

Book of Mormon Study Notes

Jay's Sunday School Lessons following LDS Church Come Follow Me curriculum 2020

On 12 March 2020, the First Presidency temporarily suspended all gathering of church members worldwide due to conditions related to COVID-19 throughout the world. We began holding our own Sunday School lessons at home. After the second week of quarantined church at home I invited my children and other family and friends to join our weekly Sunday Book of Mormon study discussions via online video sharing. These study sessions have continued and can be accessed below.

In the following lessons I have given frequent reference to the English-Jewish translation of the Book of Mormon titled The Stick of Joseph in the Hand of Ephraim which you can access here:

<https://stickofjoseph.org/>

All page references in these lessons to the Teachings of Denver Snuffer (TDS) are to the PDF version (which differs from page numbers in the printed versions).

Jacob 5 – Words of Mormon

Jay Ball, 29 Mar 2020

Lesson:

Jacob adopted the words of Zenos to bear testimony of the things he, Jacob, had been taught by the Lord. You may remember Nephi did the same thing by using Isaiah's words. The Lord spoke to Jacob face-to-face. (2 Ne 11:2-3) So when Jacob said the events "must surely come to pass" he was independently confirming as another witness the prophecy was accurate. Jacob did not reveal a new allegory, provide a new narrative, or tell a new story. He used words of earlier prophets to state his message, adding only, "I prophesy these scriptures are true."

<Speaker view>

Footnote in Stick of Joseph to verse 2: This unusual order of words ("words of me") would be normal in Hebrew where the pronominal suffix would have been used.

Olive Tree in a vineyard? Footnote in SJ to verse 3: While the Torah prohibits sowing diverse seeds in a vineyard (Deut. 22:9), the Mishnah does not consider the presence of olive trees in a vineyard as violating this commandment (m.Kilayim 6:3-5). Since ancient times, olive trees have traditionally been cultivated alongside grapes due to their mutual affinity for the same soil and climate, their staggered harvest seasons, and the protection the trees afford the grapes from certain weather phenomena. This practice continues today.

Skip to verse 48 (end of 47) Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard?

v 48

This is our pride and haughtiness. We think we are in control We have forgotten God and His covenants with the fathers. "Taking strength unto themselves," means we think we can disrespect, ignore and even violate laws upon which blessings are predicated but still claim the blessings.

When we read about the lofty branches taking strength unto themselves, the tendency is to apply that to someone outside our circle. It can't mean us, it must apply to all the heathens out there in the world. I suggest we liken this to ourselves. President Bensons popular talk warning us against pride was given to and directed at members of the church. President Oaks, as recent as 2010 reminded, us the church is still under condemnation for taking lightly the Book of Mormon. The message and warnings of Book of Mormon are directed at the audience who has it in our possession.

v 49-51

In all His preparation to save His people, the Lord cannot think of anything more He could have done. He has prepared salvation for us. But it is only preparation. We must be willing to receive it. (see D&C 19:19-20)

What more could God do? To do more would rob us of our agency by compelling us to submit. He cannot do that, because it would end our existence (D&C 93:30-31). Without the freedom to choose we do not exist. Therefore, what more could he have done?

In order to lay a foundation to better understand some of the significance to this parable in Jacob 5, I want to follow a footnote and turn to 1 Ne ch 15.

1 Ne 15:6-8 Laman and Lemuel cannot understand the words of Lehi concerning natural branches of olive tree.

Skipping to 1 Ne 15:12-14...

Milo HaGoyim

“Fulness of the Gentiles.” See Gen. 48:19; Rom. 11:25; 3 Nefi 7:4 [16:4-7]. 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 descendents will become the fulness of the Gentiles. Hence this work began among the Gentiles and goes to all of scattered Israel in the hand of Ephraim. See also Ezek. 37:19.

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. (Isa 29:13-14)

The Talmud ascribes Isa 29:14 to a teaching that:

“The Torah is destined to be forgotten in Israel, because it is said, Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful: (Dt. 28:59) now, I do not know what this wonder is, but when it is said, Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder [and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish], (Is. 29:14) it follows that this wonder refers to Torah.” (b.Shabb. 138b)

Rab taught that this portion of Isaiah refers to an apostasy of Israel from the Torah, and goes on to relate it to the famine of hearing the word spoken of in Amos 8:11-12:

“Our Rabbis taught: When our Masters entered the vineyard at Yabneh, they said, The Torah is destined to be forgotten in Israel, as it is said, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And it is said, And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. (Amos 8:11f)” (ibid)

<https://stickofjoseph.org/our-blog/the-sealed-book-and-the-restoration-of-the-house-of-israel/>

So what do we conclude from this rabbit trail of scriptures? The apostasy of Judah is realized by the "fullness of the Gentiles" which must be connected with the coming forth of the book predicted in Isa 29. That would be The Book of Mormon. Or in the words of Ezekiel 37, the Stick of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim (which is it's own discussion for another time).

Returning to Jacob 5

Some keys to help understand this parable:

Throughout the allegory, "fruit" means salvation in a covenantal sense. It requires the promises made to the fathers (see Abraham 1:2) to be the same covenant given to you.

Natural fruit, "which natural fruit is good and the most precious above all other fruit." (v 61 - cf Lehi's dream)

Roots - promises made to the fathers that their seed would not be utterly destroyed.

We seek to obtain our own promise with the Lord, so that we will not be burned at His coming (Malachi as quoted to Joseph Smith, JSH v 39, leaving neither root nor branch - familial terms).

"He also quoted the next verse differently: And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming." (JSH 1:39)

What does it mean to have our own promise with the Lord?

Joseph Smith letter to Uncle Silas

"If the saints in the days of the apostles were privileged to take the ancients for examples, and lay hold of the same promises, and attain to the same exalted privilege of knowing that their names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life and that they were sealed there as a perpetual memorial before the face of the Most High, will not the same faithfulness, the same purity of heart and the same faith bring the same assurance of eternal life, and that in the same manner, to the children of men now in this age of the world?

I have no doubt but that the holy prophets and apostles and saints in ancient days were saved in the kingdom of God; neither do I doubt but that they held converse and communion with him while they were in the flesh, as Paul said to his Corinthian brethren that the Lord Jesus showed himself to above five hundred saints at one time after his resurrection. Job said that he knew that his Redeemer lived and that he should see him in the flesh in the latter days. I may believe that Enoch walked with God and by faith was translated. I may believe that Noah was a perfect man in his generation and also walked with God. I may believe that Abraham communed with God and conversed with angels. I may believe that Isaac obtained a renewal of the covenant made to Abraham by the direct voice of the Lord. I may believe that Jacob conversed with holy angels, and heard the voice of his Maker, that he wrestled with the angel until he prevailed and obtained the blessing. I may believe that Elijah was taken to Heaven in a chariot of fire with fiery horses. I may believe that the saints saw the Lord and conversed with him face

to face after his resurrection. I may believe that the Hebrew church came to Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. I may believe that they looked into eternity and saw the Judge of all, and Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. But will all this purchase an assurance for me, and waft me to the regions of eternal day, and seat me down in the presence of the King of kings with my garments spotless, pure, and white?

Or must I not rather obtain for myself, by my own faith and diligence in keeping the commandments of the Lord, an assurance of salvation for myself? And have I not an equal privilege with the ancient saints? And will not the Lord hear my prayers and listen to my cries as soon as he ever did to theirs, if I come to him in the manner they did? Or, is he a respecter of persons?"

(JS Papers, Documents Vol. 3, pp. 303-308)

<Speaker view>

v 52-53

How great a number is required in order for the Lord to vindicate his promise? It's not about numbers. It's never been about a big volume. It's the quality of the salvation. Because if you can save but one, what you have saved is infinite and eternal. And therefore it continues on forever.

v 54

Notice the word "mother." The term reconfirms there is both male and female roles in the religion of the fathers, because it was genealogical and familial. It will restore on earth the Family of God.

v 61, 62

v 64

God will provide everything necessary. If a few will accept God's offer, He will "prepare the way for them that they may grow." The "good fruit" will be restored to the fathers, and become part of their house, numbered among Abraham's seed.

v 71

In the final effort, God is personally assisting His servants. He is personally in charge. The test is for the branches to respond and bear fruit.

The tree will be pruned. The required pruning, digging, cutting, moving and grafting will be unsettling. Pruning sometimes requires the blunt declaration, 'You are in error. You follow a false tradition that will damn you.' Tough pruning is difficult for the servant, hard for the tree, and challenging to all, it must be done.

We can plant the doctrine, restore truth, and remember the Prophet Joseph Smith's words, but if we are not nourished from it we will not be grafted in to the living roots. Our hearts will not turn to the fathers. His servants will dispense pruning, care, and ministrations but fruit must grow in response. Without responding, the branches remain unproductive in a damaged vineyard, ultimately only suitable to be

burned. "Grafting" restores, reconnects, and returns, or in other words, plants in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers. (see JSH 1:39)

Enos:

See Evernote Note:

16 Sep 2019, Mon, 5:42am
Marcus,

This week's lesson covers material from the book of Enos. We typically gloss over Enos, throwing him into a category of repentance and forgiveness.

Enos was dealing with limited space on plates, so he has taken pains to condense his words in the most valuable way possible to communicate significant things.

Enos may very well be one of the most intelligent composers of scripture in history. He certainly stands out in the Book of Mormon. His life brought him into contact with God, and his book makes careful use of symbols to communicate to the latter-day readers about these sacred events.

Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. (Enos 1:3-5)

He places his story in the forest; a place apart. He describes his activities as "prayer and supplication" which lasts through the day into the night. His description of the event concludes by describing contact between himself and God. Through that contact, he receives a remission of his sins.

There is another description of a "wrestle" between man and God analogous to Enos'. In the other account the setting is also a lone place apart. Jacob's encounter also lasts into the night, and similarly includes contact between the man and God. Jacob's wrestle is recorded in these terms:

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. (Gen 32:24-30.)

We must conclude Enos intended to write these similarities into his record. These are deliberate parallels. Beyond the parallels, however, there are elements which anyone familiar with the fullness of the Gospel will recognize. Jacob weaves into his account the following list:

- Solitary setting

- Contact with Deity
- An embrace between God and man
- Reference to his sinews and loins
- Bestowal of a new name

The implications are clear. Jacob's narrative is deliberately including ritual symbols involved in Temple rites. Some things are sacred and cannot be spoken directly. But symbols which remind us of the sacred are entirely appropriate. Symbols are used in the Genesis account of creation to both conceal and reveal at the same moment. Christ would remind those He taught they needed to have "eyes to see" if they were to understand His teachings. He taught at different levels. Those who could not grasp the depth of His stories were left unaccountable for hidden knowledge. But those who could "see" the underlying truths of His teachings were able to be informed without being forced to see. When ready, it stays veiled. In this respect Christ was a gifted and merciful teacher.

Joseph Smith taught the ordinances of the Gospel have always been the same. The Gospel has been the same since the beginning of time. Those who lived anciently were taught the same things as we are taught, including our most sacred ordinances. It should not surprise us that Enos was able to incorporate symbols in his narrative which tie to symbols we would recognize.

Just like Jacob, Enos also demonstrates a similar capacity to employ sophisticated symbolism woven into his narrative to capture hidden meanings. He weaves into his account the following list:

- Solitary setting in the forest (suggesting Eden)
- Contact between him and Deity
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The implications are clear enough: Enos is serving us notice that his record is intended to be read as a hermetic text. (Hermetic texts use symbols to conceal full meanings from the uninitiated, but which fully inform the initiated). He is using symbols to communicate in few words a larger meaning. He expects us to employ these symbols and their meanings as readers of his account.

So we need to consider carefully his use of images. When he writes, "I went to hunt beasts in the forests" we should keep in mind what he tells us later about the herds of domesticated animals kept among his people. He explains in verse 21 that "the people of Nephi did till the land, and raise all manner of grain, and of fruit, and flocks of herds, and flocks of all manner of cattle of every kind, and goats, and wild goats, and also many horses." He did not need to "hunt" to have meat. Why mention this setting in the forest where he is engaged in hunting beasts in connection with his remembering "eternal life and the joy of the saints?"

Enos' father ministered in the Temple. As a result, Enos would have Temple knowledge passed to him directly from inside his family. His introduction included reference to his father being a just man who taught him. Here Enos elaborates that "the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart." Note what Enos is meditating upon has nothing to do with guilt, remorse or regret. It is purely positive; purely the highest of aspirations found in the Gospel. Enos is on a quest. He tells us what his quest involves. He is seeking after "eternal life, and the joy of the saints."

This is not a solitary hunting trip. Nor is this just a foray into the forest. He is writing something profound and sacred which includes symbolic allusion to Melchizedek Priestly rites and ordinances. His record is meant to be understood through "eyes which can see".

Book of Mormon Study- Enos

Online zoom Sunday School, 12 Apr 2020

Intro

Behold, it came to pass that I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—and blessed be the name of my God for it- (v 1)

Compare with 1 Ne 1:1

Nephi draws attention to "afflictions" first, then to having been "highly favored". In contrast, Enos draws attention first to "nurture," and second to "admonition".

Enos, 2 generations from Lehi. It has taken only six generations for the spiritual strength of this family line to have failed by the time we get to Abinadom, son of Chemish, Omni 1:11 "I know of no revelation"

Wrestle

2 And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins.

3 Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart.

4 And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.

5 And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.

In a place apart

Our reaching up to connect with God is a personal journey which each must take for themselves. It cannot be shared. You must approach God's throne yourself. Joseph was alone when he met the Father and Son. Moses was alone when he ascended the Mount to meet the Lord. Enoch was alone when he was caught up to heaven. Elijah was alone on the mountain when the whirlwind, lightning and earthquake preceded the Lord's own voice. Daniel alone saw the vision of the Lord. Paul alone saw the light. Nephi alone saw his father's vision. Enos was alone in the wilderness in his encounter with God. Abraham was alone when the Lord spoke to him. Jacob slept alone when the ladder to heaven descended for him. You will also be alone should the Lord come to visit you. This cannot be borrowed from another.

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hermetic: sealed, mysterious, hidden

Enos, thy Sins are Forgiven Thee. (v 5)

Whenever you enter the presence of God, he forgives your sins.

Alma 45:16, "*for the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.*" We should not expect to find Him visiting with someone whose sins are unforgiven.

Joseph Smith gave several different accounts of the First Vision. He includes the fact that his sins were forgiven as part of many of them. In his 1832 account he wrote: "I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying 'Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee.'"

The Lord cannot "look upon sin." Therefore, He removes it by forgiving those who come into His presence.

Joseph Smith said, "*Our heavenly Father is more liberal in His views, and boundless in His mercies and blessings, than we are ready to believe or receive[.]*" (TPJS pg 256)

Many examples in D&C. (see D&C 25:3, 29:3, 31:5, 36:1, 50:36, 60:7, 61:2, 62:3, 64:3, 90:1, 90:6, 95:1)

It is an almost invariable occurrence when the Lord speaks directly to anyone that He forgives their sins. So it is with us. We are unworthy. We need fixing. He repairs us so as to make it possible for us to receive an audience with Him. Enos accurately describes the manner in which the Lord deals with us all as a part of his record of the Lord's encounter with him.

James 5:14-15 - the "prayer of faith" that will save the sick, "...and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." The reason why the sins are forgiven is because the act of healing, the process of healing by the "prayer of faith" invoking the power of the Holy Ghost, means that when the Holy Ghost comes upon the person, one of its acts is to purge from sin. The inner vessel is cleansed. The Holy Ghost cannot abide in an unclean vessel, and so the Holy Ghost cleanses the person, the inner vessel, before the healing takes place.

This is exactly like what happened when Christ healed in Matthew chapter 9. He begins by forgiving the sins of the lame person. That produced some criticism, and He asked which is easier, to say your sins are forgiven or, in verse 5, to say arise, take up your bed and walk? And then the person was healed, but he was healed and his sins were forgiven because the Holy Ghost is a purgative. That's why it's called "fire." Because fire is a purgative element.

If you want to sterilize a blade, you expose it to fire. Fire has a purgative effect that the Holy Ghost represents. In the process of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost and the visitation of fire, it's not necessary that something dramatic happen. In 3 Nephi 9:20, it says because of the faith of the Lamanites they "were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost and they knew it not." Their sins got forgiven them. Their inner vessel got cleansed.

I knew God could not lie.

22 And it came to pass when I was come near to enter into Egypt, the Lord said unto me: Behold, Sarai, thy wife, is a very fair woman to look upon;

23 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see her, they will say— She is his wife; and they will kill you, but they will save her alive; therefore see that ye do on this wise:

24 Let her say unto the Egyptians, she is thy sister, and thy soul shall live.

25 And it came to pass that I, Abraham, told Sarai, my wife, all that the Lord had said unto me—Therefore say unto them, I pray thee, thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee. (Abr 2:22-25)

There are many commentaries attempting to sort out the familial relationship between Abraham and Sarai. It is not important to do so for our purposes. The issue is not whether we can justify the "sisterhood" of Sarai to Abraham. Rather, the issue is whether the Egyptians would be misled to believe Sarai was NOT Abraham's wife. The statement was intended to conceal the fact that Abraham was married to Sarai.

The idea of misleading the Egyptians was the Lord's. He was protecting the life of Abraham, and used a half-truth (Sarai was Abraham's sister) to conceal a greater, more relevant truth (Sarai was Abraham's wife). If incomplete, evasive answers designed to conceal something important from notice fall within the scope of the statement: "God cannot lie," then we have to be very careful about how we understand the statement. How can we ever have any confidence in the words God speaks to us if He can be so artful in parsing language? How can we know we are not being misled by part truths which conceal greater, more relevant truths? (DS, Beloved Enos, pg 57)

Also look at the use of the words "endless" and "eternal" to describe damnation in D&C 19:4-12.

"And again, the idea that he is a God of truth and cannot lie is equally as necessary to the exercise of faith in him as the idea of his unchangeableness. For without the idea that he was a God of truth and could not lie, the confidence necessary to be placed in his word in order to the exercise of faith in him could not exist. But having the idea that he is not man that he can lie, it gives power to the minds of men to exercise faith in him." (LoF 3:22)

Enos is, in fact, writing about an altogether different kind of communication in which God cannot and does not lie or anything like it. He is writing about covenant-making. As to covenants God intends to be bound, is always interested in clarity, and will construe all terms in favorably for man's benefit. He makes it clear: "What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the

heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same." (D&C 1:38) Covenants "shall all be fulfilled" by the Lord. Even covenants made long ago, among people long since dead, whose meaning has become lost or obscure. The Lord will never offer an excuse, nor deviate in the smallest degree from what He covenants to do.

Faith

verse 7

And I said; Lord, how is it done.

This is an inspired question.

28 But no man is possessor of all things except he be purified and cleansed from all sin.

29 And if ye are purified and cleansed from all sin, ye shall ask whatsoever you will in the name of Jesus and it shall be done.

30 But know this, it shall be given you what you shall ask; and as ye are appointed to the head, the spirits shall be subject unto you. (D&C 50:28-30)

verse 8

And he said unto me: Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen. And many years pass away before he shall manifest himself in the flesh; wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole.

The power to rend the veil comes through faith. Nephi quotes Christ in 2 Ne 27:23 saying: "*For behold, I am God; and I am a God of miracles; and I will show unto the world that I am the same yesterday, today, and forever; and I work not among the children of men save it be according to their faith.*"

"Because faith is wanting, the fruits are. No man since the world was had faith without having something along with it. The ancients quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, women received their dead, etc. By faith the worlds were made. A man who has none of the gifts has no faith; and he deceives himself, if he supposes he has. Faith has been wanting, not only among the heathen, but in professed Christendom also, so that tongues, healings, prophecy, and prophets and apostles, and all the gifts and blessings have been wanting" (Teaching of Prophet Joseph Smith, 270).

37 Behold I say unto you, Nay; for it is by faith that miracles are wrought; and it is by faith that angels appear and minister unto men; wherefore, if these things have ceased wo be unto the children of men, for it is because of unbelief, and all is vain.

38 For no man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name; wherefore, if these things have ceased, then has faith ceased also; and awful is the state of man, for they are as though there had been no redemption made. (Moroni 7:37-38)

verse 10

And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind again, saying:...

"All things whatsoever God in his infinite wisdom has seen fit and proper to reveal to us, while we are dwelling in mortality, in regard to our mortal bodies, are revealed to us in the abstract, and independent of affinity of this mortal tabernacle, but are revealed to our spirits precisely as though we had no bodies at all; and those revelations which will save our spirits will save our bodies." (TPJS pg 355)

Ask what you will

(Why does Enos seek for a promise from God that has already been made with his fathers?)

Enos could have asked for anything. It is all the more remarkable that Enos, when put to the test, decided to make a request for the benefit of his enemies, now his "brethren." The depth of Enos' humility is almost unfathomable. He asks nothing for himself; not wisdom, long life, a continuing mortal ministry, nor even to come speedily into the Lord's kingdom. Instead he asks the Lord to bless those who have rejected him, his people and his people's faith in Christ. We are reading a sacred account written by a man who followed Christ. We have surely come to holy ground as we are allowed this view into the relationship between Enos and his Lord...

Given that Nephi wrote these things on the same plates on which Enos was now writing, the question arises as to why Enos puts his wording so tentative. He does not come right out and repeat what Nephi had written. Instead he makes this future uncertain. He writes "[I]f it should so be, that my people, the Nephites, should fall into transgression, and by any means..." He knew this was going to happen. It is already prophesied in the very plates on which he was etching his own record. Given this, we should consider why he uses tentative language rather than definite language to describe this already known future. It was not because he was unaware of his people's fate. Nor was it due to a lack of faith on his part. Rather, since Enos would have been given the sealing power as a part of having his calling and election made sure, he would have been cautious about how he stated in his sacred writings his descendants' fate. Remember that once someone has been given the power to bind the Lord, the Lord has committed Himself to vindicate the words of such a servant. Enos' suse of tentative language on something which has already been prophesied by Nephi is one of the confirming evidences that Enos

has been given the sealing power (and correspondingly had his calling and election made sure). He did not want anything he said or wrote to bind the Lord to this unwanted outcome. Although he could accept this future and even call the enemy victors over his descendants his "brethren," he did not want to own any part of the responsibility for this fate. (DS, Beloved Enos, pg 84, 86-87)

Nothing short of crying repentance continually.

Letter to Marcus, 5 Jan 2020:

I can look on Facebook among my own friends and family and see an onslaught of accusation and contention going back and forth between various opinions on things that people are passionate about, and I wonder - are we any more noble and wise as humans in our day than were those living in the days of Enos or his son Jarom?

Note what Enos had to say about the people in his day:

And the people were a stiffnecked people, hard to understand. And there was nothing save it was exceeding harshness, preaching and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually reminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God, and all these things— stirring them up continually to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was nothing short of these things, and exceedingly great plainness of speech, would keep them from going down speedily to destruction. And after this manner do I write concerning them. Enos 1:22-23

And Jarom:

Wherefore, the prophets, and the priests, and the teachers, did labor diligently, exhorting with all long-suffering the people to diligence; teaching the law of Moses, and the intent for which it was given; persuading them to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was. And after this manner did they teach them. And it came to pass that by so doing they kept them from being destroyed upon the face of the land; for they did prick their hearts with the word, continually stirring them up unto repentance. Jarom 1:11-12

Why does it seem that the majority of the preaching in our meetings and classes are sweet words of encouragement? Why does it appear the focus is on the positive side of everything and building up our self-esteem to the exclusion of crying repentance for fear of offending someone in our congregations? How much are talks filled with distracting inspirational stories, with flattering words that do not call us to repent, really helping us?

I'm reminded of the account in 3 Ne. 11:32-40 where Christ declared His Doctrine. His Doctrine came from His Father and mentions "baptism" four times. Only the first mention is positive, the three subsequent times it is negative. This is a 3 to 1 ratio of negative warning to positive promise. I do not

believe the Lord or His Father are negative. This approach is more a reflection on us than on Them. God is extraordinarily positive. But we need the clarity of being told the downside, and to be warned, because, unfortunately, a positive promise does not adequately motivate us.

Maybe the kind of teaching that stirs us up continually to repentance should be reserved to our personal scripture study. But when there is a lack of serious warnings over our pulpits it makes me wonder why that is so.

Rest

verse 26

And I saw that I must soon go down to my grave, having been wrought upon by the power of God that I must preach and prophesy unto this people, and declare the word according to the truth which is in Christ. And I have declared it in all my days, and have rejoiced in it above that of the world.

Reminds me of the hymn press forward saints, last verse, press on enduring in the ways of Christ, His name proclaim in days of mortal strife. This is on display with Enos, declaring God's word.

verse 27

And I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen.

Enos 1:27 - "rest", cf "which is the fullness of his glory" (D&C 84:24)

Book of Mormon Study – Mosiah 1-3

Online zoom Sunday School, 19 Apr 2020

Some Background

"Zarahemla" is Aramaic

Aramaic: זרעחמלא Zera (seed/dispersed) and Ch'mla (gathered in). Suggests the group who came with Muloch and founded Zarahemla may have spoken Aramaic. (footnote 8, SJ Moshiyah 1:2 [Mosiah 1:10])

The people of Zerach'mla (commonly called Mulochites) and the Nefites had each only been in the land of Promise about 400 years—not long enough for language corruption alone to make their language unintelligible to one another. The Stick of Joseph tells us very little about the Mulochites, only that they were descendants of Muloch, the son of king Tzidkiyahu, and those who came with Muloch into the wilderness and across the sea (Ameni 1:6–7; Moshiyah 11:13; Cheleman 2:29; 3:9). We are never told who smuggled a son of Tzidkiyahu, heir to David's throne, out of Jerusalem. Could they have been Babylonian dissidents? Whereas the Nefites spoke Hebrew (M'raman 4:11), there is internal evidence that the Mulochites may have been Aramaic speakers. Zerach'mla is Aramaic and after the merger of the Nefites and Mulochites, Aramaic names like "Alma" (the Aramaic form of the Hebrew name "Elam") begin to appear. (footnote 10, SJ Ameni 1:7 [Omni 1:17])

Sukkot - Feast of tabernacles

My son, I would that ye should make a proclamation throughout all this land among all this people, or the people of Zarahemla, and the people of Mosiah who dwell in the land, that thereby they may be gathered together (Mosiah 1:10)

So they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written. (2 Chron. 30:5)

Sukkot is one of the three pilgrimage feasts requiring the people to gather to "the place which he shall choose", i.e. the Temple (Deut. 16:16). (footnote 17, SJ Moshiyah 1:4 [Mosiah 1:18])

Firstlings:

Gen. 4:4; Ex. 13:12; 34:19; Lev. 27:26; Num. 3:41; 18:15–18; Deut. 12:6, 17; 14:23; Neh. 10:36. Neh. 10:36 is just two days after Sukkot Neh. 8:2 and 9:1). Sukkoth coincides with lambing season, so firstlings would have been available. Moreover, the Talmud indicates a firstling could be offered up even more than a year after birth (b. Rosh Hashanah 5b) (footnote 18, SJ Moshiyah 1:5, [Moshiyah 2:3])

At Sukkot, "fourteen lambs of the first year" served as a burnt offering (Num. 29:13). (ibid, footnote 19)

This keeps with the Sukkot theme of Binyamin's speech. Each of the biblical Temples was dedicated at Sukkot (1 Kings 8:2, 65; Neh. 8:13-18; 2 Macc. 10:5-8). See also Alma 16:37 (footnote 29, Moshiyah 1:11 [Mosiah 2:38])

God sustains us

Consider King Benjamin's description that we are supported and preserved by God's power moment to moment, how He lends us breath and sustains us that we may live and move and do according to our own will (Mosiah 2:21. See also Acts 17:28). Not only does God put up with our brass overconfidence in ourselves, he sustains us in the very act of our disdain for His role in supporting us day by day.

In 2 Enoch, God put it this way:

"There is no counselor and no successor, only myself, eternal, not made by hands. My unchanging thought is (my) counselor, and my word is (my) deed. And my eyes behold all things. If I turn my face away, then all falls into destruction; but if I look at it, then all is stable." (2 Enoch (A) 33:4, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:157, emphasis mine.)

All it involves for God's spirit to "no longer strive with man" (Gen 6:3) is for Him to withdraw His gaze.

Evil Spirits

For behold, there is a wo pronounced upon him who listeth to obey that spirit; for if he listeth to obey him, and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; (Mosiah 2:33, 38)

This is almost identical to 1 Cor. 11:29, "drinks damnation to himself" pointing to an underlying Hebrew word nefesh נפש (Strong's 5315), meaning "soul, life, or self" (see 3 Nepi 8:9). (footnote 27, SJ Moshiyah 1:10)

cf Alma 20:17, 34:34, Moroni 8:14

Mysteries

...that we might read and understand of his mysteries (Mosiah 1:3,5)

...open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view. (Mosiah 2:9)

Joseph B. Wirthlin counseled, "God has revealed everything necessary for our salvation. We should teach and dwell on the things that have been revealed and avoid delving into so-called mysteries. My counsel to teachers in the Church, whether they instruct in wards and stakes, Church institutions of higher learning, institutes of religion, seminaries, or even as parents in their homes, is to base their teachings on the scriptures and the words of latter-day prophets." ("Deep Roots," Ensign, Nov. 1994, 77)

Elder W. Mark Basset spoke on the topic of "mysteries", Oct 2016, For Our Spiritual Development and Learning

Wisdom's path

...if ye should transgress and go contrary to that which has been spoken, that ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom's paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved - (Mosiah 2:36)

compare:

...blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have. (2 Ne 28:30)

cf 3 Ne 26:7-12 and Alma 12:9-11

Son of God the Father of heaven and earth

And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary. (Mosiah 3:8)

These comes suggest Christ is both the Son of the Father and Christ is also the Father of heaven and earth.

And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father of heaven and earth the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary.

This suggests Christ is the Son of God the Father. And God the Father is the Father of heaven and earth, and the creator of all things from the beginning.

In the first layout, we are forced to view the content of these verses as essentially Trinitarian, because Christ is both the Father and the Son. In the second, instead we have two personages, one of whom was the Father of heaven and earth and the other who is His Son.

Becoming a Child

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 18:3)

Becoming "as a child" is a requirement.

For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father. (Mosiah 3:19)

Meekness

A difficult attribute to recognize, it is found in the relationship between man and God, not between man and man; to be meek is to follow the Lord's will, even when one doesn't want to do so, even when it brings one into conflict with friends, family, or community. Meekness is measured as between the servant and the Lord, not as between the servant and his critics. Meekness, among other things, involves a conscious effort to avoid harming or offending others. It requires an absence of pride or self-will. It is not insistent upon being recognized or applauded. It denotes a willingness to suffer without complaint. Others may never recognize the meek, because meekness does not vaunt itself nor demand notice. There is great freedom in meekness. It relieves the meek from the burden of seeking their acclaim. It gives them the security of feeling God's approval for their course of living. It is private. Meekness means a person voluntarily restrains himself and uses the absolute minimum control or authority over others. It is related to humility. Humility is voluntary submission to the control or power of God — in other words, obedience. Meekness affects a person's relationship with his fellow man. There is nothing showy or attention-grabbing about the meek. Instead, they are content to know they have a relationship and power with God. Unless God requires something to be done or revealed, the meek do not voluntarily put this authority on display.

Humility

Voluntary submission to the control or power of God or, in other words, obedience. Children are by nature more humble than adults. They not only do not have a good working knowledge of practical skills, they are keenly aware of their own ignorance. As a result, children are inquisitive and eager to be taught. They not only don't know, they know they don't know and want to be given the chance to learn. They "seek" and "ask" and "knock." Children do, by nature, just as Christ bids all to do. One is not teachable without humility. Humility and the capacity to accept new truth are directly related. Humbling oneself is not just an expression to wear on one's countenance. Rather, it is opening one's heart up to higher things. Can you accept truth if it is taught to you? Even if it contradicts your traditions? Even if it alienates you from family, friends, comfortable social associations, your neighbors (Matthew 19:27-30)?

Patience

As used in Mosiah 3:19, patience is not defined as it typically is; rather, it refers to the patience a child has as he grows into adulthood. There are many years ahead to reach adulthood — there is nothing the child can do to change that, nor do they attempt to do so. In much the same way, most adults have many years ahead of them before they become fit for an audience with Christ (or the Second Comforter. See John 14:16-17, 2 Ne 32:5-6, D&C 93:1). Just like one cannot rush from childhood into adulthood but must progress by degrees through the many long months into many years, so too, men and women must progress from a smaller degree to a much larger one. Perhaps it takes decades to develop, as necessary, to receive an audience with Christ. Children persist in waiting, growing, and maturing. Their progression into adulthood is gradual. But that process is relentless and marches on through two decades of development and maturity. That is the patience spoken of in this scripture.

Full of love

Being "full of love" is what the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians is all about. Charity is the "pure love of Christ." This childlike attribute comes from a natural disposition to share love which children enjoy by their native status. As we progress into adulthood and experience the disappointments of other's failings, we become less willing to love others.

Willing to submit

Christ asked: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46.) Calling Him Lord is not enough. Willingness to submit requires a willingness to be inconvenienced.

"Whoever claims to love me but does not stand ready, watching for every communication I will send, indeed does not love me." (TSJ 10:14, cf John 14:23)

From the book, Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid by Douglas Hofstadter.

You see, for a crab to walk on dry ground, the weight of its forward arms is so great that they must be dragged along the ground. They cannot push them by going forward. Instead, that requires the crab to walk backwards. To go forward, it must walk backwards. Since all things testify of God and His ways, the crab is also a testimony of some truth. It tells us by its movement that to go forward we must go backward.

Says the crab: "After all, when we walk forwards, we move backwards. It's in our genes, you know, turning round and round. That reminds me-I've always wondered, 'Which came first-the Crab, or the Gene?' That is to say, 'Which came last the Gene, or the Crab?' I'm always turning things round and round, you know. It's in our genes, after all. When we walk backwards, we move forwards.

Here is a short section one of the Crab's Genes, turning round and round. When the two DNA strands are raveled and laid out side by side, they read this way:

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...TTTTTTTTTCGAAAAAAAAA  
...AAAAAAAAAGCTTTTTTTTT
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Notice that they are the same, only one forwards while the other goes backwards. This is the defining property of the form called "crab canon" in music.

That same pattern appears in the Menorah. The seven lamps have arms which connect the first to the last. If you were to set the lamp stand out in the same form using "ABC" the pattern would look like:

A-B-C-D-C-B-A.

This pattern also reminds us anew of the Lord's injunction: 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt 18:3.) Returning to the mind of a child is necessary as a precondition, according to Christ's words, for us to be able to enter His kingdom"

...

What is it about the mind of a child that makes him or her more suited to following Christ? Is it innocence? Certainly a child's mind is more innocent than the adult's. But innocence also accompanies the willingness or even the necessity to imagine things. Children are able to hold out the possibilities for Santa and tooth-fairies and Peter Pan. To a child these things are possible. It requires failures and disappointments to form an adult mind. Those failings and disappointments make the adult mind skeptical, and unbelieving. Things once held in honor by the childish mind become impossible to believe in adulthood.

...

Simplicity marks the child's mind. Things are much clearer to a child than they are to an adult. Craftiness and cunning develop in the maturing adult mind and are alien to the child's mind. Part of the process of developing involves learning people can be mean, cunning and manipulative. Adults can generally recall specific events in their childhood when they felt betrayed for the first time. All of that is part of the mortal curriculum because we have come here to receive knowledge of good and evil.

Adult cynicism and skepticism, however, ill-serves us as we seek higher things. The Lord was teaching a profound principle in telling us we must become as little children if we wish to enter His kingdom. It is a requirement. (DS, Second Comforter, p 237-247)

Book of Mormon Study – Mosiah 4-6

Online zoom Sunday School, 26 Apr 2020

Cleansing the inner vessel; focus on inward change.

Mosiah 4:1-3

"King Benjamin's audience cried out in prayer this petition to God: "O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men." (Mosiah 4: 2.) What strikes me about this prayer is that today we would identify this with the Evangelical/Born Again Christian approach to a religious experience. It is a confession of belief coupled with a request for forgiveness. Latter-day Saints belittle this approach. We claim that much more is needed, including certain authoritative rites and ordinances. Ultimately, that may be part of God's plan, and certainly Christ's own example informs us that baptism was required even of Him "to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 13-15.) But the ordinances are signposts that provide an outward proof of inward change. Here, in the account of King Benjamin, we have the focus entirely upon the inward change. This is the "weightier" part of the process. Christ condemned those who observed the ordinances, but failed to exercise mercy and faith; the inward target of the outward observance. (See, e.g., Matt. 23: 23.) There is some considerable peril in being too proud of your ordinances. They have displaced the inward, weightier part of the Gospel in past dispensations, and certainly can do so again. Satan has no new tricks. The old ones seem to work so well, there is little reason to introduce some new road for apostasy. Pride in ordinances as the ticket for salvation works every time it is tried. It's a little thing, but little things count when the measurement is taken against perfection." (DS, The Gospel's Effect, 14 Mar 2014, <https://denversnuffer.com/2014/03/the-gospels-effect/>)

Mosiah 4:2

"for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things;" see note "Son of God the Father of heaven and earth" from last week's lesson notes, pg 3.

Slavery and Beggars

Mosiah 4:16

"His policy anticipated the discontinuance of servitude in the Law of Moses. (Mosiah 2: 14.) Long before Christ would do so, King Benjamin made people free from slavery. But that came at a social cost. Without servitude as a form of repayment (limited under Moses' law to six years servitude, in the seventh they go free Ex. 21: 2), some were reduced to begging. For those, King Benjamin taught his people that they must give to beggars. He required that his people notice them, and not allow them to petition in vain for relief from their needs. (Mosiah 4: 16.) He forbid withholding from beggars because

of the convenient thought beggars deserve their direful condition. (Mosiah 4: 17-18.)” (King Benjamin’s Self Reliance <https://denversnuffer.com/2014/01/king-benjamins-self-reliance/>)

SJ footnote for 4:18

One of the prophetic meanings of Sukkot is that of the millennial Kingdom and the Mashiach tabernacling with us (see Zech. 14:16). The Kingdom and Kingdom-living are important themes in King Benjamin's message (see Moshiah 2:3–4).

SJ footnote for 4:19

Sukkot teaches us our dependence on Elohim and reminds us of the forty years in the wilderness in which we were totally dependent.

SJ footnote 4:20

A reference to the water libation ceremony performed at Sukkot, in which the priests poured out water and wine, mixing them together over the altar (m.Sukkah 4:9 [b.Sukkah 48a–b]). In John 7:37–38 (which was also at Sukkot, see also John 7:2), Yeshua referred to this ceremony as well, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scriptures have said, rivers of water of life will flow from his belly.”

"If you have any ability to relieve the suffering of another person, it is your responsibility to do so. The undesirable beggar, the foreigner who does not belong, is the one we tend to judge. The beggar whose language and customs are strange to us is easy to dismiss. He 'deserves' this condemnation, we think. Yet that thought is the very thought King Benjamin is warning us about.

Outside the Salt Lake Temple are beggars who regularly put up their petition in vain to those passing into and out of the Temple. It is unlikely the Temple patrons could not spare something to relieve the suffering of the beggars. That location is one which allows Saints daily to demonstrate they have heard and are willing to obey, the principles of sacrifice.

I used to think having the right heart must precede action to be of any worth. What I have found instead is that action can lead the heart. Christ's Sermon on the Mount is a call to action. Do the things asked by Him, and the heart will follow. The mind can lead the heart. The heart does not always have to go first.

...

In 3 Ne. 27:27, Christ poses this question, and gives the answer: "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am." Christ came to save men, not to condemn them. (John 3:17) We must learn to be like Him. If He forgave men frankly and freely, then why should we believe ourselves justified when we judge, condemn and belittle them? How then can we obtain a hope or faith that we can inherit the same position with the exalted?" (DS, Second Comforter, pg 196-197)

"We should remember how [Christ] supplicates with gentleness, and never compels or demands we follow Him. President Spencer W. Kimball described the beggar's petition in these words: 'I have seen

your cathedrals with altars of gold and silver and your beggars on the cold floors of such edifices, with their skinny arms extended and their bony hands cupped and raised to those who come to see or to worship.' (*Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, The*. Edited by Edward L. Kimball. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982, p. 214, emphasis added.) This sign of entreaty from the beggar, whose petition invites those who can to give them alms, is surely a sign for how He beckons for us. He entreats. He implores. He invites. But He does not proceed with a clenched fist, a harsh gesture, an insistent demand. His cupped hand beckons us to give Him our attention. Surely those who are His true messengers will do likewise. Surely one sign they have been sent by Him is this gentle entreaty, and not a call which relies on status. Since no power or authority can or ought to be maintained by virtue of His priesthood, His true messengers will never claim people should follow them because of their pretended authority. They will use, instead, pure knowledge which will greatly enlarge the souls of His sheep. They hear His voice in these gentle words of truth. For them the status of the teacher is irrelevant, and only the message is important.

Among the ordinances Christ has given mankind, water is used to baptize and to wash. Consecrated oil is used to anoint and to bless. These are the ceremonial symbols of Christ's love. His love cleanses us. His oil anoints us to glory. These liquids signify the removal of sin and stains. They cleanse us and renew us spiritually. They are symbols of the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of Christ. They signify holiness and spirituality. Both are preeminent symbols of love.

Liquid cannot be grasped nor held in the hand. The tighter the hand closes, the more liquid is forced out. Indeed, the only way to hold water or oil in our hand is to cup our palm. Only by making the hand open can these symbolic liquids be held. In the ordinances and liquids employed to show the cleansing power of His love, He reminds us of the true sign of His messengers. They, like Him, will petition. They will never come with a clenched hand but only an open, cupped hand, inviting the follower and beckoning him to come.

Is not the cupped hand recognized everywhere as the bear's petition? Is it not a symbol of beseeching? Does it not remind us of how we look to our Father in Heaven for all that we have? In this simple physical symbol we see how Christ's power to ordain and control power, principalities, thrones, dominions under His almighty hand is linked inevitably to the openness, the uncontrolling, and petitioning hand which has been lovingly extended in cupping shape. His hand is never clenched, tight, controlling. And open hand is a sign of both Christ and His true messengers. They, like Him, will show forth love, openness, and the kind of gentle petitioning and beckoning that is seen in the beggar's cupped hand for us to follow. They will never claim authority except to bless or ordain.

Of all that can be said of Our Lord, it is His love which distinguishes Him the most. He is the greatest because He loves more than any of us. His is the greatest, but He acts as the least. His message is delivered by entreaty. When we finally see Him as He is, we will all recognize Him as the very definition of Love; for God is Love. (1 Jn. 4:8.) In turn, His followers will learn to love." (Denver Snuffer, *Come Let Us Adore Him*, pg 289-291)

SJ footnote 4:22

51 Parallel to Yeshua's Sukkot teaching, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge with a righteous judgment" (John 7:2, 24). As we read in the Mishnah, Hillel taught, "And do not judge your fellow until you are in his place" (m.Avot 2:4).

Mosiah 4:26

Our assistance to those in need is directly related to God forgiving our sins.

Spirit of Prophecy

Mosiah 5:3

"were it expedient we could prophesy of all things."

Prophecy is one of the hallmark signs of gift the Holy Ghost (example, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery's baptism, JSH 1:73-74)

Letter to Marcus, 16 Jul 2019

Note how many times in Mosiah 18 verses 10-16 the Spirit is promised, poured out and the people are filled with the spirit and grace (I counted six times). This happened without any mention of the gift of the Holy Ghost being given by laying on of hands. We see this also in the experience of Joseph and Oliver's baptism. Joseph Smith received an audience with the Father and the Son, stood in a pillar of fire, and was commissioned to do a great work. and yet the first time his testimony mentions the Holy Ghost is after baptism, and after baptism, using authority which John the Baptist told him had not the right to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost. That would happen at some subsequent occasion. Why then, without the laying on of hands by one having authority, did Joseph Smith receive the Holy Ghost?

At the time Joseph and Oliver were baptized, they had no authority from heaven with which to confer the Holy Ghost. (JS-H 1: 70.) They had no ordinance available to them other than baptism. (JS-H 1: 70-71.) They performed the ordinance as instructed. But afterwards, without any authority to confer upon one another the Holy Ghost, they nevertheless had the gift of the Holy Ghost poured out upon them. (JS-H 1: 73.) This was not merely a temporary visit of the Holy Ghost. It lingered thereafter with them so they could understand the scriptures in the manner they were intended to be understood when these scriptures were first inspired by the Holy Ghost in the minds of the prophets who wrote them. (JS-H 1: 74.)

As Joseph and Oliver experienced these things, "No sooner had I baptized Oliver Cowdery, than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass. And again, so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of this Church, and many other things." (JS-H 1: 73.)

Mosiah 5:7-15

What is the significance of taking on the name of Mashiach?

Know the name by which ye are called (5:14) To know this name is to become like Him (see LoF 7:9-11)

SJ footnote 5:10

A word play: “Binyamin” means “a son of the right hand.”

SJ footnote 5:15

Binyamin is speaking at Sukkot and reflecting on the themes of the other recent fall holy days. As we read in the Talmud: “For it has been taught: ‘All are judged on Rosh Hashanah and their doom is sealed on Yom Kippur’ (b. Rosh Hashanah 16a), and it has been taught: ‘Beth Shammai says: There will be three groups at the Day of Judgment: one of thoroughly righteous, one of thoroughly wicked, and one of intermediate. The thoroughly righteous will forthwith be inscribed definitively as entitled to everlasting life; the thoroughly wicked will forthwith be inscribed definitively as doomed to Gehinnom’” (b. Rosh Hashanah 16b).

Book of Mormon Study – Mosiah 7-10

Online zoom Sunday School, 3 May 2020

Some Chronology

- **[Around 279 BC]** Amaron, son of Omni, delivers the plates to his brother, Chemish.
- **[?]** Abinadom, son of Chemish, "saw much war" (Omni 1:10). "I know of no revelation..." (v 11)
- **[?]** Mosiah leads people out of land of Nephi to Zarahemla (Omni 1:12-13)
- **[?]** In days of king Benjamin, son of Mosiah, there is "a serious war" with Lamanites (Omni 1:24)
- **[Around 200 BC]** Zeniff leads expedition to the land of Nephi.
- **[Around 160 BC]** Zeniff confers kingdom on his son, Noah.
- **[Around 148 BC]** Abinadi begins to prophesy.
- **[124 BC]** Benjamin addressed his people.
- **[About 121 BC]** Ammon discovered people of Limhi. (Not to be confused with missionary Ammon who preached to king Lamoni, - Alma 17:18ff, about 30 years later, around 91 BC)

Mosiah 1:1

The people "wearied [king Mosiah] with their teasings" to know what happened of the people who went up to the land of Lehi-Nephi (see Omni 1:27-30).

Some questions:

Why did they need the King's permission to go? If they're a free people, why not just go? Did they want the King's blessing? One thought is, like Columbus, they needed help funding the mission. When the king granted permission (v 2), they left "on the morrow" (v 3), meaning they left the very next day. Suggests that they were already packed and ready. So seems unlikely they needed "funding". There is an intense curiosity or draw to know and find out about what has happened to Zeniff. Very possible and likely that in the group led by Ammon (and perhaps Ammon himself?) were family and descendants related to those who had left some 79 years before.

Also Zeniff has an intense drive to go down to the land of Lehi-Nephi. For some reason that is not given, he is drawn and quite insistent on going down to possess the land. Even to the irrational point of being naive enough to believe the Lamanites would be willing to just step away and let them come in and occupy. Which is what happened, but they stepped aside for an evil intent.

Did Zeniff get permission from king Mosiah (Benjamin's father) to go down like Ammon's group did with grandson king Mosiah later?

Mosiah 7:15

"...we will be their slaves; for it is better that we be slaves to the Nephites than to pay tribute to the king of the Lamanites." Did King Benjamin implement the policy of no slavery (Mosiah 2:13) after Zeniff left for the land of Nephi?

Mosiah 7:25

"shed blood among themselves" – Was there civil war? Could this reference include the conflict described in Mosiah 9:2?

Mosiah 7:26-28

The reason Abinadi was killed was because he taught about Mashiach (Christ). See 1 Ne 1:19-20 how they sought to kill Lehi only after he taught about Christ.

Mosiah 7:29

"I will not succor my people in the day of their transgression"

And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities. (Alma 7:12)

Revelation is required:

"Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it. No man is a minister of Jesus Christ without being a Prophet. No man can be a minister of Jesus Christ except he has the testimony of Jesus; and this is the spirit of prophecy. Whenever salvation has been administered, it has been by testimony. Men of the present time testify of heaven and hell, and have never seen either; and I will say that no man knows these things without this." (Joseph Smith, DHC: 3: 389-390;)

Do you have a testimony of Christ? If so, you should be having revelation. As we have seen, the two are linked together. It is through revelation He will succor you. He will allow you to clearly understand the challenges you face. He will guide you past the trials and comfort you in what can only be suffered and not overcome. Just like Him, some of our trials cannot be overcome, but can be endured. He will strengthen your weaknesses to allow you to endure. But, He is able to do so only if you come to Him.

Our testimony of Christ is tied to revelation. Revelation is tied to obedience. Both are tied to the light we obtain here. And all of these are the Atonement of Christ at work in your life.

Whether or not you receive the full Atonement for your sins depends on whether you will permit Him to succor you. It is not a future work. He is not going to magically remove errors from you after you die. Rather, He is working to remove them from you now, in the life you are living now. He will guide you past the errors in your life, if you will receive His succor. His succor includes His commandments, and His revelations. If you will not obey Him, you cannot receive the Atonement He offers. If you will not ask for, receive and follow His revelations to you, then you will not receive an Atonement which He offers. (DS, Eighteen Verses, Ch 15)

Christ succors us. How can He succor us if we don't receive revelation? Here in Mosiah we are told, "I will not succor my people in the day of their transgression." For me to be succored I need to hear him. In

the day of my transgression, where I am distancing myself from Him, I am not hearing him, so I cannot be succored.

Mosiah 8:13-17

Definition of Seer:

The concept captured by the title “seer” involves sight. Seeing is the hallmark of the seer. They have vision. A seer is someone who has knowledge of things which cannot be seen with the natural eye. When Joseph Smith received the Urim and Thummim from an angel, he was told: the possession and use of these stones were what constituted seers in ancient or former times... (JSH 3:3; see also Mosiah 5:13). When anyone has possession of such an instrument, they are, by definition, a seer; the instrument itself allows the possessor to see the past, present, and future. However, it is not necessary to possess this instrument to be a seer. Whenever hidden knowledge is revealed to a person, the recipient is a seer. Whether they have a Urim and Thummim or not, anyone receiving Divine revelation of future or past events has the gift of seership. It remains the calling of a seer to reveal things which are secret or hidden. Seers have a responsibility to teach others or, if their contemporary generation rejects them, to leave a written testimony for future generations. Any people who have a seer among them gain knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come. Mankind needs living seers, or they are cut off from one of the gifts intended to guide them. Seership and exaltation are connected. “There is no reason you cannot also receive the gift of seership to guide you as occasion requires. The knowledge of some things requires you to behold the past, present and future.” Seership is a voluntary process; anyone who is willing to follow the path to get there may climb the mountain and see into the distance. Seership is something that all ought to expect will be included in the Lord’s tutelage while they are here. (Teachings and Commandments, pg 798)

When anyone has possession of such an instrument, they are a “seer” by definition, the instrument itself allows the possessor to see the past, present and future. However, it is not necessary to possess this instrument to be a seer. Perhaps the greatest seer, other than Christ, did not possess an instrument like the Urim and Thummim. Enoch saw things through vision, without any instrument, after his eyes were anointed for that purpose. We read in Moses 6:35-36: “*And the Lord spake unto Enoch, and said unto him: Anoint thine eyes with clay, and wash them, and thou shalt see. And he did so. And he beheld the spirits that God had created; and he beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye; and from thenceforth came the saying abroad in the land: A seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.*”

...

Once anointed, Enoch was able to see things the natural eye could not detect. This runs contrary to our preference for physical proof. Since the things Enoch saw were “not visible to the natural eye,” they were not capable of being proven in the normal sense. To obtain any benefit from Enoch as seer, the people had to trust his witness account of what he saw, or they had to obtain a similar vision

themselves. If they were unwilling to do either, then they would not benefit from his gift. (DS, Eighteen Verses, pg 129-130)

Enoch's testimony is restored to us through another seer, Joseph Smith. In the case of Enoch, we are required not only to believe him, but also to trust Joseph's account of Enoch's visions. It is twice removed from us requiring great faith to accept, and holding commensurate great value in its meaning. Enoch's vision extended to the past, present and future. He was caught up to heaven and had an audience with Christ. While in the heavenly vision, he was shown the future and past of the earth. Among other things, Enoch saw the future flood, the future life of Christ, the crucifixion, the resurrection and the latter-day restoration of the Gospel.

A similar vision of all the history of this earth was given to Moses. But it is not necessary to actually possess either the Urim and Thummim or have your eyes altered by anointing to have such a vision, or to be a seer. Isaiah was a great seer, although he never mentions possession of a Urim and Thummim. Nephi also saw these things at a time before the Nephites gained possession of the instrument. Others have had such a Divine tutorial in the world's history as well. Daniel saw the world's history unfold in the form of an image seen by Nebuchadnezzar. (See Danile Chapter 2.) He also saw the future end times and Christ's return. (See Daniel Chapter 10.)

The vision of this earth's history, from beginning to end, is a common experience for many seers. Whether or not they have the Urim and Thummim, seers have often seen the full account of it. More often than not, however "they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart." (Alma 12:9.) We should expect the seers' accounts of what they have seen to be limited, and never a complete revelation of everything they know. (ibid pg 131-133)

Joseph Smith commented on the effects of having such a vision in these words: "Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject." (DHC 6:50) (ibid pg 133-134)

The concept captured by the title "seer" involves sight. Seeing is the hallmark of the seer. They have vision. The opposite of the visionary seer are those who are "blind." The "blindness" referred to in scripture is often coupled with the "mind." That is, people are "blind in their minds." (See, e.g., 1 Ne. 14:7; Jarom 1:3; Alma 13:4; Alma 14:6; 3 Ne. 7:16; Ether 4:15 and Ether 15:9.) Sometimes it is "blindness of the heart." (See, e.g., D&C 58:15 and Eph. 4:8.) Both these uses have nothing to do with physical sight, but with the willingness to allow into the mind or into the heart the great visions offered by God.

