

Book of Mormon Study –3 Nephi 20-26

Online zoom Sunday School, 18 Oct 2020

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

3 Ne 20:8

And he said unto them: He that eateth this bread eateth of my body to his soul; and he that drinketh of this wine drinketh of my blood to his soul; and his soul shall never hunger nor thirst, but shall be filled.

Similar words were spoken by Christ to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:13-14). I'm reminded of accounts like in the book Visions of Glory and other places where we read of spirits who hang out in bars or hospitals and other places where they can prey on people's addictions and fears.

What's the definition of a creation? How often in a creation does one appear? If you look carefully at the scriptures, the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, talking with Christ, are given a fulsome vision of everything that is now going to unfold on into the future. And these are the disciples; this is Peter, James, and John standing there on the Mount. They look at this, they look upon the long absence of their spirit from their bodies and they regard it as a form of prison, and so they figure out an escape route. It's in the scriptures. John says, "Don't send me there, let me stay in this arena and do battle here." Peter and James—it's actually Jacob—James say, "Let us come speedily into your kingdom," meaning, don't leave us there, resurrect us. They will miss the resurrection because the first resurrection was when Christ came out of the grave and they were going to die after that. Therefore, they were left there. They said no, don't leave us there, and so they secured an early resurrection, they're not in the spirit world.

People who have died can have addictions that remain. What is that prison condition like? Imagine starving, only you are without a body that can't be satisfied. Or you have some addiction where there is no way to find a resolution to the craving. Food itself can be an addiction. How do you resolve your cravings in a form that is incapable of partaking of the source that can bring resolution to that craving?

So what kind of promise is one that promises thy soul shall never hunger or thirst?

3 Ne 20:12

And verily, verily, I say unto you, that when they shall be fulfilled then is the fulfilling of the covenant which the Father hath made unto his people, O house of Israel.

Isaiah's prophecies concerning the Israelite covenant will happen at the same time as the fulfillment of the covenants for the Nephite remnant. So things will develop simultaneously for all the chosen people. Not just locally, but globally.

If the judgments of God will begin on His own house (D&C 112: 24-26), then how do you prepare to avoid that judgment?

There is an upside to every prophecy, even in those predicting calamity. The upside consists in two things: First, avoiding the judgment by being prepared for it. (D&C 38: 30.) Second, recognizing it so as to not be alarmed or lose faith because of it. (D&C 1: 3.)

When you see the distresses which are to come, recognize them as signs given by the Lord and take comfort. (Luke 21: 8-13.)

3 Ne 20:13

And then shall the remnants, which shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth, be gathered in from the east and from the west, and from the south and from the north; and they shall be brought to the knowledge of the Lord their God, who hath redeemed them.

Notice “remnants” is plural. This is Christ speaking, and the scope of the message is universal. It is not local. It includes local events, to be sure. But the time of this fulfillment will be global. All the “remnants” will be affected.

It will not matter if the particular “remnant” is anywhere “upon the face of the earth” they will be “gathered in.”

Why would they necessarily be “gathered?” What is the purpose of “gathering?”

Which is more important, to gather physically or to gather “to the knowledge of the Lord their God?”

How could people gather “to the knowledge of the Lord their God?” What kind of “knowledge of the Lord God” will be involved?

Do true messengers speak about one another, or about their Lord? How can a man, any man, save you? Who alone has the capacity to redeem you? Is “knowledge of the Lord their God” related also to knowledge that He “hath redeemed them?” Can you “know” Christ and not acquire in the process of knowing Him the knowledge that He “hath redeemed” you?

Do you come to understand He has redeemed you by also coming to know Him?

If these promises are made by Him, should you expect it possible for you to go ahead and “gather in” to Him even before there are others willing to do so? Can this “gathering in” occur in your lifetime, for you? If God is no respecter of persons, then what would you need to do today to obtain the same blessings others will receive as they “gather in” in perhaps greater numbers in the future? Is it possible to do that? Are you willing to try?

3 Ne 20:14-15

"this land" (we've discussed this before)

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 20:18

Deut. 30:4; Isa. 11:12; Jer. 23:3-8; Zech. 2:6; 3 Nefi 4:9. See also Ezek. 37, where the restoration and gathering of Israel is prophesied in conjunction with this record.

3 Ne 20:20

And it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that the sword of my justice shall hang over them at that day; and except they repent it shall fall upon them, saith the Father, yea, even upon all the nations of the Gentiles.

Again the reminder is made to the gentiles. We who are associated with the gentiles (D&C 109: 60) are numbered among “all the nations of the gentiles.”

So this is Divine judgment, aimed at the gentiles who were offered, and then rejected the fullness of His Gospel. These are those who will be receiving the “sword of [His] justice.” Even now, the “sword of [His] justice ...hangs over us.” For we are “at that day” now. So the sword “shall fall upon them, saith the Father” unless we “repent.”

