is a complete victory when discussions about changing ordinances are allowed to take place. Even good men are taken in by such disputes.

[3 Ne 11:31-32](#)

Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine. And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; and I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me; and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me.

When the Lord proclaims there is a "doctrine" belonging to Him, it is important to take note. As He begins His doctrinal statement, He first reminds us again of the unity between Himself, His Father and the Holy Ghost. This reminder of unity has followed the admonition to avoid contention and anger – things which prevent our becoming one with each other.

To understand His doctrine you must first know and understand that the doctrine originates with the Father. Christ has completely accepted and advocates the doctrine. Moreover He embodies it.

When did the Father bear record of the Son? Did you notice that? The FATHER bears record of the Son! I'm not talking about Matthew or Luke's testimony that the Father bore record of the Son, because that is Matthew's and Luke's testimony. I'm not talking about Joseph Smith's record of the Father's

testimony of the Son. I'm talking about the Father's testimony. When did you hear the Father bear record of the Son?

The Father does bear record of the Son. But you must go through the Son to get to the Father. When you do, acting in faith according to the conditions established for your salvation, then you will receive the Father's testimony or record of the Son for yourself. But implicit in this statement is the fact that access to the Father is possible by the means provided through the Son. That is a ratification of the fullness of the Gospel. It is an invitation to return to heaven and obtain from the Father a confirmation of your salvation.

The Father's testimony is that our salvation comes through Christ. For us the Father has provided a Savior. If we repent, we can come back into the presence of God and enter into our salvation and exaltation. But it is through the means provided for us: A Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

We are commanded to:

1. Repent.
2. Believe in Christ.

To repent is to turn again to Him. To follow Him and leave behind your sinful ways. To abandon the world and worldliness and to choose to always remember Him, that you may have His spirit to be with you always.

3 Ne 11:35

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost.

Belief in Christ necessarily means belief in the Father. To believe Christ is to accept His message of the Father's primacy and authority.

You see in these three members of the Godhead a full establishment of interconnected roles and responsibilities.

The Father ordains the plan. It is He who presides.

The Son implements the plan. It is He who makes the required sacrifice to save us.

The Holy Ghost activates the plan. It is the "fire" of the Holy Ghost which makes new, cleanses and perfects the man's understanding.

These three are "one" and united. They provide mankind with the possibility for salvation and exaltation.

Christ "bears record of it from the Father." This means that Christ is the Father's messenger announcing the Father's plan. What of the need for two witnesses? (Matt. 18: 16.) One of the criticisms of Christ's message was the absence of additional witnesses. (John 8: 13-14.) Is Christ doing that same thing here with the Nephites? Does His announcement that He speaks for the Father constitute one, or two witnesses? The Father first bore witness of Christ (3 Nephi 11: 6-7.) Now Christ bears witness of Him.

The Father's testimony always affirms the status of the Son as His Beloved, and of our need to "hear Him." (See e.g., Matt. 17: 5; JS-H 1: 17; see also Matt. 3: 17.) The Father can, and does, acknowledge others as His. (Psalms 2: 7.) But, unlike the Son who has repeatedly visited this earth, walked upon it (Luke 24: 15-16), been handled by people (Luke 24: 36-39; 3 Nephi 11: 14-15), and eaten here (John 21: 13), the Father does not come into contact with this earth in its fallen state (Matt. 17: 5; JS-H 1: 17). The only time the Father had contact with this earth was before the Fall, in the Paradisiacal setting of Eden—which was a Temple at the time (Gen. 3: 8). Whenever there has been contact with the Father thereafter, He has been at a distance from this earth. (Moses 7: 24; 1 Nephi 1: 8; Alma 36: 22.)

There is a formality with the Father that does not exist with the Son. For example, the Son has eaten with mortal man while He was immortal, both before His ministry in the flesh (Exo. 24: 9-11) and after (Luke 24: 41-43). As our Redeemer, He is directly responsible for us and has contact with us to perform His redemptive service. The Father, on the other hand, is different in status, responsibility, glory and dominion. The Son can appear to mortal man without showing His glory or requiring any alteration of the mortal who beholds Him. (See, e.g., John 20: 15-17.) To behold the Father, to endure His presence, one must be transfigured. (Moses 1: 2.) Mortal man cannot behold the Father's works while mortal, for if you comprehend them you cannot afterward remain mortal in the flesh. (Moses 1: 5.)

The primary means to learn of Christ for mortal man is the Holy Ghost. It is this means which brings all things to your remembrance (John 14: 26). Once the learning has culminated in preparation of the individual, then the Savior has a continuing ministry. (John 14: 21.) The Savior's ministry is to bring the person redemption.

When this process is complete, then it is the responsibility of those who have been redeemed to cry repentance to their neighbors. (D&C 88: 74, 81.) Indeed, the desire to bring others to receive redemption becomes their primary concern. (Mosiah 28: 3.)

The process then produces those who bear testimony of the Son. If they are called of God, they will use scriptures to testify of Christ. This has always been the pattern ordained by God. (Jacob 7: 10-11.) They may understand the scriptures more clearly, because they have seen the same things as earlier prophets. (JS-H 1: 74.) But their testimonies will draw from the scriptures and the words of their brothers in Christ who went before as they testify of Him.

3 Ne 11:36

And thus will the Father bear record of me, and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one."