"Blindness" is a voluntary condition. Nephi writes: "Wo unto the blind that will not see; for they shall perish also." (2 Ne. 9:32.) He speaks of those who "will not see" instead of those who "cannot see." It is a choice. They elect to be "blind." They refuse to receive what might otherwise have been available to them. In that sense, seership is also a voluntary process. Anyone who is willing to follow the path to get there may climb the mountain and see into the distance. (ibid pg 135)

The highest form of truth and light comes through revelation. It requires faith to obtain, and cannot be reached by study alone. Not everyone has faith to acquire this, however. For them, study is a substitute allowing them to gain some forms of very limited knowledge. D&C 88:118 reminds us: “And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.” (Emphasis added.) Faith is preferred. Study and the best books are secondary. God would prefer us to get information first-hand from Him. However, people generally are unwilling to do that, and prefer instead to learn through study. Worse still, some prefer to “learn” by attending lectures, firesides, symposiums, and classes without revelation or study. They presume they can cut corners in this way and still get whatever it is they need. They cannot. Such things can never connect us with the living vine, give us our own revelations, animate our minds with the visions of eternity, or make us seers. (ibid pg 137)

Any people who have a seer among them gain knowledge of things as they are, as they were, and as they are to come. [ftn:] This is the definition of truth: “And truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come;” (D&C 93:24.) This is also part of the definition of a seer: “But a seer can know of things which are past, and also of things which are to come, and by them shall all things be revealed, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest.” (Mosiah 8:17.) (ibid pg 138-139)

[T]here is no reason you cannot also receive the gift of seership to guide you as occasion requires. The knowledge of some things requires you to behold the past, present and future. Paul’s admonition to seek earnestly the best gifts did not exclude seership. (1 Cor. 12:31.) (ibid pg 139)

[Stick of Joseph, footnote for Mosiah 8:17](#)

Throughout this verse, the underlying Hebrew word behind “things” would be *devarim* which can mean “things” but can also mean “words.” The words “secret” and *דברים* “hidden” point to the underlying Hebrew word *sod* סוד. The *sod* level of interpretation deals with hidden messages in the original Hebrew of the Scriptures.

Book of Mormon Study – Mosiah 11-17

Online zoom Sunday School, 10 May 2020

Trying to get an idea of numbers.

King Noah reigns for about 12 years before Abinadi shows up. To be able to accumulate enough gold, copper, ziff, etc. in 12 years to build a spacious palace and to ornament the chairs in the temple with pure gold where he and his priests sat (11:9-11), from taxes collected from the people at a rate of 1/5th of all they possessed (11:3), how many people at a minimum could we assume makes up the kingdom? (Keep in mind mining and refining these precious metals is also involved)

Quick search tells me Iraq (where there is polygamy) is currently growing at a rate of 2.32%. USA grows at about .6%, Denmark about .4%

If we assume Noah's kingdom is a city size of Smithfield at around 9K, and Zeniff settled at around 200 BC, then at the time Abinadi starts preaching is around 52 years later:

At an aggressive growth rate of 2%, for the population at the time of Abinadi to be 9K, Zeniff would have had to come down with around 3181 people. If we assume a population of only around 4K, then Zeniff's party would have needed to be around 1413. (These numbers would not account for any immigration that might have contributed to the population).

Abinadi

When Noah's people departed from God's path, a single man entered the scene. He was unconnected from any known genealogy. Only he bears the name "Abinadi" in the book, and therefore we cannot know for certain if he was Nephite, Lamanite, Jaredite, or something other. The lone witness, Abinadi, condemned King Noah, his court and his people. The established authorities were incredulous. King Noah declared: "Who is Abinadi, that I and my people should be judged of him, or who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction?" (Mosiah 11:27) The "house of order" (play on D&C 109:8), as far as the king and his priests could tell, could not include such an outsider. (DS, Talk 10)

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 12:1

Avinodi would almost certainly have chosen an opportune time to re-enter the city. A festival would have given him a large audience (compare John 7:1–10, where Yeshua secretly returned to Jerusalem for Sukkot [feast of tabernacles]). It appears that this occasion was Shavuot [feast of weeks], evidenced by Avinodi's strong use of Shavuot imagery, themes, and liturgy in his message. (See *Stick of Joseph* footnotes to Mosiah 12:33, 13:5,24 below).

Shavuot - Festival of Weeks

Shavuot, (Hebrew: שבועות, lit. "Weeks"), is known as the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (Koinē Greek: Πεντηκοστή) in English. It is a Jewish holiday that occurs on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of Sivan, meaning it may fall between May 15 and June 14. (This year it will be May 29)

Shavuot has a double significance. It marked the all-important wheat harvest in the Land of Israel (Exodus 34:22) and it commemorates the anniversary of the day when God gave the Torah to the nation of Israel assembled at Mount Sinai—although the association is not explicit in the Biblical text between the giving of the Torah (Matan Torah) and Shavuot.

The holiday is one of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals of the Bible. The word Shavuot means "weeks" and it marks the conclusion of the Counting of the Omer. Its date is directly linked to that of Passover; the Torah mandates the seven-week Counting of the Omer, beginning on the second day of Passover, to be immediately followed by Shavuot. This counting of days and weeks is understood to express anticipation and desire for the giving of the Torah. On Passover, the people of Israel were freed from their enslavement to Pharaoh; on Shavuot, they were given the Torah and became a nation committed to serving God. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shavuot>)

Mosiah 12:4

Pestilence is not just bugs and vermin; it is also confusion, disorder, and chaos.

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 12:5

Shavuot is the wrapping up of Passover after the counting of the Omer. Avinodi begins using Exodus imagery in Moshiah 7:10–11 (Mosiah 12:1-5. See also Mosiah 11:20-25). Compare Ex. 1:11.

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 12:6

These words were particularly relevant, as Shavuot is a harvest festival.

Mosiah 12:12

Here is pride, vanity, and here is the very thing which, had the people to whom Melchizedek spoke, had they done this, there would have been no City of Peace, there would have been no Salem, there would have been no second Zion. Contrast with Melkesidek's people in Alma 13:17-18. (DS, Talk 8)

Mosiah 12:15

"And behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou shalt also prosper."

This verse is advice given by wicked, deceived priests to a vain and insecure king. These priests are like many others condemned in scripture: they are religious and believe themselves to be teaching correct principles, but they are profoundly wrong. It is interesting that these counselor-priests are confident in

the advice they give because of the apparent success of King Noah's reign. They confuse outward signs of success with God's approval of the King.

Do we confuse outward signs of success with God's approval in our day? Where the scriptures emphasize that obedience is what brings prosperity, do we tend to switch it and use prosperity as the gauge (for example, our prosperity as a church is evidence of God's favor on us as his chosen people)? (Deut 29:9; Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do. [see also 2 Chron 24:20] Job 36:11-12 If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures. But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.) Nowhere does the Lord commend we measure our standing before Him by the prosperous circumstances of our lives.

An example of this is in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. The rich man "fared sumptuously" (Luke 16:19) in his lifetime. Yet he merited no name in the parable. As to the beggar Lazarus, he was not only named, but he was given the same name as one of Christ's beloved friends. In the parable, the character called "Lazarus" never does "prosper" in life. He begged from hunger and was "full of sores,... moreover the dogs came and licked his sores." This is not a picture of prosperity. But it is the picture of someone whom the Lord loved, despite his terrible circumstances in life. Upon his death, Lazarus "was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" Here at last, and only after death, does Lazarus finally "prosper."

- Ps 73:12, Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.
- Ps 37:16, A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.
- Ps 73:3, For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 12:33

Shavuot is traditionally the anniversary of Moshe receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai (b.Shabbat 86b).

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 13:5

Ex. 34:29. The Shavuot imagery continues with Avinodi's face shining as Moshe's did when he received the Torah.

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 13:24

Ex. 20:4–17. The Shavuot imagery continues with Avinodi's recitation of the mitzvot.

Law of Moses

Mosiah 12:31-32; 13:27-28

If Abinadi were speaking to us today, what would he be telling us... They relied on the law of Moses as the thing that brought salvation. What is the similar thing upon which we rely or trust as authoritative thing that signifies that we are sealed unto eternal life with our families? It, like the law of Moses was to the people of Nephi (or Israel), was a means to something, an end, not the end itself.

What does it mean The Law of Moses fulfilled?

"And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh, and in me is the law of Moses fulfilled." 3 Ne 9:17

Stick of Joseph footnote 2 Ne 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 [Joseph Smith] understood "fulfilled the law" to mean that Mashiach [Messiah or Christ] "magnified" the Torah and made it "honorable" and not that he destroyed it. He said that Mashiach himself "fulfil[li]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, p. 162-3)."

Stick of Joseph footnote 2 Ne 25:27

142 We read in the Torah, "Cursed be he that confirms not all the words of this Torah to do them" (Deut. 27:26). This deadness is not from Torah observance, but from Torah violations. Yet Torah is life (Deut. 30:10–20; 32:46–47), and the Mashiach is the Torah (3 Nephi 15:2-10).

143 The underlying Hebrew may have been chalaf חָלַף (Strong's 2498), which can mean "done away" but can also mean "changed, renewed, or revived." This same word (that is translated in the as "renewed") is found in Isa. 40:31 and 41:1. Yeshua later testifies to the Nefites (in 3 Nephi 12:46) in parallel thought that "things which were of old time... [were] all fulfilled. Old things are done away and all things have become new" (see note to 3 Nepi 5:31; M'roni 8:2).

Mosiah 14:2

For Christ was going to grow up before God "*as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.*" Almost the entire Hebrew vocabulary is based upon a three-letter root. The root of the word translated as "beauty" is talking about something to be coveted, desired, or some kind of precious thing you want... It could be translated, "He had no bona fide authority that we should submit to it." Or perhaps, "He had no standing, credibility, bona fides, he had no position that we should acknowledge him." (see DS, 40 Years, Talk 7, pg 221)

Mosiah 14:10

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him;"

Notice the astonishing statement, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him." Can you imagine! This seems so surprising at first. However, it is not. In the account of Enoch account, this topic is explained from the viewpoint of heaven. Enoch was in heaven looking at the events of the earth. He was shown in vision the

events to follow his time. Enoch saw the destruction of the wicked and spoke in the bitterness of his heart. We read in Moses chapter 7 verse 44:

"Enoch saw this, he had bitterness of soul, and wept over his brethren, and said unto the heavens: I will refuse to be comforted; but the Lord said unto Enoch: Lift up your heart, and be glad; and look. And it came to pass that Enoch looked; and from Noah, he beheld all the families of the earth; and he cried unto the Lord, saying: When shall the day of the Lord come? When shall the blood of the Righteous be shed, that all they that mourn may be sanctified and have eternal life? And the Lord said: It shall be in the meridian of time, in the days of wickedness and vengeance. And behold, Enoch saw the day of the coming of the Son of Man, even in the flesh; and his soul rejoiced, saying: The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain."

Enoch was weeping in the bitterness of his heart. "I will refuse to be comforted." All this loss, all this waste, all this death, all this wickedness! So much reason to mourn, "I will refuse to be comforted." He beheld men killing one another until God ended the bloodshed by destroying the wicked. It was so awful a scene Enoch determined nothing could possibly comfort him about the ruin of mankind. But then the Lord says to Enoch, in effect, "No, no, no! Be happy! See! The Lamb is slaughtered!" This suffering and death of the Lamb will undo the destruction. Where there was now death before Enoch, the scene is transformed by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. Through that sacrifice, hope is provided. This is why Isaiah declared; "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." Is there no other way? No, there's no other way. God must offer Himself as a sacrifice. (DS, 40 Years, Talk #7)

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 15:1

Ex. 19:11; Ps. 50:3. Ps. 50 is an important part of the Shavuot imagery and has many parallels with Avinodi's message. Ps. 50:13–14 emphasizes that Elohim prefers thanksgiving over sacrifices, while Avinodi calls for the mitzvot to be "written in your hearts" (Mosiah 13:11). Ps. 50:16–21, like Avinodi, gives a strong rebuke to observe the Torah; Ps. 50:16, 22, also like Avinodi (in Mosiah 11:20-25; 12:25-30), calls us to keep the Torah, not merely proclaim the Torah.

Christ is both Father and the Son

Mosiah 15:2-5

In the declaration of Abinadi he uses language that also tends to make Christ the same person as God the Father. Here is Abinadi's statement:

"Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son—The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son—And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth. And thus the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation, but

suffereth himself to be mocked, and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people." (Mosiah 15: 2-5.)

Abinadi likewise says Christ will be "called the Son of God." He qualified to be "called" because He "subjected the flesh to the will of the Father." You cannot be the Son of God the Father unless you reflect Him. You are His "Son" when you are like Him. To be like Him you must subject your will to the will of the Father. This is how Christ defined Himself. (3 Ne 11:11)

When Christ subjected Himself entirely to the will of the Father, He was in every deed, thought and action "the Father" even though He was flesh and blood and living among us. They were "one." (John 10:30) If you beheld Christ, you would behold the image of His Father. (John 14:9)

Who is Christ's seed?

Mosiah 15:8-10

What Abinadi is talking about here are those who have connected with God, like becoming a "seer" that we talked about last week. Or what Joseph Smith meant when he spoke of a legally authorized administrator, "Whenever men can find out the will of God and find an administrator legally authorized from God, there is the kingdom of God; but where these are not, the kingdom of God is not." (TPJS p. 274) This is His seed. It's not our relationship as "Children of God" that we sing about in primary. It's something we gain when we prove worthy of it as described in LoF 6:8.

Mosiah 15:14-18

The feet of those who walk upon the mountains crying peace are beautiful (Isa. 52:7) because they are clean from the blood and sins of their generation.

In the ancient ceremonies involving animal sacrifice, blood was shed upon the ground and the feet of those involved in the rites became bloody. The blood of the sacrifice upon the feet became a symbol of the sins for which the sacrifice was offered.

The feet of those who walk upon the mountains crying peace are cleansed from that blood. Christ's washing of His Apostles' feet was to symbolize this cleansing which He alone could provide. He employs no servant to provide such a cleansing. (2 Ne. 9: 41.) These feet, washed by Him are, therefore, beautiful because they connote the sanctity of the one crying peace.

"Crying peace" because the only thing which stills the mind of man, and brings rest from the trouble of this world, is the atonement of Christ. That is why it is called "the rest of the Lord." When cleansed, it becomes the consuming desire of those who are clean to bring others to partake. Just like Lehi's dream, when those who had eaten of the fruit of the tree of life ate, they immediately invited others to come and join them.

"Upon the mountains" because the mountain is nature's symbol of the ascent to God. The climb represents repentance and purification of the soul. When a person stands upon the top of the mountain, she appears to be part of heaven itself and no longer earthbound. Her profile is with the sky, symbolizing the completion of the ascent back to God.

It is beautiful. All of it is beautiful. All of it is a reflection of the purity and intelligence of God, whose ways are higher than man's ways as the heavens are higher than the earth. (Isa. 55: 8-9.)

<http://denversnuffer.com/2010/03/how-beautiful-upon-the-mountains/>

Mosiah 15:26

But behold, and fear, and tremble before God, for ye ought to tremble; for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection. (cf with Mosiah 2:36-37)

Mosiah 15:27

Therefore ought ye not to tremble? For salvation cometh to none such; for the Lord hath redeemed none such; yea, neither can the Lord redeem such; for he cannot deny himself; for he cannot deny justice when it has its claim.

“When you think of Christ as 'the prototype of the saved man' (LoF 7:9) you should also remember Christ 'attained to the resurrection' by 'breaking the bonds of death.' Justice requires man to die. When we die it will be deserved. From Adam to the present, this has been true for everyone. But when Christ died it was unjust. The 'wages of sin' is death, but He did not earn those wages. He never fell to sin, and therefore the law of justice was offended by His death. Because of this, He was able to take His body up again, and the law of justice could not prevent it. To the contrary, justice required His resurrection. Christ's death offended the law of justice.

When a man who should have lived forever is slain, something infinite is taken. Therefore the price He paid was infinite. Whatever justice could demand from the fall had been satisfied. Accordingly, Christ can intercede for all mankind.”

(Denver Snuffer, Preserving the Restoration pg 313. See also 40 years pdf, pg 196, Talk #7, Christ: The Prototype of the Saved Man)

Stretched Forth His Hand

Mosiah 16:1 (see also Mosiah 12:2)

And now it came to pass that after Abinadi had spoken these words, he stretched forth his hands and said, The time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord, when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just (Mosiah 16:1). Mosiah 12:24 helps one to understand what he stretched forth his hand(s) means: The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations. Abinadi is demonstrating the Lord's action, thereby affirming he is His messenger. He had been given the sign to testify and used it to declare he was a true messenger. Later in the Nephite history, the prophet Alma concluded his testimony of Melchizedek by using the same sign to evidence his authority: And now it came to pass that when Alma had said these words unto them, he stretched forth his hand unto them and cried with

a mighty voice, saying, Now is the time to repent, for the day of salvation draweth nigh! (Alma 13:21). He used this sign because he was authorized to do so, and he understood what the declaration meant. Although those who were there may not have understood, it was a sign that he was a true messenger. Man cannot be saved in ignorance. Once the key of knowledge is lost, mankind is lost and cannot be saved until that key is returned. Prophets sent with messages who testify to an ignorant people use signs that the Lord recognizes and authorizes, but they may not be noticed or understood by those who hear the message. Nevertheless, the testimony becomes binding when the Lord's seal is put upon it. This often involves a required sign to be given, or in other words, for hands to be stretched forth. (DS, "A Couple of Questions," Jan. 30, 2013, blog post.)

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 16:14

For example, the Passover was a shadow which Mashiach fulfilled; therefore, Paul says, "Therefore let us keep the feast" (1 Cor. 5:7-8).

Mosiah 17:7-8

For all else they might have found to accuse him, Abinadi ends up being put to death for teaching that Christ is the Son of God, become man.

Book of Mormon Study – Mosiah 18-24

Online zoom Sunday School, 17 May 2020

Filled with Spirit

Mosiah 18:10-16

Note the number of times reference to "pour out his Spirit", "Spirit was upon him", and "filled with Spirit" etc.

Compare baptisms of Alma and Helam with Joseph and Oliver's (JSH 1:68-74) and Adam's (Moses 6:52-68)

Mosiah 18:13 (quoting from Stick of Joseph)

And when he had said these words, the spirit of YHWH was upon him, and he said, Helam, I immerse you, having s'mikhah from El Shaddai, as a testimony that you have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the spirit of YHWH be poured out upon you, and may he grant unto you Eternal life through the redemption of Mashiach, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.

Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 18:13

s'mikhah - "Authority, ordination." From a word meaning "laying on of hands."

El Shaddai - God Almighty, literally "God, the double breasted." Identified in the Zohar with the Shekinah (Zohar 1 95a), the feminine aspect of Elohim.

Some notes about Heavenly Mother

Our scriptures speak carefully about the existence and importance of a Heavenly Mother: a Divine Female whose greatest attribute is to bestow wisdom upon the whole of this creation. It is possible to miss Her presence. That cultural and theological blindness is not because of Her absence from the scriptures. It is not hard to detect Her, if you know what to look for. WE just don't yet understand how to look.

The Old Testament (now retitled The Old Covenants) was preserved and transmitted in the Hebrew language for generations. Some characteristics of that language are important to understand as part of this discussion. First, Hebrew has no neuter, only masculine and feminine. Furthermore, when there are multiple persons involved, even if only one member of a group is male, Hebrew uses only the masculine to refer to the group. Women and men collectively are referred to using a masculine noun or pronoun.

When a masculine noun or pronoun from the Hebrew language is translated into English, English language readers assume it means "man" or "men" and excludes "women." In English we can use neuter pronouns like "they" or "them" to refer to a group of both men and women. Hebrew would use "men" or "he" if the group included even a single male in the group.

We all know that the Hebrew word “Elohim” is used to refer to God and that it is plural. In English it should be translated as “Gods,” but because we allow theology to control translating the text, the term “Elohim” in Hebrew is therefore rendered in English as a singular “God.” It should be plural; and if plural, rendered masculine in English. But that is Hebrew to English, and does not mean, as we shall see, there is no female among the Elohim.

The story of creation starts by identifying Heavenly Parents, a couple clearly described as the true and living “God.” In the King James Version, the creation of mankind is told in these words: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

The context of the words “created he (God) him (man)” is immediately clarified to refer to both the male and female and not just the male: “created he him; male and female created he them.” The English translation follows the masculine pronoun implied in Hebrew. Therefore, looking at it in the Hebrew language, there were two persons described and only one of them was male. It could be translated: “created they (Gods) them (man and woman); male and female.” In the King James Version the Gods are described using a masculine pronoun taken from the Hebrew. Moving from Hebrew into English, the translation stayed true to the Hebrew and the human couple is likewise described using a masculine pronoun. They are called “him” in English because of this.

The words “So God created man in his (God’s) own image,” affirm two points:

First, the plurality of God.

Second, that plurality is a couple that includes both a male and a female. Man is created in God’s image, and that image is a couple: a man and a woman. This is not figurative language. It is literally describing mankind having two sexes and that is godlike, or what God’s own “image” is. (Denver Snuffer, *Our Divine Parents*, pg 1-2)

Mosiah 18:17

“And they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ”

What is “the church”?

Is it an organization or club that people join?

Is it the hierarchy, the officials, or the leaders? (As when people ask “What is the church’s stand on this issue?”)

Is it the building we meet in or the meetings we attend? (As in “Let’s clean the church” or “I’m attending church”)

Is it “the kingdom of God on earth?”

What is the scriptural definition of “church”?

In our bibles “church” is translated from the Greek word “Ecclesia” which loosely meant “the called out ones” or “assembly”. The word ecclesia didn’t even have a religious connotation in the beginning. It was a military term, as when soldiers are called out to assemble. It later came to describe any assembly of people who shared a common interest, such as a town council or guild. So when translating the New Testament from Greek to English, the King James translators simply took every instance where

“assembly” appeared in Greek and substituted the work “church”. The term can also be synonymously replaced with “congregation” or “community” and it will fit.

Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church. (D&C 10:67-68)

[Mosiah 19:2-3](#)

There is a division among the people. We read that "the forces of the king were small, having been reduced." It appears the division and contention that followed were related to this reduction in the king's forces. This after Alma had fled with about 450 (Alma's group started out with 204 souls, 18:16, but by the time they fled there were about 450 18:35). As it relates to last week's discussion on numbers of people that made up the kingdom, were Alma's group's numbers significant enough to have an effect on the king's forces? Whatever the details may be, these things seem to play a role in the division and contention that followed. Note also it was a minority who started to make an impact on the changes that were starting to take place in the kingdom.

Mosiah 19:15

What did Lamanites want with precious metals? Or the Nephites for that matter? Was this used as a medium of exchange (money)? (see 24:7) We know Satan uses money to control and buy up armies and navies and reign with blood and horror on the earth. (Hugh Nibley has written quite a bit on this topic)

[Stick of Joseph footnote for Mosiah 20:2 \("one day"\)](#)

The underlying Hebrew may have been *yom echad* יוֹם אֶחָד, which can be used idiomatically to mean “a certain day.” The context here is that the “certain day” was Tu B’av (the 15th of Av), an ancient, minor Jewish festival that marks the beginning of the grape harvest. It is similar in romantic character with Valentine’s Day and is traditionally celebrated with maidens dancing. This event parallels that of Judg. 21:16-23, which also occurred at a “feast of ” (Judg. 21:19). According to the Talmud, this “feast of ” was the 15th of Av: “Rabbi Simeon ben Gamliel said, ‘There never were in Israel greater days of joy than the Fifteenth of Av and the Day of Atonement’!... what happened on the fifteenth of Av?... Rabbi Joseph said in the name of Rabbi Nahman: ‘It is the day on which the Tribe of Benjamin was permitted to re-enter the congregation [of Israel], as it is said, now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying: There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife (Judg. 21:1). From what was their exposition?’ Rab said: From the phrase ‘any of us’ which was interpreted to mean, ‘but not from any of our children’” (b.Ta’anit 30b).

[Stick of Joseph footnote for Mosiah 20:5](#)

See Judg. 21:16–23, where the men of Benjamin, who could not otherwise obtain wives, were permitted to kidnap the maidens who danced at Tu B’av.

Mosiah 19:20-21

King put to death by fire. Wicked priests flee.

Mosiah 21:6-12

In light of our earlier discussion about numbers that comprise the kingdom, how great affect did these losses have on them?

Mosiah 21:21

Wicked priests had come into the city by night and carried off grain and other precious things. Yet in 23:35-36, Amulon is with the lost Lamanites when they ask Alma to escort them back (about 8 days journey, 23:3) to the city of Nephi. Why does Alma remember the way back, but not Amulon?

Stick of Joseph footnote *Mosiah 21:26*

Note that the discovery of Coriantumr shortly after the final destruction of the Yeredite nation may have taken place much earlier (perhaps around ~ 550), with only the report of that discovery being made during the days of Moshiah the 1st. (cf Omni 1:19-21)

Mosiah 21:31

Yea, they did mourn for their departure, for they knew not whither they had fled. Now they would have gladly joined with them, for they themselves had entered into a covenant with God to serve him and keep his commandments.

Were these among the same people who earlier (in 18:32. See also 12:9,16), when Alma's group were gathering and meeting by the waters of Mormon, were calling the hotline number to turn in their neighbors?

Mosiah 21:31-32

Limhi and his people had entered into a covenant.

Covenants. Look up my study I did relating covenants taken in Boise and my presentation including Dead Sea Scrolls.

Mosiah 21:33

Did Ammon decline because he felt unworthy despite having authority, or was it because he considered himself an unworthy servant he felt he did not have authority?

Is immersion part of the law of Moses? The people are aware of this practice at time of Ammon with Limhi - and if they could just unite with Alma's people we'd be glad to receive this immersion. King Benjamin doesn't mention it. Ammon seems to be aware of the practice but doesn't feel worthy to

perform it. The people are aware that Alma practiced it. Did Abinadi teach something about it, or were there those familiar with Alma having practiced it even though they did not join the group that left with them?

Mosiah 21:34

They did not at this time form themselves into a church (or assembly). See earlier discussion on church/assembly.

Mosiah 22:15-16

How large of a group is it that left with Ammon up to Zarahemla. They didn't leave tracks with all their animals and gold etc. that Lamanites lost their tracks after 2 days? Was this because the number of the people was small enough that the tracks they left could become easily hidden, or did this have more to do with the Lord's intervention on their behalf?

Mosiah 23:12-13

Rule under a wicked king is considered "bondage". Limhi's people being taxed by Lamanites was considered "bondage" (see 21:15). King Noah introduced a tax on his people (11:3). Was it because they are taxed that makes it "bondage"?

Alma considers being brought into iniquity under a wicked king constitutes "bondage" or "bonds of iniquity".

Mosiah 23:20

Numbers again. Alma's people "multiply". The 450 plus people want to make Alma a king. It doesn't have to be a very big group of people to make a kingdom.

Mosiah 23:21

Will the Lord chasten even a righteous people? Why must our faith be tried? (see LoF 6, particularly para 4-8)

Life is an open book test. We only need to realize the test is underway to be able to pass it. (T&C 159:18)

Mosiah 24:4-6

King Laman has Amulon teach the Lamanites the language of the Nephites. How different would their language be at this time? Could it mean teach them writing?

Mosiah 24:8

We don't read anything about Alma's wife, but here it tells us about his children. If Alma the younger was a young man at the time he was "stealing away the hearts of the people" (Mosiah 27:8-9, between around 18-26 years later), then how old would he have been at this time? Would he have remembered being persecuted by Amulon's children?

[Limhi, Alma, and Passover Patterns](#)

By Ronald P. Millett, Eldon G. Lytle, and John P. Pratt · October 12, 2005

<https://latterdaysaintmag.com/article-1-5408/>

John Pratt article Limhi, Alma, and Passover Patterns:

<https://johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2005/passover.html>

Book of Mormon Study – Mosiah 25-28

Online zoom Sunday School, 24 May 2020

Children of Amulon

Mosiah 25:12

In 24:8, Amulon's children (who would have been children from the Lamanite women that were taken) persecuted Alma's children. Did some of these end up joining Alma when they escaped? Or were they the possible children of Amulon that could have remained behind with the people of Limhi (20:3)? If they were the latter, then they would already be considered seed of Nephi, but if the former, then they would have more reason to want to change their identity to become associated with seed of Nephi.

If it was considered taboo to mix blood with with the other race (see 2 Ne 5:22-23, Alma 3:7-8), then this would be more reason to want to identify with the seed of Nephi. (See also other examples from Gen 24:3, 28:1-2)

On the other hand, we read in the next verse what it means to be numbered among those who were called Nephites (25:13):

And now all the people of Zarahemla were numbered with the Nephites, and this because the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi.

From the book God's Chosen People of America

In the very beginning the world was created by Sotuknang under the command of Taiowa, the Great Spirit. Spider Woman, whose real name was Kokyangwuti, was given to Sotuknang for a help mate. She was commanded to create life upon this earth. This is the reason she is called "Spider Woman" because she is the mother of all living, and all life on this earth is in her web.

The first two beings created by Spider Woman were twins whom she called Poqanghoya and Palangawhoya. Poqanghoya was sent to the north pole, and Palangawhoya was sent to the south pole to keep the world properly rotating on its axis...

After Spider Woman created the Polar Twins she created male and female in the four pure colors, i.e., black, white, red, and yellow. The male beings were patterned after the image of Sotuknang and the female after her own image. The four colors of people were moulded out of the clay of the earth. Each color of people was given his own language and sent to the four directions of the earth. Each was warned to stay in his own location and not mix his blood with anyone other than his own pure color. If each would do this and keep the commandments each would remain a pure and good people. The Hopi say crime set in when they disobeyed their commandments

and races started mixing their blood with those of another color. Trouble started with the mixed breeds. (Zula Brinkerhoff, God's Chosen People of America, 1971, pg 239-240)

The Remnant of "God's Chosen People" has circled the earth several times to claim the earth for the Great Creator. Now the Indians are returning to the point of beginning according to their sign. Tribes from all over the world are waiting for the next sign when they will migrate to Hopiland to stay. Each tribe that I have met has from 400 to 600 pure bloods in their tribe. Pure bloods must be Indians who have not mixed with any other race. (ibid pg 243)

[Mosiah 25:14-15](#)

Mosiah, the king, finishes addressing the people, then asks Alma to teach them. Alma preaches to the separate bodies (earlier we read that they were gathered together in two bodies, vs 4).

Here we begin to see where king Mosiah starts to defer to Alma the responsibility over the spiritual affairs of the people.

Baptism and Organization of a Church

[Mosiah 25:17-18](#)

Limhi and his people desire to be baptized and Alma baptizes them.

...and as many as he did baptize did belong to the church of God; and this because of their belief on the words of Alma.

Those who were baptized were then considered part of the church or assembly of God.

Later in 26:36 we read:

And those that would not confess their sins and repent of their iniquity, the same were not numbered among the people of the church, and their names were blotted out.

Was this a physical removal of a name from some list? King Benjamin talks about taking on the name of Christ and that you can have this name blotted out of your heart through transgression (see Mosiah 5:10-11). In Mosiah 6:1-2 we read that king Benjamin took the names of those who entered into the covenant.

Alma had organized the assemblies as described in 18:17-18 (cf 21:34). This is the first time in the Book of Mormon where baptism is associated with belonging to an assembly or church of God. So Limhi and his people desired to now belong to this assembly. We see no mention where any other of Mosiah's people desire to be baptized by Alma. It appears they already had this ordinance (cf Ammon's reaction in 21:33-34). The authority rested with Mosiah and within his kingdom, but what appears to be new is the association of baptism with belonging to an assembly or church. Therefore, my assumption is that, like king Benjamin did in taking names of those who entered into a covenant, Alma likewise is taking

names of those who enter a covenant through baptism, and by this they joined themselves to the church of God.

Mosiah 25:19-20

Here we begin to see a separation between the affairs of the church and the affairs of government. Keep in mind under Law of Moses (as we see in ancient Israel), there was no such separation. The law that governed the people in their secular lives was the same as the law that governed their spiritual lives. Mosiah gives Alma authority or power to go throughout the land and baptize and organize assemblies of churches. (see verses 21-22)

Mosiah 25:23

And it came to pass that whosoever were desirous to take upon them the name of Christ, or of God, they did join the churches of God; and they were called the people of God.

Mosiah 26:7-12

The organization of the church opens the door to relieve king Mosiah from responsibilities related to spiritual affairs of the people because he can now delegate such things to Alma.

Mosiah 26:9

Notice that in the original 1829-1830 printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon there are some word differences in this verse:

*And it came to pass that Alma did ~~not~~ know concerning them; **but for** there were many witnesses against them; yea, the people stood and testified of their iniquity in abundance.*

Alma calling and election

Mosiah 26:14-20

Here we see Alma inquiring about a problem with how to deal with issues that have arisen as a result of the organization of a church. What he received from the Lord was so much more.

Look at the brother of Jared for example. He went to the Lord to inquire about a practical matter. And the Lord in response to the inquiry about the lighting, first of all, asks the brother of Jared if he will believe Him. The Lord asked the brother of Jared if he would accept the words, (in other words, the covenant) which the Lord would then offer to this man. Once he agreed to the conditions, the Lord gives him a revelation containing all of God's revelations a mortal is permitted to receive.

What the brother of Jared received in the revelation had nothing to do with the original problem that brought him in prayer to the Lord. He wanted to solve a lighting problem inside a barge. The revelation has nothing to do with the lighting problem inside the barge. It contained instead all of God's revelations.

Similarly, when Joseph Smith went into the Sacred Grove he was trying to find out which church to join. In answer to the inquiry about which church to join, he was told to join none of them, and that they were all corrupt, and he would be the means of bringing something else about.

Later, when Joseph prayed to find out what his state and standing was before the Lord, and the angel Moroni came and disposed of Joseph's inquiry very perfunctorily, telling him to "fear not" and then went on to tell him about everything the Lord had as an agenda, including the plates of the Book of Mormon.

The subject someone asks about when they go to the Lord does not necessarily then control the content of what the Lord will reveal. Likewise, when Joseph made the inquiry about the plurality of wives, the Lord took it as an opportunity to talk about something more important. (DS, 40 Years, Talk 9)

Church discipline

Mosiah 26:21-39

For behold, this is my church; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance. And whomsoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive. (verse 22)

Compare with:

Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church. (D&C 10:67-68)

Is there a tendency in the church to over complicate or institutionalize things with church courts? How might we compare that with what we see here in these verses in Alma?

What do scriptures say about discipline of leaders?

"In His infinite wisdom, God has seen fit to include, in His checks and balances, provision for the trial by the Church of even the President of the Church if he transgresses. Though this procedure has not been used within the Church, yet the fact that the Master included the provision in His plan for Church government indicates that the possibility that the Prophet may transgress is a real one:

And inasmuch as a President of the High Priesthood shall transgress, he shall be had in remembrance before the common council of the church, who shall be assisted by twelve counselors of the High Priesthood; And their decision upon his head shall be an end of controversy concerning him. Thus, none shall be exempted from the justice and the laws of God, that all things may be done in order and in solemnity before him, according to truth and righteousness. (D&C 107:82-84)

He also provides a way for the Church to judge the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Council of the Seventy in the event they make unrighteous decisions". (Thus Saith the Lord, pg 71)

Why do we expect that God will violate one man's free agency and remove him from his place as church leader should he choose to attempt to lead the church astray, when provision is given in the scriptures God has given us to do the removing?

Mosiah 27:4-5

Priests labor with their own hands for their support.

Mosiah 27:8

Alma was an idolotrous man. What does it mean to be an idoloter?

Idol

Anything that separates mankind from the Lamb of God. Cast it aside, and come to Him. Why we have idols between us and the Lord is as different as one person is from another. Almost without exception, it comes as a result of a false tradition handed down. False traditions are based on each person's life experiences. No matter what they are or how they were acquired, whatever separates Christ from you must be set aside. Come to Him because only He can save you.

Mosiah 27:11-13

The angel speaks to them and they don't understand. Then the Angel speaks again and they understand. Is this coming through 2 degrees? from Terrestrial to a Telestial?

They were going about "rebelling against God" (27:11), compare with Mosiah 2:36-37

Mosiah 27:28

Alma is saved from an everlasting burning.

"A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, 'They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.' The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man. (TPJS pg 357)

Moroni tells us we would rather be with the damned souls in Hell than be in Gods presence unworthy (Mormon 9:4).

Mosiah 27:32

Alma having been persecutor, now becomes persecuted. This is part of what it means to be Christlike. As Disciples of Christ we must expect to be given opportunities to forgive others.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be

exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Matt. 5:10-12.)

Book of Mormon Study – Mosiah 29-Alma 4

Online zoom Sunday School, 31 May 2020

Timeline:

Year	Event	Age of Alma the Elder	Age of Mosiah	Age of Alma the Younger
Around 160 BC	Zeniff confers kingdom on his son, Noah.	13		
Around 148 BC	Abinadi begins to prophesy.	25	6	
124 BC	King Benjamin addressed his people.	49	30	
118 BC (Mon 27 Mar)	Alma to Zarahemla.	55	36	15-25
Around 100 BC	Alma the younger sees angel and is converted.	73	54	33-43
Around 91 BC	First year of reign of Judges. Alma Elder and Mosiah die.	82	63	42-52
Around 87 BC	Alma fights Amlici.			46-56
Around 83 BC	Alma gives up judgement seat.			50-60
Around 73 BC	Alma taken up.			60-70

Mosiah 29:1

Why did Mosiah send out to know the will of the people on who should be their king when the obvious answer (as he lays out in his response below) is Aaron, who is gone to the land of Nephi and who he knows would not accept the kingdom anyway?

Choose judges.

Mosiah 29:25

Under law of Moses, judges were to be appointed (see Deut 16:18). Then why were Nephites under rule of Kings? (see Deut 17:14-15)

Mosiah 29:30-31

With system of judges sins of people are upon their own heads. Under kings, sins are upon the head of the king.

Christ is our true king. Did he take upon him the sins of his people? Christ is the example of what a king should be.

Are prophets in this sense kings? If a prophet does not warn the people, then the sins of the people will be upon his head (see Ezekiel 3:16-19). Prophets are also referred to as "servants". How does this relate to what it means to be a righteous king?

And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. 2 Ne 10:11

God commands there shall not be kings on this land, and if you raise one up, God will destroy him.

What kind of person can become a successful king upon this land without being destroyed? See example of King Benjamin - Mosiah 2:11-17. (See discussion in TDS, Vol 3, pg 153-154)

Those who will establish Zion must reject even the idea of a king. We have embedded in the doctrine of the Restoration the notion that we're going to become "Kings and Queens, Priests and Priestesses." I suggest that when Christ said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36), and he gird himself with a towel, and he knelt down, and he washed the feet of those that he was ministering to, implicit within that act is the kind of conduct of our real King (John 13:4- 16). Those who are His kings and priests will do likewise. They, too, will kneel and serve. They will not be "Strongmen." They will be meek servants to the Gentile's way of reckoning. If He says, "My kingdom is not of this world," and He came merely to be a servant, how much more gratefully should we look at the opportunity to kneel and to serve rather than to say, "I want the chief seats" (Matthew 23:6), rather than say, "I want to be upheld and sustained and lauded and praised." We are not here to be flattered and extolled. We are here to serve in any way we can. (these thoughts come from TDS, Vol 2, pg 150)

Mosiah 29:39

they were exceedingly rejoiced because of the liberty which had been granted unto them.

Contrast with how we treat our liberties today.

Mosiah 29:42

Alma is appointed chief judge, he being also the High Priest. The separation from secular and spiritual leader that was implemented in the last chapter is now re-united in one man again here. This lasts 9 years, as Alma ends up giving up the judgement seat to Nephihah in Alma 4:20.

Alma 1:3-4

Nehor taught priests should be supported by the people and all mankind should be saved at the last day. We will see this doctrine causing problems throughout the rest of the book of Alma.

These teachings prevail in churches today. Universalism is gaining popularity, even inside the CJCLDS. Take a look at what Nephi prophesied about our day:

"And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God...

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for

there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance.” (2 Nephi 28:8,21-22)

Sure enough, we see a rise in teachings in the LDS church suggesting as much. “*Odds Are You're Going to Be Exalted*” by Alonzo L. Gaskill (available from Deseret Book) is one book that is rising in popularity in Mormonism. This title looks uncannily like a Mormon version of a book that is popular in other Christian circles titled “*That All Shall Be Saved: Heaven, Hell, and Universal Salvation*” by David Bentley Hart.

Alma 1:12

This teaching from Nehor is what Alma calls "priestcraft".

Priestcraft is a new message that does not include knowledge about how the audience may come to God themselves; the primary intent is always to make others dependent on the messenger. It is foolishness to separate information about what the Lord is doing from instruction on how to become redeemed. It is vanity to spread new and personal revelation about the afterlife, God, man, prophecy, visionary encounters, and spiritual experiences if the primary reason does not focus on instructing how the audience can come to God themselves. It is dangerous to trust teachings that fail to give man guidance on how to find God for himself. Pandering for popularity is at the heart of priestcraft. Priestcrafts are where people seek approval of the world but not the best interest of Zion (see 2 Nephi 26:29-33). Any man who tries to put himself between another person and heaven, claiming that he alone should be the source of religious beliefs and education, is practicing priestcraft and will, in the end, lead both himself and his followers to damnation. All churches, if the Book of Mormon is true, are filled with corruption and priestcraft. The obligation to hold up a light is circumscribed by His direction that [He is] the light which ye shall hold up (3 Nephi 18:24-25) — nothing and no one else. He is the lifeline. Therefore, when anyone offers to preach, teach, exhort, and expound, He must be at the center of this prophesying, or they are engaging in priestcraft. (T&C glossary)

Can the Book of Mormon be used just as easily as the Bible in engaging in priestcraft if it is used to pursue any end other than establishing Zion?

Alma 1:26-27

*And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they **were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength.** And **they did impart of their substance,** every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted; **and they did not wear costly apparel,** yet they were neat and comely.*

You see they prospered in this, and they were blessed because of it. We should learn from their example, when they were prospering, about what it was they did that was right to bring it about. The ideal is never to have a professional class of clergyman. The ideal is to have every one of us as equals. In our own day, in a revelation given through Joseph, D&C 52:39 says: “*Let the residue of the elders watch over the churches, and declare the word in the regions round about them; and **let them labor with their own hands** that there be no idolatry nor wickedness practiced.*” To “labor with their own hands” means

they are not professionals receiving compensation for preaching, because as soon as you turn them into a professional clergy, people idolize them...

"And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple." Isn't it interesting, that both in the case of Alma, talking about how their system worked with their priests, and in the modern revelation, talking about how things should be among us, the first principle is "there is no such thing as professional clergy," followed immediately by, "remember the poor, remember the needy," in both instances. That is not happenstance. (TDS, Vol 2, pg 277-278)

They did not wear costly apparel. What is it with "costly apparel" in the Book of Mormon? Note it does not say lavish or showy, but "costly". Can you tell the difference between an expensive suit or dress and one that is not? If I am frugal and I keep my eyes open I may be able to find a great deal on an otherwise "costly" suit at DI or at a yard sale. But if money is tight for me, why do I need to be so concerned with finding such a deal to keep up with expectations of what I should wear to church?

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?...

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: (Matt 6:25,28)

Alma 1:32

*For those who did not belong to their church did indulge themselves in **sorceries**, and in **idolatry or idleness**, and in **babblings**, and in **envyings** and **strife**; **wearing costly apparel**; **being lifted up in the pride of their own eyes**; **persecuting**, **lying**, **thieving**, **robbing**, **committing whoredoms**, and **murdering**, and **all manner of wickedness**; nevertheless, the law was put in force upon all those who did transgress it, inasmuch as it was possible.*

Here we find a *list*. The list appears to give a progression of sins in an order from lesser to more serious degree. It's worth looking at these in order, and taking a minute to consider at the meaning of some of these:

sorceries: Originally, divination from the casting of lots; hence, the use of supernatural knowledge or power gained in any manner, especially through the connivance of evil spirits; magic art; enchantment; witchcraft; spells; charms. Soothsayers are Those who make predictions by using means other than true prophecy. Modern application of soothsaying may exist in business, government, economics, weather — especially long-term weather — politics, etc. It is foretelling for gain, profit, popularity, or influence without God's commission and direction.

idolatry or idleness: Idol is anything that separates mankind from Christ. Interesting how this relates to being idle.

babblings: lashon hara, talebearing, derogatory or damaging speech about a person

envyings: a feeling of discontent or covetousness with regard to another's advantages, success, possessions, etc.

strife: heated, often violent conflict or disagreement. contention

wearing costly apparel: we've mentioned already, with additional mention below

lifted up in the pride of their own eyes: “Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition is gone, pride is gone.” — C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (President Benson gave an entire talk on this one subject)

persecuting: cruel and unfair treatment of a person or group, especially because of their religious or political beliefs, or their race.

lying

thieving: to steal

robbing: to take something from (someone) by unlawful force or threat of violence

committing whoredoms

murdering

all manner of wickedness

These things all go together. You don't have whoredoms without lyings etc. Our modern day entertainment is incomplete without this list. Lists like this occur all through the Book of Mormon. (Compare with 2 Ne 28:11-15 or 3 Ne 30:2, for example.)

[Come back to Alma 1:5-9](#)

Nehor is a perfect example of one who follows the path of sins listed in verse 32. They began to give him money, he began to be lifted up in the pride of his heart, and he began to wear costly apparel. Then after this, he debates with Gideon, gets angry, takes the sword, and kills him. Murder. Note the progression of sins.

Can you identify items in this list that are applied in prophecy to us in our day?

*Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say: Come unto me, and **for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins**. O ye wicked and perverse and stiffnecked people, why have ye **built up churches unto yourselves to get gain**? Why have ye **transfigured the holy word of God**, that ye might bring damnation upon your souls? Behold, look ye unto the revelations of God; for behold, the time cometh at that day when all these things must be fulfilled. Behold, the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come, at that day when these things shall come forth among you. Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. And I know that **ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts. For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.** (Mormon 8:32-37)*

Amlici

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 2:1

It is likely no coincidence that his name seems built upon the Hebrew root mlk (מלך), meaning “to rule” or, in the noun form, “king.”

Alma 2:3-4

We see those today with evil intentions, who seek to destroy the assembly of God, who will find or create loopholes in the framework of our government to gain power etc.

Alma 2:37-38

Reminds me of battle of King David with his son Absalom who had seized part of the kingdom from his father. The battle took place in "the wood of Ephraim" and "the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured". (2 Sam 18:6-8)

Curse of dark skin

Alma 3:7-8

See last week's notes on the taboo of mixing of seed.

Alma 3:9-10

See also 2 Ne 5:21-23

"...wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of blackness to come upon them."

As much as Mormonism takes flack on this subject, the teaching of black skin as a curse did not originate with Joseph Smith.

"[S]ome concluded that black people had descended from the Canaanites, the lineage cursed 'as pertaining to the Priesthood.' (Abr 1:21,26)

In coming to this conclusion, later Mormons borrowed from the common nineteenth-century belief that Africans descended from Ham and bore a curse. In the Bible, Noah's son Ham mocked his father's drunkenness and nakedness, and in revenge Noah cursed Ham's son Canaan. 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.'" (Richard Bushman, Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling, pg 288)

Stick of Joseph footnote for 2 Ne 5:22

Similarly, we read of Ham in the Talmud: “Our Rabbis taught: Three copulated in the ark, and they were all punished; the dog, the raven, and Ham. The dog was doomed to be tied, the raven expectorates [his seed into his mate’s mouth] and Ham was smitten in his skin” (b.Sanhedrin 108b). A similar account appears in the Midrash Rabbah but says “Ham came forth black-skinned” (Gen. Rabbah XXXVI:7).

In the *Book of Jubilees* (accepted as Jewish scripture by some, and is part of the Ethiopic cannon), the possibility of salvation for Ham's descendants was denied;

Be careful, my son, Jacob, that you do not take a wife from any of the seed of the daughters of Canaan, because all of his seed is (destined) for uprooting from the earth; because through the sin of Ham, Canaan sinned, and all of his seed will be blotted out from the earth, and all his remnant, and there is none of his who will be saved. (Jubilees 22:20-21)

Contrary to other views, Joseph Smith thought the capacity of a Negro slave to be saved was possible beyond any question. In that respect, Joseph Smith was more broad in his view of the potential for redemption of the slaves than many others. (see TPJS, pg 269)

The curse (2 Ne 5:21) was designed by God to prevent intermarriage (“that they might not be enticing unto my people”). In the LDS scriptures the word “enticing” is footnoted to the Topical Guide subject “Marriage, Temporal.” (DS, New, Improved Mormonism) (again, see notes from last week’s lesson)

The church has taken some flack recently on this subject because of differences in the printed manual on 2 Ne 5 (pg 24 in printed manual) and what later has been changed in the online version. To satisfy my own curiosity I found myself investigating the differences more deeply. From the Jan 18th article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*:

“Church spokeswoman Irene Caso explained the problem this week.

During the publication of the ‘Come, Follow Me’ manual for 2020, there was an error that resulted in the printing of material that doesn’t reflect the church’s current views on the topic,” she said in a statement. “To correct this, a decision was made to modify the content in the digital version of the lesson.” (Error in printed LDS Church manual could revive racial criticisms

<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2020/01/18/error-printed-lds-church/>)

Printed manual version:	Online version:
<p>The dark skin was placed upon the Lamanites so that they could be distinguished from the Nephites and to keep the two peoples from mixing [see 2 Nephi 5:21-23; Alma 3:6-10]. The dark skin was the sign of the curse. The curse was the withdrawal of the Spirit of the Lord. ... Dark skin ... is no longer to be considered a sign of the curse.</p>	<p>In Nephi’s day the curse of the Lamanites was that they were “cut off from [the Lord’s] presence ... because of their iniquity” (2 Nephi 5:20–21). This meant the Spirit of the Lord was withdrawn from their lives. When Lamanites later embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ, “the curse of God did no more follow them” (Alma 23:18). The Book of Mormon also states that a mark of dark skin came upon the Lamanites after the Nephites separated from them. The nature and appearance of this mark are not fully understood. The mark initially distinguished the Lamanites from the Nephites. Later, as both the Nephites and Lamanites each went through periods of wickedness and righteousness, the mark became irrelevant as an indicator of the Lamanites’ standing before God.</p>

	<p>Prophets affirm in our day that dark skin is not a sign of divine disfavor or cursing. The Church embraces Nephi's teaching that the Lord "denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female" (2 Nephi 26:33). President Russell M. Nelson declared: "The Lord has stressed His essential doctrine of equal opportunity for His children. ... Differences in culture, language, gender, race, and nationality fade into insignificance as the faithful enter the covenant path and come unto our beloved Redeemer"</p>
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What are the differences between what was printed in the manual and what was later corrected in the digital version that do not reflect the church's current views?

Both versions assert that the curse was the withdrawal of the spirit of the Lord, and that dark skin was placed upon the Lamanites so that they could be distinguished from the Nephites. The online version adds additional explanation and commentary. If both versions assert that the curse is the withdrawal of the spirit, it can be assumed the online version intends to infer that dark skin itself is not the curse and the church still holds to Joseph Fielding Smith's "Answers to Gospel Questions" that dark skin was the sign of the curse.

This leaves the manual's statement (that "doesn't reflect the church's current views"):

The curse was given "...to keep the two peoples from mixing [see 2 Nephi 5:21-23; Alma 3:6-10]."

In other words, what doesn't reflect the church's current views are the teachings in the Book of Mormon from 2 Nephi chapter 5 and Alma chapter 3 about the mixing of seed.

Aside from trying to parse through the details of this topic, what is the Lord trying to tell us in these verses on the curse of a dark skin?

All things testify of Christ. All things are a type of higher things. Relate this to the idea of a mark or a curse of dark skin so you don't mix seed. We become the seed of Abraham and of Christ. God declares us his son, or his begotten. Beloved. This doesn't mix with the world. Must be apart, separate. These are the types of things the curse of a dark skin and forbidding to mix seed points to. (see Alma 5:57)

The other thing that comes to mind is that we are here to learn to love one another. This gives a perfect opportunity to overcome opposition of differences.

Alma 4:4

They were baptized by the hand of Alma, who was the high priest. Does this mean that the 3500 souls (verse 5) that were united to the church and baptized, all were baptized personally by Alma? Much like we read his father did with the people of Limhi in Mosiah 25:18. Was this sacred responsibility not delegated to those called as priests? When Christ came many years later, he gave only 12 authority to perform this ordinance (3 Ne 11:21-22).

Alma 4:18

*Now Alma did not grant unto him the office of being high priest over the church, but he retained the **office** of high priest unto himself; but he delivered the judgment-seat unto Nephiah.*

This suggests that the office of being high priest over the church is something that Alma could have conferred. The true High Priesthood (as was that of Melchizedek) is something only conferred by God himself (see Stick of Joseph footnote below). So this office must have therefore been an *office* within the organization of the assemblies or churches.

Offices in the organization of the church today include "high priest", "elder", "priest", "teacher", "deacon", and even "member".

Did you know that "member" is an office in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? That office is conferred upon you whether you are male or female. Every one of us has a responsibility to preach, teach, exhort, and expound. (see D&C 20:38,68-70, 88:122) (TDS, Vol 2, pg 70)

We tend to conflate "office" with "priesthood". Consider the idea that an office in the Church is not coincidental or coextensive with priesthood. There is no such thing as the priesthood of Deacon. There is no such thing as the priesthood of Teacher. There is an office in the Church called "Teacher." There is an office in the Church called "Deacon." And the occupant of that, out of tradition, is supposed to have Aaronic priesthood in order to discharge that office. However, within the Church, we also sustain as "teachers"—for example, Gospel Doctrine teachers—females who hold the office of "Gospel Doctrine teacher" within the Church. What is the difference between the office of Gospel Doctrine teacher, that we sustain by our common consent on the one hand, and Teacher in the Aaronic priesthood, Teacher held by someone with the Aaronic priesthood, on the other hand? We make a big deal out of the offices in the Church which are associated with Aaronic priesthood. However, they are offices in the Church. They were offices in the Church to begin with; they are offices in the Church yet today. And priesthood and offices in the Church are not necessarily coincident with one another. (TDS, Vol 2, pg 102)

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 4:20

Ordained by Adonai ; see Alma 9:10. Malki-Tzedek (Melchizedek) is the prototypical example of such; see Alma 10:1-2 [Book of Mormon, Alma 13:10-20].

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 5-12

Online zoom Sunday School, 14 Jun 2020

Singing with a Changed Heart

Alma 5:26

How well does the convert remain converted? Does the believer follow up their belief with progression in their understanding, behavior and intelligence? Or, instead, does faith atrophy and die?

"The popular scripture from Alma 5:26 stood out to me:

And now behold, I say unto you, my brethren, if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?

Most of us have experienced some form of conversion experience, even if we are not converts to the gospel. At times when we feel distant from God, reflecting on the precious experiences when we felt God's hand in our lives can have the effect of turning us back to Him. But it's not just about turning back to a place where we were when we were converted. We are expected to grow in the gospel.

I'm reminded of when Lincoln reflected upon the ground of Gettysburg after that great battle and observed: "we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or to detract." (Abraham Lincoln. Gettysburg Address; November 9, 1863.) When men gave their lives as a willing sacrifice for the cause in which they believed, they sanctified the cause far above words. Lincoln recognized that. He dignified himself by confessing in few words how men's sacrifices had been the true consecration for the battleground.