The key for gentile survival is repentance. Time and time again the words “repent” or “repentance” are used to let the gentiles know there is an escape. But that escape does not come from receiving a hollow form of godliness without any power. (JS-H 1: 19.) What is “priesthood” if there is no power in it?

Well the Book of Mormon continues to invite listening gentiles to repent. Over the heads of all responsible for failure, the Book of Mormon preaches repentance and truth. It preaches against priestcraft which teaches gentiles to worship man and rely upon the arm of flesh, the Book of Mormon invites gentiles to come and receive pure religion and knowledge of their Redeemer.

3 Ne 20:21-22

And it shall come to pass that I will establish my people, O house of Israel. And behold, this people will I establish in this land, unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your father Jacob; and it shall be a New Jerusalem. And the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people; yea, even I will be in the midst of you.

The Lord will establish His people, including all of the “house of Israel.” The plan is global. But when it comes to the Americas, His people are those in the audience at the moment He was speaking to “this people.” And the land of promise for them is “this land.” Meaning that wherever it was that Christ was speaking involved two things: The ancestors of the remnant, and the land of promise.

Now the statement gets interesting because Christ refers to a covenant He made personally with “your father Jacob.” Which “Jacob” is this referring to? And, if the Old Testament father whose name was changed to Israel, then why refer to him by his earlier name (“Jacob”) rather than by his new name (“Israel”)?

In Jacob’s final blessing to his sons, he blessed Joseph as one “separate from his brethren” to inherit a land “unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.” (Gen. 49: 26.) The covenant between Christ and

Jacob affected this blessing given Joseph. It is in the “utmost bound of the everlasting hills” that Zion or the New Jerusalem is to be built. And it will be Jacob’s posterity, the remnant visited by Christ, who will build it. Christ’s visit to these people reaffirms the prior covenant, and reconfirms the Lord’s intent to fulfill His covenant with Jacob. It is for Jacob’s sake this is done. Covenants between the Lord and His sons are always fulfilled; for the Lord takes His word very seriously. His word cannot be broken. (D&C 1: 38.) But these are the words of His covenants. It is not merely vain words spoken using His name as authority by those whom He did not authorize to speak such words. (Matt. 7: 22-23.)

Since the statement involves global gathering of all the “house of Israel,” it would appear this reference to “Jacob” is a reference to the global, overall covenant for the entire collection of remnants (plural) throughout the world, wherever they are scattered. However, the crowning portion of the covenant, the capstone which Jacob was given for his posterity in his covenant, was the promise of the New Jerusalem. When that New Jerusalem has come again, it will be “unto the fulfilling of the covenant which [Christ] made with your father Jacob.”

[3 Ne 20:22](#)

Not only is the New Jerusalem foretold, but Christ promises He will “be in the midst” of them. See also 3 Nephi 21:23-25 (where Gentiles are included with the promised city and, again, He promises to “be in the midst” of them).

[3 Ne 20:23](#)

Behold, I am he of whom Moses spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people.

If there were any doubt about who was meant in Deuteronomy 18: 15-19, Christ clarifies it here. He, Christ, was always meant to be the ultimate Law-Giver. He is the one who must be followed. He may send prophets, but it is Christ alone who is to be followed. Those who draw attention away from Him and turn attention to themselves will always lead astray. For the Lord alone can save. No man can.

In the middle of this prophecy of remnant return and gentile holocaust, comes the reminder again of the Lord’s primacy. Look to Him. Him alone. He is the one raised up to save mankind. He is the gentile hope.

The judgments the gentiles have merited by their refusal to accept the fullness of Christ’s Gospel is not an impediment to you, if you will come to Him. It was always meant to be a singular event anyway. There is no collective salvation. Each person comes to Him one at a time. Even when He redeems a group, He visits with them individually. (3 Nephi 11: 13-17.)

[3 Ne 20:25-28](#)

These verses connect a single doctrine. That doctrine is at the heart of “turning of the hearts of the children to the fathers,” which is the result of any restoration of the Gospel. The definition of “children of the prophets” is that one has accepted, believed, and followed the Lord’s true messengers. They

become children of Abraham and receive priestly authority sealing them into the family of God, joining the “fathers.” From the time of Abraham until today, all who are redeemed have become a part of his household.

The phrase “turning the hearts of the children to the fathers” is a reference to the restoration of sealing authority, allowing a connection between man living on the earth, and the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). In this dispensation, that restoration occurred when Joseph Smith was given the sealing authority and priesthood whereby he could ask and receive answers. (D&C 132: 45-47.)