The phrase: "And thus will the Father bear record of me" is referring to the Father visiting "him with fire and the Holy Ghost." This means that to the recipient of the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost comes a witness to the person of the Father. When the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost come to you, so does the Father's testimony of the Son.

You cannot receive this baptism and not have a testimony given to you by the Father of the Son.

The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one. And the primary means for obtaining access to their “record” spoken of in this verse, is through the scriptures.

3 Ne 11:37-38

And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things. And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.

Repentance is not likely unless a person is willing to undergo a change to become more “childlike” in perspective and attitude. We discussed this a few weeks ago in lesson on Mosiah 1-3. It is more than just an analogy or good advice. It is a prerequisite. It is the only way you can “inherit the kingdom of God.”

Children are open to change and willing to learn. They welcome new ideas for all ideas are new to them. The world is new to them. They feel their ignorance and are anxious to fill it with information and understanding. They know they are unable to cope with the world they live in unless they obtain more understanding than they have. So they relentlessly search to know more.

On the other hand, adults are generally closed. They believe they already know something, and therefore are unwilling to receive more. (2 Nephi 28: 29.)

Adults learn disciplines of study and then think the Gospel should be viewed by the tools of the scholar. To the economist, all of the Gospel appears to be financial. To the philosopher, all of the Gospel appears to be dialectic. To the lawyer it is a legal system. But the Gospel is separate from the understanding of men. It requires us to surrender our arrogance and foolishness and come as a child to learn anew everything about life and truth. This is why the Gospel always begins with creation, informs of the Fall, and preaches the Atonement.

We must “repent” because the foundation of accepting new truth begins with the realization that we’re not getting anywhere by what we’ve already done. We need to abandon old ways and begin anew. Until we are open to the new truths offered through the Gospel, we can’t even start the journey. We’re headed in the wrong direction and don’t even know it. First we need to realize our direction is wrong. Then stop going that way. When we turn to the new direction, we’ve begun repenting. (2 Cor. 5: 17.)

From repentance comes light and truth. At first, just turning to face the new direction is a great revelation. But you’ve not seen anything until you walk in that direction for a while. As you move toward the light and receive more, the world itself changes meaning and nothing you used to think important remains important. (Isa. 65: 17.)

Becoming as a little child, or repenting, must precede baptism if you are to be saved. Otherwise, you cannot “receive these things” or, in other words, you cannot accept the new truths and perspectives the Gospel will require you to know and accept. Unless these steps are taken you cannot “inherit the kingdom of God” because only such people will be able to enter.

Teachable. Open. Willing to receive more. Able to endure difficulties as a result of the changes which come to them. Patient. Submissive to God. And eager to learn more. (Mosiah 3: 19.)

Not arrogant. Not trying to fit the new truths into your existing framework of false notions. (Mark 2: 22.) Not resisting truth and arguing against it. (1 Tim. 6: 4-6.) Not proud or boastful, secure in your own salvation. (Luke 18: 11.) Not holding a testimony that you will be saved while others around you will be lost because they do not believe as you do. (Alma 31: 14-18.)

How few there will be who find it. (Matt. 7: 14; 3 Ne. 14: 14; 3 Ne. 27: 33; D&C 132: 22.) Most people are simply unwilling to repent. They have such truth as they are willing to receive already, and want nothing more. (2 Nephi 28: 14-15.)

Even Christ is unable to persuade them to accept His Gospel.

3 Ne 11:39

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

This is the reason for this doctrine. It will allow those who accept and follow it to endure against all enemies. It will allow them to prevail.

Even the “gates of hell shall not prevail against them.” Meaning that death and hell can have no claim upon them. They will not be taken captive either in this world (Alma 12: 11) or when they leave this world (Alma 40: 13.)

3 Ne 11:41

Therefore, go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth.

This is the charge given by Christ to the twelve whom He had called and given power to baptize. It was overheard by those who had been witnessing these events. But the charge is to the twelve.

The obligation to declare the doctrine of Christ, preach repentance, baptize with authority and make known the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is imposed upon the twelve. This burden, therefore, rests on them and is theirs to bear off “unto this people.” They are to warn everybody of these obligations. Not just those who were there.

The extent of the duty runs “unto the ends of the earth.” From where they were at the time Christ was preaching, to the entire North and South American continents and all those who may be living there at the time were the assigned mission field to whom the doctrine of Christ was to be declared.

The break between this portion of Christ’s teachings and what would follow is interesting to consider. The remainder of His teachings will form the primary message foundational to Christianity. It is the new, higher law which replaces the earlier Law of Moses. Yet this portion, declared by Christ as His “doctrine” is the part to be taken first and declared everywhere. Why?

A fair conclusion to reach is that before you consider the new, higher law you must first:

- Repent
- Be Baptized

-Receive the Holy Ghost

-Have a correct understanding of God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Ghost

These things precede His replacement of the older, lower law with His new, higher law. It is reasonable to conclude you will not comprehend His follow-on teachings if you have not first repented, been baptized, received the Holy Ghost, and understand the Godhead. Or, even more to the point: You will never be able to LIVE His new, higher law unless these steps are taken first. Until then you may aspire, but you will not be able to live them. They address the heart, rather than just conduct. They go to the deepest convictions inside you, what motivates you, and the reasons for your conduct. Your conduct will follow these precepts when you have been changed. For the required change, the tools discussed first must be acquired.