Christ hallowed the Gospel by His sacrifice. It does not end there, however. He asks for His followers to take up their crosses and live consecrated lives of sacrifice as they follow His path. It is not enough to find Him, convert to His ways, and find the joy of connecting with God. He requires enduring obedience. Singing the song of redeeming love once may make you feel born again. However, your faith can die in infancy if you do not nourish it through obedience and following Him. He gave the test for loving Him: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) Without an effort to walk in His ways, there is no love for Him." (from an email to Marcus Reed, 10 Jul 2019. See also DS, Eighteen Verses, pg 188-189)

"No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator." (DHC 6:58)

You can lose the song of redeeming love while actively involved in religion. It is not just faithlessness which tempts us away. For some it is caused by an excessive preoccupation with religion itself.

Every conversion has at its core a transcendental experience. The convert has heard from God. As a result of that experience, they decide to come onboard with the new faith, the new way of looking at things, the movement which delivered to them this experience. Religious movements begin with an individual soul gaining enlightenment. Some person profoundly connects with God and changes the course of history. "Religion" follows in the wake of personal or individual enlightenment as others are taught by the enlightened visionary. It is not easy to transfer a connection to God from one person to another, and religion is the unavoidable result of enlightenment as the transfer is attempted.

It is impossible to institutionalize enlightenment. Although that is the object of every religious movement at the start, none of them are able to reach that goal. What is institutionalized is an echo of the enlightenment experience. It is always left to the individual participant to find the experience for themselves. (DS, Eighteen Verses, pg 189-190)

The religion established through a prophet of God became the superstructure used to kill the Lord who first revealed it to Moses. As these devoted followers of Moses' law were killing Christ, they were satisfied their judgment was more than justified by their religion. Religion and the religious were the ones who opposed the Lord. The sinners and irreligious were His followers.

In Alma's day, the tendency to drift from enlightenment to religion was again the challenge. Alma's words are intended to remind the audience of what they once experienced. He is calling them to return to the former state of enlightenment. (ibid pg 192)

If you have been redeemed, are you still? Do you still feel the joy which accompanied your original discovery of God in your life? If not, then you need to seek Him again. (ibid pg 194)

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 7:10

Not in the "City of Yerushalayim" but the "land of Yerushalayim" (see footnote to 2 Nephi 1:1). The Mashiach was to be born in Beit Lechem (Bethlehem), a small town just outside of the City of Yerushalayim and within the land of Yerushalayim. As we read in the Targum: "And you, O Bethlehem Ephrath, you who were too small to be numbered among the thousands of the house of Judah, from you shall come forth before Me the Messiah, to exercise dominion over Israel, he whose name was mentioned from before, from the days of creation" (Targum Jonathan; Micah 5:1).

Stick of Joseph footnote 2 Nephi 1:1

This phrase "land of Yerushalayim" (land of Jerusalem) does not appear in the Tanakh. However, it has turned up in the Amarna Letters, dated to the early 14th Century. These letters were written in Akkadian on 350 clay tablets discovered in 1887 and in the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q385b), which mentions "Jeremiah the Prophet" as one of those who "were taken captive from the land of Jerusalem."

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 7:11

Isa. 53:3-4. When The Stick of Joseph actually quotes these verses, the standard terms "sorrows" and "grief" are used for Hebrew makov מַכָּוָה (Strong's 4341) and Hebrew khali חָלִי (Strong's 2483); but when only alluding to the verses, The Stick of Joseph uses the more literal translation "pains, sicknesses, and afflictions." "Pains" and "afflictions" are used for makov and "sicknesses" for khali, pointing to a Hebrew original behind the English.

Christ's Atonement

Alma 7:12

And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.

We often think of our future triumph over death as Christ's greatest accomplishment on our behalf. Maybe in one respect it is. However it is His present succor, His present intervention with our human sufferings which is most important at present. Our future condition in the resurrection depends upon how much of this succor we are willing accept at present.

D&C 19:15-20 Christ describes in painful detail the suffering endured in the Garden of Gethsemane. He tells us this suffering was not the end, however. It was only the beginning. He calls it only His "preparations" for us: "Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men." (D&C 19:19.) Why does He tell us His suffering was only "preparation" and not the completion? After all, He cried out on the cross: "It is finished!" (John 19:30) with a loud voice (Mark 15:37). How can it be the "preparation" and still be "finished?"

Joseph Smith, DHC: 3: 389-390; "Salvation cannot come without revelation; it is in vain for anyone to minister without it. No man is a minister of Jesus Christ without being a Prophet. No man can be a minister of Jesus Christ except he has the testimony of Jesus; and this is the spirit of prophecy. Whenever salvation has been administered, it has been by testimony. Men of the present time testify of heaven and hell, and have never seen either; and I will say that no man knows these things without this."

Do you have a testimony of Christ? If so, you should be having revelation. As we have seen, the two are linked together. It is through revelation He will succor you. He will allow you to clearly understand the challenges you face. He will guide you past the trials and comfort you in what can only be suffered and not overcome. Just like Him, some of our trials cannot be overcome, but can be endured. He will strengthen your weaknesses to allow you to endure. But, He is able to do so only if you come to Him.

Our testimony of Christ is tied to revelation. Revelation is tied to obedience. Both are tied to the light we obtain here. And all of these are the Atonement of Christ at work in your life.

Whether or not you receive the full Atonement for your sins depends on whether you will permit Him to succor you. It is not a future work. He is not going to magically remove errors from you after you die. Rather, He is working to remove them from you now, in the life you are living now. He will guide you past the errors in your life, if you will receive His succor. His succor includes His commandments, and His revelations. If you will not obey Him, you cannot receive the Atonement He offers. If you will not ask for, receive and follow His revelations to you, then you will not receive an Atonement which He offers. (DS, Eighteen Verses, Ch 15)

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 10:7

When we compare Alma's account of these events (Alma 6:5-7 [8:14-27]) with Amulek's account of the same (Alma 8:1-3 [10:1-11]), an interesting picture develops that points to a Passover setting. Amulek

tells us the events begin on the fourth day of the seventh month (Alma 8:1 [10:6]). Counting from Rosh Hashanah as the new year, this is just ten days before Passover. Amulek was traveling to visit a near kinsman, perhaps with whom to observe the Seder (Alma 8:2 [10:7]). An angel appears to him and directs him to return to his own home and prepare an additional place for a prophet who has been blessed. He and his house will be blessed if he does this. One cannot help but recall the tradition of setting an extra place for Elijah at the Seder.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 8:22

The giving of thanks after meals is a Jewish practice prescribed by the Talmud (b. Berakhot 47b–49a) that is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls in the hymn “Invitation to Grace after Meals” The practice is derived from Deut. 8:10.

From The Dead Sea Scriptures (with notes and introduction)

By Theodor H. Gaster (version online)

II Invitation To Grace After Meals

1 [Loudly acclaim
the majesty of God;
where many are foregathered
Let His majesty resound!

2 Amid the throng (1) of the upright
proclaim how majestic He is, (2)
and along with the faithful
tell stories of His greatness! (3)

3 [Join company] (4) with the good and the blameless
in confessing the majesty transcendent; (5)

4 unite (6) in making known
His saving power,
nor be laggard in showing to the mindless
His might and majesty!

5 For it is that the glory of the LORD (*) may be made
known that wisdom has been given,

(*) Written in archaic script.

6 and that the richness (7) of His works may be told
has it been imparted to man,

7 to the end that the witless may have knowledge of
His power,
and the mindless a sense of His greatness—

8 men who keep far from her doors,
remote from all access to her.

9 Although the Most High, forsooth,
is Jacob's special Lord, (8)
yet does His majesty reach out
over all that He has made,

{10} and a mortal who avows it (9)
is no less pleasing to Him
than one who brings offerings of grain,

{11} or presents to Him he-goats and bullocks,
or fills the altar with ashes
of burnt-offerings never so many (10)—
yea, than fragrant incense
proffered by righteous men.

{12} Wisdom's voice rings out
from behind the doors of the righteous;
wherever the godly foregather
(is heard) her song.

{13} Whenso they eat and are filled, (11)
the word is of her;
when they drink in fellowship together,

{14} their talk is of the lore (†) of the Most High;
the aim of their discourse is to further
the knowledge of His power.

[†] Heb. Torah'.

{15} (But oh, how far from the wicked
is any word of her;
how far from all the proud
any wish to have knowledge of her!)

{16} Behold, the eye (12) of the LORD
looks with compassion on the good,

{17} and great is His tenderness to them
that avow His majesty;
He will save them from the time of trouble. (13)

{18} [Bless ye] the LORD,
Who redeems the humble
from the grasp of the proud,
[and delivers [the blameless]
[from the hand of the wicked;]

{19} [Who will yet raise Ja]cob [to honor], (14)
and [from Israel] govern [the world]; (15)

{20} [Who will spread His tent in Zion
and be present in Jerusalem for ever!] (16)

Footnotes to Invitation To Grace After Meals:

1. Literally, 'multitude'.
2. Literally, 'confess the majesty of His name'. The 'name' in Hebrew signifies also the outward manifestation.
3. Verses 1-2, missing in the Qumran manuscript, are here supplied from the Syriac version.
4. Literally, 'unite your (individual) selves'.
5. Literally, 'of the Most High'. The meaning is that there is a supernal power which works salvation.
6. The Hebrew means simply, 'join in fellowship together', the expression being modelled (as again in v.13) on Ps. 122.3. To render, 'form a community', and to draw therefrom a reference to the Qumran Brotherhood, strains the syntax.
7. Literally, 'multitude'.
8. The word, 'Lord' (Heb. 'Adon), has special point: the meaning is that although the Most High is the particular Lord of Israel, His sovereignty is universal.
9. Literally, 'avow the majesty of the Most High'.
10. For the Hebrew expression (though in a slightly different sense), cp. Num. 4.3; Ps. 20.4.
11. Cp. Deut. 8.10.
12. The manuscript has 'eyes', but the verb is in the singular. Hence the text must be corrected in accordance with the Syriac version.
13. For this expression cp. Isa. 32.2; Jer. 14.8; 15.11; 30.7; Ps. 37.39. In the Qumran texts it has a quasi-eschatological meaning, as in Dan. 12.1.
14. Literally, 'establish/upraise the horn'—a common Biblical expression for 'triumph'. It is not clear whether this refers to the triumph of Israel in general (as in Ezek. 29.21; Ps. 148.14) or, more specifically, to the raising up of a future Messianic King (as in Ps. 132.17). I think the former is more

probable; see next note.

15. Literally 'and from Israel a judge of peoples'. It is not clear whether this means that God will raise up from Israel one who will be judge of all peoples, or that He Himself is such a judge. In light of Ps. 67.4, whence the expression is taken and where it refers to God, I think the latter more probable, the strict translation then being, '(Bless the Lord) ... Who judges (all) peoples from Israel'. Nor do I think that 'judges' here refers to the Final Judgment; the Hebrew word means simply 'governs'. The sentiment is that of Isa. 2.3.

16. This expression echoes Exod. 33.7. The verse, missing from the manuscript, is here supplied from the Syriac version.

This prayer of Invitation To Grace After Meals is filled with imagery of the holy Mother.

Alma 9:21

Gift of Holy Ghost is listed along with other gifts of the spirit.

Alma 9:25-29

We can read this as Alma himself is an angel delivering a message.

I've been reading in Alma (following in line with the church's Book of Mormon Sunday School curriculum). In chapter 9:25, as I read Alma teaching:

*"And now for this cause, that ye may not be destroyed, **the Lord has sent his angel** to visit many of his people, declaring unto them that they must go forth and cry mightily unto this people, saying: Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand;"*

It occurred to me that we could just as easily read this as Alma himself being an angel to these people as the angel that taught Alma. Sure enough, two verses later Alma is proclaiming:

"Therefore, prepare ye the way of the Lord, for the time is at hand..."

Then Alma concludes this statement with:

"Now behold, this is the voice of the angel, crying unto the people." (v 29)

Then, as if to add further validation, this article you shared from Jeffery Bradshaw has this quote from Margaret Barker that I really liked:

"The high priests and kings of ancient Jerusalem entered the holy of holies and then emerged as messengers, angels of the Lord. They had been raised up, that is, resurrected; they were sons of God, that is, angels; and they were anointed ones, that is, messiahs. . . .

***Human beings could become angels, and then continue to live in the material world.** This transformation did not just happen after physical death; it marked the passage from the life in the material world to the life of eternity."*

(email to Katie Fultz, 2 Jun 2020)

(see also D&C - angels are those who live or have lived on this earth)

Alma 10:6

Angel to Amulek Sun 2 Jun 83 BC am. 8 Flower on Sacred Round. 6 Sivan on Hebrew. Firstfruits (Pentecost)

Based on John Pratt's "Nephite Calendar", the day the angel visited Amulek "was a holy day on at least three of the sacred calendars. First it was Firstfruits (Pentecost) on the Hebrew calendar, 6 Sivan. In fact, even though the Hebrew sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees often celebrated Firstfruits on different days, in this year they would have both celebrated on that day. That is because one celebrated on 6 Sivan (as do modern Jews) and the other celebrated on the eighth Sunday after Passover, which was Sun 2 Jun that year.

Moreover, the day was also Firstfruits on the Enoch Calendar. The Enoch calendar Firstfruits only coincides with the Pharisee celebration about once every fifteen years. And if the angel appeared before noon, then the day was a triple major holy day, also being the day 1 Malchijah on the Priest cycle, one of the six principal holy days on that 168-day cycle." (The Nephite Calendar, 14 Jan 2004, <https://johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2004/nephite.html#4.1>)

Alma 10:24

Amulek stretched forth his hand.

Alma 11:4-19

Reasons for the listing or description of the monetary system of Nephites in Alma. This was based on the law established by King Mosiah. It was not based on system patterned after Jews. It is tied to the size or weight of bushels of barley. If it is based on a fixed value of barley, This would mean it is not subject to inflation.

Alma 12:9-11

cf 1 En 58:5

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 12:11

Alma is alluding to the concept in Judaism of the four levels of understanding known as Pardes פְּרָדֵס. Pardes is the Hebrew word for "paradise." PaRDeS is also an acronym for the four levels of understanding of the Scriptures: Pashat (literal); Remez (implied, hinted); Drash (allegorical, homiletical); and Sod (hidden, secret). Alma is telling us that a person who has hardened his heart may be limited to the lower, "lesser" levels of understanding.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 12:12-15

This verse is framed around the Sefirot of the Tree of Life: "... stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame, that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save every man that believes on his name...."

Alma 12:36

what is first provocation?

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 13-16

Online zoom Sunday School, 21 Jun 2020

Review of verses from last week

Alma 12:30

God made His plan of redemption known to man, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world. And this he made known unto them according to their faith, and repentance, and their holy works.

First commandments, provocation, and death

Second commandments, provocation, and death

"Provocation" in Heb 3:8-11

Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.

Some observations of the art.

The art shows Alma and Amulek wearing something. The artist needs to do this for modesty reasons, but remember they were naked. Same is true for art depicting Christ on the cross.

There is a picture illustrating Alma eating with Amulek. We see it beautiful outside. If John Pratt's calculations are correct, the time of year would have been in June. We also see what looks like could be Amulek's wife and daughter (with a white board?). I have wondered of Amulek's wife and family as I read this account. If his wife was a believer, would she have been included among those who were burned? Would she have been among the family who disowned him? How much did Amulek sacrifice to become converted and come unto Christ? Was it all worth it?

Cite your minds Forward

Alma 13:1

As we begin looking at chapter 13 I want to approach this as if you have never read this book before. Try to strip away anything you think you already know and approach this with completely new eyes.

Why "cite your minds forward?" Especially since it was talking in the past tense? Why is this idiom in the verse? How would Joseph Smith know about this kind of word usage?

Why "the Lord God ordained priests?" Were they ordained by God indeed? Was there another man involved in conferring that authority? Did it necessarily come from God alone? What priesthood is it that is referred to?

What is “after his holy order?” Is this Aaronic? Is this Melchizedek? Or is this something different?

We are familiar with two priesthoods that we read about in D&C 84. Melchizedek and Aaronic.

Elsewhere Joseph Smith taught, “All priesthood is Melchizedek, but there are different portions or degrees of it. That portion that brought Moses to speak with God face-to-face was taken away, but that which brought the ministry of angels remained. All prophets have the Melchizedek priesthood and were ordained by God himself.” (TPJS, pg 180)

Later, beginning on page 322 of TPJS, he begins teaching about “three grand orders of priesthood”. He goes on to discuss Patriarchal, Melchizedek and Levitical (or Aaronic) priesthoods.

What form of priesthood is “after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son?” Are all three? Or is there one that is distinguished by being uniquely after the order of His Son?

Alma 13:2

To be “ordained after the order of his Son” it must be done “in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.”

Think about these words carefully.

The “manner” must be in a way which will let people know or understand how to “look forward to His Son for redemption.”

Let's clear away some conditioned thinking that may interfere with grasping what may be being taught here by Alma:

Christ WAS NOT ordained by being sustained by a congregation.

Christ WAS NOT ordained by having hands laid upon Him by another man.

Christ DID NOT carry a credential with Him or a certificate of priestly authority.

Christ WAS NOT part of the established priestly hierarchy.

We have no record of His ordination at all. We only have established, priestly class officials asking Christ about where He got His authority from. And we have Christ simply refusing to answer their question.

Christ showed that He in fact held priestly authority by His demonstration of power. More importantly, He taught profound truths with such passing simplicity and convincing prose that His message necessarily came from a higher source. In word and deed He put on display His power and authority.

But what is the verse in Alma speaking about? How does one become “ordained” in such a manner that people learning of it will then know how to look forward (or back) to the Savior and understand His redeeming power?

Do they put on display, by the words and precepts they speak, the profound simplicity and convincing prose of the angels themselves? Are they able to show their ordination by speaking words of eternal life, as He did?

How does this “ordination” acquire or show redeeming power?

How can obtaining authority by ordination to this priesthood be something which will let people know their Lord better?

What is really going on for those who hold actual priestly authority, being ordained in the required manner? Do they acquire more than administrative authority from an institution? Do they receive power from on high? Can you get it anywhere other than from on high? Is this why the power of the priesthood is inseparably connected with the powers of heaven? What have we Saints been doing? Practicing? Holding ourselves forth to possess?

Where can we get this ordination after the order of the Son of God?

Alma 13:3

Called and prepared FIRST. From the foundation of the world.

So here priesthood has its beginning before this world even was organized. There is a necessary link between those hallowed days and power here. No person has authority here unless it was first obtained there.

How was it obtained first – before the foundation of the world?

It was because of the foreknowledge of God. And what was God's foreknowledge based upon? Their "exceeding faith and good works!"

How can a person have "faith" when they stand in the presence of God? Do they now have knowledge? This was before the mortal estate, right? If so, then how can there be faith? What good works were involved?

Then, too, the "faith" and the "good works" were done as a result of the person having been "left to choose between good and evil." Now this is surprising! You mean that before Adam partook of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (i.e., before the foundation of the world) that some people had already obtained a knowledge of good and evil, been tempted, exhibited good works and acquired faith? How so? When and where did they do that? What does that tell us about them? Is this why Joseph said there were "sons of God who exalted themselves to be gods before the world was made?" (TPJS p. 375.) When and where and how did they do this? And was this required for any person to be able to claim they now have priestly authority here? Or is it only those who have the "holy order after the Son of God?" Is there something about these men's "holy calling" that distinguishes them from others here? If so, what is it? Who are these men? Are they always going to be from unlikely sources and places, so that people can know how to recognize the Lord?

Then, too, we have them in a class of people who had been through a "preparatory redemption" already. What does that mean? What does it imply? How did they qualify? How long have these souls been working on the process of redemption and thereby qualify through their faith and good works to hold authority in this estate? Who are they?

Alma 13:4

The result of what went on before is the reason for the ordination or calling. That is, "thus they have been called." Meaning that all of what went into the earlier experiences i.e., being left to choose between good and evil, and having chosen good, having "faith" and good works, is the reason for their ordination. These souls are not novices. They are not getting authority here for the first time. They come

with power from beyond this earth, bringing it with them to this earth. They qualified before and elsewhere.

All of this is “on account of their faith.” All things are obtained through faith (see Sixth Lecture on Faith). Faith is a principle of power. It is capable of making things happen. There must be a connection between faith and power; between faith and priesthood.

Others reject the Spirit of God and, therefore, do not have this power. These others may claim to have authority, but they do not really receive power from the Spirit of God. They are animated by a different source.

Alma 13:5-6

So there wasn’t some great advantage for these people who hold actual priestly authority. We learn that “in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren.” Where was that “first place?” Is it also “from the foundation of the world” referred to earlier?

What does it mean that they were “on the same standing with their brethren” while in that first place?

What was it about these who receive authority that qualified them to receive the “holy calling” from the foundation of the world? What does it mean that they “would not harden their hearts” in the first place? If they didn’t do it then, will they do it now?

Is foreknowledge about these individual’s qualifications based on prior performance? Can you determine that since they did not harden their hearts in the first place, they will not begin to harden their hearts now?

What about the “atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared” made them qualified? Did they accept Him there? Did they soften their hearts there toward Him? Are they capable of having redeeming faith in Him here because they first acquired it there?

Is all this necessary to have preceded ordination here? If it was not acquired there, can an ordination here have any effect?

What, then, do those who qualify do? What does it mean “to teach his commandments unto the children of men?”

Is there something different between teaching commandments on the one hand, and “that they [who are taught] also might enter into his rest” on the other hand? Are the two linked together? Is it necessary to both “teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest” to show such priestly authority? That is, can anyone, regardless of their true ordination to authority teach commandments? But does it take something more, some higher ordination in order to bring those taught “to enter into His rest?” If so, what is the difference? How can you recognize such teachings if they are ever put on display?

Did Joseph Smith exhibit such powerful teachings?

Did Enoch?

Did Melchizedek? Abraham? Elijah? Elisha? Nephi? The Brother of Jared? Enos? Others?

Do we see that today? If so, where? Does anyone have the audacity to presume they can bring another soul back to the Lord's rest? Maybe Joseph Smith's comment on this point is appropriate: ""The things of God are of deep import and time and experience and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind O man if thou wilt lead a soul into salvation must search into and contemplate the darkest abyss and the broad expanse of eternity, thou must commune with God." (DHC Vol. 3, p. 295.)

Alma 13:7

Now we encounter comments that everyone seems to use about this priesthood. It is "without beginning of days or end of years." It is "from the foundation of the world."

It is "prepared from eternity to eternity."

When did eternity end and mortality begin?

When does mortality end and eternity begin again?

What does the phrase "from eternity to eternity" really refer to?

Do we pass "from eternity" then back "to eternity" as part of this mortal experience?

What went on before, back in the first "eternity?" We read elsewhere of this peaceful existence during "millennial" conditions, which end with rebellion, disputes and a war. Was Satan loosed in an earlier eternity after some season of peace to stir the hearts of men to anger one with another? (See Rev. 20: 7-9.) Was he cast out to hell, or the Telesstial Kingdom, where we presently reside? What went on? How often would the Lord have gathered us as a hen gathers her chicks, but we would not be gathered? (I suppose His asking and the lack of an answer implies a great number.)

What is it about what went on before, in the earlier "eternity," that allows God to possess His perfect "foreknowledge of all things" now?

What is this strange doctrine and the implications which flow from them? Was Joseph Smith trying to tell us this in the later Nauvoo talks? (Maybe we should read them again...)

How is one to take it all in? How is the priesthood tied to this prior eternity? Why do we get side-tracked into the subject of "from eternity to eternity" when we learn about this endless priesthood which is without beginning of days or end of years?

Alma 13:8

The manner of such person's ordination is described but-

What does it mean to be "called with a holy calling?" Is there something about the nature of this "calling" that is different from an interview and being "found worthy of advancement in the priesthood" as we commonly see? What is a "holy calling" anyway? Why does this kind of priestly calling get described exclusively as "holy" by its nature? Is there some contact with God required (who is the source of all holiness) as part of this "holy calling?"

Then we have the description of their ordination. What does it mean to be "ordained with a holy ordinance?" Does our practice of laying on hands, conferring the Aaronic Priesthood and ordaining to

the office of Priest answer to this description? What is the “holy ordinance” that is done to confer this priesthood?

Can we automatically rule out the entirety of Aaronic and most of the Melchizedek priesthood offices when we see the words: “taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order?” Is there some office we are aware of which is appropriately described as “taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order?” Think about that for a moment.

If this is a “holy calling” and it results in the person receiving it “taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order” isn’t this something perhaps quite different from what we do to disseminate the priesthood? And if all the Aaronic Priesthood and most of the Melchizedek Priesthood offices are not what we would appropriately call “the high priesthood of the holy order” then are we talking about either of these two commonly held priesthoods anyway?

Then we have the interesting addition that the “calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end” for those involved. That is, without reference to mortality. It was held before coming here, it will endure after leaving here. It is “endless” in the sense it comes “from eternity to eternity” as set out in the preceding verse.

This is potentially quite different from the manner in which we practice priestly ordinations in the church today. I suppose that some will want to confine all this description to our practices. They are free to see it in that way if they choose. I’m just asking if it is more likely that the words have a different meaning than we have associated with them before. If that is possible, then perhaps we ought to be asking the Lord to inform us more about the matter, rather than presuming we already possess what is being described here.

It may just be that our hopes for some great, eternal reward hinge upon getting to the bottom of this matter. It may just be that God’s control over and involvement with the “holy calling” and “holy ordinance” of having the “high priesthood after the Son of God” is immediate and direct. It may be that this “holy ordinance” will only come from that God who employs no servant at the gate, but is Himself the gatekeeper. (2 Ne. 9: 41.) Wouldn’t that be wonderful. Think about it – no flawed process. No fooled bishop or stake president letting someone obtain an office for which they are completely unsuited. It sort of makes sense.

Alma 13:9

Several things about this formulation are interesting. Most interesting is the closing declaration, “And thus it is. Amen.” It is iconic. It is as if the statement were an authorized, serious message, intended to be accompanied by the requisite formalities to let the reader know that this is serious stuff. This is “most holy.” This is not just a passing description. It holds terrible, eternal significance. So the material that preceded it holds important keys to understanding. Important warnings and knowledge. Perhaps, as a result of the concluding punctuation, we should be very, very careful about the words that preceded it.

Now look at the beginning-

“Thus they become...” These individuals have become something. The “high priests” about whom this material has been written have been in the process of becoming something holy from before the foundation of the world. This is pre-earth or pre-mortal existence stuff. The history, or background

leading up to finding a holy high priest in mortality is eons in the making. It goes back to before this world had been reorganized.

"..high priests forever..." This priestly authority and holy order is not mortal. It is without beginning in this mortal phase of existence.

Now comes the formula of the authority: "after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity, and truth." Look at it in pieces.

-After the order of the Son

-After the order of the Only Begotten of the Father

-After the order of Him who is without beginning of days or end of years

-After the order of Him who is full of grace

-After the order of Him who is full of equity

-After the order of Him who is full of truth.

What does it mean to be "begotten" of the Father? (Psalms 2: 7.)

What does it mean to be a "son" of the Father? (1 John 3: 1-3.)

What does it mean to be full of "grace?" (D&C 93: 11-20.)

What does it mean to be full of "equity?" (Proverbs 2: 9.)

What does it mean to be full of "truth?" (D&C 93: 24.)

This is interesting. What are we to make of such "holy" men who are "high priests after the order of the Son of God?"

Do you think we make a man such a thing by sustaining him in Ward, Stake and General Conferences? Can we make one of them at all?

If we never realize who they are, does that mean they don't exist? Does it mean they weren't ordained before the foundation of the world?

This is quite different than what I've been told in Gospel Doctrine class. It is beginning to look and feel a lot like what Joseph Smith was saying right at the end in the Nauvoo period. I wonder why we neglect this today?

Alma 13:10

Immediately following the formula, the explanation continues that "many" were able to become ordained as such "high priests of God." But the way they did this was through several specific actions.

They had "exceeding faith." What do you suppose "exceeding faith" means? Why not "faith?" What is the difference between "faith" and "exceeding faith?"

They went through "repentance." So we know they made the same kinds of mortal mistakes as we do. They experience the bitter and then are able to prefer the sweet. They knew what it was like to feel the bitterness of hell, because they felt the sting of sin. So they repented. These great souls are NOT perfect, after all! They "repented" because they didn't do it right the first time. What a refreshing idea. They weren't fake. They didn't feign virtue. They had failing. They were filled with life, made errors, and needed to repent. They were not immune to the circumstances of this fallen world.

More importantly, do the terms “exceeding faith” and “repentance” go together? That is, do you necessarily have to possess “exceeding faith” in order to become one who fully “repents?” If so, why? How is it done? This may be an important clue to the process of “keeping the second estate” and “proving” that you are ready to move on. Perhaps it is in this manner that some will then have “glory added upon their heads forever,” (Abr. 3: 26) and in another cycle of existence and eternal progression then also join in the ranks of those belonging to the “holy order after the Son of God.”

These called persons are, despite everything, “righteous before God.” God measures differently than do we. Being “righteous before God” may not mean the same thing we think “righteous” means. We want outward signs, symbols, dress, grooming and conformity. God looks at the intent of the heart.

Interestingly, they “choose to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish.” What do you suppose that means? First, they “repent,” then they “work righteousness.” Because of this, they do not “perish.” So do these things all go together? Can a person “repent” but then not “work righteousness?” Does a person have to “repent” and “work righteousness” in order to not “perish?”

There is so much more. But I stop the verse by verse commentary here. I will not have time in this lesson to get even this far. (verse by verse commentary has been taken from DS blog from Jun 7-11, 2010)

We are often taught that it is unlawful to preach mysteries, yet here Alma is preaching the deepest doctrines to the non-converted. If we preach the truth, it will attract those whose lives are empty. Why would they join us if what we offer is as trite and superficial as the false religions they already believe?

[Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 13:16](#)

A document found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, known as “The Melchizedek Document” (11Q13), speaks of a Messianic figure called “Melchizedek” who will release the people “from the debt of all their sins.” The first century Jewish writer Philo of Alexandria identifies Melchizedek with the Logos (Word) and says he will “bring forward wine instead of water and shall give your souls to drink, and shall cheer them with unmixed wine in order that they may be wholly occupied with divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself” (Philo, Allegorical Interpretation iii, 82).

[Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 13:18](#)

The first century Jewish writer Philo of Alexandria writes, “God made Melchizedek...his own high priest” (Philo, Allegorical Interpretation iii, 79).

According to the Talmud, Melchizedek was a title for Shem; his father was Noach (b.Nedarim 32b).

[Alma 13:21](#)

Stretched Forth His Hand - we touched on this back in Mosiah:

[Mosiah 16:1](#)

And now it came to pass that after Abinadi had spoken these words, he stretched forth his hands and said, The time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord, when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just (Mosiah 16:1). Mosiah 12:24 helps one to understand what he stretched forth his hand(s) means: The

Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations. Abinadi is demonstrating the Lord's action, thereby affirming he is His messenger. He had been given the sign to testify and used it to declare he was a true messenger. Later in the Nephite history, the prophet Alma concluded his testimony of Melchizedek by using the same sign to evidence his authority: And now it came to pass that when Alma had said these words unto them, he stretched forth his hand unto them and cried with a mighty voice, saying, Now is the time to repent, for the day of salvation draweth nigh! (Alma 13:21). He used this sign because he was authorized to do so, and he understood what the declaration meant. Although those who were there may not have understood, it was a sign that he was a true messenger. Man cannot be saved in ignorance. Once the key of knowledge is lost, mankind is lost and cannot be saved until that key is returned. Prophets sent with messages who testify to an ignorant people use signs that the Lord recognizes and authorizes, but they may not be noticed or understood by those who hear the message. Nevertheless, the testimony becomes binding when the Lord's seal is put upon it. This often involves a required sign to be given, or in other words, for hands to be stretched forth. (DS, "A Couple of Questions," Jan. 30, 2013, blog post.) (See also Alma 14:10-11 below)

Alma 13:28

A list:

But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering;

Alma 13:29

Another list:

Having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day and enter into his rest.

Alma 13:30

Alma concludes praying that the Lord grant they many not suffer the *second death*.

Alma 14:10-11

I was thinking about the poor store owner(s) in recent news at CHAZ who was told to pay protection money. At first I thought, no, if it were me I wouldn't pay them. Then I realized the predicament the store owner is under. No other place to turn. And if he refuses he will be labeled "racist", and that kind of label in these circumstances could certainly result in his store being burned to the ground and possible threat to his life and that of his family. Go ahead and pay. Not because you trust the people to actually protect you, but because if you don't the very people offering protection would likely be the ones to turn around and become the perpetrators. Then it occurred to me. If I had the faith, could I trust in God to protect me and my store?

Power. Amulek asks Alma, should we stretch forth our hands. Alma tells him now is not the time. Similar thing in next week's lesson with Ammon. Those who were coming to attack Ammon did not know anything about God or His power or the promise that had been made to Ammon.

Alma 14:23

"...twelfth day of tenth month". This is just over 3 months since Angel visited Amulek (Alma 10:6). We must also take into account this is "after many days" being in prison. In this short time Amulek, being taught by a true High Priest of God, is able to transform his life and become a powerful teacher, with power and authority himself from God. (As we see he is witnessing and teaching profound truths and even stretching forth his hand and suggesting to Alma they have power to stop the martyrdom).

Alma 14:26

Alma prays, "How long shall we suffer these great afflictions, O Lord? O Lord, give us strength..." In the Stick of Joseph it uses the words "O Adon", where in other places for "Lord" it is often translated "YHWH". Hebrew gives us many more names for God and Lord than we see in English.

"And they broke the cords with which they were bound;" (note in verse 28 it says they were "loosed from their bands"). Power in the priesthood includes power to break bands. We see in the example of Nephi that he broke the bands when his brothers bound him in the wilderness, but when he was bound on the ship he endured the suffering.

Alma 15:3-12

Compare Zeezrom's conversion with the conversion of Alma, Paul, King Lamoni, and King Lamoni's father. What are the similarities? Have you experienced anything similar?

Alma 15:16,18

Amulek's sacrifices. Was his wife and children among those of his kindred who remained in Ammonihah? (see Alma 10:11)

Alma 16:1

On the fifth day of the second month (82 BC). This would be just less than 4 months from when Alma and Amulek came out of the prison.

The last war/battle with the Lamanites (that the record tells us about) had been in 86 BC (Alma 3:22-24). After this one there was 3 more years of peace.

Definition:

Wrath

There are two levels of wrath. One is temporal — here and now. The wicked are often punished here by letting them pursue their own evil course until it destroys them. Repentance, in that sense, relieves them of the physical, emotional, social, military, economic, and interpersonal disasters they bring upon themselves by their ruinous pursuit of destructive behavior. The other is eternal — meaning coming after this life. That second wrath is a result of leaving this life with accountability for what happened here and the lack of preparation for the moment when “judgment” is rendered. That “judgment” consists of the unrepentant finally facing reality. “When you are in His presence you can accurately measure the difference between what you are and what He wanted you to become — i.e., like Him. The gulf is so great that you would rather be in hell than in the presence of a just and holy being when you are stained with the blood and sins of your generation (Mormon 4:6).” God withdrawing is how His wrath manifests itself. “If He withdraws from you, that should be felt keenly as an absence and rejection.”

God’s wrath is “poured out” and takes a specific form: wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds (1 Nephi 3:29). People go to war. The wicked shall slay the wicked (T&C 50:8; Proverbs 2:37; Mormon 2:1). The wicked get to destroy one another, but they do not get to destroy the righteous (see 1 Nephi 7:4). The angel makes a point of stating what Nephi is beholding in 1 Nephi 3:29: Behold, the wrath of God is upon the mother of harlots. How is this God’s wrath? The answer is that when God is angry, He withdraws His spirit (see Helaman 2:34; 5:3). And when He withdraws His spirit from one, He generally pours it out on another (see Helaman 2:34). When His spirit withdraws, men are left to their natural, carnal state, filled with envy, jealousy, covetousness, ambition, and greed. When the Heavens become silent, the judgments of God follow (see Revelation 2:17; T&C 86:20).

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 17-22

Online zoom Sunday School, 28 Jun 2020

Missionary Work – How to Follow the Example of Ammon and How NOT to

Not long ago I listened to a speaker at a fireside who spoke on the topic of how to do missionary work among the Native Americans on our local reservations. He began by relating how Jell-O was a common thing at many church functions. He noted that "If you've ever made Jell-O or eaten Jell-O you know it takes the shape of whatever you use as a mold. You might have stars or American flags on the Fourth of July, or an entire bunt pan for large institutional functions." Due to the many expectations we find in the church, we may often feel like we are being asked to fit into some mold.

"There's an old rabbi who explains what Nimrod was up to when he was building the Tower of Babel. So Nimrod, as we know, was the mighty hunter in the land. Or according to some sources, the mighty hunter of the Lord's people. Nimrod is the archetypal tyrant who founded Babylon. And in many traditions was the builder of the tower. He it was, after the flood, who found that it was easier to control people by crowding them into cities and making them think, act, talk, and dress the same. To read from Genesis:

"And they said one to another, come, go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and they had tar for mortar. And they said, come, go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top will be nigh near unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down beholding the city and the tower, which the children of men were building. And the Lord said, Behold, the people are the same, and they all have the same language; and this tower they begin to build."

The rabbi explains that the the bricks are a metaphor for the people. Bricks, as you know, were made by taking clay and forcing or pressing it into a mold. Clay being pliable and moldable. Then burning them thoroughly, to dry them. So with pressure and heat the bricks all come out looking and feeling the same.

Now the ending of the kingdom of Babylon, there was a king who had a dream about an image made of gold, silver, bronze, iron, and iron mixed with miry clay. The stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, which struck the feet, broke it in pieces, and ground it to powder. The King, Nebuchadnezzar, apparently inspired by this dream, set up a giant image in the plains of Dura for all the people to worship. Which if they didn't, they were cast like a brick into the fiery furnace. So this, among other things, was one of the hallmarks of what the image represents. The influence of Babylon. Conform or die. This influence, as we've learned, has dominated in political, social, cultural, and religious spheres ever since. The past 500 years missionaries have been preaching to the natives of this land. Prior to that time the influence of Babylon hadn't touched them. First they were pressed into a Catholic mold, under the auspices

of the Inquisition. The Spanish built missions, churches, and told the people they couldn't speak their language, sing their songs, do their dances, or pray to their God. In fact, they were told the only access they could have to God was through a middle man wearing a brown frock who would speak to God for them. Then came Protestants and Mormons with their own molds to press the people into. Now I'm not here to recount all the details that people encountered, except to show that in the name of God the people have been moved off their land, stripped of their way of life, separated from their parents, punished for speaking their language, beaten, driven, and killed. This is all well-known and I don't want to focus on that. But we should bear it in mind. These are the things that come about through colonialism.

So we need to approach this differently than has been done before. I believe the Lord intends to break the mold. To grind that influence to dust. And so if we have the true message that God intends to bring to the inhabitants of this land, surely how we approach it must be different than what has gone before. What is needed, I think, and what they haven't really encountered, is people who live the teachings of Jesus, who live the Sermon on the Mount. Not only to say, but to do. Consider the different results of the preaching of Aaron and Omner and Himni and Muleki, and that of Ammon. There was a big difference. What made the difference? They were all sons of Mosiah. Well, except Muleki. He just got an honorable mention. They gave, all of them, they gave up a kingly lifestyle, put everything on the altar and suffered hunger, thirst, and fatigue. Yet the majority of the group failed to make converts, except one only, it's interesting the record points out. At least initially. But their approach was different than Ammon's. Ammon's approach was to show, rather than tell. To serve, rather than preach. He wasn't there to tell them what they ought to do, what they ought to learn. I've heard just recently and told of some projects on reservations to go and replace a roof, to replace a tile floor in homes of widows. Also to build greenhouses to help people regain self-sufficiency and food independence. I think that's the kind of thing that would be good for us to do. Let's do that. Let's feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, take abuse if it's offered, turn the other cheek. Give to those that ask of you, be easily entreated. And I think when they are satisfied that you are who you claim to be, they may ask about your religion. Ammon waited until he was asked. This all takes patience and relationships. Real genuine relationships. And I don't think there is a shortcut for that. We need to preach by example." (Sam Vaughn, Hurricane UT, Mar 21, 2020)

Alma 17:20. Compare with 21:4-5.

Among the Amalekites (Amlicites), as a Nephite Aaron would not appear that different as did Ammon among the people of Lamoni. Ammon was immediately bound when coming into the land because he was a Nephite. Also note how King Lamoni's father asked Lamoni, what are you doing with this Nephite? (Alma 20:10) But Aaron and his companions walked freely into the land of the Amalekites and the people of Amulon, and taught in the streets and in their synagogues. It seems to be what they said (and perhaps their accent?) that identified them more than their appearance.

Falling to the Earth as if Dead

Alma 18:40-19:30

Joseph Smith used “taste,” and Nephi used “feel” to describe the very intangible way we detect truth as it is presented to us. Nephi, when talking to his older brothers about how to know a matter is true, used these words:

“Ye are swift to do iniquity but slow to remember the Lord your God. Ye have seen an angel, and he spake unto you; yea, ye have heard his voice from time to time; and he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but ye were past feeling, that ye could not feel his words” (1 Nephi 17:45).

This is delicate, refined, and subtle. It is intended to stretch us, to quiet us down, and calm our minds. We are supposed to receive our own anecdotal evidence which is personal to us, adapted to our own capacities, and something sufficient to convince us it comes from God. It is ALWAYS the case that these experiences are going to be anecdotal. Only the prepared are going to experience them. Others are excluded. One of the best examples of how this works is found in Daniel:

And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel; Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. (Daniel 10:4-9)

Daniel’s experience was real. But it was not open to the view of the unworthy. The physically demanding nature of this kind of experience is often referred to in scripture. Joseph Smith went through it when he collapsed, exhausted, and returning home after the night spent with Moroni (see JS-H 1:48). In these verses, King Lamoni, his wife, and all within his house have a similar reaction to this great revelation. Every such experience is real. They are physical and exhausting. But they are also necessarily personal and cannot be shared. Those lacking faith to have such access are free to disbelieve in them. It is true that this kind of “oil” cannot be shared (see Matthew 25:8-9). Taste and feel are two ways to communicate the highly personal nature of such experiences. (see Denver Snuffer, First Three Words, TDS Vol 1, pg 44-45)

Stick of Joseph footnotes Alma 18:13

107 Compare with the Aramaic title רבּוּנא. Defined in the Soncino Talmud (Pesachim 115b n. 6) as follows: “‘Rabbana’ is a Babylonian title, probably the equivalent of the Palestinian ‘Rabban’ lit., ‘our teacher,’ which is a peculiar title of honour, higher than ‘Rabbi.’”

108 The Hebrew word for “great” here was likely *rav* רב, from the same root as “Rabbanah.”

Alma 18:22

Ammon was harmless.

Alma 18:36

...he laid before him the records and the holy scriptures of the people.

Aaron later also “reads” the scriptures to the father of King Lamoni (Alma 22:12). Abinadai also “read” unto King Noah’s court the words of scripture (Mosiah 13:11).

Alma 18:38

Ammon relates the rebellions of Laman, Lemuel and sons of Ishmael to King Lamoni. What does it take to be able to accept that the history you have been raised with is twisted or incorrect?

Alma 21:2

Amalekites and the people of Amulon were of religion of Nehor. How/when did they learn of this religion?

Amalekites - In Royal Skousen’s work, he renders this as *Amlicites*, as it appeared in the original manuscript. This makes more sense, as the Amlicites were of the religion of Nehor who joined forces with the Lamanites in the war against the Nephites in Alma 2.

Alma 21:5

Hast thou seen an angel? Why do not angels appear unto us? Behold are not this people as good as thy people?

“Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. ... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone.” (Mere Christianity, New York: Macmillan, 1952, pp. 109–10.)

Alma 21:6

We do believe that God will save all men.

(compare 2 Ne 28:8,22)

Alma 21:11

And they contended with many about the word.

The way that Aaron (and Muloki and Ammah) were teaching appears to be a different approach than what Ammon did.

Alma 21:20

King Lamoni "caused that there should be synagogues built in the land of Ishmael; and he caused that his people, or the people who were under his reign, should assemble themselves together."

Where the early church met in homes, and in Joseph Smith's day the only church building built was a temple, here there are synagogues built for the purpose of assembling together.

Alma 22:3

Aaron's approach to father of King Lamoni:

"And now, O king, if thou wilt spare our lives, we will be thy servants."

This is similar to Ammon's approach, but different than Aaron's initial approach. But since comparing notes with Ammon we see Aaron changes his approach.

Alma 22:7

Father of King Lamoni has different answer to the question "Do you believe there is a God". Where with King Lamoni it was about a great spirit, with Lamoni's father he says, the Amlicites believe there is a God. Notice that Aaron does not say, "Yeah, but the God they worship is all wrong, don't believe them". He simply takes what is understood and builds upon that.

Compare Aaron's teaching to father of king Lamoni to Ammons teaching to king Lamoni

Ammon's teachings to king Lamoni	Aaron's teachings to father of king Lamoni
<p><i>Alma 18:36-39</i></p> <p><i>Now when Ammon had said these words, he began at the creation of the world, and also the creation of Adam, and told him all the things concerning the fall of man, and rehearsed and laid before him the records and the holy scriptures of the people, which had been spoken by the prophets, even down to the time that their father, Lehi, left Jerusalem. And he also rehearsed unto them (for it was unto the king and to his servants) all the journeyings of their fathers in the wilderness, and all their sufferings with hunger and thirst, and their travail, and so forth. And he also rehearsed unto them concerning the rebellions of Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael, yea, all their rebellions did he relate unto them; and he expounded unto them all the records and scriptures from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem down to the present time. But this is not all; for he expounded unto them the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world; and he also made known unto them concerning the coming of Christ, and all the works of the Lord did he make known unto them.</i></p>	<p><i>Alma 22:12-14</i></p> <p><i>And it came to pass that when Aaron saw that the king would believe his words, he began from the creation of Adam, reading the scriptures unto the king—how God created man after his own image, and that God gave him commandments, and that because of transgression, man had fallen. And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the creation of Adam, laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state and also the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name. And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance, and so forth; and that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory; and Aaron did expound all these things unto the king.</i></p>
<p>creation of the world, and also the creation of Adam</p>	<p>creation of Adam</p>

the fall of man	laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state
journeyings of their fathers [Lehi's family] in the wilderness, and all their sufferings with hunger and thirst, and their travail, and so forth... rebellions of Laman and Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael	
he expounded unto them all the records and scriptures	reading the scriptures unto the king... did expound unto him the scriptures
plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world; and he also made known unto them concerning the coming of Christ, and all the works of the Lord did he make known unto them.	plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name. And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance, and so forth; and that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory;

The Attitude of the King's Prayer

Alma 22:17-18

I want to draw a connection between the Brother of Jared in Ether 3 and what we see in this example with Lamoni's father.

"And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried mightily, saying...."

It was not the words of the prayer that provoked the attention of heaven, although his prayer was in fact needed, relevant, and exactly what the Lord answered. It was what came before.

This was the King. The King who could have people killed if he chose to do so. This was the one who, like God among his people, exercised the power of life and death. This was the one who could exact taxes from them. This was the one who had absolutely no reason to do what he did here. Look what he did. He prostrated himself on the ground and he "cried out mightily." He didn't pray. He mirrored exactly what the brother of Jared did when he approached God. In the depths of humility and in the sincerity of his heart, he showed absolutely an appreciation for the difference between himself, on the one hand, and God, on the other.

Don't mistake me, I do not think it is necessary to physically engage in this kind of display. But when the display is an extension of what is in the heart, it is absolutely fine. When what is in the heart is right, it doesn't matter how it's displayed, because God looketh on the inner man. This King was so overtaken by what he had heard, that he was not ashamed to prostrate himself in front of the foreign missionaries. He was not ashamed to cry out in the depths of humility. He didn't care who saw it. He didn't do this to

be seen. He didn't care that he was being seen. He did this because at that moment, that was what he was. He was seeking grace from the throne of grace.

Then we read his prayer:

"O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God..."

Do you see this? This is someone who isn't at all certain. This is someone who was convicted of his own inadequacy. It may not be that in your case you don't know enough, it may actually be that you know too much that is wrong. It may be that what you lack comes from your own false beliefs. It will all be erased and started over anyway, if you happen to gaze into heaven for five minutes, you realize that people who have been writing about this stuff since the beginning of time, who have not gazed into heaven, don't know what they're talking about. The suppositions and the connections and the ideas that get floated around are not only false, many of them are offensive to God. They're not right. The board is going to be erased. God's going to re-order it when He ministers to you. You are going to see things in a completely different light when it happens.

It is not that you are brilliant and a shining light of knowledge that qualifies you to know God. Instead it is what is in your heart. How has your heart been prepared? If your heart is open to receive because it is broken and your spirit contrite, then you are ready.

Returning to the king's prayer:

"I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. And now when the king had said these words, he was struck as if he were dead."

Look what happens next. When he recovers, because as he was struck as if he were dead, he was converted. The Lord ministered to him!

And in verse 23:

"And the king stood forth, and began to minister unto them. And he did minister unto them, insomuch that his whole household were converted unto the Lord."

This is what happens when you are converted to the Lord. You can't stand to look about you and see other people left in the darkness. You want to invite them, rather like Nathaniel was invited to, "Come and see for yourself." (John 1:46) You come to the Lord, you come and see for yourself. This little bit of skeptical praying, whether there is a God, and "if thou art God, will you make yourself known to me?" That worked! But not because this is a magic incantation, instead because the king cried out with a broken heart and contrite spirit.

Don't think you lack the faith! If this King, with this prayer, can go to God and ask and receive an answer, your faith is enough. That is not the impediment. The impediment is the pride of your heart, the hardness of your heart, the self-reliance you think you have, the traditions that bind you down, the arrogance of your heart, the unwillingness to cry out mightily to God, and then to be open to receiving an answer. This was enough, and you too, can do enough. (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, beginning on pg 241)

Division of Lands Between Lamanites and Nephites

Alma 22:27-34

This Land: Nephite America

By Book of Mormon Evidence -October 30, 2019

<https://bookofmormonevidence.org/this-land-nephite-america/>

True Book of Mormon Geography Lands - Western New York Model

Errors of Rodney Meldrum

<https://bookofmormongeography.org/basics/models-reviewed/errors-rodney-meldrum/>

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 23-29

Online zoom Sunday School, 5 Jul 2020

Alma 23:7

For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion, that they did not fight against God any more, neither against any of their brethren.

They called them "weapons of rebellion". King Benjamin taught about rebellion:

"And now, I say unto you, my brethren, that after ye have known and have been taught all these things, if ye should transgress and go contrary to that which has been spoken, that ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom's paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved - I say unto you, that the man that doeth this, the same cometh out in open rebellion against God; therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit, and becometh an enemy to all righteousness; (Mosiah 2:36-37)

You see, rebellion is when you withdraw from the Spirit of the Lord and no longer trust that He will "guide you in wisdom's paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved". How much do we trust in our weapons to protect us against the chaos we see going on around us? Is it rebellion against God to trust in them? How strong was the faith of these people?

Hopi Origins

"The 'Old Hopi' will tell you that before the 'Great Star' appeared in the sky, their people were converted to the 'Great Spirit.' After they were converted, they took all their weapons of war that they had and buried them deep in the earth. They refused to take them up again lest they sin against the Great Spirit." (Zula Brinkerhoff, *God's Chosen People of America*, pg 250)

Alma 24:7

Look at this from the eyes of those who have not been converted. Their brother Lamanites no longer want to be called Lamanites. In fact, they are saying things like "God has in goodness sent these our brethren, the Nephites, unto us to preach unto us, and to convince us of the traditions of our wicked fathers." Not only that, they have opened a correspondence with the Nephites (Alma 23:18, see also next verse here). Even though the Anti-Nephi-Lehis are harmless, the Lamanites wouldn't see it that way. It would be natural for Lamanites to have some fear and trepidation over this.

In our current day we see a lot being said about white privilege. Because of conditions in the history of our wicked white race, it has resulted in a situation of what we now classify toward minorities as what is being called "systemic racism".

In this verse we see the Anti-Nephi-Lehis having been convinced of the traditions of their wicked fathers.

Is there merit or value in acknowledging the wickedness of our fathers? Part of the mission of the sons of Mosiah in the first place was to come into the land of the Nephites to convince them of these things (see Alma 17:9. See also Alma 9:16-17).

How can it help us to be convinced of traditions of our own wicked fathers?

In order to identify some possible false traditions that can be found in our own culture, I want to first take a look at the people of Qumran and what they said about wicked traditions of their fathers. The earliest we can estimate that the community of Qumran began is around 176 BCE. The community appears to have been destroyed by the Romans around 68 CE. This spans the timeframe between when the Old Testament record ends and after when our New Testament record ends. The wicked fathers for the people of Qumran would include the second temple period Deuteronomists who the Dead Sea Scrolls identifies as enemies. These would be those who were responsible for making changes to and corrupting God's covenant that was established during the first temple period and earlier. Here I want to remind you of Nephi's prophesy that covenants would be removed from the Bible (1 Ne 13:21-29).

The community of Qumran established their own covenant with God:

And all those who enter in the Rule of the Community shall establish a covenant before God in order to carry out all that he commands and in order not to stray from following him for any fear, dread grief or agony (that might occur) during the dominion of Belial. (1QS 1:16-18, TDSST pg 3)

Included in this covenant was a recognition and acknowledgement of the sins of their wicked fathers:

*And the levites shall recite the sins of the children of Israel, all their blameworthy transgressions and their sins during the dominion of Belial. [And all] those who enter the covenant shall confess after them and they shall say:
<<We have acted sinfully,
[we have transgressed,
we have sinned, we have acted irreverently,
we and our fathers before us,
inasmuch as we walk
[in the opposite direction to the precepts] of truth and justice
[...] his judgment upon us and upon our fathers; (ibid. 22-26)*

Compare this to the typical Evangelical Christian prayer where we acknowledge our sinful nature to God before asking for forgiveness and asking Christ to save us. See Mosiah 4:2.

Daniel offered a prayer for a covenant of God with his people in his day. In it we see a plea and prayer exposing past sins of the people and petitioning forgiveness from the Lord. This pattern is consistent with what we see in other places in scripture.

“And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly and have rebelled, even by departing from your precepts and from your judgments. Neither have we listened unto your servants the prophets, who

spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.” (Daniel 9:4-6). See also Ezekiel 36:16-38. As also with Josiah (2 Chron 34:31-32), King Benjamin (Mosiah 1), and others.