In Christ’s statement to the Nephite audience, He confirmed that they were “the children of the prophets” because they followed the prophets’ teachings. Therefore, because of their obedience they were “of the house of Israel” and had realized that status because “of the covenant which the Father made with your fathers.” That covenant was given “unto Abraham” promising to Abraham: “And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” All those after the day of Abraham who received this priesthood and sealing would become the seed of Abraham. They become heirs of the promise, and children of Abraham. They are sealed up to eternal life and therefore their hearts have turned to the fathers.

The reason the gentiles received access to the Holy Ghost was to fulfill the purposes of the Father. The remnant would reject the Gospel, and as a result merit judgment. Judgment would come through the gentiles. For that to occur, the Holy Ghost needed to inspire gentile successes.

The Spirit would be responsible for such great gentile success that they will be made “mighty above all, unto the scattering of my people.” That is, no other people will be able to prevail against the gentiles of North America while the Holy Ghost was with the gentiles. They will be a “scourge” upon the remnant as a result of the Father’s judgments implemented by Christ, using the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit will entitle the gentiles to be offered the fullness. They will qualify by their acts and obedience. When you receive light and stay true to it, you are offered more light. The gentiles will accept and pursue more light, and will merit an opportunity to receive the fullness of the Gospel.

Gentiles did have the fullness of the Gospel, which requires the fullness of the priesthood that was offered while Joseph Smith was here. It was given sometime between 1829 and 1832 (see D&C 132:45). D&C 124:28 tells us the fullness was taken away.

The prophecy of Christ, as commanded by the Father, foretells that if the gentiles do reject the fullness, then the Father will “return their iniquities upon their own heads.” Meaning that the gentiles will, by reason of their rejection of what was offered them, merit condemnation for ingratitude. (D&C 88: 33-35.) They remain “filthy still” because that which would have cleansed them was not received in gratitude. It was rejected. When a people reject the Lord, the Lord, being governed by law, must reject them.

This is the reason the coming judgments are necessary. Where much is given (and we were offered everything) then much is expected. (Luke 12: 47-48.) When everything is rejected, then the punishment merited reflects complete rejection of the Lord. You must keep this in mind as you read the judgments Christ prophesies upon the gentiles.

And remember also that no matter what the collective gentile conduct may be (or fail to be), the Lord approaches each of us individually. The Book of Mormon is intended as the final opportunity for gentile salvation. The church is under condemnation for failing to remember its contents and take them seriously. (D&C 84: 54-58.) That scourge needn't be applied to you, if you will "repent and remember the new covenant" offered to you. There is, for any gentile who will repent and take the covenants offered in the Book of Mormon, an opportunity to yet become associated with the remnant and an heir of the preservation and salvation offered to them.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 20:40

Isa. 52:6–7; Moshiyah 8:8-9. We read in the Talmud and Midrash Rabbah: "Rabbi Jose the Galilean says: Great is peace—or at the hour the King Messiah reveals himself unto Israel, he will begin in no other way than with 'peace' as it is written: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good news, that announces peace' (Isa. 52:7)" (Perek HaShalom in some Talmud editions and Numbers Rabbah XI, 16–20).

3 Ne 20:42 (21:29)

Throughout the scriptures, when it comes to the establishment of Zion, there is no such thing as "hastening the work." It can't be done in haste. This verse in 3 Nephi 20:42, Christ speaks about the final gathering: "For ye shall not go out with haste nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel shall be your rearward." This is the Lord speaking; He's quoting Isaiah, but it is the Lord speaking.

D&C 63:24: "This is the will of the Lord your God concerning his saints, that they should assemble themselves together unto the land of Zion, not in haste, lest there should be confusion, which bringeth pestilence." The instruction given in 1831 will apply when the Lord decides to gather again. Not in haste. Just as it did before, haste will bring pestilence to the land of gathering.

D&C 101:68, "Nevertheless, as I have said unto you in a former commandment, let not your gathering be in haste, nor by flight; but let all things be prepared before you. And in order that all things be prepared before you, observe the commandment which I have given concerning these things—Which saith, or teacheth, to purchase all the lands with money, which can be purchased for money." There will ultimately be an excess from your smaller gatherings in the beginnings of this work. As a result of that excess, there can be a place prepared, but not in haste. Whether there will be a place prepared for you depends entirely on what you now do. Going back to 3 Nephi 21:29, "And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight, for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward." It cannot be done in haste.

This verse also gives one of the unique attributes about Zion. The Lord will fight the battles for Zion when Zion exists. You will not need to have a weapons budget in Zion's camp. It doesn't happen that way. The battle to be fought is fought by the Lord. The prophecy given through Joseph Smith about the last days predicts the wicked decide they will not take on Zion because Zion is too terrible. They will reach that conclusion entirely because of the presence of the Lord there. (D&C 45:67) It is not because of munitions. In fact, that same description includes a statement about Zion's residents. They are those

who will not take up arms against their neighbor but instead flee to Zion. They are the only ones that aren't killing others. (Id., v. 68)

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 20:43

Isa 52:7–13. Targum Jonathan translates Isa. 52:13 as, “Behold, My Servant the Messiah shall prosper; he shall be exalted and great and very powerful” (Targum Jonathan on Isa. 52:13).