Note how in Daniel 9 he prays “we do not present our supplications before you for our righteousnesses” (Daniel 9:18). Moses put it even better, addressing the children of Israel:

“Not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart, do you go to possess their land, but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord your God does drive them out from before you; and that he may perform the word which the Lord swore unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord your God gives you not this good land to possess it for your righteousness, for you are a stiffnecked people.” (Deut 9:5. See also Ezekiel 36:21-23)

Lest we are tempted to become too proud of our own status as God's chosen people, we need to be reminded that the blessed state we find ourselves in is a result of promises made to righteous fathers that came before us, and that if we seek to obtain such blessings for ourselves we must make our own covenant with God. Do we need to remember how our own past wicked fathers failed and corrupted much of what we may wrongfully be accepting as correct traditions today? In our current day and circumstance, what things might we expect to include in such a prayer that follows a similar pattern as the examples given above? Could it begin something like this:

"Heavenly Father, we ask you for your mercy and grace to be with those of us who seek to become your people. We hope to repent and return to your path, and no longer be condemned and rejected as a people because of those who went before. Take pity on us all and have mercy for us, as we acknowledge and accept the condemnation and rejection of the latter-day gentiles, and petition that we may overcome it. We are mindful that in 1832 the gentile saints were condemned for vanity and unbelief because they treated lightly the things they had received, and they were warned by you that they would remain under condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments, not only to say, but to do." (see D&C 84:53-47)

These are things to think about. We should be mindful that we are no different in our day than were those who left a scriptural record for us as an example of what we must be to connect with God as they did.

Lamanite Converts vs Nephite Apostates

Around 80 BC, 12 years after sons of Mosiah leave on their mission to the Lamanites, and about 3 months after Alma and Amulek escape out of prison, "in the eleventh year of reign of judges... on the fifth day of second month", the city of Ammonihah is destroyed by Lamanites. (Alma 16:1-2). These Lamanites were mostly Amlicites and Amulonites who were after the order of Nehor. The people of the city of Ammonihah were also after the order of Nehor (Alma 16:11).

Interesting to note that the native Lamanites who were killing the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi end up joining the people of God (Alma 24:25-26), but the Amlicites and Amulonites, who were native Nephites that had rejected Christ, end up destroying those of their own faith in Ammonihah.

And thus we can plainly discern, that after a people have been once enlightened by the Spirit of God, and have had great knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness, and then have fallen away into sin and transgression, they become more hardened, and thus their state becomes worse than though they had never known these things. (Alma 24:30)

Wicked Destroy Wicked and Righteous

From notes sent to my Uncle Lauren around 22 May last year (in response to his request for me to review a book he had written):

The wicked can destroy the wicked. It is also fair game for the wicked to destroy the righteous. The wicked are allowed to destroy the righteous all the time in history. If you don't believe that then go ask Amulek, who suggested to Alma they stretch forth their hands and use the power of God to stop the killing of innocent believers. (Alma 14:10) Alma rejected the idea saying "the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory; and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just." (Alma 14: 11) These people are received up into glory. These people who are righteous are slain this way because the wicked get to kill them. They get to kill them because God will judge the wicked by taking their lives. That is the system. God can slay the wicked, but God cannot slay the righteous. The wicked kill the righteous. The most righteous man who ever lived was allowed to be killed by the wicked. In fact, it was indispensable for the wicked to kill Him, because otherwise there could not have been an atonement made. Therefore, Christ was slain at the hands of wicked men.

However, "the time soon cometh that the fulness of the wrath of God shall be poured out upon all the children of men; for he will not suffer that the wicked shall destroy the righteous." (1 Ne. 22:16)

Wicked Not Allowed to Destroy Righteous

We find several places in the scriptures where it says "the spirit shall not always strive with man." (Gen 6:3; 1 Ne. 7:14; Morm. 5:16 among others). What does it mean for the spirit to strive with us, and what does it mean when it says it will not always strive with us?

Let's look at some of these passages:

"the word of the Lord shall be fulfilled concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; for all things which the Lord hath spoken concerning the destruction of Jerusalem must be fulfilled. For behold, *the Spirit of the Lord ceaseth soon to strive with them*; for behold, they have rejected the prophets" (1 Ne 7:13-14)

"And when these things have passed away a speedy destruction cometh unto my people; for, notwithstanding the pains of my soul, I have seen it; wherefore, I know that it shall come to pass; and they sell themselves for naught; for, for the reward of their pride and their foolishness they shall reap destruction; for because they yield unto the devil and choose works of darkness rather than light, therefore they must go down to hell. *For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction*, and this grieveth my soul." (2 Ne 26:10-11)

"And also that the seed of this people may more fully believe his gospel, which shall go forth unto them from the Gentiles; for this people shall be scattered, and shall become a dark, a filthy, and a loathsome

people, beyond the description of that which ever hath been amongst us, yea, even that which hath been among the Lamanites, and this because of their unbelief and idolatry. For behold, *the Spirit of the Lord hath already ceased to strive with their fathers*; and they are without Christ and God in the world; and they are driven about as chaff before the wind. They were once a delightsome people, and they had Christ for their shepherd; yea, they were led even by God the Father.” (Mormon 5:15-17)

One commentary on 1 Nephi chapter 14 gives the following insight:

“God’s wrath is “poured out” and takes a specific form: “wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds.” People go to war. The “wicked kill the wicked.” (D&C 63: 33; Proverbs 11: 5; Mormon 4: 5.)

The wicked get to destroy one another, but they do not get to destroy the righteous. (1 Nephi 22: 16.)

The destruction of God’s judgment will be “among all the nations which belonged to the mother of abominations.” But that was all nations, was it not? Therefore, what nation will not be at war in this coming day?

The angel makes a point of stating what Nephi is beholding: “Behold, the wrath of God is upon the mother of harlots.” How is this God’s wrath? The answer is that when God is angry, He withdraws His spirit. (Helaman 6: 35; Helaman 13: 8.) And when He withdraws His spirit from one, He generally pours it out on another. (Helaman 6: 34-36.) When His spirit withdraws, men are left to their natural, carnal state, filled with envy, jealousy, covetousness, ambition and greed. When the heavens become silent, the judgments of God follow. (Revelation 8: 1; D&C 88: 95.)

This is the means by which the tares ripen in iniquity, and the wheat ripens in righteousness. However, to preserve the spirit among those to be saved in the last days, it will be necessary for the same priesthood, the same calling, to be in possession of those to be preserved. Otherwise they can’t ripen into wheat. (D&C 86: 1-11.) For the wheat are destined for Celestial Glory and eternal life. (D&C 101: 65.) This cannot be realized without a covenant (D&C 132: 20) and the testimony of Jesus to them. (D&C 76: 51-57.) ... If His spirit withdraws from the world, but remains with His Saints, what peril is there if the Saints don’t also withdraw from the world?” (Denver Snuffer Blog, 1 Nephi 14:15-16, Jul 12, 2010)

[Alma 25:6-13](#)

And it came to pass that when the Lamanites saw that they could not overpower the Nephites they returned again to their own land; and many of them came over to dwell in the land of Ishmael and the land of Nephi, and did join themselves to the people of God, who were the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi. (verse 13)

Looking at the backstory (verses 6-12) we see how these Lamanites that ended up joining the people of God were able to come to their senses after having gotten caught up in the ridiculousness of the incense and outrage exhibited by the Amlicites and Amulonites in their anger and fury against the Nephites for what turned out to be no good cause. Liken that unto us in our own day. What do we see? Are people becoming increasingly more angry without cause? Will we witness many conversions when those who start to see what's really going on come to their senses?

Law of Moses

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 25:15

124 ["for it was expedient that they should keep the Torah of Moshe as yet, for it was not all fulfilled."] The underlying Hebrew could likely also be rendered as "for it was expedient that they should keep the Torah of Moshe, for everything was not yet fulfilled." And not one yud or stroke shall pass from the Torah until everything is fulfilled (Matt. 5:18; Alma 16:34; 3 Nefi 1:6; 5:22). See also "What does it mean to fulfill the Torah?" in footnote to 2 Nefi 11:8 [2 Ne 25:23-27].

125 ["they must keep those outward performances until the time"] The underlying Hebrew was probably אד טו (Strong's 5704), meaning "as far (or long or much) as, whether in space (even unto) or time (during, while, until [the time]) or degree (equally with)." This word could, therefore, also be translated as "to the degree that" rather than "until the time."

Alma 26:21

...there is none that knoweth these things, save it be the penitent. (see Alma 27:18 below)

Alma 26:22

Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed; yea, and it shall be given unto such to bring thousands of souls to repentance, even as it has been given unto us to bring these our brethren to repentance.

This verse contains steps which, if taken, lead to promised results.

The steps are: 1) *repent*, 2) *exercise faith*, 3) *do good works*, and 4) *pray*. The promise which follows taking these steps is extraordinary. As with any formula in scripture, we can use the promise to determine if we have taken the required steps. If someone has repented, exercised faith, done good works and prayed, they will know they have done so successfully because they will then:

- *know the mysteries of God*
- *reveal things which never have been revealed*
- *bring thousands of souls to repentance*

Repentance

Repentance means change. It begins by wanting to be more in harmony with God. It involves hungering and thirsting for something better. Done correctly, there is an eager willingness about repentance. Too often we associate it with guilt and being shamed into changing. The Gospel is more positive than that. It presumes the repentant soul is intrigued by what Christ offers. Those who most fit the model are they who drop their nets, abandon their fishing ships, and follow Christ as He strolls along the shoreline asking for followers. (Matt 4:18-20)

We associate repentance almost exclusively with stopping something. "I need to repent" most often is an expression for "I need to stop doing that." In that sense repentance is exclusively "deduction" or "subtraction." In the real sense of the word, however, repentance is "additive" and "positive." It is the process of growing and receiving new information, new outlooks, and new positive behavior into your life. (see Denver Snuffer, Eighteen Verses, pg 195-198)

Faith

You should make it a practice to read Lectures on Faith every year. They are that good.

It is important to "exercise faith". By paring these words together, the implication is that it requires activity. There is action taking place. It is not something we "have" but something we "do." Faith should be engaged and actively used. (ibid pg 198)

Do Good Works

Good works are linked to helping others. Unless someone is benefitting from the work you do, there is not much good in it. See Matt 5:13-16. Significantly, we are warned against becoming a candle which calls attention to itself. Our "good works" should call attention to "your Father which is in heaven." (ibid pg 200-201)

Pray

You need to talk with Him. Unless you have a dialogue going with Him, He is not able to unfold the promises which follow. It is a conversation with heaven. To contrast this, look at the Pharisee in Luke 18:11. He "prayed thus with himself". (ibid pg 202)

Know the Mysteries of God

What more could be desired? It is a false, even damning suggestion that you should not seek to know mysteries from God. They must be learned. But they are not always permitted to be taught.

As has been discussed, doing charitable acts for others is necessarily tied to knowing mysteries. Some things are learned only by those who live them. Charity opens the doors to understanding things to subtle, so refined, it is not possible to comprehend them while living a coarse life. Charity to others softens the heart into increasing sensitivity. Those willing to walk in that path get to feel, and see, and ultimately comprehend things reserved only for them. It is a natural, even inevitable process. This verse sets it out as a formula. The formula works. The wisdom and experience necessary to have composed this verse was well beyond the capacity of the young Joseph Smith in 1829 when he translated the Book of Mormon. This is ancient wisdom, from a seasoned prophet of God. Joseph only translated wisdom which came from others. (see Denver Snuffer, Eighteen Verses, pg 203)

Reveal Things Which Never Have Been Revealed

Good example of this can be found in this verse given to Oliver Cowdrey:

*Behold, I say unto thee, Oliver, that it shall be given unto thee that **thou shalt be heard by the church** in all things **whatsoever thou shalt teach them by the Comforter**, concerning the revelations and commandments which I have given. But, behold, verily, verily, I say unto thee, no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses. And thou shalt be obedient unto the things*

*which I shall give unto him, even as Aaron, to declare faithfully the commandments and the revelations, with power and authority unto the church. **And if thou art led at any time by the Comforter to speak or teach, or at all times by the way of commandment unto the church, thou mayest do it. But thou shalt not write by way of commandment, but by wisdom;***

Oliver was not the Church President. Yet he was told to write words of wisdom and insight, through the Comforter or Holy Ghost. This did not upset the order of the Church, and is included within the revelation setting out that order. The order envisions there will be others who will provide inspired insight within the Church. Other, similar statements appear in D&C 88:77 ("And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom."); D&C 88:118 ("And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith."); and D&C 109:7.

There is no contradiction here in the promise of this verse and the order of the Church. The duty to teach one another is not limited to a single person or office, but spread broadly throughout the Church. Therefore the promise Ammon makes to anyone following the steps that they will be able to "reveal things which never have been revealed" does not contradict the established order within the Church. Rather, it supports it. Revealing things which have never been revealed is not limited to writing new commandments for the Church. Brother Hugh Nibley was a great restorer of ancient lost wisdom. He was a professor at BYU, and a Gospel Doctrine teacher in his ward. He never presided over either the Church at large, or any significant local portion of it. Yet his writings certainly revealed things which had not hitherto been revealed to the Saints.

Bringing Thousands of Souls to Repentance

Never underestimate the influence of your inspired words.

We cannot rely upon or look to Church leaders, alone, to perform these promises. It is left to us to take up the task. The leaders have so little contact with the members at this point, they cannot possibly influence the conversion process, except indirectly. We are the ones who will be directly involved. Even so great an office as the Quorum of the Twelve only interfaces with the rank and file members for about twenty minutes on a screen every six months. They spend their time teaching and interfacing with other general Church officers and leaders. These other general leaders, taught by the Twelve, teach Stake leaders. The Stake leaders teach local leaders. And the local leaders teach you and me. Although, the Twelve may be venerated, respected and celebrated as great men, they are distant from the neighbor, coworker, relative and friends we should be speaking with about the Gospel. Ammon's promise was given to us. (ibid pg 208-209)

Alma 26:35

Now have we not reason to rejoice? Yea, I say unto you, there never were men that had so great reason to rejoice as we, since the world began; yea, and my joy is carried away, even unto boasting in my God; for he has all power, all wisdom, and all

understanding; he comprehendeth all things, and he is a merciful Being, even unto salvation, to those who will repent and believe on his name.

Since the world began? Nowhere in recorded history of the world do we see in the Old Testament, in the Upanishads, in the earliest records that have been uncovered (Gilgamesh etc.) do we hear of a people who have buried their weapons of war and willingly submitted to be killed before they would take up arms against their brothers? This is incredible indeed! How could Joseph Smith have been so bold as to make such a statement - since the world began?

Alma 27:18

Now was not this exceeding joy? Behold, this is joy which none receiveth save it be the truly penitent and humble seeker of happiness.

What does it mean to be penitent?

Penitence is another way to describe repentance or the process of change and growing beyond sins limiting your happiness. It comes as you allow Christ to "succor" you through the power of the Atonement. Through penitence, people do away with the darkness in their lives and add light instead. (Denver Snuffer, Eighteen Verses, pg 308)

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 27:22

There is a wordplay here in the original Hebrew. "Yirshon" is from Hebrew ירשה (y'resha - Strong's 3424) meaning "possession, inheritance."

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 28:6-7

Fasting and prayer at the turn of the year (see Alma 15:10) indicates it was Yom Kippur, just ten days after Rosh Hashanah. Verse 10 says, "... thus ended the fifteenth year" because it is summarizing and conflating Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The entire month of Tishrei is called "the beginning of months" (Ex. 12:1 – 2), and Sukkot is said to be "at the year's end" (Ex. 34:22), though it begins fifteen days after Rosh Hashanah and five days after Yom Kippur. Years were also counted from Sukkot to Sukkot (Deut. 31:10 – 13).

Alma 28:11-12

*And the bodies of many thousands are laid low in the earth, while the bodies of many thousands are moldering in heaps upon the face of the earth; yea, and many thousands are mourning for the loss of their kindred, because they have reason to fear, according to the promises of the Lord, that they are consigned to a state of endless wo. While many thousands of others truly mourn for the loss of their kindred, yet **they rejoice and exult in the hope**, and even know, according to the promises of the Lord, that they are raised to dwell at the right hand of God, in a state of never-ending happiness.*

What does "hope" mean in this verse.

Read Jacob 4:6. Ether 12:32.

See also Alma 27:28-29 and compare with LoF 6:5.

For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honor and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children, and even his own life also, counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, requires more than mere belief, or supposition that he is doing the will of God, but actual knowledge, realizing that when these sufferings are ended he will enter into Eternal rest and be a partaker of the glory of God.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 29:4

A similar teaching is found in the Talmud: “In the way in which a man wishes to walk he is guided” (b.Makot 10b); “If one goes to defile himself, openings are made for him; and if he goes to purify himself, help is afforded him” (b.Shabbat 104a); “If a man defiles himself a little, he becomes much defiled: [if he defile himself] below, he becomes defiled from above; if he defile himself in this world, he becomes defiled in the world to come. Our Rabbis taught: Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be ye holy: If a man sanctify himself a little, he becomes much sanctified. [If he sanctify himself] below, he becomes sanctified from above; if he sanctify himself in this world, he becomes sanctified in the world to come” (b.Yoma 39a).

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 30-31

Online zoom Sunday School, 12 Jul 2020

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

Alma's Life at a Glance:

Year	Event	Age of Alma the Younger (estimated)
119 BC (Mon 27 Mar)	Alma to Zarahemla. (Mosiah 24:18-25)	15-25
Around 100 BC	Alma the younger sees angel and is converted. Alma the elder is 73. (Mosiah 27:11)	33-43
Around 91 BC	First year of reign of Judges. Alma Elder dies at 82, Mosiah dies at 63. (Mosiah 29:44-47)	42-52
Around 87 BC	Alma fights Amlici. (Alma 2:29-31)	46-56
Around 83 BC	Alma gives up judgement seat. (Alma 4:16-19)	50-60
Around 77 BC	Alma meets Ammon & sons of Mosiah returning home from their 14 year mission (Alma 27:16)	56-66
Around 76 BC	Tremendous battle between Lamanites and Nephites (Alma 28)	57-67
Around 74 BC	Alma's confrontation with Korihor (Alma 30). Mission to Zoramites (Alma 31). Alma's teachings to his sons (Alma 36-42). The Zoramite rebellion and Lamanite war with Nephites (Alma 43-44).	59-69
Around 73 BC	Alma taken up. (Alma 45:18)	60-70

Alma 30:3

Stick of Joseph footnote on Law of Moses again. We spoke of this last week.

Korihor Anti-Christ

Alma 30:6

In verses 15 and 26, Korihor teaches there is no way to know there will be a Christ who shall come. This is the common teaching of anti-Christ. Sherem taught the same thing to Jacob about 400 years earlier.

“And ye have led away much of this people that they pervert the right way of God, and keep not the law of Moses which is the right way; and convert the law of Moses into the worship of a being which ye say shall come many hundred years hence. And now behold, I, Sherem, declare unto you that this is blasphemy; for no man knoweth of such things; for he cannot tell of things to come. And after this manner did Sherem contend against me.” (Jacob 7:7)

Side-note: I found it curious that in this verse is a statement by Sherem, the first anti-Christ in the Book of Mormon, that is used by the church's Correlation Department. [See Gospel Doctrine Manual on The Doctrine and Covenants and Church History; lesson number 42, Continuing Revelation to Latter-day Prophets: <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-and-church-history-gospel-doctrine-teachers-manual/lesson-42-continuing-revelation-to-latter-day-prophets?lang=eng>]

"Explain that the purpose of Church correlation is to preserve 'the right way of God' (Jacob 7: 7.)"

In this quote Sherem is bringing an accusation against Jacob. Sherem, the anti-Christ, accuses Jacob of perverting the right way of God by teaching of Christ. It is this accusation which the Correlation Department has lifted and used as justification for Correlation. This seems a strange juxtaposition to me. (From Jay's email sent to Marcus Reed, 16 Jun 2019. See also Denver Snuffer, A bit of a detour, blog entry 28 Jun 2010, <https://denversnuffer.com/2010/06/a-bit-of-a-detour/>)

Anti-Christ: Those who invite people to follow them and deliberately seek devotees. Those who put themselves up for adoration and worship are mistaken, are practicing priestcraft, are anti-Christ, and are in the employ of the enemy to mankind's souls. Anti-Christ's are also all those who practice a religion that rejects Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Redeemer of mankind. Any teaching or person who draws us to them and does not point us to the Lord is unable to help us. If they try to supplant Christ as the object of admiration, then they are anti-Christ and a false prophet.

Bound and Carried

Alma 30:20

I've tried to make sense of the justification for physically binding someone and removing them from your city or land. If the law protects a person in holding whatever religious belief they choose (or none at all) then how can an atheist be bound and taken before a chief judge for teaching his point of view? (Being held against one's will, 5th & 6th Amendments?)

A person could be punished for what he did wrong (v 9-11), but the law could have no hold on a person for his beliefs (v 7,11-12). Apparently, the law having no hold on a person for his beliefs does not include the right of a person not to be bound and taken before a judge or being cast out of a land (Alma 30:20,-21,29). The classification of "punishment" seems to exclude being bound and taken etc.

Identifying with Korihor

Alma 30:12-28

Howard Zinn wrote:

"Historically, the most terrible things - war, genocide, and slavery - have resulted not from disobedience, but from obedience." ("The Zinn Reader: Writings on Disobedience and Democracy", Howard Zinn, 1997-2009. Seven Stories Press, New York., 420)

Consider the picture that comes into your mind when you think of the animated movie *The Breadwinner*. Haven't seen it? Here's the brief introduction of the plot:

Parvana is an 11-year-old girl living in Kabul, Afghanistan, under the control of the Taliban. Her father Nurullah, who is a school teacher was left physically impaired during the Soviet–Afghan War; because of the war, he lost his left leg and became a hawker. A while later, during supper, he is unjustly arrested after a volatile young member of the Taliban, Idrees, thinks he insulted him earlier while the two were selling goods in the market in Kabul. Parvana's family is left without an adult male relative, as her elder brother Sulayman died years ago, leaving her, her mother Fattema, her elder sister Soraya and her youngest brother Zaki without means to support the family, as they are not allowed to go out without a male relative. Even though Parvana and her mother try to go to the prison, they are forced to go back when a member of the Taliban beats Fattema and threatens to arrest them if they are caught again. After Parvana unsuccessfully tries to buy food while going out as a girl, she decides to cut her hair and dress as a boy and pretend to be Nurullah's nephew, Aatish, in order to support the family.

Or picture in your mind the images of Jihadists standing over their orange clad captors, knives in hand ready to behead them or torture them with some other cruel and unusual punishments for no other reason than because they are considered infidels. That is, because these infidels have a different belief than they do. Mind you, these are extremist views, but views we see being used as justification to commit atrocities. Don't misunderstand, I am not accusing or pointing a finger at Islam or Muslims. But these extremist examples give a perfect illustration of the point I'm trying to make.

Now look at the words of Korihor through the lens of someone who is disgusted with such atrocities. Can you see such abuses of these religions as *the effect of a frenzied mind; and this derangement of their minds comes because of the traditions of their fathers, which lead them away into a belief of things which are not so.*? (see v 16)

How applicable are these words from Korihor to the senseless religious craziness we see in our own day?

I do not teach this people to bind themselves down under the foolish ordinances and performances which are laid down by ancient priests, to usurp power and authority over them, to keep them in ignorance, that they may not lift up their heads, but be brought down according to thy words. Ye say that this people is a free people. Behold, I say they are in bondage. Ye say that those ancient prophecies are true. Behold, I say that ye do not know that they are true. (23-24)

And thus ye lead away this people after the foolish traditions of your fathers, and according to your own desires; and ye keep them down, even as it were in bondage, that ye may glut yourselves with the labors of their hands, that they durst not look up with boldness, and that they durst not enjoy their rights and privileges. Yea, they durst not make use of that which is their own lest they should offend their priests, who do yoke them according to their desires, and have brought them to believe, by their traditions and their dreams and their whims and their visions and their

pretended mysteries, that they should, if they did not do according to their words, offend some unknown being, who they say is God. (v 27-28)

I look at Korihor's words and identify with him on these points because I see how it applies - if we're using the argument to agree against the ridiculousness we see on display with intolerant and violent religious movements. It's the same argument that Korihor could be making against the Zoramite religion. The ones who would actually eventually kill him. It's the same argument that Korihor could be making against the religion or order of Nehor. Nehor, the one that was intolerant of others to the point where he took the sword and killed Gideon. Forget Korihor for a moment, good grief, Alma could be the one making these same observations and be absolutely correct in his assessment. Didn't Alma and Amulek witness such intolerant senselessness first hand with the martyrdom of the believers by the apostate people of Ammonihah (who were of the order of Nehor).

Can you blame people for buying into Korihor's teaching? Can you begin to see its appeal?

Now, I want you to understand that I have taken Korihor's words out of context. Korihor is not making this argument against any of the incorrect traditions and teachings of Nehors or Zoramites. He taking some valid points, and then applying it to the true religion and believers in God. That's the difference. Korihor is denying Christ and attacking the truth, and he knows it.

The people of Ammon (and others in the assembly of God) possess a sense of the reality and self-evident truth in the incorrectness of what Korihor is teaching, even if they may not be able to articulate it.

Hugh Nibley describes those who bought into Korihor's teaching:

They were now emancipated (verse 18), "leading away the hearts of many [because they liked it], causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness, yea, leading away many women, and also men, to commit whoredoms - telling them that when a man was dead, that was the end thereof." So, as I said, nobody has to be paid off. On the basis of this materialistic thing you are not going anywhere. If you are going to have your fun you must have it here. So it led to immorality. That's part of the picture of this positivism. (Nibley, Teachings of The Book of Mormon Part 2, Lecture 54, pg 336)

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?filename=24&article=1071&context=mi&type=additional>

Compare that to what we see today in the cult(s) of the social justice movement, how self-evident the garbage that gets put out there, and worse, bought into. I see these as just as real and dangerous a religious movement as one professing and using their belief in a god to control and manipulate others.

Take for example Korihor's statement, speaking about those under the abuse of religion, "...they durst not look up with boldness, and that they durst not enjoy their rights and privileges." (verse 27) Now look at something recently said by Congresswoman Ilhan Omar:

"When we say housing is a human right, we need to guarantee homes for all." Later (3:22) she speaks of healthcare as a "human right". (2:20 min, Rep. Ilhan Omar Calls for Federal Action to Address Institutional Racism, <https://youtu.be/7u7yyHu6FZk>)

This is either a clear misunderstanding or blatant misrepresentation of *basic human rights* (as understood by our country's founding fathers).

Omar's words appear to be the kind of stuff that is "*pleasing unto the carnal mind*" (v 53) and appeals to those who don't want to be accountable. What kind of damage does this rhetoric do? Should she be bound and removed from the land or hauled off to the high court to be questioned?

To put this in perspective, Korihor is teaching clearly incorrect, corrupt doctrine that has been taught to him from an angel of the devil himself.

"Allow the man his freedom", we hear people say. "We can't deny the man his freedom of speech".

But recognize that when he preaches such things (and people start buying it), it poses the same danger that we see preached to us by Omar or the cult(s) of the social justice movement. Clear, blatant, untruth that threatens the liberty and safety of our society. Liberty was just as fragile to them in Alma's day as it is to us in ours. If we don't stand up against it, confront it, or put a stop to it, what is bound to happen? Will we deserve what comes to us as a result?

Alma 30:28

I want to re-visit verse 28 for a moment.

... if they did not do according to their words, offend some unknown being, who they say is God—a being who never has been seen or known, who never was nor ever will be.

An atheist would argue that I don't need God to be moral. If we are using Sam Harris' definition of morality, I would agree. Common sense alone is enough to see the folly that adultery has on a committed marriage or the foolishness of murder, robbing, or stealing.

*Sam Harris' conception of scientific morality rests upon two factors: events in the world and states of the brain. He argues that there are right and wrong answers to questions of well-being, and he argues for a case of scientific morality in terms of well-being. There are peaks and valleys on the moral landscape, experiences whose subjective side can be objectively spoken of. The world of values is in effect a subset of the world of facts; the former one is only specific in that it is concerned with the well-being of conscious creatures. And I think that is what he might correlate with objective morality, although I haven't heard him using exactly this term. But nevertheless, in his book, he makes a case for a morality informed by science- he says that morality is an undeveloped branch of science. (Uday Saroj, Feb 21, 2017, Response to "What is Sam Harris' definition of 'objective morality'?" <https://www.quora.com/What-is-Sam-Harris-definition-of-objective-morality/answer/Uday-Saroj-1> See also Sam Harris' book, *The Moral Landscape*)*

Hugh Nibley taught:

Korihor said, he said to me in the form of an angel "there is no God; yea, and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them

because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind." And it tells us here why they were pleasing to the carnal mind. The carnal mind is that which caused men and women to lift up their heads and to commit whoredoms, "telling them that when a man was dead, that was the end thereof." That's what they wanted. They wanted a carte blanche for carnal behavior to do whatever they wanted. It appealed to the carnal mind. Carnal also means things of the world, as indicated in Alma 30:17, "but every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature [that's carnal], . . . prospered according to his genius, . . . conquered according to his strength." That's on the carnal level of the warfare in which you deal with objects and people, having no spirit at all. So he had been fooled into that, and the people liked to hear it for that reason. (Nibley, Teachings of The Book of Mormon Part 2, Lecture 54, pg 338-339)

In this whole encounter I admire Alma's boldness. The way he stands his ground. He is the first one to ask the question and put Korihor on the defensive. Alma leads and directs and takes control of the discussion. Alma knows things and is confident of what he knows. Contrast this with what we sometimes hold as the stereotypical good and gentle spirited "good guy" preacher "let's submit to authority and not disrupt the status quo" type. See also John the Baptist if you think the good guy is always a gentle soul.

Alma 30:17

I want to revisit verse 17

And many more such things did he say unto them, telling them that there could be no atonement made for the sins of men, but every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature; therefore every man prospered according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength; and whatsoever a man did was no crime.

Compare with "And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there were no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). Of these, the words "*and the Lord dwelt among them*" are the most important. But He could not do so unless they were united. Becoming one and rising up to receive the proper order of things is but a prelude to the Lord's presence. For us this poses a socio-economic problem because we do not think it is even wise to attempt to have no poor among us. We think people prosper according to their genius and therefore, have earned all they have; or correspondingly, deserve all they lack. When you are a family, as the original Zion, those competitive ideas are not even entertained. (see TDS Vol 1, pg 81)

Alma 30:53

Lets turn to Moses' experience

"And again Moses said..." (Moses 1:18)

Here Moses is talking, because Satan has come during this interlude period as an angel of light, tempting him.

“And again Moses said: I will not cease to call upon God, I have other things to inquire of him: for his glory has been upon me, wherefore I can judge between him and thee. Depart hence, Satan.”

The defect that Moses perceived in what Lucifer was saying, tempting him, did not consist merely in his presence. This is an angel. In D&C 76:28 we read a description. An angel, in a position of authority in the presence of God, was cast down. That being is not someone who, to look upon, would appear to you to be a vile creature. Instead he appears to be someone, who to look upon, is a being of light. A being of glory. He pretends to be an angel of light. The reason Moses could discern between them had nothing to do with the countenance of his appearance. It had to do with the content. It had to do with the Spirit. It had to do with what he radiated, and what Moses was able to discern was that this was not the source of something which he, Moses, chose to take in. As a consequence, he could judge between him and say, I dis-prefer you. Look at the Joseph Smith History relating to the thick darkness. The Orson Hyde account of Joseph Smith's first vision talks about a thick darkness that gathered around him. It consisted of the adversary benighting his mind with doubts and brought to his soul all sorts of improper pictures. The reason it is possible to do that, and more easily so with many of us, is because we have ingested all kinds of improper images, which then can be summoned back up. Look at 2 Nephi 9:9. This is one of the early sermons given by Jacob.

“And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself; yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents, who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness.”

It is not the physical appearance, nor the transformation, that takes place. It is the content. This is why you need to know that the course that you are pursuing is in accordance with the will of God (see LoF 6). Because once you have made the required sacrifice, you acquire the required knowledge.

Now look again here in Alma. The judgments are upon Korihor. And he is writing his final confession.

“But behold, the devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel, and said unto me: Go and reclaim this people, for they have all gone astray after an unknown God. And he said unto me: There is no God; yea, and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them because they were pleasing unto the carnal mind; and I taught them, even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true; and for this cause I withstood the truth, even until I have brought this great curse upon me.” (Alma 30:53)

You see, he was convinced by the devil that appeared to him in a form of an angel. It's not always that the adversary comes to you with murderous intent. Sometimes he comes to appeal to your vanity, to your pride. And pride is such a sinkhole that he can get most people there. You could have acclaim, you could have wealth, the devil tells us. No, the truth is you acquire what you need to acquire as a consequence of sacrificing for God. And in that process, you will endure criticism, rejection, opposition,

the world's hatred. You may even be cast out. But you obtain what you obtain from God, by sacrifice. (see TDS Vol 2, pg 53-54)

Alma 30:60

"...and thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell."

Remember that the Zoramites are also anti-Christ (Alma 31:16-17)

Also recall from last week's lesson how the wicked city of Ammonihah, who were of the order of Nehor, was destroyed by those who were stirred up to war by the Amlicites and Amulonites who were also of the order of Nehor.

Alma 31:5

And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.

This may have been more of an experiment back when Alma gave up the judgment seat (see Alma 4:16-19), but now at this time we can see it is a very valid way to effect change. This statement is backed up by evidence of what we see with Alma's experiences already and even more powerfully with Ammon and sons of Mosiah. This statement here in Alma is verifiably true.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 31:16

"...the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the law of Moses; for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them, and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are delivered from the tradition of our forefathers..." (Josephus; Ant. 13:11:6). See also Ps. 78:1-4; Enosh 1:3 [Enos 1:14].

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 31:21

From the Hebrew root rum רום and ram רם (Strong's 7311), "to be high."

Alma 31:35

*Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our **near** (Original Manuscript) brethren; therefore, give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee.*

Who were Zoramites?

Zoram was a servant of Laban. He was drafted by Lehi's family, by Nephi especially. Being a servant of Laban, the military governor of Jerusalem, he would not be an

Israelite because you can't enslave or make a servant of an Israelite. The name Zoram is again one of those desert names. It's from the eastern half of Manasseh. It means a welcome, refreshing, powerful rain. A lot of this stuff has come out of Genesis 13–14, but the people of the Near East are noted for their genealogical awareness... So it is very possible that these Zoramites would keep a sort of aloofness or distinction among themselves. They were proud of their blood, etc. It was not a hundred percent [Zoramite]. They had joined with Lehi's family and were good friends. The Zoramites were Nephites. They went along, but still they were aware of their ancestry, traditions, etc. (Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon Part 2, Lecture 55, pg 349)

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 32-35

Online zoom Sunday School, 19 Jul 2020

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

Show us a sign

Alma 32:17-18

Yea, there are many who do say: If thou wilt show unto us a sign from heaven, then we shall know of a surety; then we shall believe. Now I ask, is this faith? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for if a man knoweth a thing he hath no cause to believe, for he knoweth it.

Alma is confronting pride. If you think you know a thing (because you have been given a "sign"), then this is not faith.

"It ain't what you don't know that gets you in trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so." (Mark Twain)

Alma is addressing an audience who thinks they know something - i.e., they think that it's the worship in the way the Zoramites have taught them to worship that will connect them to God. Alma needs to help them "unlearn" this incorrect teaching so they can make room for the truth.

A "sign" is not always in the way we picture with Korihor, where he demanded a sign from Alma before he would believe. Often for us it is simply looking for proof or evidence before we will believe. But if we have proof, then is faith needed?

"There's a recent book by the most eminent American mathematician of our time, Morris Kline, called Mathematics and the Search for Knowledge. It has just been published recently by Oxford. I'm just going to read a couple of passages. (Show us a miracle; show us a sign.) He is citing Hume here: "The existence of an external world with fixed properties is really an unwarranted inference. There is no evidence that anything exists beyond the impressions and ideas that belong to nothing and represent nothing." Then he says, experience cannot prove reality; experience is personal. You may have your experience, and I may have mine. We don't know how they match up at all. He quotes Einstein a lot: "The belief in an external world independent of the percipient subject is the foundation of all science [we have to assume that such a world is, but it is only assumption]. But since our sense-perceptions inform us only indirectly of this world or Physical Reality it is only by speculation that it can become comprehensible to us." We can only know it by speculation.

There are a lot of interesting passages here. "The abandonment of physical mechanism in favor of mathematical description shocked even the great scientists. Contrary to popular belief no one has ever explained the physical reality of the force of gravitation. What science has done is to sacrifice physical intelligibility for the sake

of mathematical description and mathematical prediction.” It’s just mathematics we have; we do not have physical intelligibility. You can’t describe it to me or experience it. “One cannot [no one can] visualize a four-dimensional non-Euclidian world with which they work so much today. Almost since the beginning of the work with numbers, mathematicians have carried on algebraic reasoning that is independent of any sense experience whatever.” You can’t visualize them when they talk about these things, and they can’t visualize them either. “Our models of atomic structure are not physical; they are entirely mathematical.” They are not physical, so we don’t argue on this basis. “Newton provided a theory of gravitation whose physical nature neither he nor his successors for three hundred years have explained. Sense perception in this case has proved useless. [You might say, ‘Well, anybody sees there’s gravitation.’] Modern science is gradually removing the intuitive and physical content, both of which appeal to the senses. It is eliminating matter.” This is taking us down more and more on faith all the time, isn’t it? It is utilizing concepts which we all know are mathematical laws and nothing else. Science remains only a small, though vital, contact with sense perceptions after long chains of mathematical deductions. It’s like the god that lies at the end of a chain of syllogisms is not a very convincing god; it gets very thin by that time. Well, it’s the same thing with the reality of science—the sense perceptions after long chains of mathematical deduction. “Science is rationalized fiction, rationalized by mathematics.” He defines science as “rationalized fiction,” just as I would define faith here as “intellectual honesty,” which it is.

“Today the laws of physics concern our knowledge rather than what may be true in the physical world.” That’s what your faith is. It isn’t knowledge yet. “Mathematics no longer describes the behavior of the elementary particles, but our knowledge of this behavior. The real world is not what our unchallenged senses tell us, or our unlimited perceptions, but rather what man’s major mathematical theories tell us.” It’s mathematical theories that tell us what reality is, not the sign that I give you. “A mathematical theory of the physical world is not a description of the phenomenon as we perceive it, but a bold symbolic construction.” Einstein said he will never be able to compare his picture with the real mechanism, and he cannot even imagine the possibility of the meaning of such a comparison. So if you try to imagine what heaven is like, or what something else is like, you have your own construction. He’s talking about the cosmos, just as local as our solar system, when he says he would never be able to compare his picture with the real mechanism. He can’t even imagine the possibility of the meaning of such a comparison. It’s just strictly his own.” (Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 2, pg 353-354)

Alma 32:19

...more cursed is he that knoweth the will of God and doeth it not, than he that only believeth

Truth taught by signs would only serve to condemn or curse. This would be destructive to the principal of faith, which is required to know God, therefore, these humble people must begin with a belief. It is from this backdrop that we now get Alma's definition of faith:

Alma 32:21

And now as I said concerning faith—faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true.

Note that this is not the same "hope" we discussed two weeks ago, where a "hope in Christ" is essentially the Holy Spirit of Promise (see Alma 28:11-12, Jacob 4:6, Ether 12:32). The kind of "hope" that Alma is talking about here is a hope that is preliminary to developing a stronger faith.

The illustration of Mirror Lake. I haven't been there, but based on your description of how beautiful it is there, I have formed an image in my mind about it, and based on your testimony I'm planning on doing an experiment on your words and I'm on going to visit it myself. My hope is that it is as wonderful for me as you say it is.

Joseph Smith tells us:

If men were duly to consider themselves, and turn their thoughts and reflections to the operations of their own minds, they would readily discover that it is faith, and faith only, which is the moving cause of all action in them; that without it, both mind and body would be in a state of inactivity and all their exertions would cease, both physical and mental.

Were this class to go back and reflect upon the history of their lives, from the period of their first recollection, and ask themselves what principle excited them to action, or what gave them energy and activity in all their lawful avocations, callings, and pursuits, what would be the answer? Would it not be that it was the assurance which we had of the existence of things which we had not seen, as yet? Was it not the hope which you had, in consequence of your belief in the existence of unseen things, which stimulated you to action and exertion in order to obtain them? Are you not dependent on your faith, or belief, for the acquisition of all knowledge, wisdom, and intelligence? Would you exert yourselves to obtain wisdom and intelligence unless you did believe that you could obtain them? Would you have ever sown if you had not believed that you would reap? Would you have ever planted if you had not believed that you would gather? Would you have ever asked unless you had believed that you would receive? Would you have ever sought unless you had believed that you would have found? Or would you have ever knocked unless you had believed that it would have been opened unto you? In a word, is there anything that you would have done, either physical or mental, if you had not previously believed? Are not all your exertions, of every kind, dependent on your faith? Or may we not ask, what have you, or what do you possess, which you have not obtained by reason of your faith? Your food, your raiment, your lodgings, are they not all by reason of your faith? Reflect and ask yourselves if these things are not so. Turn your thoughts on your own minds

and see if faith is not the moving cause of all action in yourselves; and if the moving cause in you, is it not in all other intelligent beings? (Lectures on Faith, 1:10-11)

Other Definitions of Faith:

Now faith is the substance (assurance) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb 11:1)

But faith is not only the principle of action, but of power also, in all intelligent beings, whether in Heaven, or on earth. (LoF 1:13)

Faith is the 'external elixir' that gives life, power, and action, to the impulse of thought. (Napoleon Hill, Think and Grow Rich)

Alma 32:22

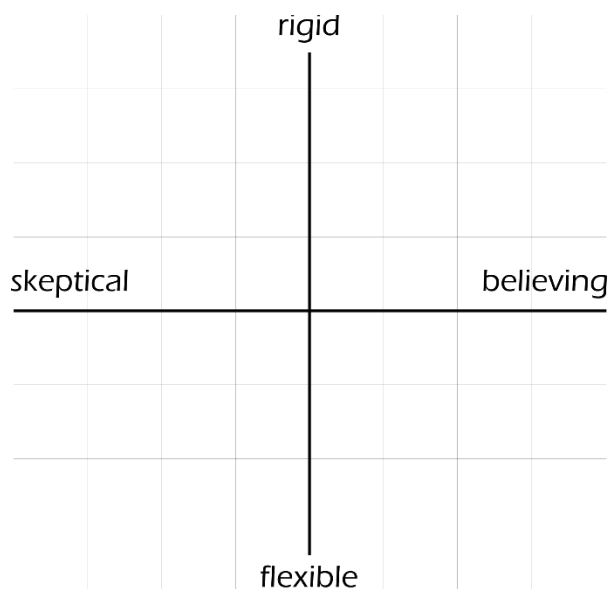
And now, behold, I say unto you, and I would that ye should remember, that God is merciful unto all who believe on his name; therefore he desireth, in the first place, that ye should believe, yea, even on his word.

God desires that you approach things believingly, as opposed to skeptically.

Some will argue that "you're only believing that because you want to believe it". To which I would say "of course I do".

A proposition that begins with a conclusion, then seeks evidence to support it, is impervious to reason. Steve Cuno

What's wrong with that quote is, to explore outside your box and expand your knowledge, you've got to begin with a conclusion. This is what faith is. Faith is saying I believe this could be true, enough to go out and experiment on it. Of course, the trick is being flexible enough to recognize when it's not a good seed.



Alma 32:23

Notice also that it is the role of angels to lead men and women to Christ. Christ's role is to lead you to the Father. These degrees reflect a progression from Telesstial to Terrestrial to Celestial. This tells us that the kind of faith being discussed here applies to the level where angels interact with man. The beginning stages in the process.

Alma 32:27

...awake an arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words, and exercise a particle of faith, yea, even if ye can no more than desire to believe, let this desire work in you, even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words.

This now places us on not just the believing ("accepting") side of my grid, but also in the "flexible" quadrant as well.

The problem we face when we open up to some new information is the fear of being deceived. The reason people approach things skeptically, is because there are so many charlatans out there peddling snake oil, and we don't want to get taken. Alma wants to tell these people "you can trust me, I'm telling you the truth". But isn't that what the last guy told them? And he turned out being wrong. How to avoid getting sucked into being taken advantage of? Next they'll be asking me to drink some kool-aid.

Did you notice how this kind of thinking places you on the skeptical end of the quadrant? When you approach things with fear and skepticism, then you are opposite of where Alma tells us you need to be to allow the seed to grow.

If I come down and say, "I just saw a polar bear in Rock Canyon," what are you supposed to say? "If you say you saw a polar bear in Rock Canyon, Brother Nibley, I believe you." Well, that's terrible. I don't want to hear that. That takes all the wind out of my sails. I want you to go up and see for yourself. Or you might say, "Of course, there's no polar bear. You didn't see anything of the sort. No polar bears are found below a certain latitude. Polar bears just aren't found in these regions, so you didn't see any polar bear." Well, I might have; there might have been one that escaped from the zoo. But you don't know. The thing for you to do is not just take it because I say so, or not to reject it because you are being scientific and you don't think it can be possible. Find out for yourself. (Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 2, pg 351-352)

Continuing in the verse:

...it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.

Joseph once explained that truth could be "tasted" when it is taught. As he put it:

"This is good doctrine. It tastes good. I can taste the principles of eternal life, and so can you. They are given to me by the revelations of Jesus Christ; and I know that when I tell you these words of eternal life as they are given to me, you taste them, and I know that you believe them. You say honey is sweet, and so do I. I can also taste the spirit of eternal life. I know it is good; and when I tell you of these things which

were given me by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, you are bound to receive them as sweet, and rejoice more and more" (TPJS p. 355)

Alma 32:34

And now, behold, is your knowledge perfect? Yea, your knowledge is perfect in that thing, and your faith is dormant;

If you don't have faith anymore once your knowledge is perfect, and we know that God is omniscient (all knowing), then how is it that "God framed the worlds by faith" (LoF 1:17)?

The question boils down to the word "dormant". How can faith, based on what we learn in LoF 1, ever be dormant?

We "exercise" faith, but can we "exercise" knowledge? Is there a difference between the kind of faith that is a principal of action and power on one hand, and the kind of faith that begins as a little seed on the other?

Here's my own reflections on this question (Your reflections may give additional insight):

When God created the world, he set things in motion, then allowed them to incubate*. There was an incubation period where things were given to respond. In other words, God planted a seed and allowed it to grow. But along the way he cultivated it, as in the words of Alma here. At some point, it grew, or manifested itself into maturity, into the tree that would bear fruit. At that point, the faith was dormant, because it had turned into "knowledge". Alma begins this discussion telling them that "it is well that ye are cast out of your synagogues, that ye may be humble, and that ye may learn *wisdom*; for it is necessary that ye should learn *wisdom*" (verse 12). In verse 23 Alma specifically mentions "women". One of the rare instances where we see reference to "men and women" (usually "men" is given to be understood as "mankind").

In a talk I attended in 2015, the speaker put it this way:

[T]he role of the man is to become knowledge, so as to be able to fulfill a role that is eternal. The role of the woman is to become wisdom, because creation will only move forward if guided by wise counsel and prudent adaptations. Only together do they become complete and therefore "one." Alone they are sterile, but joined they are infinite, because they continue. Knowledge alone may provide the spark of creation, but it is potentially dangerous when merely energetic. Creation must be wisely assisted to avoid peril. Wisdom alone is not an agent of action. Knowledge can initiate action, but wisdom is necessary to guide and counsel. The physical is a mirror of the spiritual. The seed of man provides the spark of life, but it is the womb of woman in which life is developed to become viable. Likewise, the role of the woman in nurturing new life here is akin to the role of wisdom in eternity. Together these become whole, capable of both producing and then guiding creation. The woman sacrifices her blood to bring new life here. This physical world reflects the spiritual. (TDS Vol 2, pg 190-191)

It's the cycle of yearning, stretching, growing, until you arrive at the destination and find "rest" (knowledge). Then the process begins again as you reach upwards toward yet even more light and truth.

Alma 32:35

O then, is not this real? I say unto you, Yea, because it is light; and whatsoever is light, is good, because it is discernible, therefore ye must know that it is good;

The Holy Ghost is informational. Its purpose is to enlighten the mind and to inform you. It is a revelator. Our reaction to the information can be very emotional. How we react is up to us. I've had very strong emotional reactions to some of the things revealed by the Holy Ghost to me. Those aren't always those positive, warm feelings. It has been sometimes dread. It has been sometimes fear. It has been sometimes anxiety. And being troubled in mind, body, and spirit. If I were to liken the Holy Ghost and its function – imagine that you were sitting in this room. Imagine that this room is absolutely pitch black, so much so that you can't even see your hand in front of your face if you put your hand there. It is just black. And you want to go about determining what is in this room. You begin by feeling. And you may be able to feel enough to determine that there is in front of you a table. You may be able to determine how wide the table is immediately in front of you. But you're going to have to get up and move around in order to find out how long the table is, because your arm will not reach to that other end. If you're going to explore that, between here and the other end of the table, you've got a lot of obstacles, including as we said here a chair that you occupy, a chair that is unoccupied, another chair that is occupied, several empty chairs down further still, and you're going to have to feel your way through all of that. And it is a long, arduous process. Let's assume that the Holy Ghost is a light. And let's assume that the light is initially a candle, and you light the candle and set it in front of you. The first thing that you begin to realize is that sitting in front of me is not only a table, but there are papers on the table, and there's a book on the table, and there's a glass of water and a watch on the table. And that the table is actually made of wood. I can see that, because I've lit a candle, but I still cannot see the far end. I don't know what's down there, because the candle does not produce enough light for me to perceive that. It has been lost in the shadows. The Holy Ghost illuminates something. When you get the fullness of something revealed to you, you turn the light switch on and you no longer have to feel your way to the far end of the table. At a glance you can look and you can take in the fact that there are a dozen chairs around this table, that it's probably twenty or more feet long. The ceiling in the room is vaulted and there are four lights overhead. There are windows on two of the four walls and a door through which you can enter and exit. There's wainscoting in the middle of the room. Different colored wall paper between what is below and what is above. You can take that all in and I think I can recognize Pennsylvania Avenue and the capitol building in a painting on the wall. All because someone turned on the light. Nothing more than someone turned on a light.

...

The Holy Ghost illuminates. Your reaction is your reaction. The purpose is to enliven and enlighten and to reveal. That's what it does, but how we respond to that is up to us. (Denver Snuffer, Transcription of Tim Malone Q&A with Denver Snuffer, 5/13/2015, pg 20-21)

Alma 32:42-43

And because of your diligence and your faith and your patience with the word in nourishing it, that it may take root in you, behold, by and by ye shall pluck the fruit thereof, which is most precious, which is sweet above all that is sweet, and which is white above all that is white, yea, and pure above all that is pure; and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst. Then, my brethren, ye shall reap the rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long-suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you.

...and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever. (D&C 121:46)

In my mind I like to add the last verses from D&C 121 to the end of Alma 32. Once you pass a certain threshold with your faith, things can achieve a critical mass, so to speak, where the blessings that flow are indescribable. When you ask in faith, you set in motion things that, though your prayers are not answered immediately, by and by (and this could be years or even decades), you will experience the "rewards of your faith, and your diligence, and patience, and long-suffering, waiting for the tree to bring forth fruit unto you." Denver put it this way, "Now you may ask for something you are unprepared to hear an answer for, because there is some preparation yet left. But if you ask, then you set in motion, on the other side, permission to fix what's wrong with you." (Lecture 1, TDS Vol 2, pg 25)

Looking at chapter 32 from Book of EST perspective:

All belief is the least reliable form of knowing. Belief represents uncertainty. People believe in God because they have no real certainty about Her. Where there is a natural knowing of God, there is no need for belief. The highest form of certainty is something you know so thoroughly and so naturally that it's impossible to put into words. (Book of EST, Luke Rhinehart, pg 38)

What is Reality?

First, it's physical. Physicalness manifests itself in time, distance, and form.

Secondly, the substance of physicalness is measurability.

Thirdly, the substance of measurability is agreement. Everything in the universe is in agreement: its beginnings absolutely depend on the ends of other things and extend into their middles. Everything in the universe flows into everything else - it's all one - beginnings, middles, and ends - all in agreement. (see est, pg 124-125)

Reasonableness is used to determine if what presents itself to us is real (in the interim before we can actually verify it)

Agreement is basic to both physicalness, our primary estimate of what is real, and to reasonableness, our secondary or interim test of what is real. (see est, pg 127)

Unreality is Experience. Cause and effect. If reality is effect, effect, effect, then unreality must be cause, cause, cause, the very source of all things. And of course our experience is the source. What we call reality is really agreed upon illusion. Experience is the true reality. (ibid, pg 131-133)

sourcing	natural knowing
participating or sharing	certainty of not knowing
witnessing or observing	realization
accept	observing
↑ Experienced Experience ↑ ↓ Non Experience ↓	
zero	nothing
helping	feel about
hoping	do about
deciding	think about
reasonableness	belief about

Alma 33:2

And Alma said unto them: Behold, ye have said that ye could not worship your God because ye are cast out of your synagogues. But behold, I say unto you, if ye suppose that ye cannot worship God, ye do greatly err, and ye ought to search the scriptures; if ye suppose that they have taught you this, ye do not understand them.

How were the people to search the scriptures? In Christ's day, didn't you need access to the synagogue where the scrolls and scriptures were kept in order to read them?

Reference to Portable Versions of Scriptures/Records in Book of Mormon:

- People search scriptures after Sherum is exposed as anti-Christ and they no longer hearken to the words of this wicked man (Jacob 7:23)
- King Benjamin's words were written and distributed (Mosiah 2:8)
- Abinadi "reads" unto the court of King Noah the commandments (Mosiah 13:11)
- Mosiah reads the records of Zenif to the people (Mosiah 25:5)
- Sons of Mosiah explain scripture to all who desired to hear them (Mosiah 27:35)
- On his mission in Ammonihah Alma unfolds the scriptures (Alma 12:1), "Behold, the scriptures are before you" (Alma 13:20)
- After Alma made an end of speaking many searched the scriptures (Alma 14:1)
- People of city of Ammonihah burn records (Alma 14:8,14)
- Ammon expounds and lays before king Lamoni the records of the holy scriptures (Alma 18:36). Did Lamanites have records, or would Ammon have had to have brought them down with him?
- Aaron opens scriptures unto Amlicites (Alma 21:9)
- Aaron "reads" scriptures to the king (Alma 22:12-13)
- Scriptures are laid before Korihor and all things denote there is a God (Alma 30:44)
- After being cast out of their synagogues, Alma tells poor Zoramites they ought to search the scriptures (Alma 33:2). Where do the poor have access to scripture if not in the synagogues?
- Alma asks poor Zoramites if they have read scriptures (specifically words of Zenos & Zenoch, Alma 33:12-14)

- These records *and their words* brought them [the people Ammon taught] unto repentance (Alma 37:9)

Alma 33:4-7

For he said: Thou art merciful, O God, for thou hast heard my prayer, even when I was in the wilderness; yea, thou wast merciful when I prayed concerning those who were mine enemies, and thou didst turn them to me. Yea, O God, and thou wast merciful unto me when I did cry unto thee in my field; when I did cry unto thee in my prayer, and thou didst hear me. And again, O God, when I did turn to my house thou didst hear me in my prayer. And when I did turn unto my closet, O Lord, and prayed unto thee, thou didst hear me.

Zenos on praying in your fields, houses, closets. Rob Adolfo's presentation on clean and unclean animals

Alma 33:15

In original manuscript Zenock is spelled Zenoah. In the original manuscript we see places where Oliver had written a name phonetically, then we see it has been crossed out and the name re-written, spelled as Joseph would have dictated.

Alma 33:19-21

Moses. There's some views that may give question to the credibility of Moses being real or at least not playing as significant a role (atheist view, Margaret Barker and Deuteronomists). Here the Book of Mormon confirms he was real and the event with the pole is real.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 33:19

Num. 21:6 – 9. The Hebrew word for “serpent” is nachash נחש , which has a gematria of 358, the same gematria as Mashiach משיח . See also John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 34:13

"great and last": The underlying Hebrew may have been acharon אחרון (Strong's 314), which can mean “last” but can also mean “latter, following, or to come.”

"a stop to the shedding of blood": 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 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.

Alma 34:16

And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice

Amulek's message in this chapter is very sobering. Not to be taken lightly. Compare with D&C 19:15-19:

Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not. For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink— Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 34:17-18

Referring to the Jewish custom of three times of daily prayer: Shharit (morning prayer), Minhah (mid day afternoon prayer), and Maarive (evening prayer).

Alma 34:34

That spirit which doth have power to possess your body when you die has power to possess your body in the spirit world.. Again emphasises how this life is a test that we should take seriously. God is not trifling with us.

Alma 35:5

Now their rulers and their priests and their teachers did not let the people know concerning their desires; therefore they found out privily the minds of all the people.

What similarities are there between what we see happening with Zoramites and what we saw with those in the city of Ammonihah? Liken to how does the government or powers that be ascertain our actions in our day?

*..."darkness reigned upon the face of the deep." But things were already being prepared for what was to follow, for the Spirit of the Gods was brooding upon the face of the waters." Dictionaries define brooding as "to sit or incubate (eggs) for the purpose of hatching." As Milton puts it "dovelike sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss and mad'st it pregnant." Also, "to dwell continuously on a subject." Brooding

is just the right word—a quite long quiet period of preparation in which apparently nothing was happening. Something was to come out of the water, incubating, waiting a long, long time. (Hugh Nibley, Before Adam, address given to the BYU community on April 1, 1980

<https://www.deilataylor.com/free-hugh-nibley-sources/hugh-nibley-books-online/before-adam-hugh-nibley/>)

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 36-38

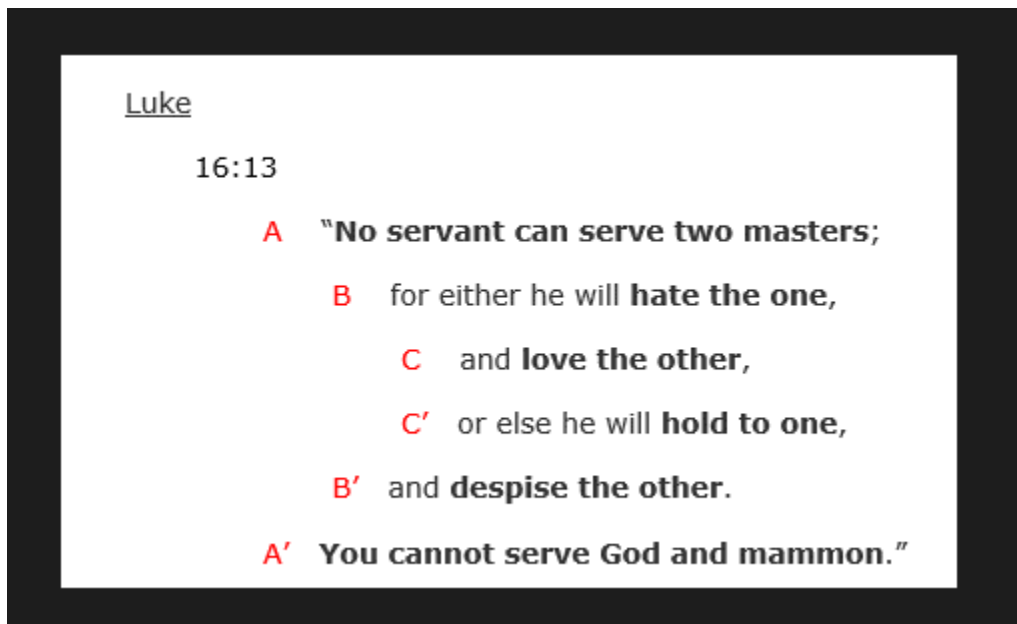
Online zoom Sunday School, 26 Jul 2020

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

Alma 36 Chiasmus structure

What is a chiasm?

A chiasm (also called a chiasmus) is a literary device in which a sequence of ideas is presented and then repeated in reverse order. The result is a “mirror” effect as the ideas are “reflected” back in a passage. Each idea is connected to its “reflection” by a repeated word, often in a related form.



Luke
16:13

A "No servant can serve two masters;
B for either he will hate the one,
C and love the other,
C' or else he will hold to one,
B' and despise the other.
A' You cannot serve God and mammon."

Discoveries in Chiasmus

In the introduction of the book *Discoveries in Chiasmus, A Pattern in All Things*, there are some enlightening points worth our attention here.

John Welch not only made the discovery of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon but has also excelled in locating and elaborating on this finding. His effort to document the initial finding has been preserved in an article he wrote for the Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, titled "*The Discovery of Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon: Forty Years Later*," Vol. 16, Issue 2, pages 74-78.

He wrote:

"I particularly remember being on the train when I noticed the chiastic structure of Alma 36—the entire chapter! It was an overwhelmingly exciting moment to watch

the length and the detail of that text unfold, which turns out to be one of the very best instances of chiasmus anywhere in world literature. Gazing out of the train window and watching the Bavarian countryside roll by, I was transported by the skill and care of Alma as a writer. Amazed at the power of the chiastic form to focus the reader's attention on the central turning point of Alma's life, I thought how fortunate we are to have the Book of Mormon. I wondered where this train would take me." That chapter is now well known as the premiere example of chiasm in all scripture, found by a young Elder, while serving in Germany, riding a train.

...

You see, for a crab to walk on dry ground, the weight of its forward arms is so great that they must be dragged along the ground. They cannot push them by going forward. Instead, that requires the crab to walk backwards. To go forward, it must walk backwards. Since all things testify of God and His ways, the crab is also a testimony of some truth. It tells us by its movement that to go forward we must go backward.

An illustration on page 201, Figure 43, [of the book *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, has this commentary: "*Here is a short section of one of the Crab's Genes, turning round and round. When the two DNA strands are unraveled and laid out side by side, they read this way:*

.... TTTTTTTTCGAAAAAAAAA...AAAAAAAAAGCTTTTTTTTTT....

Notice that they are the same, only one goes forwards, while the other goes backwards." Interesting how this forward/backward movement goes right to the level of the crab's DNA. The sequence reminds us of chiasmus. The crab's DNA is a chiasm.

In chiasmus, the first of the pattern repeats at the last. What came first is repeated in the end. It is a literary way of depicting "the last shall be first, and the first shall be last." That same pattern appears in the Menorah. The seven lamps have arms which connect the first to the last (Ex 25:32). If you were to set the lamp stand out in the same form using "ABC," the pattern would look like: A-B-C-D-C-B-A.

...

We have a description of the Urim and Thummim from Lucy Mack Smith. She described it as follows: "[On the morning of September 22, after Joseph had returned from the hill, he placed] the article [the Urim and Thummim] of which he spoke into my hands, and, upon examination, [I] found that it consisted of two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, and the glasses were set in silver bows, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old fashioned spectacles" (*Eyewitness Accounts of the Restoration* by Milton V. Backman, Jr., p.73).

One of these "two smooth three-cornered" stones pointed upward. The other pointed downward. This pattern of two triangles pointing in opposite directions is what the Star of David is made from. One pointing up, and the other pointing down. It, too, is a kind of chiasm—progression and regression set in a side-by-side pattern.

The Urim and Thummim is a chiasm. The Star of David was modeled on the Urim and Thummim and is also a chiasm.

In ceremony, we move what was on the left side to the right side. The orientation of clothing changes from the one side to the other, forming a mirror image of progression and regression. As husband and wife kneel between the mirrors of the sealing room, facing each other, the right side of the one matches the left side of the other. As the dialogue at the veil concludes, the one acting as proxy speaks words of blessing vicariously for an ancestor, who in turn blesses descendants, including the one acting as proxy. The images and symbols fold over upon each other in a repeating pattern of chiasms. Symbol and meaning merge into patterns intended to suggest to the mind a deeper level of meaning.

What do we make of these symbols? These imbedded messages seem to return to a theme. Whatever other meanings as may be contained in these forms, patterns, and types, it necessarily includes the notion that to go forward you must go backward. Perhaps this meaning reigns supreme over all the other symbolic meanings of the pattern.

This pattern also reminds us anew of the Lord's injunction: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). Returning to the mind of a child is necessary as a precondition, according to Christ's words, for us to be able to enter His kingdom. (See introduction of *Discoveries in Chiasmus, A Pattern in All Things*, Yvonne Bent & Scott Vanatter, beginning on page 1 – also Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 1, pg 145)

Chiasmus in Alma 36

<https://byustudies.byu.edu/system/files/pdfs/charts/bom/132.pdf>

Homework: Stephen Ehat - Brief Introduction to Chiasmus in Alma 36

<https://youtu.be/liSSK0exf40>

Alma and the Four Sons of the Passover Seder

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 35:16

This parallels with Ex. 13:8–16, as well as with the traditional Passover questions about the "four sons," indicating that this was a Passover Seder. (The Passover Haggadah speaks of four sons: one who is wise; one who is wicked; one who is simple; and one who does not know to ask.) Each son asks his question about the Seder in a different way, and the Haggadah recommends answering each son, according to his question, using one of the three verses in the Torah that refer to this exchange. The wise son asks, "What are the statutes, the testimonies, and the laws that God has commanded you to do?" (Deut. 6:20). One explanation for why this very detail-oriented question is categorized as "wise" is that the wise son is trying to learn how to carry out the Seder, rather than asking for someone else's understanding of its meaning. He is answered fully: "You should reply to him with [all] the laws of pesach; one may not eat any dessert after the paschal sacrifice." The wicked son asks, "What is this

service to you?" (Ex. 12:26); he is characterized by the Haggadah as isolating himself from the Jewish people, standing by objectively and watching their behavior rather than participating. Therefore, he is rebuked by the explanation; "It is because God acted for my sake when I left Egypt" (Ex. 13:8)—this implies that the Seder is not for the wicked son, because the wicked son would not have deserved to be freed from Egyptian slavery; when the four sons are illustrated in the Haggadah, this son is frequently depicted as carrying weapons or wearing stylish contemporary fashions. The simple son asks, "What is this?" (Ex. 13:14) and is answered with: "With a strong hand the Almighty led us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Ex. 13:14). And the one who does not know to ask is told, "It is because of what the Almighty did for me when I left Egypt" (Ex. 13:8).

See also Stick of Joseph blog:

Alma and the Four Sons of the Passover Seder

<https://stickofjoseph.org/our-blog/alma-and-the-four-sons-of-the-passover-seder/>

Alma 37:3

Plates of brass. Nibley says this would have been bronze, but the term bronze would have been unknown to Joseph Smith. Brass was first known to exist in about 500 BC. Bronze dates to about 3500 BC.

Small Means

Alma 37:6-7

Now ye may suppose that this is foolishness in me; but behold I say unto you, that by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise. And the Lord God doth work by means to bring about his great and eternal purposes; and by very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls.

Often the means used by the Lord to accomplish His "strange act," and to perform His "strange work" (D&C 101: 95), are very small indeed.

Jesus Christ came into the world unexpected, unannounced by men, unanticipated by His generation, but expected and announced by heaven. There were signs in heaven, but men were largely oblivious. When the shepherds keeping watch over the flocks by night were interrupted, it was not by an earthly herald. There was none among men. It was from beyond the veil. The Savior crept into the world with heaven noticing but precious few of us paying attention to what was afoot. (Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 177)

Take a look at the two disciples on the road to Emmaus when Jesus sidles up beside them, walks with them and asks "What are you talking about?" (as if He didn't know).

Look at this from their perspective. If you trusted this was Him who should have redeemed Israel, did He? Did He redeem Israel? He came, He taught, He submitted, He was killed, and it was three days since. In that circumstance, even with the rumors from the women, could you see that He had redeemed Israel? If you were part of the population, in that group, on that day, sitting in that environment, how

would you answer the question of whether He redeemed Israel? The Romans were still there, Annas and Caiaphas were still faring sumptuously, Christ was killed, His disciples had been scattered — so what evidence did they have He had redeemed Israel. There were many things to suggest the contrary. (Later, even after His disciples see Him, they would return to their everyday labor.) Did He redeem Israel? Could you have seen it then? When it was happening before the eyes of these disciples, they could not see it. They could not comprehend how it had taken place.

Because we sing on Sundays the hymn “Redeemer of Israel” we have confidence we know what Christ accomplished. He IS the Redeemer. We proclaim this as if it were so very apparent. It is no more apparent in this account in Luke that the redemption of Israel had been accomplished, than it is apparent to you and I what God is doing now, today. Do we even hear what is now sounding in our own ears?

He came, and He redeemed Israel, and all the world missed it! Even His closest disciples doubted what had happened. It would be hundreds of years before the world would come around to acknowledge Him. (Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 181-182)

[Are We Missing Something?](#)

Is it possible we could be missing some significant things happening right before our eyes in our day? I think it's worth pointing out some of the recent signs that come to my mind. We don't need to be reminded of the craziness of things that we are witnessing with the virus and violence that is currently going on. But leading up to these things were signs, for those with eyes to see, that signaled we are in coming into interesting times foretold by prophets old and new.

Over the months of August and September 2017, there were great destructions and warning signs given. You may remember California and British Columbia experienced the most destructive wildfires in recorded history. Oregon's scenic Columbia Gorge was decimated by them, too. Montana lost 1.3 million acres to fires, and heavy smoke blanketed the Western US and Canada for months.

On Monday, the 21st of August, "the Great American Eclipse", which many of us witnessed first-hand, crossed out the United States from coast to coast, suggesting the end of the "Times of the Gentiles", as scripture refers to it. The heavenly symbol of the Mother (the moon) blocked the light of the symbol of the Father (the sun), foreshadowing the coming dimming of light in the hearts of men as the fulfillment of Book of Mormon prophecies imminently face the European-American "gentile" inhabitants of this continent.

Meanwhile in the eastern US, even as the continent-wide traffic jams resulting from the eclipse were still subsiding, Harvey, what became a category 4 hurricane, gained strength and then devastated Houston with flooding and other damage. It became the costliest storm on record. Immediately afterward in early September, category-5 Irma, struck Florida as the strongest land falling hurricane in 82 years. Following that in late September, category 5 Maria devastated Puerto Rico, as the deadliest in 118 years.

These events seem likely to be a partial fulfillment of the words Joel recorded concerning our day. The Lord said:

"And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth — blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood

before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered, for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." (Joel 1:12)

On Sunday, September 3, 2017, the biggest earthquake in Idaho in a generation took place, a 5.3 magnitude. It was immediately followed by a very rare swarm of 577 earthquakes, peaking on Sunday with 131 quakes and then tapering off over the following days and weeks.

Perhaps most startling were the events unseen to the naked eye that occurred on the sun. We were in the middle of the quieter part of the 11-year solar cycle, when few sunspots are normally seen. Over the week prior to this Idaho earthquake, a tiny, unremarkable sunspot had been rotating into the earth's view. (when I say tiny, I mean the size of our earth) On September 2nd, it suddenly began to grow very rapidly and by the next day (Sunday), had become one of the largest, most complex sunspots of the entire 11-year solar cycle. In a couple of days, the sunspot region unleashed four X-class "monster flares", the most powerful kind of solar eruptions, one of which was the largest in 12 years. Two of them were accompanied by very large "coronal mass ejections" —millions-of-miles-an-hour explosions with energies comparable to a billion hydrogen bombs and upwards of 100 billion tons of matter. To put it in perspective, that's how much matter our moon is formed from. These really were big. The smaller earth-directed ejection caused a radio blackout for hours across the entire far side of our planet and caused geomagnetic storms that made the northern lights visible in the northern US. The second, much larger coronal mass ejection was directed away from us towards Mars and caused a complete radio blackout there for 10 days. Had it been aimed at earth, our power grid would have been permanently destroyed and our civilization completely crippled, which is why when they're this big, some call them a solar "killshot" or a "planet killer". It was not aimed at us, but the magnitude of power there ought to sober any observer.

"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." (3 Ne. 9:7)

As many Christians worldwide noted, three weeks later, on Sept. 23rd, 2017, the astonishing heavenly sign from the first half of Rev. 4:1 was given in the constellation of Virgo:

"a woman, clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, and the woman, being with child, cried, travailing in birth and pained to be delivered."

This heralded the rebirth of the Kingdom of God. In fact, a six-hour window on that day was witnessed as being part of a holy day on nine separate sacred calendars that John Pratt has recovered. (see *Clothed with the Sun, Moon Under Her Feet*, John Pratt, 2 Nov 2016 https://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/2016/clothed_with_sun.html) (See opening comments, Vaughn Hughes, Sat 21 Sep 2019, Boise, Idaho, Covenant Context: Signs & Obligations)

All this is to say that simply because we may not be taking notice, or that it is not making headline news, or that church leaders are not talking about it, doesn't mean that God is not on the move in our day.

Remember that "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass", even if we may not be taking notice of them.

Alma 37:12

God's course is one eternal round. (See also Alma 7:20; Alma 37:12; D&C 3:2 and 35:1, among other places)

Recall our discussion of Alma 13. We may only achieve a limited amount of grace in this life, but to that limited amount of grace we must hold fast. We cannot receive more if we will not receive what is offered to us now. But if we will receive what is offered now, we will be added upon forever and forever. Or in other words, we move up the ladder by how we conduct ourselves in this cycle of creation, and in the next cycle we will have so much the advantage. We can choose to move upward and be added upon, or we can choose instead to remain as we are, worlds without end. The scriptures speak of things that happened "before the foundation of the world" or "in the first place" or "from the foundation of the world." These statements make it clear what went on before this creation mattered and affected who we now are. In like manner what we achieve in this life through our heed and diligence will affect what comes after. The course we are on has been ordained by God and is "one eternal round". (see TDS Vol 2, pg 198)

Alma 37:13,20

O remember, remember, my son Helaman, how strict are the commandments of God. And he said: If ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land—but if ye keep not his commandments ye shall be cut off from his presence.

Therefore I command you, my son Helaman, that ye be diligent in fulfilling all my words, and that ye be diligent in keeping the commandments of God as they are written.

I am reminded of Eve in Garden of Eden. According to the Moses account of the creation, at the time the commandment was given to "not eat of" the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the woman had not been created. (Moses 3: 15-17.) It was after giving Adam this commandment that the woman was created. (Moses 3: 21-23.)

Eve's knowledge of the commandment came from Adam, not from God. God's commandment to Adam was:

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

The restriction placed on Adam was to "NOT EAT" of the fruit of that tree.

Adam's explanation to Eve was different. Eve explained her understanding to the serpent when the serpent tempted her:

“God hath said—Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” (Moses 4: 9.)

Eve’s understanding of the commandment varied from what had been given to Adam by the addition of the words: “NEITHER SHALL YE TOUCH OF IT.”

Adam added to the Lord’s commandment. This additional precaution was the error which set the transgression in motion. For when Eve saw the serpent touching the fruit and not dying, it lent credibility to the assertion that “ye shall not surely die.” (Moses 4: 10.) Being innocent, and therefore vulnerable to deception, Eve could not know she was confronting a lie. Instead she saw with her own eyes that the commandment “not to touch” clearly did not result in death.

One of the great lessons of the Moses account is that adding to the commandments of God, no matter how well intentioned, is going to lead to error if not tragedy. We do as He asks. Without adding to, nor subtracting from what He has bid us to do, we should follow what we are asked by Him. (Denver Snuffer, Just the Commandments, <https://denversnuffer.com/2010/03/just-the-commandments/>)

Alma 37:21

And now, I will speak unto you concerning those twenty-four plates,

An observation. In addition to the 30 plus page record of the Jaradite people that we have in our Book of Mormon, these 24 plates contain a record that "speaks concerning the creation of the world, and also of Adam, and an account from that time even to the great tower, and whatsoever things transpired among the children of men until that time." (see Ether 1:1-5), as well as "mysteries, and the works of darkness" and "oaths, and their covenants, and their agreements in their secret abominations; yea, and all their signs and their wonders" of the people who were destroyed that God commanded Helaman to retain (see Alma 37:27). Apparently English takes up a lot more space than whatever language Ether used.

In room 35 (I think) of the Cairo Museum there is an inscription. I should have brought along pictures of it. The inscription is in Egyptian hieroglyphic writing, Egyptian demotic writing, and Greek. The Greek and Egyptian take up so much space. The demotic takes up just about seven lines. All the other inscriptions take up half a wall, but this one is just like that. It’s amazingly economical. That’s why they were using it. If they could write in Hebrew, they would be more understood. (Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3: Transcripts of Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at BYU, 1988-1990, pg 38)

Gazel Stone

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 37:23

Gazlem: Moshiyah 12:3–4; ’Eter 1:1 179 The original Hebrew may have been gazerim גזרים from the Aramaic root גזר (Strong’s 1505) “to determine.” As a noun, it can refer to a diviner or astrologer or one who interprets signs to foretell the future (as in Dan. 2:27; 4:7; 5:7 and 5:11, where the KJV uses the word “soothsayers”). The Stick of Joseph was written in Hebrew using Egyptian characters (1 Nephi 1:1; Moshiyah 1:1; M’raman 4:11). Since the sound “L” is not written in Egyptian, when Hebrew words are

transliterated into Egyptian characters, the Egyptian “R” does double duty for both “R” (ר) and “L” (ל). Depending on how the text is punctuated (the original manuscript had no punctuation), the word may refer either to the servant or the stone.

There is an article on this verse that I found amazing:

From Rational Faiths Blog, A Book of Mormon Mystery
<http://rationalfaiths.com/a-book-of-mormon-mystery/>

Some other random notes:

gazelle [guh-zel]

noun, plural ga·zelles, (especially collectively) ga·zelle.

any small antelope of the genus *Gazella* and allied genera, of Africa and Asia, noted for graceful movements and lustrous eyes.

'Her eyes were deep and lustrous, like the eyes of a gazelle, and with one flutter of her eyelashes she could have reduced the world to ruins'. (from Stephen Payne's *Carrying the Torch*)

We use the phrase "ελαφίσια μάτια" meaning the eyes of a deer to express admiration for a woman who has beautiful, big, expressive and innocent eyes. (<https://www.proz.com/kudoz/english-to-greek/idioms-maxims-sayings/6143249-doe-eyed-gazelle-eyed.html>)

Appreciated for its grace, it is a symbol most commonly associated in Arabic literature with female beauty. In many countries in Northwestern Sub-Saharan Africa, the gazelle is commonly referred to as "dangelo", meaning "swift deer". <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gazelle>

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 37:38

Liahona: This is a unique but clearly Hebrew word: liahona ליהונוא may come from the root lawah לוה (Strong's 3867), "to join, to bind around, to wreath," from which come the related Hebrew words liah ליה (Strong's 3914), "a wreath," and lon לון (Strong's 3885), "to abide, to dwell, to remain or continue." The word "Liahona" combines these words to describe a device that joins the traveling party to God, a ball with two spindles that would wreath around and direct Lechi and his party where and when to abide, dwell, remain, or continue.

compas: This should not be confused with a magnetic compass, which had not yet come into use. The word compass, in common 1830 usage, may refer to a circular course, a boundary, or a device for navigation.

Stick of Joseph footnonte Alma 38:3

The repetition of the possessive pronoun here is normative in Hebrew, where a pronominal suffix is normally attached to each object of possession.

Alma 38:4

Shiblon was stoned. This mission to the people of Zoramites was way more involved than we have record of. Alma and his crew of missionaries did not pull out before they had done all they could to employ the word of God to have an effect on the people.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 38:7

The Hebrew word here was likely *eretz* (ארץ), which can mean “land” or “earth.”

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 39-42

Online zoom Sunday School, 2 Aug 2020

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

Sexual Immorality

Alma 39:5

Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost?

Here is an unsettling verse. Framed as a question, Alma puts us to the test. Alma is speaking to his son Corianton, who had gone to serve as a missionary, but served poorly. In his pride and arrogance, he wound up in sexual sin and abandoned his mission. As Alma counsels with Corianton, we find he has lost his belief in angels ministering to men (see Alma 39:19). Corianton no longer trusts the miraculous.

"Adulterers" have a difficult time believing in such things. They seek signs because they have a hard time believing. (see Matt 12:39). But faith does not come from signs.

Signs do not give rise to faith. They have no meaning in the lives of the unbelieving and disobedient. Without obedience, no one can acquire faith. Without faith, signs are nothing. The Pharisees who asked for a sign would not have been persuaded had they been given one. Just as Laman and Lemuel were unimpressed with an angel (1 Ne 3:31), Alma's son Corianton would also have been unimpressed.

Corianton's disbelief in angels is really a rejection of his father's conversion story. It is a rejection of the truths, testimony and witness of his father. He has crippled himself spiritually.

Although tragic for him, it is fortunate for us. Alma's teachings to Corianton are among the greatest teachings of the Book of Mormon. The chapters dealing with Alma's warnings and instructions are not only tailored for Corianton, but also for the Saints today who suffer from many similar sins and consequent misgivings. (See Denver Snuffer, Eighteen Verses, pg 78-81)

Commenting on adultery, Joseph Smith taught that adulterers could not inherit the Celestial Kingdom:

*In the evening the High Council sat on the case of Harrison Sagers, charged with seduction, and having stated that I had taught it was right. Charge not sustained. I was present with several of the Twelve, and gave an address tending to do away with every evil, and exhorting them to practice virtue and holiness before the Lord; told them that the Church had not received any permission from me to commit fornication, adultery, or any corrupt action; but my every word and action has been to the contrary. **If a man commit adultery, he cannot receive the celestial kingdom of God. Even if he is saved in any kingdom, it cannot be the celestial kingdom.** I did think that the many examples that have been made manifest, such as John C. Bennett's and others, were sufficient to show the fallacy of such a course of conduct." (DHC 6: 81; emphasis added.)*

(See Denver Snuffer, *ibid.* pg 84)

Adultery in all likelihood breaks the hearts of spouses and children. Oftentimes it causes broken families. Many broken families are condemned to struggle financially over a lifetime. These financial struggles result in lost educational opportunities, or embittered children, or other lifelong penalties being inflicted upon the innocent. When these terrible results are considered, it shows the difficulties which this sin imposes upon the repentant soul. How can adequate restitution be made from some of these consequences? It is better by far to avoid the sin so such questions and struggles do not occur. With an adequate program of warning this sin may be avoided. Temptations were never meant to overwhelm us, although they invariably confront us.

Corianton suffered under the burden of this sin, and as a result had lost faith in his father's testimony. However, Alma's comments to this wayward son end on a hopeful note: "And now, O my son, ye are called of God to preach the word unto this people. And now, my son, go thy way, declare the word with truth and soberness, that thou mayest bring souls unto repentance, that the great plan of mercy may have claim upon them. And may God grant unto you even according to my words. Amen." (.) Alma reminds us of the same doctrine James taught in the New Testament. We can save ourselves from sin by working to bring others to repentance. "Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." (.) For every harsh result there is a merciful answer. Alma the Younger sought his own repentance and restitution by his missionary efforts. Here, he calls his son Corianton to do the same. Any soul who finds themselves in a similar predicament can use the same process for their own repentance. They, too, can save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins. Broken families, disappointed children, misery and grief may be counterbalanced by the conversion of others to the Gospel. Lives restored, hope given, repentance undertaken, and children blessed from converting others can "hide a multitude of sins."

Christ holds the keys of death and hell. Surely He intends to use them for anyone He can possibly save. But we must give Him something to work with to bring us salvation. Sin no more, repent, obey, preach repentance, save souls and redeem your own soul in the process.

Angels still visit mankind. You can trust the testimonies of those who have received them. Alma was one of those who received them, and he wrote the verse we have been discussing. Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, whose advice and counsel you can trust as well. This sin is serious, and may be fatal if you do not repent. You are still called to the work, no matter your sin, just as Corianton returned to preaching the Gospel. Your own exaltation may depend upon preaching repentance to others. (*ibid* 100-102)

Alma 39:9

"*cross yourself in all these things*", Stick of Joseph renders this "*contain yourself*".

Alma 40:12

And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow.

We develop during mortality and receive from this life exactly what we develop into while mortal. (TDS Vol 2, pg 193)

Alma 41:3

And it is requisite with the justice of God that men should be judged according to their works

It does not say that God will do the judging.

Alma 41:7

for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or do evil.

This agrees with what Joseph Smith said:

"A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, 'They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.' The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man." (TPJS pg 357)

Consider these words from Moroni:

Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell. For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you. (Mormon 9:3-5)

Now I want you to read those verses carefully, and ask yourself, Exactly what is it that God is doing? You will discover the only thing that God is doing is being. He simply exists. This terrible ordeal being described is you. God is. He is simply revealing Himself to you. And this is your reaction. And why is this your reaction? Because you don't have the power of godliness. Why don't you have that? Because you need to repent. And what is it that you must repent of? The absence of knowledge about God. You don't know enough yet to be saved. The plan of salvation is the plan of education, the plan of knowledge about God and the principles of godliness. (Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 18)

Alma 41:9

points of doctrine

Is this a different definition of doctrine than that used by Christ in 3 Ne 11:28-40? (see also 2 Ne 31:2-21, D&C 10:67-68)

I think there is a difference between "points of doctrine" and "doctrine of Christ".

Happiness

Alma 41:10

Wickedness never was happiness.

The word "happiness" occurs 13 times in these 4 chapters.

In chapter 40 it is used to describe a "state of happiness" and contrasts it with the state of misery that exists in that "space between death and the resurrection of the body, and a state of the soul in happiness or in misery until the time which is appointed of God that the dead shall come forth, and be reunited, both soul and body, and be brought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works." (40:21)

But here in chapter 41, in verses 4-5, happiness is something that is restored in the resurrection to those who sought happiness in this life. And, of course, here in verse 10 the clarification that you can't restore something that was wickedness to something that will be happiness.

And now, my son, all men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.

Compare, 2 Nephi 5:27 he says: "And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness." Yet Nephi also tells us they suffered many afflictions in the wilderness (see 2 Ne 4:20). After the manner of happiness does not mean without affliction.

"Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God" (TPJS, pg 255–56).

In chapter 42 Alma speaks of a "plan of happiness" (twice).

Now, repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment, which also was eternal as the life of the soul should be, affixed opposite to the plan of happiness, which was as eternal also as the life of the soul. (42:9)

Alma 41:15

For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored; therefore, the word restoration more fully condemneth the sinner, and justifieth him not at all.

There is an equation. Everything will balance. You rich people had good before but allowed Lazarus to suffer from evil you could have relieved. Now it is put back into balance. In the immediate afterlife you get to suffer so you may understand the error of your way. You may at last understand how charity is critical to make the universe whole. See, if you are one who chooses to inflict tears (or even ignore tears you might have wiped away), then that will be recompensed to you. And if you wipe away tears from others, that will be returned to you, as well. Because what will be restored unto you is exactly, as we began with Alma, what you send out. It is an equation, after all. (Denver, TDS Vol 1, pg 98)

Alma 42:9

JJournal - 15 Feb 2019 (Fri)

I woke this morning with this thought on my mind. If we do not feed our physical body, it will die. It needs nourished daily (Matt 6:11). If we do not feed our spiritual body, it will also die (Alma 42:9). The signals of pang in our physical body when we do not eat are reminders of the need to nourish our spiritual body daily.

It might seem almost counter intuitive that to hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt 5:6) may require we subdue the physical by fasting to feed the spiritual.

In other words, if the pangs of physical hunger are given to remind us to feed ourselves daily both physically and spiritually, why would there be any need to deprive ourselves of food physically to strengthen ourselves spiritually?

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 42:13

As the Zohar says: "R. Hiya discoursed on the text: Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: Far be it from God that he should do wickedness; and from the Almighty that he should commit iniquity. For the work of man will he requite unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways (Job 34:10 – 11). 'God,' he said, 'in creating the world, meant it to be based on justice, and all that is done in the world would be weighed in the scales of justice, were it not that, to save the world from perishing, God screened it with mercy, which tempers pure justice and prevents it from destroying the world. The world is thus governed in mercy and thereby is able to endure'" (Zohar 1:180b).

Alma 42:13-14, 22

See Denver's discussion TDS Vol 1, starting on pg 72

Also:

When you think of Christ as "the prototype of the saved man," you should also remember Christ "attained to the resurrection" by "breaking the bonds of death." Justice requires man to die. When I die, it will be deserved. The same is true for all mankind from Adam to the present. However, when Christ died it was unjust. The "wages of sin" is death, but He did not earn those wages. He never submitted to sin, and therefore the law of justice was offended by His death. Because of this, He was able to take His body up again, and the law of justice could not prevent it. Christ's death was not only unjust, but it was

an eternal offense. When the life of a man who should have lived forever has been taken, what He gave up was infinite. Therefore, the price He paid was infinite. Whatever justice demanded had been satisfied, and He could then intercede for all mankind. (Denver, TDS Vol 2, pg 192-193)

Alma 42:17-20

Notes from JJournal, 8 Feb 2018

Divine nature (Young Women value #2, blue)

Earlier this week i was trying to reason through the evangelical idea of salvation by grace without works.

I thought of Alma's teaching of that without punishment there is no law (Alma 42:17). It's like the rebellious teenager who the father tells not to date that boy anymore and she replies, "or else what?". How can one say that once he has been saved he no longer has any reason to fear alienation from God if he sins? Without fear of punishment we have removed an essential component of the plan.

*"And also, if there was no law given against sin men would not be afraid to sin."
(Alma 42:20)*

Then it occurred to me that teaching of being saved by grace without works strips the power of the feminine. One who is observant will be able to see in scripture a complimentary balance in the masculine and feminine aspects of the divine nature. (Notice verse 24, "justice" is referred to in the masculine and "mercy" in the feminine.)

The masculine can be constant with a good track record over time, but the feminine demands we be our best here and now, in this moment. (In Greek "grace", charis, is a feminine noun).

The idea that the feminine demands we be at our best was confirmed this morning in my reading of the Apocrypha.

At first she will walk in twists and turns with them. She will bring fear and dread upon them, and she will torture them with her discipline until she trusts them completely. She will test them with her commandments, and again she will come straight back to them, make them glad, and reveal to them her secrets. (Sirach, Ecclesiasticus 4:17-18)

And again in chapter 6:

Wisdom is rugged terrain to the uneducated, and the fainthearted won't persevere with her. She will be like a heavy stone that tests them, and they won't hesitate to throw her aside. Wisdom is like her name, and she won't be visible to many.

Listen, my child, and welcome my opinion. Don't reject my advice.

Put your feet into her shackles and your neck into her collar. Bend your shoulder down and carry her, and don't chafe at her bonds. Come to her with your whole being, and keep to her ways with all your strength. Track her down and seek her, and she will become known to you.

When you get possession of her, don't let her go. In the end, you will find rest in her, and she will turn to you and make you happy.

*Her shackles will be a strong shelter for you, and her collar will be a glorious robe.
(Sirach, Ecclesiasticus 6:20-29)*

Alma 42:22

But there is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.

All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence. (D&C 93:30)

I say unto you, that the man that doeth this, the same cometh out in open rebellion against God; therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit, and becometh an enemy to all righteousness; therefore, the Lord has no place in him, for he dwelleth not in unholy temples. (Mosiah 2:37)

Nevertheless, it is not written that there shall be no end to this torment, but it is written endless torment... For, behold, I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name. Wherefore— Eternal punishment is God's punishment. Endless punishment is God's punishment. (D&C 19:6, 10-12)

Enoch introduces the idea that Man has created sin

I have sworn unto you, ye sinners, as a mountain has not become a slave, And a hill does not become the handmaid of a woman, Even so sin has not been sent upon the earth, But man of himself has created it, And under a great curse shall they fall who commit it. (1 En 98:4) (see Evernote "Odds Are We'll Be Alright)

Alma 42:24

"none but truly penitent are saved"

See also Alma 27:18 "none receive joy of God save truly penitent"

Penitent: Showing you are sorry for something you have done because you feel it was wrong. Feeling or expressing remorse for one's misdeeds or sins.

Alma 42:29-30

And now, my son, I desire that ye should let these things trouble you no more, and only let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance. O my son, I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point because of your sins, by denying the

justice of God; but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long-suffering have full sway in your heart; and let it bring you down to the dust in humility.

What is it that troubles us in our current state of affairs that we are dealing with now? Do these things trouble us more than our sins do?

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 43-52

Online zoom Sunday School, 9 Aug 2020

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

Helaman's Life at a Glance

Year	Reign of judges	Event	Possible age of Helaman
Around 91 BC	1	Grandpa Alma the Elder dies at age 82. Alma Younger first Chief Judge (Mosiah 29:44-47)	3-13
Around 87 BC	5	Alma fights Amlici (Alma 2:29-31)	7-17
Around 83 BC	9	Alma gives up judgement seat (Alma 4:16-19)	11-21
Around 74 BC	18	Mission to Zoramites (Alma 31). Alma's teaching to Helaman (Alma 36-37). Zoramite rebellion and Lamanite war. (Alma 43-44)	20-30
Around 73 BC	19	Helaman given records. Alma taken up (Alma 45:18). Moroni & Title of Liberty (Alma 46:12-13). Amalickiah and dissenters join Lamanites. Amalickiah become king of Lamanites (Alma 47). Moroni fortifies cities (Alma 48:7-9). Amalickiah did not obtain his design to conquer Nephites (Alma 49:26).	21-31
Around 72 BC	20	Helaman, Shiblon, Corianton and Ammon preach (Alma 49:30, but also earlier in 45:20-22)	22-32
Around 71 BC	21	Many cities built (Alma 50:15). Happiest time among people of Nephi (Alma 50:23).	23-33
Around 68 BC	24	Morianton defeated (Alma 50:35). Chief judge Nephihah dies (Alma 50:37).	26-36
Around 67 BC	25	King-men try to alter the law (Alma 51:5). Amalickiah takes many cities (Alma 51:26). Amalickiah killed by Teancum (Alma 51:34).	27-37
Around 66 BC	26	Amoron appointed king of Lamanites (Alma 52:3).	28-38
Around 65 BC	27	City of Mulek re-taken by Moroni (Alma 52:26).	29-39
Around 64 BC	28	Helaman raises army of two thousand sons of people of Ammon (Alma 53:18-22).	30-40
Around 63 BC	29	Helaman stripling sons fight with miraculous power (Alma 56:43-56, 57:25-26).	31-41
Around 62 BC	30	Moroni and Pahoran defeat king-men (Alma 62:6-8).	32-42
		Moroni yields command to Moronihah (Alma 62:43). Helaman and his bretheren go forth to regulate the church (Alma 62:44).	
Around 57 BC	35	Helaman dies (Alma 62:52). Shiblon takes charge of records (Alma 63:1).	37-47

[Alma Elder's life at a glance: Lesson 2020.05.31_BoM-Mos29-Alma4, Alma Younger's life at a glance: Lesson 2020.07.12_BoM-Alma30-31]

In composing these notes, I questioned myself on the value of guessing at the ages in these “Life at a Glance” sketches. I don’t know if this sort of speculation is a distraction. We see in the above scenario that Helaman appears to have had a very short life. Even if he was born at the time Alma, as a young man, was converted by the angel (100 BC), then Helaman would have died at 57.

But looking at this life sketch gives rise to questions like, when did Helaman have time to raise his son, Helaman? Somewhere in there a family is being raised.

Why so much about war in Book of Mormon?

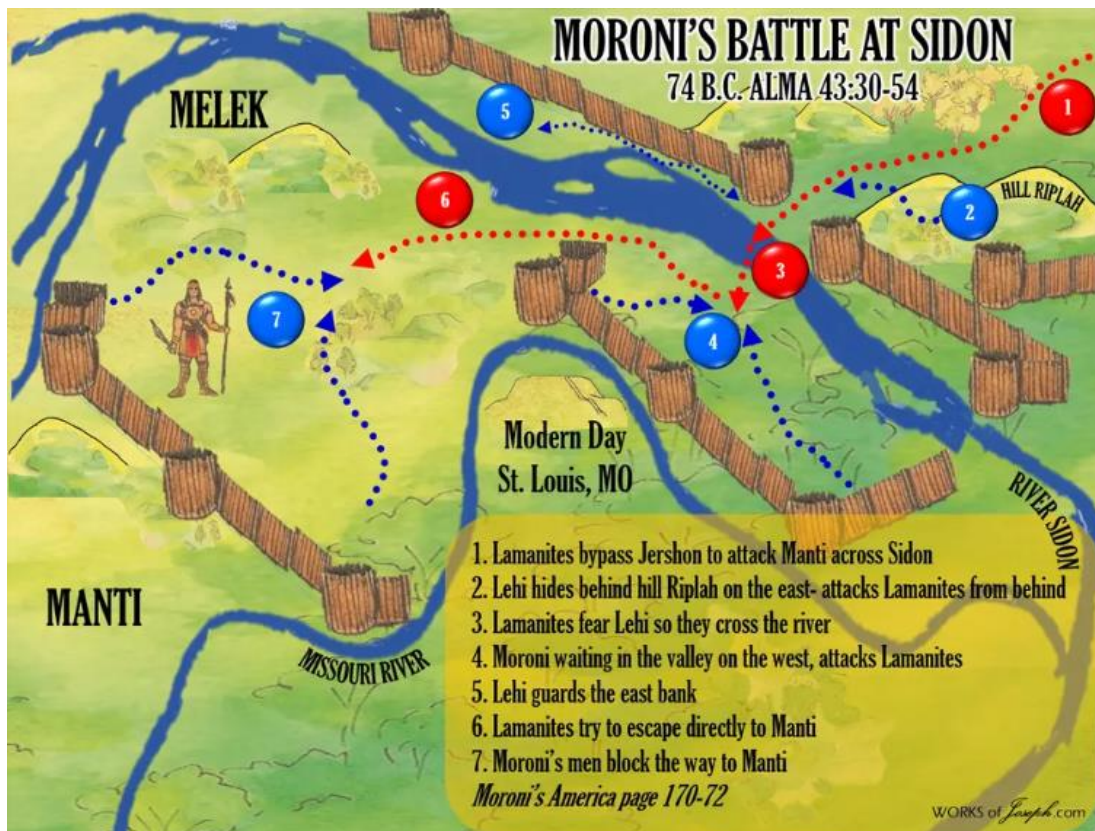
One reason I see for Mormon focusing so much attention on war chapters.

In our day I personally lament that we know so much in our recent history of something like Hitler and the 3rd Reich, yet our nation as a whole seems to be oblivious to it or chooses to deliberately ignore it as we march steadily in a direct course of repeating it to our collective demise. Absolutely shameful.

Mormon would be able to see a similar thing in his own people's history comparing it to his own present day. Not only that, but he has also seen the present and future of our day on the very land upon which he stands. We’ll explore this more in depth in this lesson.

Alma 43:5-6

Makes me wonder if Zerahemnah was himself a Zoramite. We know Amalickiah had to have been (Alma 54:23). And Zoram, the leader of the Zoramites (Alma 30:59), mixed with the Lamanites and stirred up his people to anger against the people of Ammon (Alma 35:10-11).



Alma 43:48-50

When Moroni perceives the intent of the Nephites to shrink and flee from the fierceness of the Lamanites, he "sent forth and inspired their hearts with these thoughts—yea, the thoughts of their lands, their liberty, yea, their freedom from bondage."

Notice the words "*perceiving* their intent" and "sent forth and inspired their hearts with these *thoughts*".

How did he do this in the heat of a raging hand to hand battle? It's not like he can stop everything for a minute and make a speech. He can't just send a group text out to everybody.

Alma 44:6

Yea, and this is not all; I command you by all the desires which ye have for life, that ye deliver up your weapons of war unto us, and we will seek not your blood, but we will spare your lives, if ye will go your way and come not again to war against us.

The history of the era we live in is filled with examples of religious violence. Consider the Crusades where the great battle lines were drawn between Islam and Christianity over geography considered holy to both. These conflicts continue to carry over to our current time. We also see religious violence between Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants. Jewish settlements in Palestine has become the catalyst for religious violence between Palestinians and their supporters against the Jewish State and its followers.

For many years, Sikhs have been involved in religious violence in India and Pakistan. Even the normally passive Buddhist followers of some cultic leaders have been responsible for religious terrorism in Japan. Abortion doctors have been killed by fundamentalist Christians, whose violence was viewed as a justifiable response to abortion.

The Book of Mormon comes into this era with the longest and most robust scriptural treatment of violence of any other scriptural record, including the Koran. The numerous "war chapters" of the Book of Mormon provide us with greater instruction on this subject than any other single source of God's word on violence. (See Denver Snuffer, *Eighteen Verses*, pg 211)

When violence broke out in Nauvoo and Joseph and Hyrum were killed in neighboring Carthage, the Nauvoo Legion (largest militia in Illinois) did nothing to either prevent the violence or to retaliate in its wake.

The first leadership of the Church set a powerful example of how to meet violence when they submitted and died without organizing any defensive or retaliatory military action. Although there was a military organized and ready at their command, they elected not to use it. They died as a result. This early example, however, has been dwarfed in the popular imagination by a later event in Utah.

When Latter-day Saints in the Southern Utah Territory killed all but eighteen small children of the Fancher Company in September, 1857, the Latter-day Saints joined the ranks of religious organizations whose members have attacked and killed others. Juanita Brooks' book *The Mountain Meadows Massacre*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970, puts this incident into its historical context. She

makes the violence of that day almost inevitable, and the Latter-day Saints' motivation something understandable.

The Fancher Company provoked anger throughout their migration across the Utah Territory. They claimed to have been involved in earlier mobbings of the Latter-day Saints in Missouri, and even boasted of having been complicit in the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Contemporaneously, there was an army marching against Utah to quell a reported rebellion by the Latter-day Saints. The Church was in a defensive mode, and its leaders were preparing the Saints for potential conflict. In this setting, it was not difficult for the anger felt by the Saints to become the seedbed for rationalizing violence against these migrants. (ibid. pg 212-213)

Mark Jurgensmeyer explored how religion and violence seems to be so often linked together in his book *Terror in the Mind of God*. He notes: "What puzzles me is not why bad things are done by bad people, but rather why bad things are done by people who otherwise appear to be good - in cases of religious terrorism, by pious people dedicated to a moral vision of the world."

Commenting of the Mountain Meadows Massacre, LDS Church News article (for week ending June 2, 2007, Salt Lake City: *Deseret News*; p. 3.) calls it "what may be the most troubling event in the Church's turbulent 19th century past." It is "the most troubling event" because it exposes the Saints vulnerability to troublesome group behavior. As a body of religiously committed believers, the Latter-day Saints have control over whether they will ever again join in religious-based killing. (see ibid. pg 217)

It is little wonder a volume of scripture saved up for publication until the latter-days would address this issue so directly, and with so many chapters. The "war chapters" of the Book of Mormon are distressing to some readers. They wonder why so much of the book is devoted to descriptions of the ways in which violence began and the manner in which the violence was conducted. Yet, the prophet writers and abridgers claimed to have seen our day and been acquainted with our times. They concluded these descriptions of religious violence were necessary to inform us about how to live out our days.

Alma 44:6 arises out of religious warfare. The victims of religious violence acted defensively in the battle. The tide of the fight had turned, and the victims gained the upper hand. The aggressors were terrified by the change in the tide of battle. Sensing their terror, Moroni stopped the fight and withdrew a pace from engaging the enemy. He then assured them their lives would be spared if the violence ended.

Under any other scenario from the examples we've discussed above, continuing violence would be justified by the view of the participants. "Victims" of warfare claim to be acting defensively, and therefore appropriately. They view themselves as "victims" and not aggressors. They think they can resort to violence because they didn't "start" the violence. Every example from Mountain Meadows and the Latter-day Saints, to the Christian abortion clinic bombers, to the persecuted Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Mormons and Buddhists, used rationalizations to justify their killing of those they claimed were the aggressors. But in this verse in Alma, the Book of Mormon teaches us to end violence as soon as the aggressors end their aggression. There is no need to continue killing to exterminate the enemy. Rather, allowing the enemy the chance for life is required by Christ's teachings. The aggressors are told all they need to do to end the violence is agree to "go your way and come not again to war against us." There is no authorization for preventative war. There is no approval for retaliation. The only kind of violence justified is purely defensive, not some rationalized "defensive" attack. Defensive struggle is limited to

the time in which the aggressor is actively aggressive. Once the aggressor is willing to end the violence, the violence should end.

Now the Nephites were taught to defend themselves against their enemies, even to the shedding of blood if it were necessary; yea, and they were also taught never to give an offense, yea, and never to raise the sword except it were against an enemy, except it were to preserve their lives. (Alma 48:14) (see ibid. pg 223-224)

President Spencer W. Kimball warned us about trusting violence for deliverance. Although his remarks were addressed to the greater culture, it applies to the Saints, doubly. For the Saints, of all people, should know better. His landmark talk included these warnings:

We are a warlike people, easily distracted from our assignment of preparing for the coming of the Lord. When enemies rise up, we commit vast resources to the fabrication of gods of stone and steel—ships, planes, missiles, fortifications—and depend on them for protection and deliverance. When threatened, we become anti-enemy instead of pro-kingdom of God; we train a man in the art of war and call him a patriot, thus, in the manner of Satan’s counterfeit of true patriotism, perverting the Savior’s teaching:

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

“That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 5:44–45.)

We forget that if we are righteous the Lord will either not suffer our enemies to come upon us—and this is the special promise to the inhabitants of the land of the Americas (see 2 Ne. 1:7)—or he will fight our battles for us (Ex. 14:14; D&C 98:37, to name only two references of many). This he is able to do, for as he said at the time of his betrayal,

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26:53.)

We can imagine what fearsome soldiers they would be. King Jehoshaphat and his people were delivered by such a troop (see 2 Chr. 20), and when Elisha’s life was threatened, he comforted his servant by saying,

“Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them” (2 Kgs. 6:16).

The Lord then opened the eyes of the servant,

“And he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” (2 Kgs. 6:17.)

Enoch, too, was a man of great faith who would not be distracted from his duties by the enemy:

“And so great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he spake the word of the Lord, and

the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch.” (Moses 7:13.)

What are we to fear when the Lord is with us? Can we not take the Lord at his word and exercise a particle of faith in him? Our assignment is affirmative: to forsake the things of the world as ends in themselves; to leave off idolatry and press forward in faith; to carry the gospel to our enemies, that they might no longer be our enemies.

We must leave off the worship of modern-day idols and a reliance on the “arm of flesh,” for the Lord has said to all the world in our day, “I will not spare any that remain in Babylon.” (D&C 64:24.) (Kimball, Spencer W. The False Gods We Worship; Ensign, June, 1976, pg 3-6)

In a conversation on this subject with a co-worker earlier this week I asked:

Am I being too idealistic? Everything since the beginning of this world, all the major prophecies that point to us in our day. We are physically living in the time where Zion is supposed to come before the end of all things, and here we sit - where Enoch and Melchizedek had the faith to stop the mouths of lions, quench the violence of fire, have the dead restored back to life, etc. - and we are relying on the 2nd Amendment and our guns to save us?

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 44:24

Rosh Hashanah, the 1st of Tishrei, the “head of the year,” is followed by “prayer and fasting” at Yom Kippur and “great joy” at Sukkot (see footnote to Alma 21:1 [45:1])

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 45:1

Prayer and fasting for Yom Kippur, the 10th of Tishrei (see footnote to Alma 20:19 [44:24]). Rejoicing at Sukkot (Lev. 23:40) on the 15th through the 21st of Tishrei.

Alma 45:2-8

This exchange between Alma and Helaman has a ceremonial feel to it.

Alma's prophecy

Alma 45:10-12

"dwindle in unbelief"

What is unbelief?

Unbelief: As used in the Book of Mormon, it means one does not understand and has not accepted true doctrine. The word unbelief means to accept false doctrine or to have an incomplete and inaccurate understanding of correct doctrine. Unbelief is

often used in conjunction with losing truth, forsaking doctrine, and “dwindling.” The phrase dwindling in unbelief is the Book of Mormon’s way to describe moving from a state of belief, with true and complete doctrine, to a state of unbelief, where the truth has been discarded. Miracles end because men dwindle in unbelief.

Nibley points out that the word *destruction* or *destroy* appears 354 times in the Book of Mormon.

Destroy: In the vernacular of the Book of Mormon, to destroy did not mean annihilation. It merely meant to end the organized existence of a people or to terminate their government, deprive them of a land, and end their cultural dominance. In the Book of Mormon, a people were destroyed when they lost control over their government and land. Their ability to preserve their own values and choose the way they were governed was taken over by others. Most often it was from a different ethnic group, though not always. Once people were destroyed, they were oppressed and suffered. Often they were oppressed with grievous taxes and had religious liberties removed. Then they faced a choice: either repent, in which case they came through the period of oppression with another chance; or if they were angry and rebellious, they would then be “swept away.” Being destroyed is not at all the same as being “swept away.” It is possible for people to have been destroyed and not even realize it. But when they are “swept away,” they face extinction and cannot help but notice it.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 45:19

According to Jewish tradition, as recorded in both the Talmud and the Zohar, Moshe did not actually die, but was taken up by YHWH: “...Others declare that Moses never died; it is written here, ‘So Moses died there’, and elsewhere it is written: ‘And he was there with the Lord.’ As in the latter passage it means standing and ministering, so also in the former it means standing and ministering.” (b.Sotah 13b) “Moses did not die, but he was gathered in from the world...” (Zohar 1:37b-38a) “For Moses did not die. But is it not written, ‘And Moses died there’? The truth is, however, that although the departure of the righteous is always designated ‘death,’ this is only in reference to us. For over him who has attained completeness, and is a model of holy faith, death has no power, and so he does not, in fact, die” (Zohar 2:174a).