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 20:45

Isa. 52:14–15; Rambam says: “Regarding the mission by which Messiah will present himself, Isaiah states, ‘He grew like a tender plant and as a root out of dry land at him will kings shut their mouths, for what had not been told unto them shall they see, and what they never heard shall they understand’” (Rambam on Isa. 52:15– 53:2).

3 Ne 21:1v

In 3 Nephi 21, the Lord talked about some things that become exceptionally relevant in light of what we have covered today.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 21:1,28

Deut. 30:3–4; Isa. 11:12; Jer. 23:3–8; Zech. 2:6; 3 Nepi 4:9. See also Ezek. 37, where the restoration and gathering of Israel is prophesied in conjunction with this record.

3 Ne 21:22

Christ confirms some few Gentiles will be included in His Zion: “But if they will repent [after first failing to receive what He offered them through Joseph] and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them [meaning His real church, not an earthly institution], and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob [meaning an actual covenant He will establish by His word, which will require it to be honored], unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance....” If some few Gentiles will repent and return, then they can likewise become the inheritors of this land. They can likewise be numbered among the citizens of Zion.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 23:11

“Holy ones” or “saints”

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 25:2

Son of Righteousness: The phrase in Malachi (Mal. 3:20 [4:2]) is correctly translated as “sun of righteousness,” however The Stick of Joseph has instead rendered the phrase “Son of Righteousness.” This is not an error of diction in English, but a deliberate and important interpretive term. The sixth of the ten Sefirot is known as tiferet, which is “often symbolized by the sun, also by the tree of life” (The

Zohar; Soncino Press; Volume III Glossary, p. 420). We read in the Zohar concerning tiferet: “The Holy One, blessed be He, has a Son, whose glory (tifret) shines from one end of the world to another. He is a great and mighty tree, whose head reaches heaven, and whose roots are set in the holy ground, and his name is ‘Mispar’ and his place is in the uppermost heaven, as it is written, ‘The heavens declare (me-SaPRim) the glory (tifret) of God’ (Ps. 19:1). Were it not for this ‘Mispar’ there would be neither hosts nor offspring in any of the worlds” (Zohar 2:105a).

with healing in his wings: Mal. 3:20 (4:1). This verse is never cited as a Messianic prophecy in the New Testament. However, it is used as a Messianic prophecy in the Midrash Rabbah: “Moses asked: ‘Shall they remain in pledge for ever?’ God replied: ‘No, only until the sun appears’ that is, till the coming of the Messiah; for it says, But unto you that fear My name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings (Mal. 3:20)” (Midrash Rabbah on Ex. 31:10). The Hebrew word for “wing” in this verse of Malachi is kanaf, a word which means “wing” or “corner.” The Hebrew word for “corner” is found in Num. 15:37–41, where we are told to put the tzitzit on the “corners” of our garments. In Matt. 9:20–22; 14:36; Mark 3:10; and Luke 6:19, persons were healed after touching Yeshua’s tzitzit because there was healing in his “wings.” It appears the same thing happened with the resurrected Mashiach among the Nefites. See 2 Nefi 11:5,10–11 [2 Ne 25:13, 26:1-11].

[3 Ne 26:7-11](#)

Compare with Alma 12:9 and 2 Ne 28:29

[3 Ne 26:19-20](#)

And they taught, and did minister one to another; and they had all things common among them, every man dealing justly, one with another. And it came to pass that they did do all things even as Jesus had commanded them.

We'll see this again in 4 Ne 1:2-3 (we could save commentary on this for next week)

So after they manage not only to have the same faith and to eliminate from them contentions and disputations, then they go on, “and every man did deal justly one with another.” See, there’s a difference between mercy and justice. Justice is a tougher standard. We don’t want justice. We want a merciful Redeemer who will come in and who will make up for our defects. But this is saying, “every man [Me, inside me, this is the stuff we’re talking about], did deal justly [the higher standard] with one another.” You don’t have to give me mercy, because I’m going to give YOU justice. I’m gonna be tougher on myself. It is fair that I do this for you. Oh no, no, you don’t have to do that. No, no, no, the standard by which they are evaluating their conduct internal to themselves is the more difficult standard. They’re going to deal justly with one another. I will break my heart, I will break my wallet, I will break my life before I will not deal justly with you and give you everything that you’re entitled to. See, it’s putting the shoe on the other foot, and it’s not the more relaxed and kindly and gentle standard, because when they’re dealing with one another they want to deal justly (a real problem for all those car dealers among us).