Alma 46:1-8

Notice that those who are not hearkening to the words of Helaman (v 1) are those in a higher class (and probably wearing costly apparel) who have been led by the flatteries of Amalickiah, and many of whom were in the church (v 7).

We see the same attitude in leaders in high positions in our nation today. Their attitude is the same, they consider themselves above common folk over whom they rule, giving only lip service to the ideas of equality.

I'm reminded of the classes of people that Bret Weinstein identifies. Those who are sincere in thinking they are joining a movement with best of intentions, but then there are those who are secretly actually running the agenda.

Were it the objective of this social justice movement to confront the much more difficult problems and to confront them at the full level of nuance, I would be interested in seeing those problems addressed...

So what is it that this movement is actually trying to achieve? Now remember I'm arguing that there are actually two groups embedded in one movement. One of those groups is really hoping to achieve some kind of equality... But then there's the other faction. The faction that I'm arguing is actually driving the agenda of the movement. (Bret Weinstein, How the Magic Trick is Done, starting at 29:09 min, <https://youtu.be/bz0oxlZ3xlg>)

"Am I alleging a conspiracy? No. What I have seen functions much more like a cult in which the purpose is only understood by the leaders, and the rest have been seduced into a carefully architected fiction. Most of the people involved in this movement earnestly believe that they are acting nobly to end oppression. Only the leaders understand that the true goal is to turn the tables of oppression. Something is seriously and dangerously amiss. At this moment in history the center does not hold. Partisan polarization and political corruption have rendered government ineffective, predatory, and often cruelly indifferent to the suffering of American citizens. Tribalism is the natural result." (Bret Weinstein Testifies to Congress on The Evergreen State College riots, Free Speech & Safe Spaces, <https://youtu.be/uRIKJCKWla4>)

We can blame those in authority who are driving the show, as it tells us that look at the damage one man, referring to Amalickiah (v 9), can have. But in this verse (v 7-8) there is no excuse given for those led by Amalickiah's flatteries, and this because they wouldn't be being sucked into such delusions if they had remained true in their faith. So regardless of the sincerity of your intentions when you joined this cult, you wouldn't be there if you hadn't abandoned God in the first place. Those remaining true to their faith will not be inclined to be joining in with such things.

Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 46:3

Amalickiah: Probably from a form of the Hebrew root M-L-K (מלך) "to rule" from which we get the word Melek "king."

Title of Liberty

Alma 46:11-13

Notice that it is not after Amalickiah has joined with Lamanites and things have gotten out of hand that Moroni raises the title of liberty, but at the beginning when the dissensions first occurred. He's trying to nip it in the bud.

From Hamlet's Mill by Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend, Appendix 11:

The predestined dragon-slayer, and much expected savior, Faridun—Avestan Thraethona—a true pre-decessor of Kai Khusrau, had been saved from the snares of Dahak as a baby, and hidden away in the mountains. When the archdevil Dahak claimed the sacrifice of the last son of Kaweh—seventeen sons had already been fed to the dragon-heads—the smith started the revolution for the sake of Faridun:

*He took a leathern apron, such as smiths
Wear to protect their legs while at the forge,
Stuck it upon a spear's point and forthwith
Throughout the market dust began to rise. . .*

*He took the lead, and many valiant men
Resorted to him; he rebelled and went
To Faridun. When he arrived shouts rose.
He entered the new prince's court, who marked
The apron on the spear and hailed the omen.*

[The above passage of the smith's apron on a spear head reminds me of Captain Moroni's title of liberty and Moses as a deliverer (or savior). Appendix 11 goes on to elaborate on a number of ideas that give rise to thoughts about living water, resurrection, and the idea that there is additional meaning in the name Joseph "Smith".]

Dead Sea Scrolls, War Scroll (1QM)

Rule of the banners of the whole congregation according to their formations. On the grand banner which is at the head of all the people they shall write, "People of God," the names "Israel" and "Aaron," and the names of the twelve tribes of Israel according to their order of birth. On the banners of the heads of the "camps" of three tribes they shall write, "the Spirit [of God]," and the names of three tribes. On the banner of each tribe they shall write, "Standard of God," (The Dead Sea Scrolls A New Translation, Michael Wise, Martin Abegg, JR., & Edwards Cook, pg 154)

Hugh Nibley talked about the Banner of Kawe, or Flag of Kawe, from stories from Jews from stories from the Persian Empire. Jewish mysticism, a legendary founder of the Magi. He also talks about how this story is related to the Battle Scroll in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Very interesting discussion starting on page 41, lecture 60 (and 61), *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Semester 3: Transcripts of Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at BYU, 1988-1990)

[Alma 46:15](#)

Book of Mormon is often criticized in this verse for the word Christians before there even were Christians. Its helpful to remember this is a record preserved from before any influence from Babylon. It contains the words of Zenock and Zenos who were more bold about Christ/Messiah/Machicach, terms that offended Deuteronomists and for which prophets were killed and Lehi's life was sought.

[Alma 46:16-27](#)

In Lecture 62, Nibley discusses at length the garment of Joseph (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Semester 3: Transcripts of Lectures Presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at BYU, 1988-1990). I recently heard a good summary here:

*The garment came out of the garden where there was not death. Although death was required to produce the garment, the label on the tag said 'made in Eden', (not made in the lone and dreary world). So why did that garment made out of dead animal skins last as many hundreds or thousands of years as it did, before it was destroyed. And then the legends that it still carried the scent of the garden, that you could smell the Garden of Eden in this garment, and that there was a piece that was torn off. This legend is recorded in the Book of Mormon, it's recorded in ancient Jewish tradition, that this piece, when they tore it up, that Joseph kept a piece with him. He carried it into Egypt, and that when he finally was reconciled to his brothers and told them to go get their father Jacob and bring him, he (Joseph) sent them with the piece of the coat. And that when they were yet far-off, miles away, Jacob smelled it. He could smell the garden. And said 'that's my son. Joseph yet lives!' So there was something about the garment that was eternal in some way. (Adrian Larsen, *The Stick of Joseph and the Marvelous Work*, <https://youtu.be/scPdxqeajHo> 61:07 min)*

I will not take time to go into length on this today, but I recommend reading the lecture from Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Semester 3, Lecture 62, Alma 46, The Garment of Joseph, Religious Brotherhoods. (download from lesson links)

[Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 46:22](#)

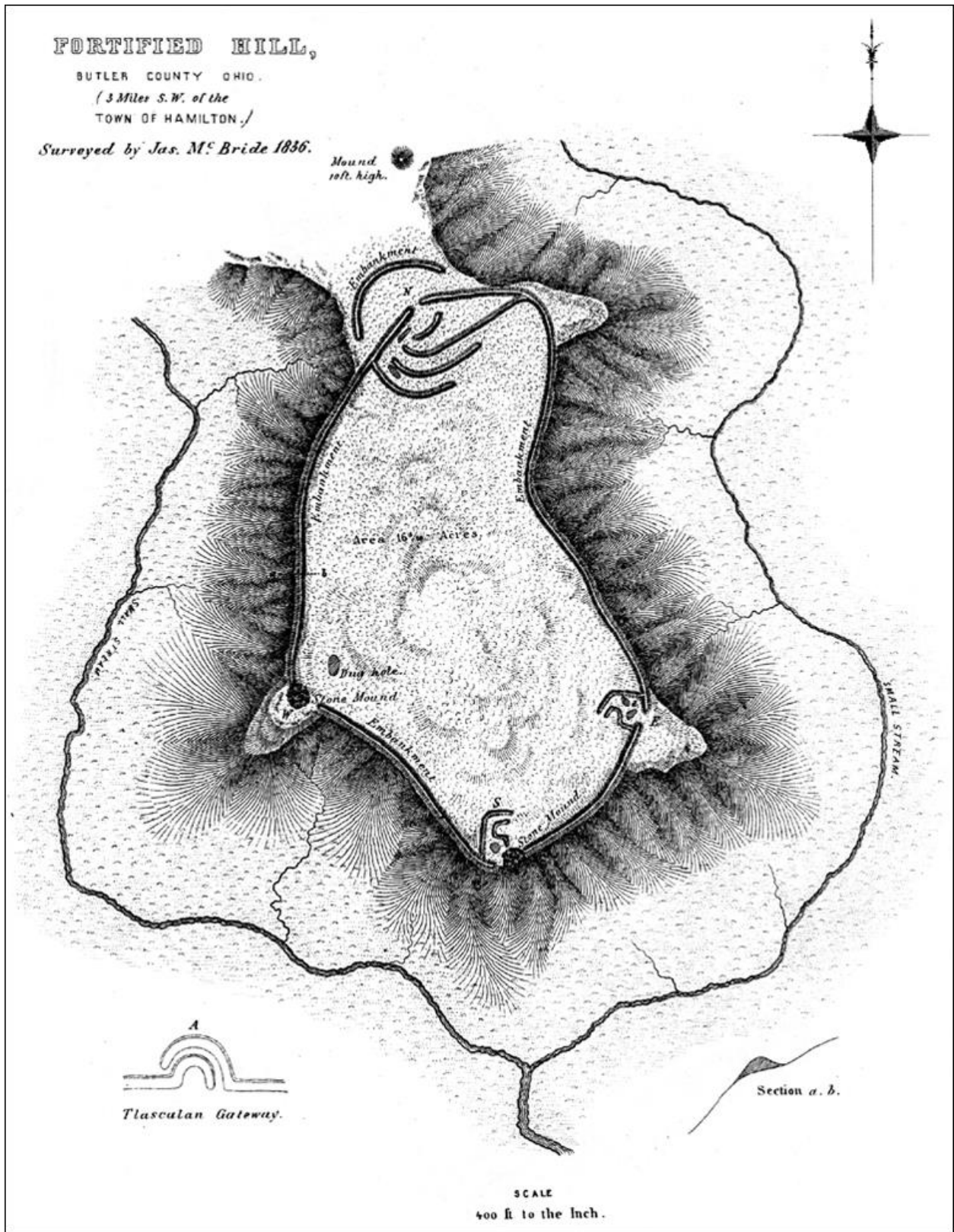
This is an example of a vow made by way of a euphemism or analogy. As we read in the Talmud, “All euphemisms [used to express vows] are equivalent to vows...[and] for oaths are equivalent to oaths...” (m.Nedarim 1:9; b.Nedarim 2a). For example, “[if he said, ‘...may it be to me] like the lamb [of the daily whole-offering]...” (m.Nedarim 1:3; b.Nedarim 10b). In Talmudic language, the essential thought is, “if we shall fall into transgression may we be even as these garments.”

[Stick of Joseph footnote Alma 46:23](#)

Compare with the Sefer HaYashar (The Book of Jasher) “And they [his brothers] hastened and took Joseph’s coat and tore it, and they killed a kid of the goats and dipped the coat in the blood of the kid, and then trampled it in the dust, and they sent the coat to their father Jacob by the hand of Naphtali, and they commanded him to say these words:” (Jasher 43:13)

[Alma 49:18-23](#)

See example of Fortified Hill Works, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortified_Hill_Works



The character of this structure is too obvious to admit of doubt. The position which it occupies is naturally strong, and no mean degree of skill is employed in its artificial

defences. Every avenue is strongly guarded. The principle approach, the only point easy of access, or capable of successful assault, is rendered doubly secure. A mound, used perhaps as an alarm post, is placed at about one-fourth of the distance down the ascent; a crescent wall crosses the isthmus, leaving but narrow passages between its ends and the steeps on either hand. Next comes the principal wall of the enclosure. In event of an attack, even though both these defences were carried, there still remains a series of walls so complicated as inevitably to distract and bewilder the assailants, thus giving a marked advantage to the defenders. (Squire and Davis, Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley, pg 17-18)

Alma 50

Mormon in his abridgment is being quite particular about the layout of the land. If the locations are not important, then why is so much space taken up in the precious plates with this sort of information?

In my view, there are two categories of Book of Mormon maps:

Those that show Cumorah in New York, and those that don't.

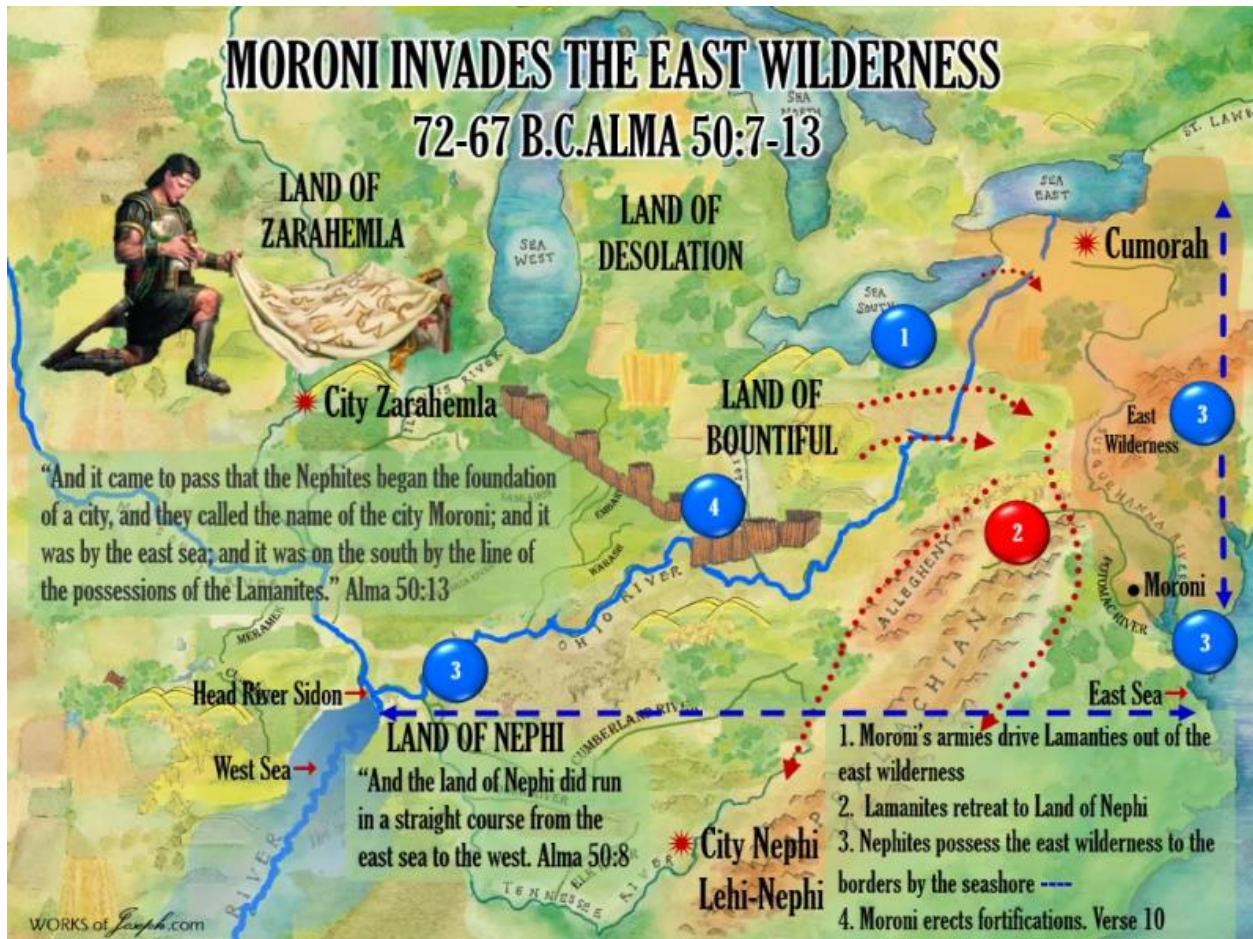
I see this as a clear binary choice.

For me, any map that doesn't put Cumorah in New York is not useful or even relevant. But I emphasize, that's because I think knowing the real-world setting is important. If you don't think it's important—and again, I emphasize that's a perfectly reasonable and faithful approach—then you can find value in non-New York maps.

To me, without that pin in the map and all that goes along with it (Letter VII, etc.), it makes no difference what you do with the geography. Whether you create an abstract map, or a map in Baja, Central America, Peru, Thailand, or anywhere else, every non-New York based map rejects what Oliver Cowdery wrote (and what Joseph endorsed). (Jonathan Neville, <http://www.moronisamerica.com/maps/>)

From Mormon's perspective:

It's important to remember that these events took place about 62-57 B.C., with centuries of Nephite civilization and warfare yet ahead before the final battles that culminated in Cumorah. Even by the time Mormon and Moroni wrote, these sites would have been historical locations with little evidence of the original battles, the way Revolutionary and Civil War sites are to us today. (Neville, Jonathan. Moroni's America: The North American setting for the Book of Mormon . Digital Legend. Kindle Edition.)



Alma 50:23

But behold there never was a happier time among the people of Nephi, since the days of Nephi, than in the days of Moroni, yea, even at this time, in the twenty and first year of the reign of the judges.

Alma 50:38

Nephihah refuses Alma the records?

Here's a puzzling thing in verse 38. Here was a very righteous judge. Nephihah had served in perfect uprightness before God, but he refused to let Alma take possession of the records. Why would he do that? Well, because Alma had given them to his son Helaman six years before. His son was head of the church. Alma had a different calling. Alma had laid down his commission to become a missionary. The point is why would he refuse to let Alma the great take possession of the records? Alma was an important government official, but if we go back to Alma 37:2 it tells us how Alma had conferred the whole thing upon his son Helaman six years before. There's no mystery there. You might think you find catches in the Book of Mormon and say, Joseph Smith must have slipped up here. Why would a great judge refuse the records to a great man like Alma who was responsible for them? Because Alma had passed

them on. That was legal now. (Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3, Lecture 69, pg 154)

Alma 51:7-8

The descriptions between the freemen and the king-men are described in very few words here in this chapter. Compared with the complexity of our own day where we have our factions between left and right, progressive vs conservative, republican vs democrat, etc.

I'm sure in Helaman's day the details were similarly complex, yet in both his day and ours, we can sum it all up as simply as a difference between those seeking freedom and liberty and those seeking inequality, class distinction, and nobility.

Alma 51:9, 13

Amalackiah as a Zoramite appears to be in correspondence with king-men in Zarahemla. There is conspiracy going on. After all, it was with nobles and king-men that helped him rise to power while he was among the Nephites (Alma 46:1-7).

Alma 51:11

Now his armies were not so great as they had hitherto been, because of the many thousands who had been slain by the hand of the Nephites; but notwithstanding their great loss, Amalickiah had gathered together a wonderfully great army, insomuch that he feared not to come down to the land of Zarahemla.

But earlier we read about Amalickiah's army's last battle in Alma 49:23:

Thus the Nephites had all power over their enemies; and thus the Lamanites did attempt to destroy the Nephites until their chief captains were all slain; yea, and more than a thousand of the Lamanites were slain; while, on the other hand, there was not a single soul of the Nephites which was slain.

When were "many thousands... slain by the hand of the Nephites", if in the last battle we read about it says there was only "more than a thousand" slain?

Alma 51:20

And the remainder of those dissenters, rather than be smitten down to the earth by the sword, yielded to the standard of liberty, and were compelled to hoist the title of liberty upon their towers, and in their cities, and to take up arms in defense of their country.

This sounds quite harsh. Here's what Nibley comments about this:

That sounds like an oxymoron, doesn't it? They were compelled to be free. They were compelled to have liberty. No, the point is here that it must be one flag or another.

They had chosen decision by arms and they had lost. Well, the winning side hoists its flag. They were supposed to have been Nephites. These were the ones who had agreed and given up. This was the policy Moroni always followed. They had gone back to being supposedly good Nephites. How reliable, I don't know. Their officers were kept under guard. Those that were slain were all slain in battle as they raised their arms to fight. So the victor's flag goes up, of course. "And thus Moroni put an end to those king-men . . . and thus he put an end to the stubbornness and the pride of those people who professed the blood of nobility; but they were brought down to humble themselves like unto their brethren, and to fight valiantly for their freedom from bondage." They joined in after that. This has happened before too. (Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3, Lecture 69, pg 155)

Book of Mormon Study – Alma 53-63

Online zoom Sunday School, 16 Aug 2020

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

Captian Moroni's Life at a Glance

Year	Reign of judges	Event	Age of Moroni
100 BC	n/a	Year after Alma the younger sees angel and is converted. (Mosiah 27:11)	born
93 BC	1	First year of reign of Judges. Alma1 dies, Mosiah dies (Mosiah 29:44-47).	7
88 BC	5	Alma fights Amlici (Alma 2:29-31)	12
83 BC	9	Alma gives up judgement seat (Alma 4:16-19)	17
77 BC	16	Tremendous battle between Lamanites and Nephites (Alma 28)	23
76 BC	17	Korihor the Anti-Christ was struck dumb (Alma 30). Alma2 led a mission among the Zoramites (Alma 31–35).	24
75 BC	18	Capt Moroni appointed chief captain (Alma 43:17). Captain Moroni defeated Zerahemnah (Alma 43; Alma 44).	25
74 BC	19	Alma younger taken up (Alma 45:18). Amalickiah tried to become king over the Nephites (Alma 46:1–10). Title of Liberty (Alma 46:11-37)	26
72 BC	21	Many cities built (Alma 50:15). Happiest time among people of Nephi (Alma 50:23).	28
69 BC	24	Morianton defeated (Alma 50:35). Chief judge Nephiah dies (Alma 50:37). Pahoran fills judgment seat (v 40)	31
68 BC	25	Captain Moroni defeated the rebellious king-men (Alma 51). Amalickiah takes many cities (Alma 51:26). Amalickiah killed by Teancum (Alma 51:34).	32
66 BC	27	Helaman stripling sons fight with miraculous power (Alma 56:43-56).	34
65 BC	28	City of Mulek re-taken by Moroni (Alma 52:26). Moroni was wounded (Alma 52:35).	35
63 BC	30	Captain Moroni and Pahoran corresponded (Alma 59–61).	37
58 BC	35	Moroni and Pahoran defeat king-men (Alma 62:6-8). Lamanites were driven from Nephite lands; peace was established (Alma 62:12–52). Helaman1 dies (v 52).	42
57 BC	36	Moroni dies (Alma 63:3).	43

[Alma Elder's life at a glance: Lesson 2020.05.31_BoM-Mos29-Alma4, Alma Younger's life at a glance: Lesson 2020.07.12_BoM-Alma30-31, Helaman's life at a glance: Lesson 2020.08.09_BoM-Alma43-52]

Alma 54:17-19

For behold, your fathers did wrong their brethren, insomuch that they did rob them of their right to the government when it rightly belonged unto them. And now behold, if

ye will lay down your arms, and subject yourselves to be governed by those to whom the government doth rightly belong, then will I cause that my people shall lay down their weapons and shall be at war no more. Behold, ye have breathed out many threatenings against me and my people; but behold, we fear not your threatenings.

Ammoron justifies this war based on the original argument of Laman and Lemuel from hundreds of years past. Notice that he recognizes that he is not a Lamanite by excluding himself from the argument, "your fathers did wrong *their* brethren". Yet in the very next breath (verse 19) he assumes his role and position as king over them saying, "ye have breathed out many threatenings against *me and my people*". It's hard for me not to get upset and angry over this blatant hypocrisy. Mostly because of how I see it on display in the leaders of our government today.

Alma 54:21

And as concerning that God whom ye say we have rejected, behold, we know not such a being; neither do ye;

Again, this is a lie. Ammoron full well knows of such a being, but is willfully denying it like we remember Korihor did in Alma 30.

Alma 54:22

And if it so be that there is a devil and a hell, behold will he not send you there to dwell with my brother whom ye have murdered, whom ye have hinted that he hath gone to such a place?

Now on this point I identify with Ammoron's question, though it is obvious he has twisted the context.

Moroni's accusation from verse 7 has returned to bite him here. Ammoron is making what I feel is valid argument. It doesn't change that Ammoron knows he himself is in the wrong and is only using this as rhetoric. But what I want you to consider is how often we use the accusation that when we are at war, the enemy deserves to be killed. A few years ago I wrote an article condemning Christian support for our occupation in Iraq.

Consider the hypocrisy of Christians using the Bible to justify war. How is our current occupation and war in Iraq so different from ancient Christians using the Bible to justify bloody crusades? ...

Then I reference an article by Pastor Todd Kennedy where he touts, "To Kill in Battle Is Not Murder"

It's not a sin of any kind to kill in war? War makes killing OK? If killing an enemy in war is not a sin, then Iraqis who kill American soldiers are not sinning either. (Jay Ball, April 14, 2016, A God of War?, <https://jayball.name/133/is-the-christian-god-a-god-of-war/>)

Despite his hot temper, remember how quick Moroni has been (see Alma 43:54 and 52:37) to stop the shedding of blood once the aggression has stopped.

Alma 55:16-17

*and he went to the city Gid, while the Lamanites were in a deep sleep and drunken,
and cast in weapons of war unto the prisoners, insomuch that they were all armed;
Yea, even to their women, and all those of their children, as many as were able to use
a weapon of war*

Moroni is a man of his word. This is one of the things he said he would do in his letter to Ammoron (see Alma 54:12)

2000 Stripling Sons

Alma 56:5-10

Helaman accepts being leader of these sons.

Here Helaman is, managing the affairs of the church like a good church leader. So, naturally, when the people of Ammon were considering taking up arms to offer their assistance in defending the country in this war, he would not suffer them to do so. But then we have a plot twist in Helaman's life. The valiant sons of these people realize that even though their parents have taken this covenant, they have not. They are free to go and defend their country. And naturally, who better to ask to lead them than Helaman. I can almost hear him say to himself, "I didn't see that coming."

We do not know what course our life here on this earth will take, but when you are on the Lord's errand, you go and serve valiantly. Helaman's involvement in the war may well be what contributed to his short life.

Alma 56:41-48 (see also 57:20-21)

our mothers knew

How does this relate to this verse in Proverbs

*The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility.
(Proverbs 15:33)*

There is a natural and inevitable affection children hold for their mothers. That affection is close to the hearts of all dying men. There are many battlefield accounts of how dying men call out in their last breath for their mother. Roland Bartetzko, former German Army soldier, when under fire in his first combat experience uttered "Mother" when fire struck others beside him. As he reflected on why he spoke that out loud he concluded, "Our lives begin with our mothers giving birth to us and on the day when I thought that my life was over, my mind circled back to where it all had begun."

For Mother's Day 2015, Lt. Col. Zumwalt wrote the following regarding soldiers crying for their mothers on the battlefield.

*Serving in Vietnam as well, Serafin found there, too, "as soon as a guy would be in
bad shape, he'd always ask for his mother. Whenever I heard that, it killed me
inside."*

A young warrior's dying battlefield cry for a mother he will never again see knows no cultural boundaries.

In 2014, Ukrainian surgeon Oleksandr Zeleniuk tended to the wounded on a Crimean battlefield. Twelve soldiers died on his operating table. "We struggled for their lives," he said, "but death won. When soldiers are dying, they all say the same thing: they call for their mother..." (A Young Warrior's Last Thought is for Mother <https://www.breitbart.com/national-security/2015/05/10/a-young-warriors-last-thought-is-for-mother/>)

There is something primal, unavoidable and universal in the connection between children and mothers. Life begins in her arms and at her breast. Approaching death always brings the beginning of life, and therefore motherhood, back into focus.

Back in our study of Mosiah 18-24 we discussed the term El Shaddai as the feminine aspect of Elohim. In scripture the word "Elohim" is used to refer to God, and that it is plural.

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Gen 1:27)

Male and female being created in the image of Elohim affirms that the plurality of God is a couple that includes both a male and a female. Man is created in God's image, and that image is a couple: a man and a woman. This is not figurative language. It is literally describing mankind having two sexes and that is godlike, or what God's own "image" is.

I think it's appropriate to focus some attention here on our Heavenly Mother.

To reflect the image of God, there are two sexes, male and female. Man was organized in this way to help us to understand who and what the Gods are. The importance of this is illustrated in a passage of the Lectures on Faith:

Let us here observe, that three things are necessary, in order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation. First, The idea that he actually exists. Secondly, A correct idea of his character, perfections, and attributes. Thirdly, An actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing, is according to his will. —For without an acquaintance with these three important facts, the faith of every rational being must be imperfect and unproductive; but with this understanding, it can become perfect and fruitful, abounding in righteousness unto the praise and glory of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. (Lectures on Faith 3:3-5)

While a great deal more could be said to demonstrate that God the Father necessarily includes God the Mother, we want to know more than merely She exists. We want to understand her character, perfections and attributes also. The Father and the Son are masculine and therefore personified by the word "knowledge." The Mother as well as the Son's companion are feminine, and personified by the word "wisdom." These personifications reflect an eternal truth about these two parts of the One True God. (We discussed this briefly back in our study of Alma 32-35)

Knowledge (masculine) initiates, Wisdom (feminine) receives, guides and tempers. Knowledge can be dangerous unless it is informed by wisdom. Wisdom provides guidance and counsel to channel what comes from knowledge. These are eternal attributes, part of what it means to be a male or a female. Creation begins with the active initiative of knowledge, but order and harmony for the creation requires wisdom. Balance between them is required for an orderly creation to exist. A great deal can be learned about Heavenly Mother by searching for the word “wisdom” in scripture. Very often the reference to “wisdom” is to Her distinctly, and not merely an abstract attribute. If we are blind to Her existence, we cannot see the reference to Her in those passages. Let's take a look at one of these passages (an old temple text) Proverbs chapter 8.

Verses 6-14

(note: froward means habitually disposed to disobedience and opposition. Stubborn, contrary, obstinate. Turned from: opposed to facing.)

Verse 15-16

By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.

Never doubt this claim by the Divine Mother. She knows best the strengths and weaknesses of Her sons. She decides who will be made kings. The earliest generations knew this about Her. In the beginning it was the mothers who decided between sons.

When reading Kings or Chronicles you will notice how often, when giving the line of kings, it will refer to the mother, "*And his mother's name was Maacah*", "*And his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess*", "*And his mother's name was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi*" etc.

Consider a couple examples from early history and how the mothers acted on this matriarchal right:

In the case of Mother Eve, it was her and not Adam who weighed and decided that Cain would be Adam's first successor to the Holy Order. She did not do this in haste, but after many years of observing how Cain was unlike his many, rebellious, older siblings. He hearkened to his parents and had interest in knowing and following God. She decided that this son was indeed from the Lord and would not be yet another one to reject His words:

And Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord, wherefore he may not reject his words. But, behold, also Cain hearkened not saying, Who is the Lord, that I should know him? And she again conceived, and bare his brother Abel. And Abel hearkened unto the voice of the Lord.

To the sorrow of both Adam and Eve, Cain changed. After his initial faithfulness, he no longer continued to follow the Lord's words. When he felt his right to stand second only to Adam in the Holy Order was threatened, he resorted to murder to keep that position. That right cannot be handled with any degree of unrighteousness. Therefore, his ambition undid his mother's choosing, and he fell from grace. But note in the account that it was Eve who chose Cain. That was her right. That right came down from the Mother in Heaven as one of the roles occupied by all mothers over their offspring.

From an email I sent to Stake institute instructor:

Consider the example of Rebekah in Gen 25 and 27. Much of this story sounds strange to us when we read how Rebekah helped Jacob receive the birthright blessing through deception of the aged Isaac. Some of this strangeness can make more sense when we realize it was her matriarchal right to intervene. While Isaac intended to bless his older son, Esau, Rebekah, as their mother, knew the younger brother Jacob was the chosen one. Rebekah proceeded with the confidence of knowing that decision was hers to make. She took appropriate steps, as was her right, to appoint the heir. She managed her ailing husband wisely and subtly. At that time Isaac's "eyes were dim" – a symbolic description of his condition— and he was unable to see the correct choice.

Another example is where we read that the mother of James and John approached Christ to request a princely position for her sons. The incident makes more sense when you realize the mother's request was consistent with her role. Her sons' position in the future kingdom was within the lawful concerns for her to seek on their behalf (see Matt 20:20-23). It was altogether appropriate for this request to come from their mother. It was squarely within the traditional role and right of the righteous matriarch.

[Proverbs 8:]17-19

I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver.

Of all the Mother's "fruit" the most valuable to fallen man is without doubt the Redeemer, Christ Jesus. At this point it is worth considering Heavenly Mother's role in Christ's birth. I hesitate to elaborate too much on what I have learned on this topic. But I will share some thoughts with you and you can decide if it resonates with your understanding of things or not. (Disclaimer: Don't believe anything I say. I am only a student of scripture seeking my own connection with God. I try to parse the scriptures for understanding, but you should go to God yourself for answers from Him. - see 2 Pet 1:20)

What was Mary's role? Who was she? Is it possible she was "the mother of God" before she came into mortality? In the Original Translation text, the Printer's Manuscript, and First Edition of the Book of Mormon the phrase describing Mary was "the Mother of God after the manner of the flesh." (Sometimes "Mother" was capitalized and sometimes "God" was capitalized.) Joseph Smith changed the 1837 edition to say, "the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh." (1 Ne. 11:18.)

The Book of Mormon gives an extended description of Mary, the Mother of the Son of God:

And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of Nazareth I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white. And it came to pass

that I saw the heavens open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou? And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins. And he said unto me: Knowest thou the condescension of God? And I said unto him: I know that he loveth his children; nevertheless, I do not know the meaning of all things. And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw? And I answered him, saying: Yea, it is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men; wherefore, it is the most desirable above all things. And he spake unto me, saying: Yea, and the most joyous to the soul. (1 Ne 11:13-23)

Most who read this passage interpret the “condescension” reference solely as Christ’s. They view it as Christ alone who condescended by being borne of Mary here in mortality. However, when leading up to the angel’s question, “Knowest thou the condescension of God,” the text focuses exclusively on Mary. When the angel clarified the “condescension,” he again focused primarily on Mary and secondarily on Her Son. The angel explained:

“Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh. And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the Spirit for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a child in her arms. And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!”

Who would you reasonably expect to be the woman chosen before this world was organized to become the mortal Mother of the Lord? Who would you expect Heavenly Father would want to bear His child, if not His Spouse? Is it possible that together God the Father and Mary can be acknowledged as the Parents of Christ? The scriptures shift the focus of the “condescension” from Christ, to His Mother, and then back to Her Son, “the seed of the woman.” (email to Marcus Reed, 23 Aug 2019)

There was a time when Christians recognized that the stars of heaven bore witness of the significance of Mary, Christ’s earthly mother. Few Christians now look at the constellations as “signs” set in the firmament by God as His testimony.

The two largest star fields belong to Virgo and Aquarius. These two largest of the Zodiac constellations are heavenly witnesses testifying of Christ’s mother Mary and the returning Christ. For Christ’s first coming, the heavenly testimony focuses the greatest part of the starfield on His Mother. We should reflect on what that may mean. We ought to contemplate why Christ’s first coming was symbolized on the heavenly ecliptic by the Virgin Mother. Why was She the focus?

Christ's Second Coming is the largest starfield on the ecliptic. He will return to pour out judgment, blessing those who follow Him and destroying those who rebel. The destruction of the wicked is what Christ identified as "the end of the world." Aquarius has two outflows from the "Waterbearer's urn." One represents water (giving life) and the other represents fire (purging).

Traditionally we interpret the constellation Virgo as a woman holding a sheaf of wheat in her left hand. The sheaf represents her seed. The brightest star in the constellation, a magnitude 1 star, is "spica"-- "the seed of the woman." That star is placed on the ecliptic. Most other stars in Virgo are located above the ecliptic. "The seed of the woman" represents Christ. His star on the ecliptic represents that everything in the firmament is divided in relation to Him. All of heaven is either above or below the ecliptic. The position of His star, like His role as judge, divides the heavens.

Sidenote about spica: The "signs" in the lights of heaven are meant to be seen and understood by the unaided human eye from the surface of the earth. However, an interesting discovery made using telescopic magnification reveals that the "seed of the woman" is not a single star, but binary stars so closely orbiting one another that they are reaching toward one another at their equators because of their gravitational attraction. These two are seen as one from the surface of the earth.

The Sun and Moon are symbols of the Father and Mother planted overhead as a testimony from Them to Their children. From the surface of the earth they occupy equal space in the firmament. Although the circumference of the sun is approximately 400 times larger than the moon, the moon is approximately 400 times closer to the earth. As a result they are visibly equal in size and occupy the same path on the ecliptic. This is why the moon is able to eclipse the sun.

The Father, represented by the Sun, is stable, unchangeable, reliable and predictable. The Sun rises every day on the horizon in the east and sets every evening on the horizon in the west. He is unvarying in His course from day-to-day and year-to-year. The Mother, represented by the Moon, changes each day. She waxes and wanes. She does not just move from east to west, but the moonrise also constantly moves in the opposite direction from west to east. Every day She reappears further to the east before beginning Her movement to the west. She moves approximately 50 minutes eastward each day.

Her complex movements overhead were part of the reason She was known anciently as "the Great Dancer." Her movements display constantly changing motions, contrasting with Her Companion Sun. This contrast between the movements of the sun and the moon reminds me of the quip by cartoonist Bob Thaves about Ginger Rogers, the dancing partner of acclaimed Fred Astair, "Sure he was great, but don't forget that Ginger Rogers did everything he did...backwards and in high heels."

Back to my letter to Marcus:

Proverbs 8:20-31

I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.

The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the Earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet he had not made the Earth, nor the fields, nor the

highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the depth, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the deep, when he gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass his commandment, when he appointed the foundations of the Earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his Earth and my delights were with the sons of men.

Before this creation, the Mother in Heaven was with the Father. She was beside Him when His work began. She was there when the plan was laid, the boundaries established, and the compass applied to establish order for the creation. All the Father knows, the Mother knows. All the Father established and ordered, the Mother established and ordered. They are One. She is the Father's "delight" and the potential of Her sons to be like Her Husband brings Her delight.

To be like their Father, Her sons must become one with Her daughters, for it is not good for man to be alone (Gen 2:18). The Father and Mother are "one" and Her sons and daughters must likewise become "one." Only when the man and woman were together was the creation "good." When men rebel, disobey, act cruelly or mistreat Her daughters, we are anything but a "delight" to the Heavenly Mother. When we offend Her we also offend Her Husband.

*Before any of us will plan, measure, set a compass, and apportion the foundations of another earth, we must grow together and become like Them. Their work is glorious. They possess love –the power that creates and organizes. Love is the power behind all They do. We cannot be like them without a loving relationship that mirrors Theirs.
(ibid)*

[The majority of these notes on Heavenly Mother come from Denver Snuffer's 2018 talk, *Our Divine Parents* (including what is quoted in my email to Marcus).]

Alma 58:11

Yea, and it came to pass that the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him.

Black Hawk's story - the "monitor" within us. That voice is significant in times like these.

I remember being moved by something I read in Black Hawk's autobiography (published in 1882). He related an account of one of his people, having killed a Frenchman, the British took him prisoner and he was told he was to be shot the next day. His family were encamped a short distance away at the mouth of the Wisconsin.

" He begged for permission to go and see them that night, as he was to die the next day. They permitted him to go after he had promised them to return by sunrise the next morning.

He visited his family, which consisted of his wife and six children. I can not describe their meeting and parting so as to be understood by the whites, as it appears that their feelings are acted upon by certain rules laid down by their preachers, while ours are governed by the monitor within us. He bade his loved ones the last sad farewell and hurried across the prairie to the fort and arrived in time. The soldiers were ready and immediately marched out and shot him down. I visited the stricken family, and by hunting and fishing provided for them until they reached their relations."

I'm impressed that the man returned, keeping his word, to his death. But what caught my attention even more was the contrast Black Hawk makes between the white man acting upon rules laid down by their preachers, "while ours are governed by the monitor within us."

Is this a lost art, relying on an internal monitor within us? (from an email sent to Chris Bailey, 19 Jun 2016)

Alma 58:26

Now it came to pass that when it was night, I caused that my men should not sleep, but that they should march forward by another way towards the land of Manti.

Gid and Teomner take possession of city. Earlier, in Alma 56:38-39

And now Antipus, beholding our danger, did speed the march of his army. But behold, it was night; therefore they did not overtake us, neither did Antipus overtake them; therefore we did camp for the night. And it came to pass that before the dawn of the morning, behold, the Lamanites were pursuing us.

Why in this instance does the Nephites march through the night, but in the earlier instance both Lamanites and Nephites camp for the night, even though one is in hot pursuit to overtake the other?

Alma 60:6-11, 24

Again (like we saw in his letter to Ammoron in ch 54) we see Moroni's personality on display. He is quick to accuse Pahoran and ends up sort of eating crow later (but is happy to do so, since it's a good thing Pahoran is not guilty of what he was accused of).

Alma 60:15-16

Moroni's lament about the king-men. Had it not been for the corruption from within and at the head, we would not have suffered so much useless loss.

Alma 60:23

Now I would that ye should remember that God has said that the inward vessel shall be cleansed first, and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also.

Where did God say this? Could it have been in the writings of Zenoch or Zenos?

Alma 60:27-30

Moroni takes it upon himself as chief commander of the armies to go set things straight. Is this like Oliver Cromwell?

Oliver Cromwell was an English general and statesman who led the Parliament of England's armies against King Charles I during the English Civil War and ruled the British Isles as Lord Protector from 1653 until his death in 1658. Oliver Cromwell was one example that was on the minds of our founding fathers when they were debating and establishing our constitution and establishing checks and balances in the government.

In Nibley's lecture on these verses (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Semester 3, Lecture 68) he had marked verse 11 from Alma 49 where Moroni has authority to alter the management of affairs. But it is in Alma 51:15-16 where we see Moroni is granted power by the voice of the people to put an end to insurrection.

Alma 60:33

Behold, the Lord saith unto me: If those whom ye have appointed your governors do not repent of their sins and iniquities, ye shall go up to battle against them.

This was a revelation to Moroni. Again, the “monitor” within us.

Alma 61:11

We would not shed the blood of our brethren if they would not rise up in rebellion and take the sword against us.

It is the Lamanites who are being aggressors. See last week (Alma 51:20) where I said Moroni's actions seemed harsh.

Alma 62:16-17 (see also verse 27-29)

And it came to pass after they had taken them, they caused them to enter into a covenant that they would no more take up their weapons of war against the Nephites. And when they had entered into this covenant they sent them to dwell with the people of Ammon, and they were in number about four thousand who had not been slain.

The common folk are just as willing to live in peace under one ruler as another. No one likes living under the rule of a tyrant who is imposing hatred and war among his people, no matter which side that tyrant may rule.

Also remember in Alma 24:21-26, how the The Anti-Nephi-Lehis welcomed their family member's murderers into their group. Would it be hard walking down the street and occasionally bumping into the person who murdered your spouse/father/etc.?

Alma 62:31-32, 38

And it came to pass that when the Lamanites saw that Moroni was coming against them, they were again frightened and fled before the army of Moroni. And it came to pass that Moroni and his army did pursue them from city to city, until they were met by Lehi and Teancum; and the Lamanites fled from Lehi and Teancum, even down upon the borders by the seashore, until they came to the land of Moroni...

Now it came to pass that Moroni marched forth on the morrow, and came upon the Lamanites, insomuch that they did slay them with a great slaughter; and they did drive them out of the land; and they did flee, even that they did not return at that time against the Nephites.

This was his keeping the promise he made to Ammoron in his epistle (see Alma 54:10-12), and restores the state of affairs back to where it appears to have been back in Alma 50.

Alma 62:40

And there had been murders, and contentions, and dissensions, and all manner of iniquity among the people of Nephi; nevertheless for the righteous' sake, yea, because of the prayers of the righteous, they were spared.

Recall the words of Amulek from years before (Alma 10:22-23)

Yea, and I say unto you that if it were not for the prayers of the righteous, who are now in the land, that ye would even now be visited with utter destruction; yet it would not be by flood, as were the people in the days of Noah, but it would be by famine, and by pestilence, and the sword. But it is by the prayers of the righteous that ye are spared; now therefore, if ye will cast out the righteous from among you then will not the Lord stay his hand; but in his fierce anger he will come out against you; then ye shall be smitten by famine, and by pestilence, and by the sword; and the time is soon at hand except ye repent.

Alma 63:5 (see also Alma 22:29-30)

on the borders of the land Bountiful, by the land Desolation,

Nibley points out the juxtaposition of how Land of Bountiful and Land of Desolation border each other.

*Notice that Bountiful and Desolation are together. There's your *coincidentia oppositorum*. (Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Semester 3, Lecture 73, pg 204)*

Alma 63:11

*Therefore it became expedient for Shiblon to confer those **sacred things**, before his death, upon the son of Helaman, who was called Helaman,*

Nibley comments on this:

This is another type. You have the national treasures all the time. Wherever the Hopis travel, they have the tiponi. It's a big box with the sacred objects in it—certain corn things and certain vessels. The Hebrews traveled with the Ark of the Covenant, which had the sacred things in it. It had the scroll of the law, the lulab, and various other sacred objects in it. And the Japanese have sacred objects that are handed down from the emperor to his son. They include a sword and a mirror. These are the sacred objects that are handed down from early times. People usually have them. I remember what they are [among the Hopis]. They have certain kachinas and corn emblems. They have something very much like what the Hebrews had, something like a sheaf of corn bent over and tied—very simple, very primitive sort of things in there that have been kept from the earliest times. These people had the sacred things too. We get them later when Mormon's father hands them over to him. (Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3, Lecture 73, pg 206)

Book of Mormon Study – Helaman 1-6

Online zoom Sunday School, 23 Aug 2020

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

Hel 1:3

One of Pahoran's sons, Paanchi, his name is clearly Egyptian Nibley points out.

Paanchi is the one indisputable Egyptian name in the Book of Mormon. Nobody can ever dispute that, either that Joseph Smith could have invented it or that it could not be pure, 100% Egyptian, because Paanchi [Piankhi] was a very important person in Egyptian history, just before Lehi's day. It means "Amon is my life." And Pacumeni and Pahoran mean the person is a Syrian. That's what an Egyptian would call a person from northern Palestine. These are familiar Egyptian names. (Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 3, Lecture 73, pg 206-207)

Hel 1:24-25

And now he did not tarry in the land of Zarahemla, but he did march forth with a large army, even towards the city of Bountiful; for it was his determination to go forth and cut his way through with the sword, that he might obtain the north parts of the land. And, supposing that their greatest strength was in the center of the land, therefore he did march forth, giving them no time to assemble themselves together save it were in small bodies; and in this manner they did fall upon them and cut them down to the earth. But behold, this march of Coriantumr through the center of the land gave Moronihah great advantage over them, notwithstanding the greatness of the number of the Nephites who were slain.

[See Map]

Hel 3:29

Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked

Compare with:

A great and marvelous work is about to come forth unto the children of men. Behold, I am God; give heed to my word, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of both joints and marrow; therefore give heed unto my word. (D&C 14:1-2)

What insight do we gain from this image? Two edge swords cut both ways.

Gift of Tongues: “The gift of tongues...even cloven tongues as of fire (T&C 123:10). This is a strange figure. To cleave means both to stick together, glue, kleben, etc., and also to split or separate. A cloven tongue is a loosened and articulate tongue. The image here employed recalls both the two-edged sword which is the word or tongue of God, which is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword, to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow, soul and spirit (T&C 16:1) and the fiery sword of the cherubim (kherev means sword). The next [sentence] confirms the use of metaphors, where ‘tongues as of fire’ is matched by the filling of the house ‘as with a rushing mighty wind.’ Was there real fire or a real wind? No, but there was something real that can best be described in those terms. We know that things really happened in the Kirtland Temple, where we read also of a sound as of rushing waters and hair as white wool.”[1] The Lord can give the Gift of Tongues, which constitutes the ability to speak “foreign” or non-native languages (see Acts 1:7–8; T&C 32:5), and He is also able to endow men and women with a loosened and articulate tongue, which speaks the words of God. To speak with a new tongue is to speak worthily of sacred things. It is to correctly weigh the truth of a matter, know by the power of the spirit that what is said is true and in conformity with God’s will, and then to speak it.

[1] Hugh Nibley, *Eloquent Witness: Nibley on Himself, Others, and the Temple*, 334–335.

Hel 4:7

And there they did fortify against the Lamanites, from the west sea, even unto the east; it being a day’s journey for a Nephite, on the line which they had fortified and stationed their armies to defend their north country.

[See Map]

Hel 4:10

And it came to pass in the sixty and first year of the reign of the judges they succeeded in regaining even the half of all their possessions.

[See Map]

Hel 4:14-16

Moronihah is leading the Nephites into battle and preaching to them and when they repent then they are able to regain their lands. Preaching the gospel to them is part of the military effort. Imagine that.

Hel 4:20-26

A lot being said in Hel 4:20 to end of chapter. Unbelief, spirit withdrawn. They are left unto themselves. What does that mean? Discuss my notes that I have taken on withdrawal of the spirit, God’s spirit will not always strive with man.

Hel 4:26

Not many years.

See:

And it came to pass that all these iniquities did come unto them in the space of not many years, insomuch that a more part of it had come unto them in the sixty and seventh year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi. (Hel 6:32)

Now this great iniquity had come upon the Nephites, in the space of not many years; and when Nephi saw it, his heart was swollen with sorrow within his breast; and he did exclaim in the agony of his soul: (Hel 7:6)

And thus in time, yea, even in the space of not many years, they became an exceedingly great band of robbers; and they did search out all the secret plans of Gadianton; and thus they became robbers of Gadianton. (Hel 11:26)

Amulek

Hel 5:9-10,37

Helaman teaches his sons about their names - and in this discourse he talks about Amulek. Amulek is also mentioned by the one Nephite dissenter in the Jail in the land of Nephi. What is it with Amulek? The record doesn't indicate that Amulek was down in the land of Nephi. When did he go down there? Why would the people in the jail be familiar with him. It occurs to me that the teaching of Amulek and his mission with Alma had become such a popular written scripture and teaching that everyone would have been familiar with it.

In the land of Nephi, same prison that Limhi cast Ammon in, and they are saying remember Amulek and Zeezrom? Didn't that happen in Ammonihah in the land of the Nephites? How do these people know Amulek and Zeezrom?

Are the events of this chapter included in what Christ was referring to:

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. (3 Ne 9:20)

Hel 5:35-42

Story of Aminadab. Why did he dissent from the church (assembly)? Were there the kind of problems in the church in Nephite times as we see in the church in our times? Often you would see Helaman¹ go out and set a regulation in the church. How much abuse of authority, as men may assume, was exercised unrighteously? (D&C 121). Even when a true prophet stands at the head and has to regulate things as in Helaman's day, how does this compare to our own day?

Hel 6:1

The Lamanites, who were incredibly more numerous than the Nephites, the more part of them had become righteous. The more part of a certain part of them or the more part of all of them? That's a big change. Whatever that entails, it happened within a matter of how many years? To me this time frame is astounding to contemplate. Then to apply that to today and recognize, to see how whatever the situation is, it can change so dramatically and so quickly.

Hel 6:24

tried, not according to the laws of their country, but according to the laws of their wickedness,

Antifa is one example who have their own rules that exercises itself above the law.

Hel 6:26

These secret oaths didn't get put into the hearts of the people by, they didn't get them from the records that Alma handed down, that Helaman was commanded not to divulge. But yea, they did get them from the very being who put it into the heart of Gadianton. This indicates revelation. Revelation from a dark source is just as real as revelation from a light source. You can, depending on whatever factors, receive revelation from Satan. Recall Korihor. This would require faith as well from a dark source. I'm reminded of the movie Now You See Me.

Note that Satan put it into the *heart* of Gadianton. See verse 30. And Alma 8:9. Hel 7:15; 16:22-23.

When light withdraws from God's chosen people, it is given unto another.

Hel 6:34

And thus we see that the Nephites did begin to dwindle in unbelief, and grow in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites began to grow exceedingly in the knowledge of their God; yea, they did begin to keep his statutes and commandments, and to walk in truth and uprightness before him.

Compare with cross references:

And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again be a delightful people. (Words of Mormon 1:8)

And the priests were not to depend upon the people for their support; but for their labor they were to receive the grace of God, that they might wax strong in the Spirit, having the knowledge of God, that they might teach with power and authority from God. (Mosiah 18:26)

And now, it has hitherto been wisdom in God that these things should be preserved; for behold, they have enlarged the memory of this people, yea, and convinced many of the error of their ways, and brought them to the knowledge of their God unto the salvation of their souls. (Alma 37:8)

And now, as I, Moroni, said I could not make a full account of these things which are written, therefore it sufficeth me to say that Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites. And he ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man might know that he was God, because of the many great works which the Lord had showed unto him. And because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw the finger of Jesus, which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he knew that it was the finger of the Lord; and he had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting. Wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus; and he did minister unto him. (Ether 3:17-20)

Book of Mormon Study – Helaman 7 – 3 Nephi 7

Online zoom Sunday School, 13 Sep 2020

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

Helaman 7:12-14

And now, when Nephi arose he beheld the multitudes of people who had gathered together. And it came to pass that he opened his mouth and said unto them: Behold, why have ye gathered yourselves together? That I may tell you of your iniquities? Yea, because I have got upon my tower that I might pour out my soul unto my God, because of the exceeding sorrow of my heart, which is because of your iniquities!

The Lord has given us commandment to pray vocally in public prayer:

And again, I command thee that thou shalt pray vocally as well as in thy heart; yea, before the world as well as in secret, in public as well as in private. (D&C 19:28, see also words to Joseph Knight, D&C 23:6)

One speaker related his feelings about public prayer:

I've given opening prayers in a lot of settings, and I have to tell you, when praying in secret, I don't have to worry about what anyone else thinks about my vocabulary, content, incomplete sentences, dangling participles, or stupid notions. I don't have to worry about any of that. It is between me and God. But when I'm standing on the corner, or at the pulpit, or before people and praying, (you may be better than I am), I have never been able to pray in public in those settings, without at least some concern about the words coming out of my mouth and their effect upon the audience. I have always felt like I was delivering more of a sermon than a prayer to God. That's a weakness I have that you may have, too. Christ deals with that by how He teaches us to pray. Our Lord's example of prayer was so private that His disciples had to come to Him and ask: "Lord teach us how to pray." They witnessed Him praying. I'll give you the examples. When the Lord went to pray, He went out alone, apart. (TDS, Vol 2, pg 248)

Did Helaman not have this problem? Was his sincere prayer intended to be public? If not, then why upon his tower and in a voice loud enough for people to overhear it?

Hel 8:4-7

Judges incite crowd, "they did stir up the people to anger against Nephi,"

Not unlike we see happening in crowds and protests today. This tactic is not new.

Therefore they did cry unto the people, saying: Why do you suffer this man to revile against us? For behold he doth condemn all this people, even unto destruction; yea, and also that these our great cities shall be taken from us, that we shall have no place in them. And now we know that this is impossible, for behold, we are powerful, and our cities great, therefore our enemies can have no power over us.

How long has it been since Lamanites had yielded up the lands back to the Nephites (Hel 5:52)? (From 62 Reign of Judges to 69. 7 years) How is it possible for the people to forget such recent history? What difference does it make when the spirit of the Lord begins to withdraw from the people? Do we see evidence of this spirit being withdrawn in our day? How long ago was 911?

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 8:15

Num. 21:6–9. The Hebrew word for “serpent” is nachash נחש (Strong’s 5175), which has a gematria of 358, the same gematria as Mashiach משיח (Strong’s 4899). See also John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32; Alma 16:32 [33:17-20].

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 8:16 (or 17?)

As we read in Targum Onkelos: “And he believed in the Word (Memra) of YHWH. And He counted it to him for righteousness” (Targum Onkelos Gen. 15:6).

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 8:21

Thus fulfilling Ezek. 17:1–24

Without Excuse

Hel 8:24-25

And now, seeing ye know these things and cannot deny them except ye shall lie, therefore in this ye have sinned, for ye have rejected all these things, notwithstanding so many evidences which ye have received; yea, even ye have received all things, both things in heaven, and all things which are in the earth, as a witness that they are true. But behold, ye have rejected the truth, and rebelled against your holy God; and even at this time, instead of laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where nothing doth corrupt, and where nothing can come which is unclean, ye are heaping up for yourselves wrath against the day of judgment.

Compare with words from Paul:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their

*foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
(Rom 1:18-22)*

And Samuel the Lamanite:

And the angel said unto me that many shall see greater things than these, to the intent that they might believe that these signs and these wonders should come to pass upon all the face of this land, to the intent that there should be no cause for unbelief among the children of men - (Hel 14:28)

And Mormon's commentary:

Now they did not sin ignorantly, for they knew the will of God concerning them, for it had been taught unto them; therefore they did wilfully rebel against God. (3 Ne 6:18)

The temptation is to use these scriptures to justify judging others, the true intent is to ask how this applies to *myself*.

You'd be better off saying, "I will recognize, I will admit, and I will hold myself to every failing I am prone to make. But as for all the rest of you, I don't see anything wrong with any of you. I cannot detect a flaw in the least, because I'm going to judge you by the standard with which I would like to be measured; which is, I take no offense, I freely forgive." (TDS Vol 2, pg 153)

If these verses that tell us we are without excuse are NOT given for us to justify judging others, then what are they for?

Remember back on our lesson on Korihor. Was he "without excuse"? Even though he was deceived by an angel that had appeared to him, he was still held accountable to the truth:

And then Alma said unto him: Believest thou that there is a God? And he answered, Nay. Now Alma said unto him: Will ye deny again that there is a God, and also deny the Christ? For behold, I say unto you, I know there is a God, and also that Christ shall come. And now what evidence have ye that there is no God, or that Christ cometh not? I say unto you that ye have none, save it be your word only. But, behold, I have all things as a testimony that these things are true; and ye also have all things as a testimony unto you that they are true; and will ye deny them? Believest thou that these things are true? Behold, I know that thou believest, but thou art possessed with a lying spirit, and ye have put off the Spirit of God that it may have no place in you; but the devil has power over you, and he doth carry you about, working devices that he may destroy the children of God. And now Korihor said unto Alma: If thou wilt show me a sign, that I may be convinced that there is a God, yea, show unto me that he hath power, and then will I be convinced of the truth of thy words. (Alma 30:37-43)

Souls of Men

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 8:28

Gen. 2:7; Yosef ben Yosef [Joseph Smith] said, “God made a tabernacle & put a spirit in it and it became a human soul...” (Ehat, A.F. & Cook, L.W. (Eds.) (1980) *The Words of Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, p. 346; see also pgs. 352,359). See also Ya’akov 2:5 [Jacob 2:16]; Moshiyah 13:2 [Mosiah 29:7]; Alma 16:10 [30:46]; 19:7-8 [40:15-26]; 3 Nefi 9:6 [20:8].

The definition of “soul” — given through Joseph Smith years prior to his translation of the Book of Abraham — was the “spirit and the body” together: And the spirit and the body is the soul of man (D&C 88:15). Christ, as well as the “noble and great,” were all embodied and therefore resurrected beings before this world. They were “souls.” Now the Lord had shewn unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was, and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones. And God saw these souls, that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them (Abraham 3:22-23). Joseph Smith said, “God made a tabernacle and put a spirit into it, and it became a living soul. How does it read in the Hebrew? It does not say in the Hebrew that God created the spirit of man. It says, ‘God made man out of the earth and put into him Adam’s spirit, and so became a living body.’” [TPJS, 352–353; WJS, 346, 352, 359; WWJ, 2:385.] (Cf. Moses 3:7: And I, the Lord God, formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into Adam his spirit or the breath of life, and man became a living soul, the first flesh upon the Earth, the first man also.) “In tracing the thing to the foundation and looking at it philosophically, we shall find a very material difference between the body and the spirit. The body is supposed to be organized matter, and the spirit by many is thought to be immaterial, without substance. With this latter statement we should beg leave to differ and state that spirit is a substance, that it is material, but that it is more pure, elastic, and refined matter than the body — that it existed before the body, can exist in the body, and will exist separate from the body, when the body will be moldering in the dust, and will in the resurrection be again united with it. Without attempting to describe this mysterious connection and the laws that govern the body and spirit of man, their relationship to each other, and the design of God in relation to the human body and spirit, I would just remark that the spirits of men are eternal, that they are governed by the same priesthood that Abraham, Melchizedek, and the apostles were: that they are organized according to that priesthood which is everlasting — without beginning of days or end of years [Hebrews 7:3] — that they all move in their respective spheres and are governed by the law of God, that when they appear upon the earth they are in a probationary state and are preparing, if righteous, for a future and a greater glory.” [TPJS, 207–208.]

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 9:6

The Hebrew word *beGED* בגד (Strong’s 899) means both “garment” or “garb” and “treachery.” This is an obvious Hebrew word play.

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 9:9-10

The ancient Jewish practice was to bury the body within 24 hours.

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 9:18

Without at least two witnesses, there were no grounds for a conviction of the five men (Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 9:38

Without at least two witnesses, there were no grounds for a conviction of the five men or of Nefi (Deut. 17:6; 19:15). The confession of Seantum alone would not have been sufficient for his conviction, in the absence of witnesses. As the Talmud says, “No man may call himself a wrongdoer” (b.Sanhedrin 9b), just as no man can testify in his own favor (b.Ketubot 27a). If a man testified to his own guilt, that in itself made him disreputable and an invalid witness (b.Sanhedrin 25a; b.Baba Kamma 72b). There are biblical instances of convictions associated with confessions (Josh. 7:19–20; 2 Sam. 1:10–16; compare Judg. 17:1–4; 1 Sam. 14:43; 2 Sam. 4:8–12). The Talmud points out that these were all confessions made after trial and conviction, made for the sole purpose of expiating the sin before YHWH (b.Sanhedrin 43b) or as special case exceptions to the rule (for example, trials before kings rather than judges). One type of exception was when a confession was “corroborated by an ordeal as well as by the production of the corpus delicti” (Falk, Z. (1964) Hebrew Law in Biblical Times. Jerusalem, Israel: Wahrmann, p. 71). Such was the case of Achan (Josh. 7:19–20), who was exposed by casting of lots and whose confession was corroborated by the discovery of the goods under the floor of his tent. Similarly, Seantum was exposed by Nefi’s revelations and by the discovery of blood on his garment.

Helaman 10

In this chapter we see sealing power given to Nephi. There are three kinds of Melchizedek sealing power. The first is when power is given to a dispensation head, as we see with Lehi and again with Joseph Smith. This kind of sealing power gives rise to the second, which is embodied within authoritative ordinances. This is the kind of sealing power that Henry B Eyring spoke about in April General Conference 2012, Families under Covenant. This second kind of sealing power has a condition upon it and can be broken, as we read in Isaiah 24:5-6. In this chapter in Helaman, however, we are not talking about these first two kinds of sealing power.

There is a third kind of sealing power. And this third kind of sealing power goes beyond either of the first two. It has absolutely unique application and is given only in rare circumstances and for highly specific purposes. That third form involves giving the authority to control the elements. This was authority possessed by Enoch. This was authority possessed by Melchizedek. This was the authority possessed by Christ. This was the authority Christ had to suspend (or not employ) in order to permit those who would kill Him to kill Him. This is the kind of authority which, in the case of every such individual, they must give their lives up willingly. Their lives cannot be taken.

Here in Helaman 10 we see a good example of this kind of sealing power. It gives us insight into why such authority would ever be given to a man. Start at verse 5. This is the Lord speaking to Nephi:

*“Because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness [and this “unwearyingness” has been described in verse 4—that is, Nephi has gone and declared what the Lord has asked him to declare, and he hasn’t feared them, nor has he sought to protect his own life, but he has instead sought to keep the commandments of God—therefore, because he has done this with such unwearyingness], behold, I [God] will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for **thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will** (emphasis added).”*

That is not a commandment given to Nephi. Instead, this is a description of the character and the nature of Nephi. God was not saying, "I'm giving this to you, but be careful how you use it. Please don't do anything that isn't according to my will." It is not that at all. Instead, it is the Lord saying, "I, God, have faith in you, Nephi. I, God, trust you." God is proclaiming that Nephi is sufficiently trustworthy that he will not do anything other than God's will. You see, the whole thing turns on its head at this point. This is God having faith in a man. What manner of man, then, does God have enough faith in to permit him to employ God's power at his word?

"Behold, thou art Nephi, and I am God. Behold, I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels...."

This is because this decree in this circumstance, may require those angels who are watching over this world to obey the word of the man. Therefore the angels, the Powers of Heaven, must give heed. God declared this in the presence of the hosts who are standing before Him.

"...I declare it unto thee in the presence of mine angels, that ye shall have power over this people, and shall smite the earth with famine, and with pestilence, and destruction, according to the wickedness of this people."

That's a rather Aaronic behavior. By that I mean Aaronic sealing power is the kind of power that can seal you up into condemnation, or judgment, as opposed to Melchizedek which purpose is given to bless. In this case with Nephi it is given to accomplish Melchizedek ends.

"Behold, I give unto you power, that whatsoever ye shall seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven; and thus shall ye have power among this people." (verse 7. See how Nephi uses this power in 2 Ne 33:13-15)

This is rather Melchizedek, because you can seal up unto eternal life. This is the positive side. This is the thing which those who are given this authority seek earnestly to do. Their lives have as their purpose to save others. They are here to rescue lost, potentially-damned souls. Therefore, they can be trusted, because their hearts are right before God. They, like God, seek the immortality and eternal life of man.

"And thus, if ye shall say unto this temple it shall be rent in twain, it shall be done."

This is because the temple is subordinate to the word of God. The temple is not the place that controls the word of God, the temple is the place which most of all ought be subject to the word of God. It's not a place to innovate the ordinances. It's a place to obey, to follow, to give strict heed to and not vary. But when it offends God and frustrates His purpose, then one with this third form of sealing authority can declare it would be cast down. When such authority makes this declaration, the temple is surely cast down, so that not so much as one stone will be left atop the other.

"And if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou cast down and become smooth, it shall be done. And behold, if ye shall say that God shall smite this people, it shall come to pass."

Then because he knows the nature and character of the man involved in giving this authority, God commands him to smite the people using God's word. He must go out and deliver the threatening message, "Except ye repent ye shall be smitten, even unto destruction." He didn't want to do that,

because that's not the character of the person who, with unwearyingness, would go out and declare the word of God. Such holders of this third form of sealing power have in their heart one and only one objective, which is the salvation of the souls of men. But Nephi was told he was required to deliver this troubling message. Yet when he delivered it, he didn't even use the authority he was given. He meekly asks the Lord if the Lord will smite. (see TDS Vol 2, pg 133-134)

Hel 10:14

smitten even unto destruction

I do not imagine Nephi took any delight in declaring this. See Samuel the Lamanite's words after declaring harsh judgments upon the people:

O ye people of the land, that ye would hear my words! And I pray that the anger of the Lord be turned away from you, and that ye would repent and be saved. (Hel 13:39)

Hel 10:17

And it came to pass that thus he did go forth in the Spirit, from multitude to multitude, declaring the word of God, even until he had declared it unto them all, or sent it forth among all the people.

How much could this be like, or compared to, Denver's words:

I don't know if it's important that anyone from Idaho Falls comes here. I don't know if it's important if anybody from Idaho Falls hears one word. But I do know that a testimony needs to be spoken on this ground, in this place. I know that everyone will be accountable for that. Not just those who happen to stumble upon this. I know that the Lord knows a great deal more than do I and that very often I only figure out later what He has had in mind all along. God is moving systematically. He is taking the measure of the Latter-day Saints. His hand is about to move again in the affairs of men. We have a window. This is your dispensation. You are accountable. (TDS Vol 2, pg 56)

Hel 11:26

not many years

Stick of Joseph footnote Hel 12:13-14

The "if...and" conditional structure seems stilted in English, which prefers "if...then." However, in Hebrew, this construction is correct. The numerous examples appearing in this paragraph, as well as elsewhere in the text, indicate the Hebraic nature of the underlying original.

Hel 12:25-26

And I would that all men might be saved. But we read that in the great and last day there are some who shall be cast out, yea, who shall be cast off from the presence of the Lord; Yea, who shall be consigned to a state of endless misery, fulfilling the words which say: They that have done good shall have everlasting life; and they that have done evil shall have everlasting damnation. And thus it is. Amen.

The words, "But we read...". Where do we read these words? They look like something that could have come from Book of Revelations. Are these words from someone like Zenock or Zenos that we don't have? Could John the revelator been using or alluding to these same words from the same records that Nephi is quoting from?

Hel 15:1

except you shall repent, your houses shall be left unto you desolate

We know this was prophesied by Isaiah (see 2 Ne 15:8), but is there also a spiritual implication here as well?

Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless, Chapter Treasures in the Heavens - see pg 58-60, Hymn of the Pearl from the Acts of Thomas. This is referred to as a Treasure in heaven but in other places are we not promised houses and mansions? Are these likewise things that we have set aside during our probation here to regain if we endure well here? Can these be lost during this probation? Interesting in this context how Samuel has also been prophesying of slippery "treasures".

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:2)

Many shelters have been prepared for people, good ones for the good, but bad ones for the bad, many, without number. Happy is he who enters into the blessed houses; for in the bad ones there is no rest, nor returning. (2 Enoch 61:2-3 [OTP-version J])

Hel 16:17-18

And they began to reason and to contend among themselves, saying: That it is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come; if so, and he be the Son of God, the Father of heaven and of earth, as it has been spoken, why will he not show himself unto us as well as unto them who shall be at Jerusalem?

Also "some things they may have guessed right". This is the idea of randomness that atheists use to rationalize a disbelief in God. (book I read recommended by Lauren recently – The Drunkard's Walk by Leonard Mlodinow) Of course you are going to have a miracle happen every once in a while. That's the nature of randomness.

The argument of reasonableness being employed to determine the truth of a thing. How this competes with faith. Even evangelicals use this as a method of determining truth. As one Christian friend shared with me in an email:

"You referred to Romans 1:20, and interpret it to mean 'that reality provides enough evidence to find the correct book of truth. Use reason first to find the book of truth and then use the book of truth to correct reason and build faith.'" (Jay response to Ron, email Aug 22, 2020)

This idea is not just with Ron, but is made by Rod Bond and Bob Bolton. It appears to be a thing among Evangelicals. It's a "rational faith" is one way I remember Bob say it many times. This is basically seeking for a sign (see notes from Alma 32 lesson).

Hel 16:21

they will, by the cunning and the mysterious arts of the evil one, work some great mystery which we cannot understand, which will keep us down to be servants to their words, and also servants unto them, for we depend upon them

This is given as an accusation that the wicked make against the righteous. Consider these words in light of recent events, applied from a different angle:

They [the government, Bill Gates, the elite...] by their cunning, will work some great mystery which we cannot understand [create a virus, manufacture a pandemic, do some conspiracy...] which will keep us down to be servants unto them [by virtue of some antidote, vaccine, etc.] for we depend on them... [thus being able to control us - Take this vaccine or you will not be allowed to work, buy, sell, etc.]

You see how this line of reasoning can go both ways. But it is still rooted in the skeptical and critical corner of the quadrant in my model. To escape this way of thinking we must move to the faith corner of the quadrant.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 1:1

Regarding the appearance of Greek names in ancient America, see citation for Timothy in 3 Nepi 9:2 [19:4]

The appearance of the Greek name "Timothy" (Timo - Theos) "honoring God" should come as no surprise. No less a scholar than Dr. Cyrus Gordon suggests the Greek word "Theos" migrated to Ancient America. He writes of the Uto-Aztecan (Nahuatl) word teo - tl: "For example teo - tl 'god' could have been introduced from Greek theo - s... Greek influence in Ancient America does not come as a complete surprise. Since Mycenaean times, the Greeks have been a nautical people" (Gordon, C.H. (1971) Before Columbus. New York, ny: Crown. p. 136).

3 Nephi 1:2-3

And Nephi, the son of Helaman, had departed out of the land of Zarahemla... and whither he went, no man knoweth;

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 1:24-25

See “What does it mean to fulfill the Torah?” footnote to 2 Nefi 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[l]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).”

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 2:1

~15 CE. The Nefites began to reckon their time from the sign of Mashiach’s birth (3 Nefi 1:9). Because there was no “year 0,” the sign was given in 1 BCE. Therefore, one year after the sign, began the year 1 CE. “In the sixteenth year” means that 15 years had been completed since the sign, but 16 years had not. Hence, the proper notation is 15 CE.

3 Ne 4:28-29

And their leader, Zemnarihah, was taken and hanged upon a tree, yea, even upon the top thereof until he was dead. And when they had hanged him until he was dead they did fell the tree to the earth, and did cry with a loud voice, saying: May the Lord preserve his people in righteousness and in holiness of heart, that they may cause to be felled to the earth all who shall seek to slay them because of power and secret combinations, even as this man hath been felled to the earth.

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 4:28

Deut. 21:22, This follows the ancient Jewish custom of felling the tree after hanging. We read in the Torah, “And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and you hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of Elohim;) that your land be not defiled, which YHWH your Elohim gives you for an inheritance” (Deut. 21:22–23). The Hebrew says, literally, “burying you shall bury him/it.” The repetition of the verb is taken by the Talmud to mean that the tree is felled and also buried (b.Sanhedrin 46b). Maimonides comments, “In order that it should not serve as a sad reminder, people saying: ‘This is the tree in which so and so was hanged’” (Maimonides, b.Sanhedrin, XV, 9).

3 Ne 5:9

But behold there are records which do contain all the proceedings of this people; and a shorter but true account was given by Nephi.

This suggests that there are other accounts of the proceedings of the people that are not true. How much of our own history can we trust is "true"? How valuable would it be to have a "true" account written in our day by one like Nephi? Would we finally know who actually killed JFK? What is the truth behind the terrorism of 911? COVID-19 and organized riots?

3 Ne 5:20

I am Mormon, and a pure descendant of Lehi.

Seed was not mixed. His fathers lived true to the commandment not to mix seed. (See lesson on Mosiah 25-28, 24 May 2020)

3 Ne 6:16

And thus Satan did lead away the hearts of the people to do all manner of iniquity; therefore they had enjoyed peace but a few years.

How did Satan do that? He isn't walking around in the flesh talking to people. Does he whisper in our ears? Does he employ demons to entice and deceive us? Are demons real? Can we be possessed and not know it?

See the verse before this one: Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. (verse 15)

Satan has great power. In this realm that we live in, Satan is the god of this world. He operates within some form of law or guidelines or rules of engagement in which he is found "going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." (see Job 1:6-12) and we can be subject to his influence.

We have agency - Nephi's words, save we be enticed by one or the other. (Nibley expounds on this somewhere)

Corruption from within the church

3 Ne 6:21-22

Now there were many of the people who were exceedingly angry because of those who testified of these things; and those who were angry were chiefly the chief judges, and they who had been high priests [Kohanim HaGadolim] and lawyers; yea, all those who were lawyers were angry with those who testified of these things. Now there was no lawyer nor judge nor high priest [Kohen HaGadol] that could have power to condemn any one to death save their condemnation was signed by the governor of the land.

The term "high priest" in this verse caught my attention. Is this the first time we see high priests in a wicked role in the Book of Mormon? Their role in this chapter is rather insidious.

Now it came to pass that those judges had many friends and kindreds; and the remainder, yea, even almost all the lawyers and the high priests, did gather themselves together, and unite with the kindreds of those judges who were to be tried according to the law. And they did enter into a covenant one with another, yea, even into that covenant which was given by them of old, which covenant was given and administered by the devil, to combine against all righteousness. (3 Ne 6:27-28)

The first time we see the term "High Priest" (in a righteous role) used in Book of Mormon is with Alma the elder:

And it came to pass that they were brought before the priests, and delivered up unto the priests by the teachers; and the priests brought them before Alma, who was the high priest. (Mosiah 26:7)

This office was later conferred upon his son, Alma:

And it came to pass that Alma was appointed to be the first chief judge, he being also the high priest, his father having conferred the office upon him, and having given him the charge concerning all the affairs of the church. (Mosiah 29:42)

When the church was initially organized by Alma, there was only one high priest, which continued to be the case in the church thereafter:

Now Alma did not grant unto him the office of being high priest over the church, but he retained the office of high priest unto himself; but he delivered the judgment-seat unto Nephihah. (Alma 4:18)

Point of clarification: There is a difference between "order" of high priest and the "office" of high priest that was conferred on Alma the younger that we read about above:

Now, as I said concerning the holy order, or this high priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish; (Alma 13:10. Study verses 1-9 for more clarity on the distinction of the "order" of high priest.)

The first time we see "High Priests" referred to in the plural is in Alma 46:

Thus they were led away by Amalickiah to dissensions, notwithstanding the preaching of Helaman and his brethren, yea, notwithstanding their exceedingly great care over the church, for they were high priests over the church. (Alma 46:6)

To me it's not clear if these were righteous high priests or dissenting high priests. The "they were high priests over the church" could be referring to those who were "led away by Amalickiah" or they could be those associated with "Helaman and his brethren".

Later in the chapter it alludes that these were likely righteous high priests associated with Helaman:

And Helaman and the high priests did also maintain order in the church; yea, even for the space of four years did they have much peace and rejoicing in the church. (Alma 46:38)

The second time we see high priests in the plural is in Helaman:

And so great was the prosperity of the church, and so many the blessings which were poured out upon the people, that even the high priests and the teachers were themselves astonished beyond measure. (Helaman 3:25)

When did multiple high priests enter into the church? Why at first was there only one high priest who was over the church (see Mosiah 25:15 ff), but then later there are multiple high priests? There is a similar pattern in the office of high priest in the early days of the church which is a topic of study on it's own. *

"Wicked" high priests:

The first time the Book of Mormon mentions a wicked "high priest" is in Ether:

And it came to pass that his high priest murdered him as he sat upon his throne. (Ether 14:9)

First time among the children of Lehi the we see a wicked high priest is with King Noah:

For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones in their stead... And the seats which were set apart for the high priests, which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold; and he caused a breastwork to be built before them, that they might rest their bodies and their arms upon while they should speak lying and vain words to his people. (Mosiah 11:5,11)

Nehor introduced corruption to how priests ought to function (this was later identified as "priestcraft"):

And he [Nehor] had gone about among the people, preaching to them that which he termed to be the word of God, bearing down against the church; declaring unto the people that every priest and teacher ought to become popular; and they ought not to labor with their hands, but that they ought to be supported by the people. (Alma 1:3, see also verse 12)

Though not "high priests", we see wicked priests among Zoramites:

Now their rulers and their priests and their teachers did not let the people know concerning their desires; therefore they found out privily the minds of all the people. (Alma 35:5)

Nephi prophesying of our day:

And they shall contend one with another; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance. (2 Ne 28:4. References to Zion along with other details in this chapter tell us these words apply to the modern day LDS church as well as other churches - see notes from Lesson on Mosiah 29-Alma 4)

Examples in our day:

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon fled Kirtland in January 1838. They fled at night. They were chased by people for 200 miles trying to kill Joseph. Among them were those who had been called as leaders of the church, including the high office of apostle.

Joseph Smith's worst critics were Mormons. They abused him led mobs against him, conspired to have him imprisoned and ultimately murdered. Mormons have slandered his memory with false histories. Joseph declared to the Mormons in April 1844 (two months before he was murdered): "You don't know me; you never knew my heart."

As recent as 1994, Jame E. Faust repeated, "stay with the majority of the Twelve Apostles".
[https://www.lds.org/ensign/1994/11/the-keys-that-never-rust#footnote1-94911_000_028, 2nd paragraph]

I would ask, what minority in the quorum of the twelve should we be wary of?

Church is broken up. Government is broken up. Land is broken up

Footnote:

* Then comes the High Priesthood, which is the greatest of all. Wherefore, it must needs be that one be appointed of the High Priesthood to preside over the priesthood, and he shall be called President of the High Priesthood of the Church; Or, in other words, the Presiding High Priest over the High Priesthood of the Church. (D&C 107:64-66)

Elder: An office in the church that Joseph Smith organized on April 6, 1830. This office had the right to preside, preach, teach, exhort, and expound scripture. Originally, Elders were elected to this position by the body of members, but the practice has since changed in the LDS Church to become a "calling" by a presiding authority and a sustaining (vote of approval) by a congregation, preliminary to ordination to the office. Joseph Smith was the First Elder in the church; Oliver Cowdery was the Second Elder. Joseph Smith recorded: "The authority of the Melchizedek priesthood was manifested and conferred, for the first time, upon several of the elders" at the June 1831 conference. [JSP, Documents Vol. 1:320, citing JS History Vol. A1:118.] This clarifies that "elder" is a church office that is not related to the High Priesthood, because these men were already serving in their church office of "elder" before the High Priesthood was restored. The office of "elder," like other offices (priests, deacons, teachers), were offices in the church. They were not coincidental to having priesthood. They were offices in the Church of Christ (D&C 107:60-64, 85-91, 99-100). These offices were elected, approved by common consent, and then filled by those elected (see D&C 26; 20:65-66). It was some time later, after D&C 3 (1835 Edition), that this church office and priesthood were conflated to mean the same thing. The office of elder belongs to the church, and whether there is priesthood present or not, the right to preach, teach, expound, exhort, baptize, lay on hands for the holy ghost, and bless and pass the sacrament are all things which the Lord commissioned the church to perform. This is also why, at the time Joseph and Oliver received only the Aaronic Priesthood, they began to call one another the First and Second elder of the church (JSH 1:72). The Lord often spoke to "the elders of my church" as one category, in contrast to "priesthood," which is another category. Mormons conflate the two. An elder is invited to become an actual priesthood holder, but that is dependent upon Heaven alone. It may be conferred on men, but

Heaven must ratify (see D&C 121:34-40). Therefore, there are a lot of elders in the church who have no priesthood. Yet they have an authoritative invitation to connect with Heaven and rise up and receive it.

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 Nephi 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.*"

Does this relate to this that Denver said a couple of years ago:

There is a need "to set in order the House of God," which can only be accomplished through a temple where that work can be performed. The temple is not the "House of God" needing to be set in order. But a temple is required to accomplish the work for God's House, or family, to be set in order. As once described by God:

Organize yourselves, prepare every needful thing, and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a House of God, that your incomings may be in the name of the Lord, that your outgoings may be in the name of the Lord, that all your salutations may be in the name of the Lord with uplifted hands unto the Most High. (T&C 86:29). (Denver Snuffer, Keep the Covenant: Do the Work, Layton, UT on August 4, 2018)

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 Nephi 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." (DS, Second Comforter, pg 167-168)

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! (Denver Snuffer, The Second Comforter, pg 170-171)

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. (see Denver Snuffer blog, Hosanna Shout!, April 5, 2020)

[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. (see TDS, Vol 2, pg 137)

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? (these notes, and most of those following, through to the end of the chapter, were taken from Denver Snuffer blog, Sep 2010, see *Removing the Condemnation* chapter on 3 Nephi 11)

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.

Personal note:

I often question if my principals are compromised by not giving credit to Denver Snuffer when I quote him frequently in these classes.

For obvious reasons I hesitate to quote an apostate when trying to teach the truth of the gospel in classes intended for an active LDS audience.

I have justified this because of what Denver said in his 8th Lecture in Las Vegas in 2014:

I'm going to put all the talks on the Internet so the invitation will be available for anyone, no matter what byway they occupy. I don't care where you are in the world, when you read the words I'm speaking or you hear what is recorded through Doug's efforts, you are likewise invited. The message is to all. It begins here, it sounds here, but it will echo outward.

I don't care if no one gives me credit for this message. It is the truth within the message that matters! It's never been about me. It's been about the doctrines of the Restoration. It has always been about the truth that rolled forth through the prophet Joseph Smith. This is about the acts of God offering salvation to us in our day. (TDS, Vol 2, pg 242)

This justification seems validated again by what I read while preparing this lesson in this section from Denver’s blog post on 3 Ne 11:36:

When I study other materials, I do so to inform my reading and understanding of scripture, not to supplant it. I spend as much time with scripture study as I do with other writings. Although I could recite things using my own words, I find the language of scripture describes truths better than new wordings and therefore often use the language of scripture even if I do not show them in quotes. I also make frequent reference to scripture in this blog to show the reader that the scriptures are an existing library of material dealing with every part of Christ's Gospel.

[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.

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. (notes taken from talk by Denver Snuffer, Other Sheep Indeed, Transcript, Sunstone Symposium July 29, 2017)

[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.

[most of the notes in this lesson have been taken from Denver Snuffer blog, see Removing the Condemnation chapters on 3 Nephi 12-16]

Book of Mormon Study –3 Nephi 17-19

Online zoom Sunday School, 11 Oct 2020

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

3 Ne 17:1-3

Behold, now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he looked round about again on the multitude, and he said unto them: Behold, my time is at hand. I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time. Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.

Christ finishes His explanation to the Nephite audience and then pauses. He spends some time looking at the group of Nephites whom He had been teaching. And, after they stare back without question or inquiry, He laments they are just not getting it. They are too spiritually weak to receive what He would like to teach them. He suggests they go home and pray and ponder, and see if they can't be ready to be taught tomorrow.

They are unprepared to receive what He is coming to teach them because they are missing the very point which He just taught! He had told them the disciples at Jerusalem are not going to receive any knowledge of them unless these other disciples ask. If they do not ask, then the disciples at Jerusalem will not know about the Nephites. After making this clear, Christ tells the Nephites there are still other sheep. And in response to this clearest of declarations, there is no inquiry! The Nephites simply do not ask. They listen to what the Lord is willing to tell them, but they are unwilling to ask to learn more! It could not be a clearer example of the necessity of asking. Nor a clearer example of how the Lord is disappointed when we fail to ask Him.

It is learning which is the most difficult. It is far easier to perform a miracle. These people are prepared to receive miracles (as we continue reading in verses 6-10). But they are not prepared to be taught. Today people continue to mistake the things which matter most and are the most difficult to achieve on the one hand, with what is less difficult on the other hand. It is learning, being taught, and receiving further light and knowledge which always challenges the human mind the most. Here we are talking about learning through revelation, not merely by study. (see Denver Snuffer, *The Second Comforter*, pg 96-98)

Another thought on this verse is that I'm reminded of when he was with the two disciples when they arrived at Emmaus and "he made as though he would have gone further." (Luke 24:28)

When they arrived at Emmaus, He came in, because they asked Him to stay. If they had not asked, He would have passed by. That also tells you something important about our Lord. He does not force Himself upon you. You must invite. (Denver Snuffer, *TDS*, Vol 2, pg 183)

Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 17:16

Isa. 64:3 (4). There is a direct connection here with a Baraita (pre-Talmudic tradition), which is quoted twice in the Talmud (and in the Midrash Rabbah and Zohar): “What is the meaning of ‘Eye has not seen’ (Isa. 64:3)? Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said: This is the wine that has been kept in its grapes from the six days in the beginning” (b.Berakhot 34b; b.Sanhedrin 99a). [The Yayin HaMeshumar—the wine that has been kept] And the Midrash Rabbah says: “Because he bared his soul unto death (Isa. 53:12) and bruised themselves with the Torah which is sweeter than honey, the Holy One, blessed be He, will hereafter give them to drink of the wine kept in its grapes since the six days in the beginning” (Midrash Rabbah to Numbers 13:2 [500]). And we read in the Zohar: “The Tzadik (The Righteous) is the Yesod (foundation) in Yah, the mystery (sod) which is the wine which has been kept in its grapes from the six days in the beginning” (Zohar; Roeh M’haimna on Pinchas). This Baraita directly connects with the partaking of the wine of the Seder in 3 Nephi 8:6–7 and with Mashiach as the suffering servant of Isa. 53 (See notes to Moshiyah 8 [Mosiah 14-15]).

See [The Mystery of the Passover Wine and the Stick of Joseph](https://stickofjoseph.org/our-blog/the-mystery-of-the-passover-wine-and-the-stick-of-joseph/)

<https://stickofjoseph.org/our-blog/the-mystery-of-the-passover-wine-and-the-stick-of-joseph/>

3 Ne 17:20

And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

Words are incapable of describing what is meant by the expression “my joy is full”. We read earlier in Alma where Ammon was so overcome with joy that it exhausted his strength (Alma 27:17).

Could the kind of joy Christ speaks about in this verse compare in some measure with the joy Christ must have felt at meeting Mary after his resurrection? John’s account records that Christ told Mary: ‘Touch me not.’ In the Joseph Smith Translation the words are changed to read: ‘Hold me not.’ (JST-John 20: 17.) I imagine that when Mary realized it was Jesus, she embraced Him joyfully. That she did not timidly reach out her hand, but she readily greeted Him with open arms, and He, in turn, embraced her. This was a moment where the Lord was triumphant, exultant, overjoyed at His return from the grave, and she shared His joy. As dark and terrible as were the sufferings through which He passed, the magnitude of which is impossible for man to put into words, these feelings of triumph were, on the other hand, of equal magnitude in their joy and gratitude. He had attained to the resurrection of the dead! Just as He had seen His Father do, He likewise held the keys of death and hell! He had the deep satisfaction of having accomplished the most difficult assignment to be given by the Father, knowing it was a benefit to all of His Father’s children, and it had been done perfectly.

I think it no question that Mary and Christ embraced. That there would have been nothing timid about the warm encounter she had with Him. Then He said to her, ‘Hold me not’ because He had to ascend, return and report to His Father. I believe Joseph Smith was correct when he revised this language. (see Denver Snuffer, 2016.09.11 The Doctrine of Christ, General Conference, Boise ID_transcript.pdf, pg 14-15)

Note also in this verse they are called by the Lord “Blessed”.

3 Ne 18:3-4

And when the disciples had come with bread and wine, he took of the bread and brake and blessed it; and he gave unto the Disciples and commanded that they should eat. And when they had eaten and were filled, he commanded that they should give unto the multitude.

It is interesting these 12 are consistently referred to as “disciples” and not as “Apostles.” There isn’t a single “Apostle” in the Book of Mormon record. Only “disciples.” There are 12 of them, and they are treated exactly as were the Apostles in Jerusalem. This was a distinction David Whitmer believed to be significant. He disliked the claim to restore Apostles.

Notice in the narrative the Lord “commanded that they should eat.” This is an interesting phrasing. It is more than an invitation. It is more than an offering. It is a commandment. Why? What is it about partaking of His sacrament, eating in remembrance of the body of Christ, that must be done? Why is it a commandment?

Why would people who had seen, touched, knelt at the feet of the risen Lord, need to partake of the bread as a “witness” and “remembrance” of Him? How can this add to what they had already received? Why is the sacrament sacred enough to be celebrated by the Lord with people who are in His very presence?

3 Ne 18:5

And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, he said unto the Disciples: Behold there shall one be ordained among you, and to him will I give power that he shall break bread and bless it and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name.

Notice now the “multitude” takes part in eating the bread and “were filled.” This raises the question of how they were filled. Were their stomachs filled because of the amount they ate? Did they eat until they were filled, or did they get filled on just a small amount of bread? Or was this a spiritual filling where each heart was touched and each person’s countenance before the Lord filled with light?

This is a group which has just a few hours before engaged in a “hosanna shout” before the Lord. (3 Nephi 11: 17.) Now, however, they are “filled.” It is a profound moment with deep significance.

The Lord then tells the disciples that “there shall be one ordained among you” to break the bread. Notice it is “one.” All twelve have been asked to pass the sacrament to the multitude, but from among them “shall one be ordained” to receive “power that he shall break bread and bless it.” Why would only “one” be chosen to do this? All twelve had been given the power to baptize. (3 Nephi 11: 21-22.) Only one of them is to bless the sacrament. What does that suggest about the sanctity of the sacrament, if it is performed in the correct manner? Should it be viewed as a “higher ordinance” because of the more exclusive reservation of the “power” conferred by the Lord? What does that tell us about the manner we ought to proceed? Have we missed something in our reading of these verses?

Now the record is written by Nephi. (3 Nephi 1: 2.) He is the first one called by the Lord. (3 Nephi 11: 18.) He is the first one given power to baptize by the Lord. (3 Nephi 11: 18-21.) But the identity of the person given “power that he shall break bread and bless it” is not recorded. We can know it is Nephi

because he was always the one given the other power first. More to the point, however, we can know it was him because he kept the record. Had it been another, he would have told us. But since it was him, he declined to draw further attention to himself. Identifying himself previously was necessary for the narrative to be complete. Here, however, identifying himself would call undue attention. As a humble follower of Christ, it was not appropriate for him to do so, therefore the disciple is unnamed in our account.

Why is “power [to] break bread and bless it” conferred separately from the power to baptize? In D&C 20, the authority is coextensive. (See D&C 20: 38-39, 46.) Why does the Lord separate it among the Nephites? Since we have this account, does it add any instruction for us about the significance of the sacrament?

Sometimes we neglect things because of our familiarity with them. We presume wrongly that we understand them because of their frequent repetition. Here, however, the sacrament seems to take on greater significance. It achieves a pinnacle that exceeds even touching the risen Lord.

When we share food with one another, we become part of the same material. We share substance. When a meal is shared, life is shared. We become one of the same substance.

The substance which binds us is the “body of Christ” in symbol. Christ “broke” the bread before it was blessed. What does breaking the bread symbolize about Christ? How is His broken body intended to unite us with one another, and with Him?

Why is the broken bread distributed to those who “shall believe and be baptized in my name?” Does the order matter? Can a person be baptized before they believe, later come to believe, and then receive the sacrament correctly? Or must they come to believe first, then receive baptism second, before it is proper to partake of the sacrament? We’ve been working our way through the Lord’s commandments deliberately trying to unlock their specific requirements. They are simple. They can be done by anyone. But they are specific and should be followed in the same manner the Lord instituted them. This is the “straight path” which He says is narrow and few will find. Perhaps it is not found because we proceed with inexactitude to do what He has laid out before us with exactness.

The Lord occupies the role as Master and as Example. He bids us to follow Him. And He tells us His way is plain. If we confuse it, muddle it, and fail to do it as He has asked us to do, then it is not His failure, but ours. He has made it clear that He respects no one, but is open to all. But it is open on the exact terms. And some times the terms are exacting. (this and many of the subsequent comments here from 3 Ne 18 are taken from Denver Snuffer blog, November 2010. See <https://denversnuffer.com/2010/11/3-nephi-18-5/>)

3 Ne 18:6-7

And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you. And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

Here the Lord emphasizes a formula He has provided in this ordinance:

- “Always observe to do.” It is to be done, and when it is done it is to be done in an “observant” way.
- “Even as I have done.” His example is intended to clarify and define the manner the ordinance is to be observed. He regulates it by what He has done.
- “Even as I have broken bread and blessed it.” The manner, the process, the gestures of breaking it first and then blessing it second, are to be followed exactly.
- “And given it unto you.” When it is broken, then blessed, those who qualify by having repented and been baptized receive it as a gift or token from Christ. It is His body.

Now the Lord clarifies in explanation what He has earlier clarified in the blessing: This is to be done “in remembrance of [His] body.” It is through His body that He, the living sacrifice, shows us the way. A loving God has died for us. His body is a testimony of **life, obedience, sacrifice, cruelty, forgiveness, death, resurrection, immortality, power and glory**. When you remember His life you should remember all that is associated with it.

Here the Lord reminds the Nephites they are to remember the body “which [He] has shown unto [them].” The sacred embrace and ceremony of recognition (which we discussed in our last lesson), should return to the mind of those present whenever they received the bread again. The Lord could give no greater testimony of what He had done, who He was, and how He served them than by showing to them His risen body still bearing the marks of crucifixion.

The act is intended to be a “testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember [Him].” The act of testifying is not composed merely of the act of eating the bread. To actually testify to the Father you must:

1. Repent
2. Be baptized
3. Receive the bread after it has been properly blessed with power
4. Remember His body and the ten things symbolized through it

This is the acceptable sacrifice the Father will receive as a “testimony” of Christ.

Should you perform this, then you will receive power to “have [His] Spirit to be with you.”

These are simple steps. They are possible to be performed. When they are, the Father receives the act as a testimony before Him of the truth that you do always remember His Son. It will be recorded in heaven, and will be a witness for your salvation in the Day of Judgment.

It is interesting the Lord should give us language that makes “observing to do” and “as He has done” a required part of the process. Those words are probably best when viewed in their clearest meaning, and accomplished with exactitude. Though He measures our hearts, when instructions are given in simplicity, one fair measure of the heart is how closely we follow the instruction.

Since the result is to have His Spirit to be with you, it should be a simple matter to determine by reflection if you have His Spirit as your companion. If you can feel that He is always with you, then you have an acceptable testimony to the Father. If you do not, then perhaps you should revisit the steps He has provided to see what you might improve. There is a law irrevocably decreed before the foundation

of the world upon which all blessings are predicated. And when we receive any blessing from the Lord, it is by obedience to the law upon which the blessing is provided. Therefore, it makes sense that you can determine the extent to which you have followed the formula by the result promised. Having Christ's Spirit to be with you is significant enough proof that you should know the truth of the matter. Since you know the means by which to judge, see that you judge the matter correctly. (Moroni 7: 18.)

3 Ne 18:8

And it came to pass that when he said these words, he commanded his Disciples that they should take of the wine of the cup and drink of it, and that they should also give unto the multitude that they might drink of it.

In this description we do not have mention of the blessing pronounced upon the wine. Moroni will later clarify that it was blessed and provide us the words of His blessing (see Moroni 5: 1-2.)

Once again it is a "command" to partake. The Lord, knowing how critical this act is for salvation and a testimony before the Father, makes it a command that the disciples drink of it.

Wine was generally either purple or red. Our blood is purple when deprived of oxygen in our veins, and red when filled with oxygen in our arteries. These two colors of blood inside our bodies are akin to the predominate colors of wine.

Once again it is the disciples who partake first. Then, after having partaken, they pass it to the multitude. This illustrates the practice of receiving it before being able to pass it to others. It is not possible to pass along what has not first been received. This is true of all the Lord's ordinances. It is one of the reasons Alma rebaptized himself the instant he first began to baptize others. (Mosiah 18:14.) Those who bless are to be sanctified by partaking, then they pass the sacrament as sanctified ministers. Those who are passing are not more important, but rather they are first purified. Then those to whom they minister may receive the ordinance from those who are already clean.

Our modern practice is to pass the sacrament first to the "presiding authority" who is present. The presiding authority (who is always mentioned at the beginning of the meeting) is identified, and then the priests who pass the sacrament bring it to that person first. After he partakes, the sacrament is passed to others. We show great deference to authority in our system. In the Third Nephi events presided over by the Lord, He shows great deference to purity.

The Lord's commandment to the disciples is followed by the instruction to provide the wine to the multitude "that they might drink." The ones officiating are "commanded," whereas the multitude is provided the opportunity to follow by example. Instead of a "commandment" to the multitude, there is an invitation. Clearly the Lord understands the importance of example and respects free will. Those who want to follow Him closest will be told what they must do. Then others are invited to follow of their own free will, and not by compulsion.

This systematic progression begins with knowledge of the Lord. They met Him. They felt the prints in His side, hands and feet. They had no veil separating them from Him. Yet, despite this knowledge, He walks them through ordinances where they qualify to return permanently to His presence. The ordinances are important enough for the Risen Lord to personally conduct and instruct on how to perform them. It is

not merely what we believe, nor what we understand, but it is also what we do that matters. We must follow Him and His Divinely ordained ordinances. But to do so we need to perform them as He has instructed.

We require a priest to repeat the entire sacrament prayer if he gets a word wrong or adds a word while pronouncing the blessing. In this we show how exact we believe the ordinance is to be followed. We should perform it in every particular as the Lord has instructed. When we do, then the promise of having His Spirit to always be with us is realized.

3 Ne 18:9

And it came to pass that they did so, and did drink of it and were filled; and they gave unto the multitude, and they did drink, and they were filled.

Partaking of the broken bread filled the disciples, and then the multitude, so again drinking the wine filled both.

What were they filled with?

Since this is an ordinance where the promised result is to “have His Spirit to be with them,” (3 Nephi 18: 7) is any meaning of “filled” adequate apart from being filled with His Spirit? Clearly this ceremony is not performed to merely fill the belly. It harkens back to His promise to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, that they are to be filled. What the Lord presents in ceremony is the fulfillment of the earlier promise in His sermon. There is a beautiful symmetry to His sermon, His promise, the catalyst ordinance, and the reality of being “filled” which is missing from the New Testament record. In this respect, as in so many others, the Book of Mormon is the preferred, and more revealing account of the Lord’s ministry.

The Lord’s work is to bring about redemption for mankind. He redeems. In ceremony, and now in reality, He is working with a multitude to bring about their preparation and redemption. It is a Master Teacher, proving by His words and deeds, that He knows how to lead souls to salvation.

It is of interest that the record prepared by Mormon in such a painstaking effort takes the time to include these details for our instruction. They are intended not merely as history, but also as a guide. The plan of salvation is to be shared, so that others may follow it and themselves be “filled” with His Spirit.

Now note the prayers all refer to Christ’s Spirit. This is something apart from the Holy Ghost. It is Christ’s Spirit which is to “always be with them.”

What does it mean to have Christ’s Spirit to be with you? To guide you?

This is an important point, and worthy of some discussion by Joseph in The Lectures on Faith.

The Spirit of Christ is also referred to in Section 84: 45-47. It is also described using the word “light” instead of His Spirit, in Section 88: 5-13. If you read those carefully you realize that connecting with His Spirit or His light will also put you in contact with everything else governed by Him. He is the light which “enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings;”

This is why Joseph commented that the closer a man draws to God the clearer his understanding will be on all subjects. Greater light means clearer perception. It involves discerning between truth and error. It allows you to see what is dark, and who is dark, and what is light and who is filled with light. The light of a person's countenance is upon them, and if the Lord's Spirit fills you then you can see others just as He sees them.

It was His Spirit that enabled the Nephites to become one. With it, Zion becomes possible. Without it, Zion is only a theory to be abused and misunderstood. Without it, Zion is a vain ambition of conspiring men. It will not come to pass. With His Spirit, Zion is inevitable, because He will bring again Zion. If you would like to see the course of this doomed people changed at least as to your part, then these teachings and following these ordinances are the means by which the Lord's Spirit becomes available to you.

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 18:28](#)

The Torah prohibits uncircumcised males from partaking of the Passover (Ex. 12:42–45).

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 18:29](#)

This is almost identical to 1 Cor. 11:29, “drinks damnation to himself,” pointing to an underlying Hebrew word nefesh נפש, which can mean “soul, life, or self” (see Moshiah 1:10,16, 18 [Mosiah 2:32-33; 3:18, 24-25]).

[3 Ne 18:28-29](#)

And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it; For whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink of my flesh and blood ye shall forbid him.

This commandment about partaking of the bread and wine is the one He needed them to understand. They should take precautions to prevent those who they know to be unworthy from partaking. The reason is merciful. When they partake of His flesh and blood unworthily, they establish a testimony before the Father of their unworthiness.

Remember the bread and wine become a testimony to the Father. (See 3 Nephi 18: 10.) The observance comes to the attention of the Father. It is a witness before Him. Therefore, when the flesh and blood are taken by those who are unworthy, the witness which comes to the Father is of their unworthiness. The Father cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. (D&C 1: 31.) When a person comes before the Father in a witness of their unworthiness, such a person “eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul.” This person has asked the Father to take notice of their unworthiness.

It is the responsibility of those who minister these things to “forbid him” in such circumstances. They are their brother's keeper. Though it may be difficult for the person to be warned, it is merciful to do so. The sacrament is to be offered to the worthy, never offered to the unworthy. The worthy should “forbid” the unworthy from taking.

This is not an unkind teaching. It is not exclusionary or discriminatory. It is based on the doctrine Christ teaches, and the import of the act which witnesses to the Father. That witness occurs whenever the sacrament is properly administered, with appropriate power to bless, in a setting the Lord has authorized, by those who have repented and are properly baptized. Among such people the bread and wine should be given only to those who are worthy.

Now, the responsibility is on the ones administering the bread and wine. But the duty only extends to those who are “knowingly... unworthy.” That is, the ones who administer are not obligated to police others. They are not required to interview and determine worthiness. They are only to take note of such things as come to their attention and require the conclusion that the recipient is “unworthy.” Obvious misdeeds are important, private matters and individual failings are not consequential to the ones administering the rite.

“Therefore, if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink [Christ’s] flesh and blood ye shall forbid him.” But only if you “know” such is the case. Then, you should “forbid” him from doing so. Not by force, but by refusing to minister the sacrament to him. This becomes impractical, however, when it is a tray passed down a row of people, who cannot be forbidden to partake. In that kind of ceremony, the individual cannot be forbidden except through general teaching and warning. Then the individual is free to choose for themselves whether to heed the caution or to ignore it. The question remains, however, if that relieves the persons ministering the sacrament from their obligation to “forbid him” if he is known to be unworthy.

These are interesting points. All the more so because the Lord has taken the time to teach us these principles. And for Him to teach them, and provide them to us as part of restoring the Gospel to our day, I presume that informs us these points are to be followed.

Whether we choose to follow His teachings or not becomes, for most of us, a matter of convention and acceptance of popular behavior. If these teachings are found in the Book of Mormon, but not observed by us in how we proceed each Sabbath, then we tend to feel comfortable that what we do is right and the text has been corrected by modern practice. It is an interesting conclusion to draw. One which, upon careful examination, does not always leave us with the same feeling of comfort.

Well, the Lord had this to say about us in 1832:

“your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received— Which vanity and unbelief have brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all. And they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written—” (D&C 84: 54-57).

[3 Ne 18:36-37](#)

In chapter 11 Christ gave Nephi and twelve others power to baptize. We read:

“And Nephi arose and went forth, and bowed himself before the Lord and did kiss his feet. And the Lord commanded him that he should arise. And he arose and stood before him. And the Lord said unto him: I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people when I am again ascended into heaven. And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize.” (3 Ne 11:19-22)

Christ did not touch them, He said to them, “I give you power to baptize.” Although the record is incomplete, these disciples, in all likelihood, had previously been ordained. But Christ was renewing His church when He came. All that was needed to obtain the power to baptize was (and is) for Christ to tell you.

This is in contrast to the power given by Christ to lay on hands for the Holy Ghost. For power to do that, Christ needed to touch them. When Christ actually does give power to give the Holy Ghost the account stresses the touching:

*“And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of these sayings, he **touched** with his hand the disciples whom he had chosen, one by one, even until he had **touched** them all, and spake unto them as he **touched** them. And the multitude heard not the words which he spake, therefore they did not bear record; but the disciples bare record that he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost. And I will show unto you hereafter that this record is true (3 Ne 18:36-37, emphasis added).”*

...

Once John the Baptist came and laid his hand on Joseph, we have had a practice of continuing to lay hands on one another to confer Aaronic Priesthood. (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 288-289)

[3 Ne 18:38](#)

And it came to pass that when Jesus had touched them all, there came a cloud and overshadowed the multitude that they could not see Jesus.

Stick of Joseph footnote gives these references:
Deut. 31:15; Mark 9:7; Mosiah 27:11; Ether 2:4

[Stick of Joseph footnote 3 Ne 19:4](#)

The appearance of the Greek name “Timothy” (Timo - Theos) “honoring God” should come as no surprise. No less a scholar than Dr. Cyrus Gordon suggests the Greek word “Theos” migrated to Ancient America. He writes of the Uto-Aztecan (Nahuatl) word teo - tl: “For example teo - tl ‘god’ could have been introduced from Greek theo - s... Greek influence in Ancient America does not come as a complete surprise. Since Mycenaean times, the Greeks have been a nautical people” (Gordon, C.H. (1971) Before Columbus. New York, ny: Crown. p. 136).

3 Ne 19:9

And they did pray for that which they most desired; and they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them.

3 Ne 19:11

And it came to pass that Nephi went down into the water and was baptized.

There is a similar pattern as when Alma baptized himself (Mosiah 18:14-15). Also compare the account of the baptism of Adam (Moses 6:64-65).

3 Ne 19

The text clearly differentiates between the "disciples" or the ones Jesus had "chosen" on the one hand, and the "multitude" on the other hand. This distinction must be recognized to catch the import of what is being taught or shown in the account. (Denver Snuffer, *The Second Comforter*, footnote 155, pg 175)

3 Ne 19:12-13

And he came up out of the water and began to baptize. And he baptized all those whom Jesus had chosen. [i.e., the twelve disciples] And it came to pass when they were all [i.e., the twelve] baptized and had come up out of the water, the Holy Ghost did fall upon them [again the twelve], and they were filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

This baptism is a form of preparatory washing for the ceremonies which are underway in this part of the Book of Mormon. It is consistent with the higher ordinances of the Gospel, and with what the record is about to reveal happened on this second day of Christ's ministry among the Nephites. So the ceremonial baptism here is best regarded as a form of ceremonial washing of the twelve disciples who participated in them.

The washing of these chosen twelve is immediately followed by an anointing of the Spirit. These disciples are now washed, anointed and prepared for an endowment from on-high. Now that the twelve are prepared by these first cleansing rites, Christ returns to minister further rites to them. "Jesus came and stood in the midst and ministered unto them. And it came to pass that he spake unto the multitude, and commanded them that they should kneel down again upon the earth, and also that his disciples should kneel down upon the earth." (3 Ne 19:15-16.) There are two distinct groups here in the narrative.

The twelve are now assembled in a circle (as we understand from the language 'Jesus came and stood in the midst'). He is in the center of the circle, as a fixed point about which the circle is drawn. He is the point by which a compass can draw a perfect round. This is a ceremony unfolding in the record. You must understand this to understand the record. The disciples are then commanded to pray (v 17). This is a prayer circle, familiar to anyone who attends the Temple.

While the disciples pray in a circle, the Lord then knocks at the veil three times. You will remember from last lesson we mentioned of the three degrees of separation between God and man. As God reached

downward, He called three times the day before. Now, when reaching upward, there is a three-fold petition at the veil to bring a response.

The first knock at the veil is set out in full in verses 20-23. The second is also set out in full in verses 28-29. The final knock is described, without quoting the words used, in verse 32. Anyone who has been to the temple will immediately recognize the ceremonial setting of this account. These events are not just haphazard or unscripted. They are part of ceremonial worship which is required of any person who will conform to heaven's patterns.

The Lord's disciples are assembled in a circle, in prayer. They are praying in unison. The final ceremonial preparation comes as they are clothed in white. Sacred clothing is an important part of the ceremonial preparation for receiving the Father. Christ taught that without a proper "wedding garment" people are not permitted into the wedding feast. (see Matt 22:11-14). Sacred clothing is a part of appearing before God and having your shame removed. (see e.g. Gen 3:21; 2 Ne 9:14, Rev 3:18). It is an essential part of the true faith. It is, therefore a part of the ceremony recounted here.

Now that the disciples have been washed, anointed, clothed in white garments, and otherwise instructed so as to prepare them to receive further light and knowledge through the veil, the veil is parted. This point of the ceremony, however, has its own veil extended over it in the record. "And tongue cannot speak the words which he prayed, neither can be written by man the words which he prayed. And the multitude did hear and do bear record; and their hearts were open and they did understand in their hearts the words which he prayed. Nevertheless, so great and marvelous were the words which he prayed that they cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by man." (verses 32-34). And so it is with these things. They can be learned, but they cannot be taught. Those who are willing to receive them, however, will receive them. But only when they are prepared to respect the limits which should always separate the sacred from the profane.

Sidetone: The notion that Joseph Smith copied another ordinance or another rite in restoring Temple worship is laughable. The Book of Mormon account is written in 1829. Joseph would not begin to restore the Temple rise until 1842. Nothing in Joseph's words or statements in 1829 even remotely suggest he anticipated Temple ceremonies. Though Joseph had no idea where the Restoration was headed in 1829, the Lord did.

The Book of Mormon is a sacred text. It contains a fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a tool provided by God which can be used to prepare any person seeking God's presence. The Book of Mormon and the Temple are the primary means by which God has chosen to prepare us for the return to God and our redemption from the Fall. In the visit of Christ recorded in 3 Nephi we see there two tools merge together. The Risen Lord's ministry to the Nephites is a Temple text. It is best understood in its ritual setting. There is a clear ceremonial path being depicted which is intended to instruct you in the mysteries of godliness. But it must be seen through the eyes of faith. Then, having seen it through those eyes of faith, you can qualify to see the underlying reality it is trying to help you believe exists. This Book of Mormon text is trying to bring you through the veil. If you will heed its instructions, then you will be moved closer to that event. (see Denver Snuffer, *The Second Comforter*, 175-179)

3 Ne 19:15

And it came to pass that while the angels were ministering unto the disciples, behold, Jesus came and stood in the midst and ministered unto them.

Angels are ministering to people after the baptism. All this is going on. Unobtrusively in the middle of all this, almost as if it were a passing comment, Christ comes down and is ministering with them. Compare this with Christ's appearance to the Nephites that we discussed two lessons ago (see notes from 3 Ne 11:8). The Lord's humility and example is on display. He did not appear with fanfare and pageantry.

3 Ne 19:18

And behold, they began to pray; and they did pray unto Jesus, calling him their Lord and their God.

They pray to Jesus. While Jesus was mortal, when one called him "good" he would not accept the salutation but said only one is good. That is God (see Mark 10:18). Here, Christ is perfected. He has done all the Father asked. He is worthy to be prayed to. (I'm reminded here of the confusion from Bruce R. McConkie words to BYU students, "gaining a special, personal relationship with Christ... is both improper and perilous". Our Relationship with the Lord – BYU Speeches, Bruce R. McConkie, 2 March 1982 <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/bruce-r-mcconkie/relationship-lord/>)

3 Ne 19:29

Father, I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one [echad], that I may be glorified in them.

The Stick of Joseph's use of the word "echad" points to this footnote:
John 17:9–11; 3 Nephi 5:8; 9:9; 13:3. See echad in Glossary.
Echad The number one. Implies alike, together, united.

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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. (Denver Snuffer, Other Sheep Indeed, Jul 29, 2017, transcript, Q&A, pg 14)

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. (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 158)

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) (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 1, pg 85)

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. (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 298vv)

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. (Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 159)

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 Nepi 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). (Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 1, pg 32)

Book of Mormon Study –3 Nephi 27-4 Nephi

Online zoom Sunday School, 25 Oct 2020
(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

3 Ne 28:6-8

Why did the apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration [look] upon the long absence of [their] spirits from [their] bodies to be...bondage? (D&C 45:16-17) Because going to the Spirit World means a lengthy tenure there, awaiting the resurrection. Why did John the Beloved (who was among those on the Mount) then ask to tarry until [Christ] come[s] in [His] glory? (D&C 7:3) Because he would rather be here working than in the Spirit World trying to bring people along there. Why did the three Nephites likewise ask that they not taste of death; but [to] live to behold all the doings of the Father unto the children of men? They had the same concern as John. What were the other nine Nephite disciples really asking when they requested to speedily come unto [Christ's] kingdom instead of either living here or waiting in the Spirit World? They wanted to rise quickly from the dead and resume the journey as those who had arisen from the dead with Christ. These were all men who were in Christ's presence and had the promise to be exalted. Yet they were either: 1. Remaining here, without death, to minister; or 2. Going to what they thought would be "bondage" in the Spirit World to await their eventual resurrection; or 3. Dying but then proceeding "speedily" (or immediately) into Christ's kingdom. Every one of them would be exalted. But that does not change the distance and paths that must be crossed between here in the flesh and rising to exaltation or the potential choices that can be made. Likewise, as a living mortal you can have an association with the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn (a priestly reference that requires you to understand about the "rights of the fathers") here—now. If you do this, you become one of those solitary souls who live as a stranger and sojourner on earth. Your association is with heaven, not with earth. But that does not fulfill the prophecies and covenants regarding Zion. You can have the same kind of life, but it is your life alone if you live without bringing others with you. You will live without a city, a community, all things in common, no poor among that community, a temple, rites, and the completion of the restoration of all things. You may have a life worthy of Zion, but it will not be a City of Zion, the New Jerusalem. You can be a "citizen," but you will be a sojourner in exile here. (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 3, pg 66-67)

3 Ne 30:2

Turn, all ye Gentiles, from your wicked ways; and repent of your evil doings, of your lyings and deceivings, and of your whoredoms, and of your secret abominations, and your idolatries, and of your murders, and your priestcrafts, and your envyings, and your strifes, and from all your wickedness and abominations, and come unto me, and be baptized in my name, that ye may receive a remission of your sins, and be filled

with the Holy Ghost, that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.

A precaution go us - those who are going to inherit this book. Mormon made sure to insert this at this point in the narrative. What's remarkable is as we look at this verse is how this ties into what we're now going to receive about the practice of Zion among those in the next short book in the Book of Mormon.

Keep in mind this list of defects when we look at what the description of what Zion was NOT in 4 Ne 1:16.

4 Ne 1:2

And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

I made note of this last week from 3 Ne 26:19-20. 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." 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 going to be tougher on myself. It is fair that I do this for you.

You've heard people respond, "Oh no, no, you don't have to do that for me..."

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, this is 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. (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 1, pg 32)

4 Ne 1:3

And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift.

See Ether 12:8 (6-12).

The Heavenly Gift can be defined as an offer made directly from the Lord, (as in the case here and we saw it again through Joseph Smith) through a new gospel dispensation, with Heaven's intent to bestow the fullness of the gospel and priesthood upon a generation. This fullness includes an expanding scriptural canon, revelation, Heavenly visitors, and prophetic power, as well as all blessings and sealing power necessary for fullness of salvation and exaltation. It has been offered by the Lord more often than

it has been welcomed and accepted by mankind. This is reflected in the Lord's lament, O ye people...of the house of Israel, how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and have nourished you. And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel who have fallen. Yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem as ye that have fallen, yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens and ye would not. O ye house of Israel whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart. 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 (3 Nephi 10:4-7). The Lord's offer can only be accepted on the condition of obedience and faith. When the fullness is accepted, people live in peace and happiness: And they had all things common among them; therefore, there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free and partakers of the Heavenly gift (4 Nephi 1:3). He has shewn himself unto the world, and glorified the name of the Father, and prepared a way that thereby others might be partakers of the Heavenly gift (Ether 12:8). When the fullness is refused (by mankind not complying with the conditions of the covenant), the opportunity to establish a Heavenly order and Zion is lost. (see Denver Snuffer, T&C Glossary)

The inevitable result of having the heavenly gift is there were no rich, and there were no poor, and there were no bond, and there were no free. This is NOT a description of a socio-economic order alone. The foundation of Zion shows up here as the heavenly gift. It's the presence and the abundance of the things of the Spirit. It's not that we have now solved the social-welfare state, because the social-welfare state is the arm of flesh effort to try and imitate something that we all, in our gut, think is probably a fair thing to do, to have everyone be on an equal plane and have everyone deal with one another so that there are no rich and poor or bond or free. But every time people (including attempts by the church) have tried that as the goal in itself, it hasn't worked, and it doesn't work because to get where you need to get in order for the things to work, it has to be the heavenly gift. It has to be people in harmony with each other because they are in harmony with the Lord. By getting in harmony with the Lord you find that YOU are a lot more tolerable to others, and others are suddenly more tolerable to you. Even defective others are more tolerable to you, if you're in harmony with the Lord. Because if you can see them as the Lord sees them, they are beautiful; they are wonderful! Every one you have ever met is a child of your Heavenly Father, and if you can get the heavenly gift, then you stop seeing things through the lens of this world, and you start seeing things as they really are. (see Denver Snuffer, Zion Symposium talk, TDS Vol 1, pg 32-33. Many of the subsequent comments from 4 Nephi in this lesson have been taken from this talk.)

This description of Zion in 4 Nephi begins at verse 5 once you have the presence of the heavenly gift. It goes to verse 24 at the 201st year. That's 168 years in 20 verses. And while you might think that's an abbreviation, it's actually everything we need to know, and it's startling in what it tells us. There's an abundance of information that is downloaded in a rapid-fire fashion.

[4 Ne 1:5](#)

And there were great and marvelous works wrought by the disciples of Jesus, insomuch that they did heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cause the lame to walk, and the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear; and all manner of miracles

did they work among the children of men; and in nothing did they work miracles save it were in the name of Jesus.

They healed the sick; they raise the dead; they cause the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, the deaf to hear. "...and in nothing did they work miracles save it were in the name of Jesus,". It is about Him, and it is about His work and is about bringing about His will. And why was it His will that the sick among them be healed and the dead rise again? Why is it that, during this period of time, it was in conformity with His will that the lame walk, and the blind receive their sight, and the deaf hear, and all manner of miracles occur?

Don't they need cripples? Don't they need the blind? Don't they need people to whom they ought to be ministering to? Shouldn't there be a group of them, who, unlike the verse mentioned earlier, are in bondage to the ailments of the body?

Apparently not. Apparently, we need it. Apparently it serves an extraordinarily useful purpose for us, but in their setting they've got bigger things to do. They've got more important things to do, and it will tell us what that is.

4 Ne 1:7-8

And the Lord did prosper them exceedingly in the land; yea, insomuch that they did build cities again where there had been cities burned. Yea, even that great city Zarahemla did they cause to be built again.

These people are busy; they're engaged in activities. They're not just sitting about; they're accomplishing something. But they're not accomplishing something in the way in which we accomplish something. If you wanted to rebuild a city among us, the way in which we set about to rebuild cities is extraordinarily inefficient. We divide up the capital that's used to finance the construction, and we create a whole industry and people out there that never produce anything except let people use their money, and that's all they do. And they become really quite wealthy as a consequence of that. There are some people that do some small component, and all they do is that small component, and they sell it at a high price. And whether it's easy or whether it's difficult, the purpose behind that is their own self-interest. And we have managed to figure out how to get along in a society with every single person working for their own self-interest, and we've never come together to say, how might we benefit one another by the contribution of whatever our unique gifts are. When the Lord talks about gifts in D&C 46, He's talking about gifts as the property belonging to not the person who has the gift but the church itself. It's not a commodity that someone owns; it is the presence of God in the life of a person that is intended to elevate and to benefit and to bless everyone. The presumption is everything is to be done for the benefit and the glory of Zion.

4 Ne 1:9

But there were many cities which had been sunk, and waters came up in the stead thereof; therefore these cities could not be renewed.

From the geological information presented on the Hopeland model maps, it appears that the waters (lakes and rivers) have greatly receded rather than grown. I wonder where in the Hopeland model we see where waters might have been buried under water?

4 Ne 1:10-11

And now, behold, it came to pass that the people of Nephi did wax strong, and did multiply exceedingly fast, and became an exceedingly fair and delightsome people. And they were married, and given in marriage, and were blessed according to the multitude of the promises which the Lord had made unto them.

Again in verse 23 it says they multiplied exceedingly, and they filled the whole land. There appears to be a lot of sex going on in Zion. What is it about Zion that results in this baby boom?

The “multitude of the promises,” the “married and given in marriage” - think about that for a moment. We have just had the fulsome restoration of the benefits of the Gospel by the coming of the Christ in which He has restored some things that are too sacred to be committed into the written account of the events (see last 2 lessons), and now it says in passing, “they’re given in marriage, and He blessed them according to these promises.” Well, what is that telling us? It’s the covenant of Abraham. It’s the temple marriage. He’s saying that these people enter into the covenant of marriage, and as a consequence of the covenant of marriage, they realize the benefits of the promises made. And what are the promises made that you associate with the covenant of Abraham? It’s not just benefits that pertain to this life; it’s benefits that pertain to all eternity. It’s the promise of exaltation. It’s the promise that you become part of the Church of the Firstborn; you become part of the General Assembly; you become part of the citizens, not just of a society here on this earth, but a society that includes a heavenly body; and you have the right to commune with all of those that are participants in this larger organization.

These are they who are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly place, the holiest of all. These are they who have come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of Enoch, and of the Firstborn... But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion; Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter; Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him; To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves; That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory. (D&C 76:66-67, 114-118)

4 Ne 1:12

And they did not walk any more after the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses; but they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.

Does it say meeting together on the Sabbath? It doesn't say that. Meeting together in order to correlate the activities of the Stake at 6:30 in morning every Sunday? Meeting together to hold some presidency meeting or other? And what were they doing when they got together? They're fasting; they're praying; they're meeting together; they're bearing testimony; and they're listening to the word of God. Listening to the word of God. Does that mean reading the scriptures? It doesn't say, "and reading together the scriptures." They got together to hear the word of God.

Early accounts in the church would include an expectation of an abundance of the gifts of the Spirit to be manifest. Often in the journals of those in the earliest part of the Restoration, folks would prophesy as they came up from the waters of baptism. Look at the account in Joseph Smith-History, verse 73, after Joseph and Oliver were baptized; "Immediately on our coming...out of the water after we had been baptized, we experienced great and glorious blessings from our Heavenly Father. No sooner had I baptized Oliver..., than the Holy Ghost fell upon him, and he stood up and prophesied many things which should shortly come to pass....so soon as I had been baptized by him, I also had the spirit of prophecy, when, standing up, I prophesied concerning the rise of [the] Church, and many other things... Our minds being now enlightened, we began to have the scriptures laid open to our [understanding], and the true meaning and intention of their more mysterious passages revealed unto us in a manner which we never could attain to previously, nor ever before had thought of."

I don't imagine they were getting together to rehash and reiterate a limited and redundant, correlated curriculum that tends to put us to sleep. I imagine there was something exciting about it!

"I advise all to go on to perfection, and search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Godliness." Joseph Smith, Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 364

[Stick of Joseph footnote 4 Ne 1:12](#)

3 Nephi 4:7 [9:17-20]; 7:2 [15:2-10]. The original Hebrew might also be understood as a rhetorical question: "And did they not walk more after the performances and ordinances of the Torah of Moshe?" See note to Moshiyah 8:1 [Mosiah 13:27] on the issue of rhetorical questions and statements in Hebrew.

[4 Ne 1:13](#)

And it came to pass that there was no contention among all the people, in all the land; but there were mighty miracles wrought among the disciples of Jesus.

See, this is now the second time that they've mentioned "no contention." It was mentioned back in verse 2: "no disputations and no contentions among them". We see it again here in verse 13, and it's mentioned again in verse 15, and they talk about "the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people." Etching in plates is hard work. There's absolutely no reason for redundancy. Therefore, we have to conclude that while they thought they had gotten rid of contention, they found another level of harmony among them. And then when they thought they had achieved a perfection of that harmony, they found yet another level of harmony among themselves. Oh, three degrees. Well, that's interesting. "Because of the love of God, which did dwell in the hearts of the people." The love of God. Consider faith, hope, charity. These three also reflect three degrees. Here we have charity now, where we have

finally arrived at the point where there is such a fulsome elimination of the problem that they use the same word, but they don't have to mean the same thing with it.

4 Ne 1:16

And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.

Envyings. We have upward mobility in the church. We have elders, and then you have elder's quorum presidents; and you have wards, and you have bishops; and you have stake presidents that rule and reign over bishops; and you have area presidents who rule and reign over stake presidents; and you have general authorities; and you have first presiding authorities in the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency; and then you have the First Presidency; and then you have the President. And all along scattered in there, there's lots and lots of opportunity for envyings, because we're suffering from the defect that the Savior noted among His own disciples about wanting those chief seats. A Savior, who knelt and washed the feet, the most menial act that you can engage in in that society, is dealing with the problem of disciples, an inner circle who want recognition; they want those seats. And what does Christ teach them? "Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: (Mark 12:38-39)

Better to go sit in the back of the room and get called up. Look at Nephi in the crowd at the temple Bountiful and how the Lord had to call him up. Nephi wasn't up there saying, "The great and wonderful, His holiness has appeared. I'm here to introduce Him." Because really all that is is a diversion of attention to the one doing the introduction (like Chaucer in Knight's Tale). Don't we all know someone, those whose life's ambition is to have some office in the church?

surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.

Compare with: But behold there never was a happier time among the people of Nephi, since the days of Nephi, than in the days of Moroni, yea, even at this time, in the twenty and first year of the reign of the judges. (Alma 50:23)

What's the difference between a "happier people" and a "happier time"?

4 Ne 1:27

...they did receive all manner of wickedness, and did administer that which was sacred unto him to whom it had been forbidden because of unworthiness.

Some quotes from the Book of Enoch.

Look at what Azazel has done, who has taught all unrighteousness [oppression] on earth and revealed the eternal secrets which were made and kept [performed] in heaven, which men were striving to learn: (1 En 9:6, RH Charles version [OTP in brackets]. See also chapter 7 for some of the things the Watchers taught.)

And heal [give life to] the earth which the angels have ruined [corrupted], and proclaim the healing of the earth, for I will restore the earth and heal the plague, that not all of the children of men may perish through all the secret things that the Watchers have disclosed and have taught their sons. (1 En 10:7)

(Say to them): "You were in heaven, but all the mysteries of heaven had not been revealed to you, and you knew worthless ones [rejected mysteries], and these in the hardness of your hearts you have made known to the women, and through these mysteries women and men work much evil on earth." (1 En 16:3)

See also Rom 16:25-26; Eph 3:3-11; Col 1:26; 1 Cor 2:7

In the ordinances as they have been restored in the temple today, everyone who enters in is expected to come to the veil possessing certain knowledge, capable of identifying themselves as having been true and faithful, and be received in an embrace, and then welcomed into the presence of God. It's a normal and expected part of the ordinances, as they have been restored. Those ordinances are supposed to be teaching us something. They are the Lord's way of shouting in a multimedia presentation, "Here is how I did what I did and what I would like you to do in the process of you becoming like me, a son of God, a daughter of God, a member of the household of faith, and part of the church and kingdom of the Firstborn." You have to become the Firstborn. You have to become one with Him. You have to become part of that, not in an organized group-think kind of way, in an individual way in which you connect up with Holiness, in which you become a vessel of Holiness. You are someone to whom sacred things have been entrusted, and you become, in turn, sacred as the bearer of them. (Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 1, pg 27)

Isaiah's prophecy concerning the last days' temple clearly identifies it as a house where man will be instructed in God's path. It will be a facility where the God of Jacob will teach His pathway of ascent back to the Throne of God. Mankind will learn the laws governing that pathway. (Isaiah 2:2-3). Therefore, when the Holy Order returns, those who are initiated will be given more than just the laying on of hands. It will include men and women, as husband and wife. They will be given understanding of things which the world cannot know because it is forbidden for the profane to obtain what God decrees for the righteous alone to maintain in holiness. The unholy are excluded from this knowledge.

The Book of Mormon excludes sacred information from the ungodly (see, e.g., 1 Nephi 14:28; 3 Nephi 26:11-12,16; 3 Nephi 27:23). Joseph Smith did not reveal everything entrusted to him (see D&C 76:114-116; JS-H 1:20). Information can be sacred. It can be controlled by God so that when He determines to communicate it to man, He will do so either by catching the individual up into the heavenly realm or by commanding that a temple be built to house His revelations. Either option will require that those who enter in must be approved by His decree, because the way is guarded by sentinels who protect what is Holy from those who are profane. (Denver Snuffer, The Holy Order, TDS Vol 4, pg 123 and its footnote 93 on pg 159)

Book of Mormon Study – Mormon 1-6

Online zoom Sunday School, 1 Nov 2020

(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Mormon's Life at a Glance:

Year	Event	Age of Mormon
300 CE	[4 Ne 1:45] Both people of Nephi and the Lamanites had become exceedingly wicked one like unto another.	
305 CE	[4 Ne 1:47] Amos died. Ammaron keeps record.	
310 CE	Mormon born	0
320 CE	[Morm 1:2] Ammaron tells Mormon about records on hill Shim. When Mormon is about 24 he is to go to Antum and take the plates.	10
321 CE	[Morm 1:6] Mormon carried by his father, Mormon (v 5), to Zarahemla, a war begins (Morm 1:8), after which there is peace for about 4 years (v 12).	11
325 CE	[Morm 1:15] Mormon visited of the Lord at 15. Was forbidden to preach (v 16-17). In that same year began another war (Morm 2:1).	15
326 CE	[Morm 2:2] Mormon heads an army at age 16.	16
344 CE	[Morm 2:15] Mormon sorrows for wickedness of Nephites. Their sorrowing was not unto repentance (v 13).	34
345 CE	[Morm 2:16] Lamanites pursue Nephites to land of Jashon, which was near hill Shim (v 17). Mormon takes plates.	35
360 CE	[Morm 3:4] Lamanites send epistle, preparing to come to battle. Just before this Mormon had cried repentance, the Lord had given them chance to repent (v 2-3).	50
361 CE	[Morm 3:8] Nephites beat Lamanites again. They swear to avenge Lamanites (v 9), Mormon refuses to be their commander (v 11-16). At this juncture in the record Mormon admonishes modern Gentiles (v 17) and desires to persuade all ends of the earth to repent (v 22).	51
362 CE	[Morm 4:1] Nephites attack Lamanites out from land Desolation. Had it not been for this Lamanites could have had no power over them (v 4).	52
366 CE	[Morm 4:10] Lamanites came again upon Nephites. Nephites repented not. Impossible to describe horrible scene of blood and carnage (v 11).	56
374 CE	[Morm 4:16] Lamanites come against Nephites (v 17) and from this time forth Nephites gain no power over Lamanites, but begin to be "swept off" (v 18). Mormon takes all the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord (v 23).	64
	[Morm 5:1] Mormon repents of his oath and returns to command armies of Nephites.	
384 CE	[Morm 6:5] Final battle at Cumorah. Mormon began to be old, knowing this to be the last struggle of his people (v 6).	74

Stick of Joseph footnote Morm 1:3

Shim: Likely from the Hebrew root sim שים (Strong's 7760), "to put or place something, to deposit."

Morm 1:13

God took away the disciples and miracles did cease. Compare Moroni 7:35-37. We should apply this to ourselves and ask, do we see miracles in our day?

This agrees with what Joseph Smith said:

"Because faith is wanting, the fruits are. No man since the world was had faith without having something along with it. The ancients quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, women received their dead, etc. By faith the worlds were made. A man who has none of the gifts has no faith; and he deceives himself, if he supposes he has. Faith has been wanting, not only among the heathen, but in professed Christendom also, so that tongues, healings, prophecy, and prophets and apostles, and all the gifts and blessings have been wanting" (Teaching of Prophet Joseph Smith, 270).

Mormon 2:10

Magic art and witchcraft.

Also mentioned earlier in Morm 1:19 (*there were sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics, and the power of the Evil One was wrought upon all the face of the land*). Is the sacrificing of women and children to idols mentioned later (Morm 4:15,21) also related to magic art and witchcraft?

In a review of my Uncle Lauren's book, *Our War With Satan*, I wrote:

The subject of this chapter (and the book as a whole) brings to my mind several works that I have read on this topic, that may be worth reading, or at least be familiar with.

There Are Save Two Churches Only, Volume I (& vol 2): Be Ye Not Deceived: God Creates, Satan Imitates by D. Christian Markham

<http://www.twochurchesonly.com/>

Conquering Spiritual Evil Spiral-bound – 2011 by Douglas H. Mendenhall

<https://www.amazon.com/Conquering-Spiritual-Evil-Douglas-Mendenhall/dp/B005Z7FXL4>

Derek Prince - The Enemies We Face (Part 1-4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZoleQVsCEE>

And also, I think there will be value in reading the Pace memorandum. Glen Pace, a member of the presiding bishopric of the LDS church wrote a memorandum on Satanic Ritual Abuse in Utah.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pace_memorandum

(Book review sent to Lauren 22 May 2019)

Morm 2:13

their sorrowing was not unto repentance, because of the goodness of God; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin.

Sorrowing of the damned vs sorrowing of the righteous. Definition of repentance is to turn to God. Repentance without turning to face God is simply the sorrowing of the damned.

Morm 2:15

...I saw that the day of grace was passed [“past”, 1830] with them,

Compare with Moroni’s dialog with Christ in Ether:

And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. (Ether 12:36)

Take note of the Lord’s answer:

And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father. (ibid 37)

Do you see what happened in the exchange? Moroni begged the Lord to give unto the Gentiles grace. And the Lord says, “It doesn’t matter to you if I do not give the Gentiles grace.” Christ did not give Moroni what he asked for! He would not promise that the Gentiles would receive grace! The Lord could not do that, because it would abrogate both the law (grace for grace) and our agency, because we are free to choose. Therefore, the Gentiles inherited the Restoration with no promise from Christ to Moroni that those who would receive this record would receive grace of God. That is dependent upon you.

And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood. And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things. (ibid 38-39)

This is that Lord who, when you pass through the thunderings and lightnings, you will speak with. He talks in plain humility. It is not His position to cause fear in your heart, but to bring to you comfort. His purpose is not to leave you comfortless, but to come and comfort you (John 14:18). It’s you that imposes the barrier. It’s you that brings the fear. That is rightly so, because we ought to fear. But what we should fear is our own weakness and our own sins. Our greatest sin is our ignorance.

And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing. And now, I would commend you [this is Moroni commending us, the Gentiles, who are going to receive this book] to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that

the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. (Ether 12:40-41)

He first asked for grace to be given. God cannot give it and, therefore, would not promise it. Then he turned to us, and he asks, "You Gentiles, please, seek for His grace; it cannot otherwise be given you." The Book of Mormon's assessment of us is sober indeed. The foolish arrogance with which we read that book blinds us to our predicament. The plea from Moroni to us is to "seek for grace." It is through grace we obtain charity. It is through charity we are able to bless others. Because the fact of the matter is you cannot bless anyone or hold that priesthood primarily designed to minister blessings and not cursings, unless you have charity for others. This is never given unless you are willing to do things you would rather not do, thereby offering a sacrifice to God. You do not get trusted by God to hold this honor unless you are willing to subordinate your will to the will of the Father. It is the purpose of the Father, and the purpose behind His higher priesthood, to bless all of His offspring. Therefore, it is only through grace you can acquire what you need to be of use to God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 227)

Morm 3:2-3

The Lord calls Mormon cry repentance. Which he does. But earlier he was forbidden (Morm 1:16). There's a time for things. In this case, the people are given a chance to repent. God is merciful. He gives us every chance possible. With all the signs of our dire circumstances now in our day, are we repenting? On the other hand, are we even being called to repent?

I brought this up back in our lesson on the Book of Enos, but worth repeating here:

Why does it seem that the majority of the preaching in our meetings and classes are sweet words of encouragement? Why does it appear the focus is on the positive side of everything and building up our self-esteem to the exclusion of crying repentance for fear of offending someone in our congregations? How much are talks filled with distracting inspirational stories, with flattering words that do not call us to repent, really helping us?

I'm reminded of the account in 3 Ne 11:32-40 where Christ declared His Doctrine. His Doctrine came from His Father and mentions "baptism" four times. Only the first mention is positive, the three subsequent times it is negative. This is a 3 to 1 ratio of negative warning to positive promise. I do not believe the Lord or His Father are negative. This approach is more a reflection on us than on Them. God is extraordinarily positive. But we need the clarity of being told the downside, and to be warned, because, unfortunately, a positive promise does not adequately motivate us.

Maybe the kind of teaching that stirs us up continually to repentance should be reserved to our personal scripture study. But when there is a lack of serious warnings over our pulpits it makes me wonder why that is so. (email to Marcus Reed, 5 Jan 2020)

Morm 3:18-19

What is the significance that twelve tribes will be judged by the twelve whom Jesus chose in Jerusalem, and the remnant of "this people" will be judged by the twelve Jesus chose in "this land"?

Who judges Gentiles?

Morm 4:5

But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed.

Back in lesson on Alma 23-29 we had a discussion on the *Wicked Destroy Wicked and Righteous*.

Morm 4:11

And it is impossible for the tongue to describe, or for man to write a perfect description of the horrible scene of the blood and carnage

Turn forward to Mormon 9:2. This is in next week's lesson material. This was written by Mormon late in his life. He has lived what we would rate as an NC-17 life if it were depicted in film. Between the rape, followed by the cannibalism of those captured women, the scenes of murder, mayhem, and torture continually before his eyes, his life was distressing. Remember this is the man who abridged the Book of Mormon. That's the life that he was subjected to. So look at these words:

Behold, will ye believe in the day of your visitation—behold, when the Lord shall come, yea, even that great day when the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, yea, in that great day when ye shall be brought to stand before the Lamb of God—then will ye say that there is no God? Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell. For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you. (see Denver Snuffer, TDS Vol 2, pg 18)

Morm 4:18

And from this time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites, but began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun.

Difference between being destroyed and swept away. In the vernacular of the Book of Mormon, to destroy did not mean annihilation. It merely meant to end the organized existence of a people or to terminate their government, deprive them of a land, and end their cultural dominance. In the Book of

Mormon, a people were destroyed when they lost control over their government and land. Their ability to preserve their own values and choose the way they were governed was taken over by others. Most often it was from a different ethnic group, though not always. Once people were destroyed, they were oppressed and suffered. Often they were oppressed with grievous taxes and had religious liberties removed. Then they faced a choice: either repent, in which case they came through the period of oppression with another chance; or if they were angry and rebellious, they would then be “swept away.” Being destroyed is not at all the same as being “swept away.” It is possible for people to have been destroyed and not even realize it. But when they are “swept away,” they face extinction and cannot help but notice it. (T&C Glossary, “Destroy”)

Morm 5:1-2

Mormon repents of his oath. Back in 3:16:

And it came to pass that I utterly refused to go up against mine enemies; and I did even as the Lord had commanded me; and I did stand as an idle witness to manifest unto the world the things which I saw and heard, according to the manifestations of the Spirit which had testified of things to come.

Why did he repent of his oath and take command of his armies knowing beforehand that they would be destroyed? Why did Mormon lead his armies into their final battle, knowing it would be their last (Morm 6:6). Why not, like Ether, as a prophet, hide in the cavity of a rock and act as a witness of these events from a safe distance, but instead, go out, take his sword in hand, and battle and kill, and subject himself to possible death himself?

I speculate he was like a commander of a ship that stays at the helm and goes down with his ship. “I’m a war guy. This is what I do.”

The integrity of the warrior spirit. Can't live with himself if he runs and hides for his own safety. Look at Black Hawk. The spirit of the Tribe is to be brave.

But this is the business of killing. Didn't he warn Gentiles not to engage in such?

Mormon doesn't say it, but has God inspired him to repent of his oath and return? Or does God leave it to us to be agents unto ourselves and not be commanded in all things and make our own choices? Like Gandhi saying “Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it”.

Does it matter that I may choose to make a living and support my family as an engineer over a graphic designer or as a construction worker? Even though money is the domain of this world and heaven does not operate in this realm, whichever occupation I choose, will God still inspire me in that choice?

Morm 5:2

But behold, I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities, but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them.

This generation does not seem to value the truth enough for the Lord to reveal what will save them. God truly does have things that the eyes of man have not seen, nor have the ears heard, nor has yet entered into the hearts of man (D&C 76:10). God sends knowledge into the world for the meek and humble, and He perpetually keeps great things hidden from the strident, vulgar, proud, haughty, and foolish. Whether the Lord completes His work and fulfills His promises in this generation or in a future generation will be decided by us. We must repent and offer a broken heart and a contrite spirit if we hope to please God. There is a great deal more that needs to be restored. There is so much resistance to restoring truths from the worldly that this journey may not be possible until man has been humbled by God's hand. There is a sobering prophecy of a coming moment when the Lord will lament to the living and the dead over the way in which the world has responded to His messages: And again, the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven, saying: Hearken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you. O, ye nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunderings, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trump, and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not! (D&C 43:23-25.)¹⁹⁶

Footnote 196: Many of those sent by the Lord have labored in their ministries without hope of seeing Zion. As we see in Mormon's words in this verse: "But behold, I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities". Joseph Smith said, "There has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand. I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen" (DHC 6:184-185). We are very late in history and have greater reason to humble ourselves and obey God than any previous generation. Yet most of us also seem far too disinterested to spare ourselves from the coming tribulations by establishing Zion and dwelling in peace with one another. (Denver Snuffer, Holy Order, TDS Vol 4, pg 158 and 163)

Morm 5:6

...they did tread the people of the Nephites under their feet.

How much do we need to stretch our imagination to see in our day the reality of what Mormon is describing in his day, applied to us? How precarious is our own situation in light of what we see going on? Remember that Mormon is being selective on what he chooses to include in this record as a warning to its intended audience.

On Jul 11, 2016, I sent the following in an email to my grandfather in law:

I think the Muslim problem is much greater than this when you take into account prophecy of the last days.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. (Isaiah 11:11)

If you take a few minutes to research the ancient locations of Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shiner and Hamath, you'll find that these regions cover the Middle East and North Africa. Syria, historically a melting pot of many groups and cultures, is right in the center of it all. (see attached map)

Are we witnessing the beginning of the prophecy spoken by Christ to the Nephites?

Then shall ye, who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, go forth among them; and ye shall be in the midst of them who shall be many; and ye shall be among them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, and as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he goeth through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thy hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. (3 Nephi 20:16-17)

Not coincidentally, on September 28, President Barack Obama tweeted the following:

"We're also increasing the number of Syrian and other refugees we admit to the U.S. to 100,000 per year for the next two years.

Obama is unwittingly participating in and performing the Father's work of Gentile destruction by means of the remnant flood. Therefore it's more than just a little ironic that President Obama, in his weekly address the day before Thanksgiving, compared the fleeing refugees to the Mayflower Pilgrims.

The Pilgrims marked a milestone in the growing Gentile invasion that eventually decimated and nearly destroyed the Remnants of Israel on this continent. (1 Nephi 13:14). And now, the refugee flood begins the process of treading down the Gentile nations and restoring the gospel covenant to Israel. (3 Nephi 21:12-13)

This video gives greater perspective to the issue:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3X5hIFXYU>

Note that I am not taking any position for or against the refugees. I'm only observing the meaning and potential outcome of these migrations. The vast majority of refugees appear to be truly desperate and fleeing for their lives, with no intent to do harm. As followers of Christ, we all have an obligation to do what we can to help with their needs. There's no point in fighting against them; if the Father wants them brought here, they will come, regardless of Gentile opposition.

Morm 5:22-24

And then, O ye Gentiles, how can ye stand before the power of God, except ye shall repent and turn from your evil ways? Know ye not that ye are in the hands of God? Know ye not that he hath all power, and at his great command the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll? Therefore, repent ye, and humble yourselves before him, lest he shall come out in justice against you—lest a remnant of the seed of Jacob shall go forth among you as a lion, and tear you in pieces, and there is none to deliver.

Recall from last week's lesson 3 Ne 30. It's sobering the dim view the Book of Mormon holds for the Gentiles. And yet we see such pride and arrogance among those of us who possess this record? The Book of Mormon message to us should humble us. Even though Mormon's view of us is pessimistic, his message still extends to us hope if we repent. As we also noted above from Morm 4:11, Mormon (in chapter 9) references again the rolling together as a scroll. We see this wording from Isaiah

Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. (Isa 34:3-4)

Mormon refers to this “rolling” as “*the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll*”, yet Isaiah says “*the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll*”. In D&C 88:95 we read:

And there shall be silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; and immediately after shall the curtain of heaven be unfolded, as a scroll is unfolded after it is rolled up, and the face of the Lord shall be unveiled; (D&C 88:95)

Is this event a “rolling” or an “unfolding”? Is it the earth or the heavens that is rolled or unrolled? Why does Mormon repeat this rolling as a scroll in association with Gentiles twice (here in chapter 5 and again in chapter 9)?

Stick of Joseph footnote Morm 6:2

Kumorah [Cumorah]: Likely from the Hebrew root kum קום (Strong's 6965), “to rise up.” This was the same hill which the Yeredites called “Ramah” (‘Eter 6:14), from the Hebrew root ram רם (Strong's 7410), “to be high.” Kumorah might be a contraction for Kum - Rammah, “to rise up high.”

To me it is interesting how similar "kum" and "ram", or Kum-ram, sounds phonetically similar to Qumran. Both Cumorah and Qumran were places that were high or risen up. Both were a place of terrible destruction. Both contained records which were hid in the earth and later came to light to reveal God's words and warnings to later generations.

Morm 6:7-8

that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked,.. every soul was filled with terror

Compare with:

Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection. And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them; And they that die not in me, wo unto them, for their death is bitter. (D&C 42:45-47)

Stick of Joseph footnote Morm 6:11

ten thousand: The underlying Hebrew may have been *eleph* אלף (Strong's 505). In its strictest sense, this word means "thousand," but is also used poetically for large numbers. This root (אלוף) can also mean "chieftain," indicating one with command of a large group of soldiers, but not necessarily numbering one thousand. The same word is used for the rank of Colonel and above in the modern Israeli Defense Forces. The Nefite practice of appointing "captains, and higher captains, and chief captains, according to their numbers" (Alma 1:10) indicates that a captain over "ten thousand" was likely the "chief captain" commander of a large unit, consisting of smaller divisions and units, but not necessarily numbering anything close to ten thousand. See Wenham, J.W. (1967) Large Numbers in the Old Testament. Tyndale Bulletin, Volume 18, pgs. 19–53. See also 1 Chron. 12:18–20; 13:1.

Book of Mormon Study – Mormon 7-9

Online zoom Sunday School, 8 Nov 2020

(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Morm 7:4

Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war?

Is this hypocritical for Mormon to be telling them this? He repented of his oath not to command armies anymore and returned to fight in war.

If this remnant does not take up weapons, then how are gentiles to become trodden under foot by them? (as a lion among sheep. See last lesson chapter)

Remember the Hopi who have this in their tradition (from lesson notes on Alma 23-29):

"The 'Old Hopi' will tell you that before the 'Great Star' appeared in the sky, their people were converted to the 'Great Spirit.' After they were converted, they took all their weapons of war that they had and buried them deep in the earth. They refused to take them up again lest they sin against the Great Spirit." (Zula Brinkerhoff, God's Chosen People of America, pg 250)

Also refer back to lesson on Alma 43-52 where we discussed religious violence.

Morm 7:5

... also in him is the sting of death swallowed up.

Last week we took note of Morm 6:7-8:

that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked,.. every soul was filled with terror

and compared it to:

Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection. And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them; And they that die not in me, wo unto them, for their death is bitter. (D&C 42:45-47)

Morm 7:7

...he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above,

I've heard from some who believe the sermon on the mount, as taught by Jesus in the original Aramaic, was sung, perhaps like a chant, rather than simply spoken. (See Denver Snuffer, Have you heard Christ sing? Remembering the Covenant Vol 1, p. 119. <https://denversnuffer.com/2010/03/have-you-heard-christ-sing/>)

I think singing is the purpose behind the voice. It's easier to feel the spirit during singing than it is during someone speaking because our voices were only intended for singing. They don't talk in the Spirit World; they don't need to, and the voices get used there for singing. If you can hear each other without the voice in the spirit world, can we do so here? (see Denver Snuffer opening remarks talk on Zion, TDS Vol 1, pg 31)

Morm 7:10

Mormon's final parting words are to "the remnant of this people", i.e. seed of Lehi. It devolves upon us as Gentiles to fulfill our role and deliver to them Mormon's parting message to them.

Morm 8:8

...no one knoweth the end of the war.

All Nephites are killed, and yet the land is still "one continual round of murder and bloodshed". Once you rid the world of the "enemy" there is still no peace. The mentality behind what some zealots identify as "jihad", or ridding the world of infidels or heathens, will not resolve anything. What ultimately ends up happening is you create terrorists faster than you can kill them. Like cutting off the head of Hydra and two more appear. One reason I wonder about God's commandments to Joshua to kill every man, woman, and child in certain places. Is this the work of Deuteronomists?

Morm 8:11

But behold, my father and I have seen them, and they have ministered unto us.

Whether we are saved depends on what we do during our mortal probation. Angels do not fix our errors or finish our tests for us. When immortals return, it will be to destroy the wicked and visit with those who are wheat. The best way to understand it is to refer to what we know about the immortals that are still on Earth. We have two examples: the three Nephites and John the Beloved. Once the mortal lives of the three Nephite disciples who tarried on the Earth ended, they (like John) ministered as angels to mortal prophets. They did not minister openly to the world. They acted as angels whose ministry is explained in Moroni:

*Neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by **declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him. And by so***

doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men. (Moroni 7:29-32, emphasis added)

Angels minister to “chosen vessels” or mortal messengers, as the three Nephites did with Mormon and Moroni. Then these vessels testify and bear testimony so that the way is prepared “that the residue of men may have faith in Christ.” These three visited with Mormon, but the people to whom Mormon ministered didn’t see them. They ministered to Moroni, and those to whom Moroni ministered didn’t see them. The chosen vessels also become as ministering angels. Many people have received ministering angels. Men, women, and children have, can, and do receive angelic ministers. Angels minister to those with faith, who are supposed to then preach salvation to others. Likewise, John the Beloved became a ministering angel.¹⁴⁵ He has a ministry “for those who shall be heirs of salvation.” Do not expect him to make appearances to the world and do what flesh and blood are required to do. When the world has faith enough to receive angels, then angels will minister to them. But until then, they minister in private to those with faith to receive them. Appearing to the world would be unjust. It would be unfair if any single generation had all the heavy-lifting of salvation performed for them by immortals. If angels suddenly accomplish things that, from the days of Adam, have been the duty of mortals, an apology would be owed to every other generation. (Denver Snuffer, *The Holy Order*, TDS Vol 4, pg 133)

Morm 8:14-16

...plates thereof are of no worth,... but the record thereof is of great worth;

Joshep Smith’s experience:

I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would until four years from that time. (JSH 1:53)

Richard Bushman wrote:

*Thoughts of the money value of the plates troubled Joseph. The angel had cautioned him about the temptation to get rich. He was told he must have "no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom." Despite the warning, the sight of the gold was too much, and Joseph gave way to the very temptation he had been cautioned about. Oliver Cowdery and Lucy Smith said that Joseph felt a severe physical shock when he touched the plates, and that the angel appeared and severely rebuked him. Joseph reported three failed attempts at lifting out the plates, causing him to cry "unto the Lord in the agony of my soul why can I not obtain them." The angel told him that he was "tempted of the adversary [adversary] and sought the Plates to obtain riches and kept not the commandment that I should have an eye single to the glory of God therefore I was chastened and sought diligently to obtain the plates and obtained them not until I was twenty-one years of age." (Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, 2005, pg 45)*

Take note in verse 15:

...with an eye single to his glory,

Stick of Joseph footnote Morm 8:15

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). Here in M’raman 4:3, the Hebrew idiom is used correctly, according to the “Jewish context” of this idiomatic phrase (compare Prov. 23:6; 28:22; see also 3 Nepi 5:37).

Morm 8:17

he that condemneth, let him be aware lest he shall be in danger of hell fire.

Does this apply to my evangelical friends who reject this book?

There is a similar warning in the Dead Sea Scrolls (and/or in Book of Enoch) that I took note of.

Morm 8:19

For behold, the same that judgeth rashly shall be judged rashly again; for according to his works shall his wages be; therefore, he that smiteth shall be smitten again, of the Lord.

Compare

*For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again and be restored. Therefore, the word restoration more fully condemneth the sinner and justifieth him not at all.
(Alma 41:15)*

Morm 8:23

Search the prophecies of Isaiah...

Christ said as much when he taught the Nephites (3 Ne 20:11). Moroni here says it. Nephi also (2 Ne 25:8) and he and Jacob quoted much from Isaiah, as did Abinadi, and others in many places throughout the Book of Mormon.

What is it about Isaiah?

Jacob uses Isaiah as a key to understanding "things which are, and which are to come" (2 Ne 6:4). Isaiah can be a key that helps "unlock" meaning to much of the Book of Mormon's message to us.

A key is something used to open a lock; something that is important or central in importance. A “keystone” is the point in an arch that fits in the center, holding the arch together. Upon it all else rests. Keys are better viewed as a signal or a signpost along a pathway. Instead of “I hold keys and so I hold something of value,” holding a key is better viewed as being given a strong guide or route to take. If the word is viewed using these meanings, it suggests that holding a key implies using it in action.

Keys are knowledge. A particular key is knowledge or instruction received from the Lord on how to do something. If one has the key, then one has the ability or power to do something. And conversely, if one is powerless to do or accomplish something (bind and loose, request ministering angels, command the elements or spirits, etc.), then they do not possess a key. “Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven...the key that unlocks the Heavens and puts in our possession the glories of the celestial world.” (TPJS 298–299)

“In knowledge there is power. God has more power than all other beings because He has greater knowledge; and hence He knows how to subject all other beings to Him. He has power over all.” (TPJS, 288) Joseph Smith also used the term keys to mean understanding, the greatest key being the ability to ask God and receive an answer. (T&C glossary, Key(s))

Morm 8:24

poisonous serpents

This is mentioned again in chapter 9:24. Why the repetition?

Morm 8:26

It shall come in a day when they say miracles have ceased. See comments from last week, Morm 1:13.

Morm 8:28

even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers shall rise in the pride of their hearts, even to the envying of them who belong to their churches.

We discussed envyings earlier (in lesson 3 Nephi 27-4 Nephi), 4 Ne 1:16:

And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.

Morm 8:31

The Book of Mormon warns about our time. It describes pollutions of both the environment and the spirits of mankind that we now see:

Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be heard of fires, and tempests, and vapors of smoke in foreign lands; and there shall also be heard of wars, and rumors

*of wars, and earthquakes in divers places. Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be **great pollutions upon the face of the earth**—*

So, now he's talking about pollutions which he will *illustrate* in the words that are coming up, *pollutions* that you're going to see in the last days. And these are the pollutions about which he was concerned:

There shall be murders, and robbings, and lyings, and deceivings, and whoredoms, and all manner of abominations — when there shall be many who will say, Do this or do that, it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day. But woe unto such, for they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say, Come unto me, and for your money you shall receive forgiveness of your sins. (Mormon 8:29-32, emphasis added)

Today's greatest pollutions are lies, deceits, and advocating all manner of abominations *as if they were good*. Abusive and wicked practices are now advocated boldly and incorporated into our entertainment media and culture—*fearlessly*. Their advocates have no shame, no fear of judgment, and no concern for godliness.

The needs of the poor are often forgotten—and their direful circumstances *used* by political leaders *only* to advance their power and control. The sick and infirm have become a political opportunity. Governments face increasing perplexities and fail to address them with common sense. The world's leaders welcome perplexities to increase public distress because they hope to ride that increasing public distress to increased political power.

Christ described our socially bleak times but told us not to be discouraged because of it. He told us to look up, for the time of redemption is promised when a generation sees these signs:

*In the generation in which the times of the gentiles shall be fulfilled, there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, **distress of nations with perplexity, like the sea and the waves roaring**. The earth also shall be troubled, and the waters of the great deep, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken;... when these things begin to come to pass, then **look up**, lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draws near. (Luke 21:25-28, emphasis added) (Denver Snuffer, Hurricane Conference - The Heavens are Open, pg 8 of 26)*

Morm 8:32-37

Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say: Come unto me, and for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins. O ye wicked and perverse and stiffnecked people, why have ye built up churches unto yourselves to get gain? Why have ye transfigured the holy word of God, that ye might bring damnation upon your souls? Behold, look ye unto the revelations of God; for behold, the time cometh at that day when all these things must be fulfilled. Behold, the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly

come, at that day when these things shall come forth among you. Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts. For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.

In the warning, he makes no exception for some latter-day church. He makes no exception for any latter-day organization of any kind. There may be a few who are the humble followers of Christ that are mentioned in the Book Mormon (see, e.g., 2 Nephi 28:14), but they are not mentioned as part of an organized congregation. 359 They are not identified as part of an institution. When the faithful are gathered at the end, they are gathered as individuals, not as congregations. Christ said through Jeremiah, I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion (Jeremiah 3:14). He has never promised to take those belonging to an institution (see also Matt 24:36-41). There is no such thing as collective security. The Book of Mormon preaches against such an idea. We are just as vulnerable to the misapprehension that we are safe and “saved” because of status as are any other group of people. We are bound together to fellowship, bear one another’s burdens, mourn with those who mourn, testify to one another, and help comfort those in need (see Mosiah 18:9). Fellowship is indispensable to Christianity. But salvation comes one-at-a-time when we render an account of our lives (see Luke 19:12-26). (Denver Snuffer, Zion Will Come, TDS Vol 3, pg 147)

Morm 8:35

Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.

Compare

Then I wept greatly and my tears ceased not until I could no longer endure it; when I saw, they flowed on account of what I had seen; for everything shall come and be fulfilled, and all the deeds of men in their order were shown to me. (1 En 90:41. See also Ether 3:25 and Moses 1:8)

Morm 8:38

pollutions...

Whatever definition we applied to this word earlier (in v 31) can apply here (and vice versa)

O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an

endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?

I posed this question to our Stake Book of Mormon Institute class instructor:

What is "the holy church of God" in this verse? Aren't we God's holy church? Can God's holy church be polluted? Is it actually possible for latter day gentiles to sin against the fullness of the gospel as Christ told the Nephites in 3 Nephi 16:10? (email to Marcus Reed, 14 Apr 2019)

Morm 9:2

Behold, will ye believe in the day of your visitation—behold, when the Lord shall come, yea, even that great day when the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,

We brought the *rolling together as a scroll* up last week.

Mormon 9:3-5

Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell.

Back in lesson on Alma 39-42 we discussed how man is his own judge. Alma 41:7, "*for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or do evil.*"

"A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, 'They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.' The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man." (TPJS pg 357)

This verse in Mormon 9 is describing our reaction to being in the presence of a just and holy God.

Morm 9:13

This verse is relating to the special connection with Christ that the Book of Mormon message is trying to communicate to us in our day. Could be rendered this way:

[Now is the day of redemption. -And- [B]ecause of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord (in mortality); yea, this is wherein all men are redeemed[. B]ecause the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection, which bringeth to pass a redemption from an endless sleep, from which sleep all men shall be awakened by the power of God when the trump shall sound; and they shall come forth, both small and great, and all shall

stand before his bar, being redeemed and loosed from this eternal band of death, which death is a temporal death.

Ask

Morm 9:21,27-25

What's the difference between the "ask" in this verse in Mormon, and how it is used in 3 Ne 18:17-25 or D&C 50:25-30?

The principle of asking and receiving, on the one hand, and the spirit of prophecy and revelation, on the other, are directly related. Without an inquiry, one is not able to receive, (see Second Comforter pg 92) for those who are willing to receive always ask. Asking is the way those who are ready identify themselves for Heaven. (ibid pg 99) "[In First Nephi 11:1-7 we] have Nephi telling us he desired to know things. He believed God could make them known. And he was pondering the things he was seeking. Then in response to this process, the Lord sent an angel who inquired of Nephi.... What ought to stick out most in this passage is that Nephi is now granted an audience with an angel, and the angel is inquiring of him: What desirest thou? He is in the presence of an angel, but before he can learn anything, the angel first asks him: What do you want? That should tell you something of great significance. Heaven responds to inquiries! This is one of those eternal principles. Heaven is controlled by ordained limits or governing principles. Just as we must abide the conditions for obtaining blessings, Heaven's help comes in response to ordained limitations, principles, laws and ordinances. This is why the angel does not launch into a lecture right away. Instead, the angel asks Nephi what he wants to know so the balance and limits are maintained. If you aren't asking, you are sealing the Heavens. You disqualify yourself from further knowledge. God did not come in response to Joseph Smith's silent desire to know more. The First Vision came as a result of a specific vocal and private prayer in which he asked to know more. When the Father and Son appeared, the first words spoken were: Joseph: This is my beloved Son. Hear Him! Then nothing further happens until Joseph asked the Personages who stood above [him] in the light, which of all the sects was right. God did not force an answer upon Joseph, nor comment further until Joseph had first asked a question. It is not Heaven's responsibility to force upon us answers to questions which we do not ask. Unless we are willing to ask, we will not (in fact cannot) receive. This is why teaching we should not ask to know more of God's mysteries is so pernicious. It is not only false, it limits Heaven's ability to provide light and truth to us. We seal the Heavens when we comply with such instruction. Nephi asks, I desire to behold the things which my father saw (1 Nephi 11:3). Then the angel asks Nephi whether he believed the things his father had been teaching him. Nephi says he did believe. Indeed, Nephi said he believed all the words of my father. Having now secured from Nephi both a question to answer and a confession of faith in the Lord's spokesman (Nephi's prophet-father), the angel reacts with overwhelming joy: And when I had spoken these words, the Spirit cried with a loud voice, saying, Hosanna to the Lord, the Most High God, for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all! And blessed art thou, Nephi, because thou believest in the Son of the Most High God; wherefore, thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired (1 Nephi 11:6). An angel shouting for joy! Here we have a clear indication of just how much it pleases God and His holy angels when a person finally shows their willingness to receive further light and truth by conversing with the Lord through the veil. It is a rare thing. Heaven rejoices over someone who comes with a question, and with faith, and with a desire to know these things, believing the Lord can make them known. This particular alignment of things is so rare an event Heaven cannot contain the joy, exultation, and wonder when it occurs.... The Heavens long for communion with mankind. The silence which prevails is due to

our wickedness, and not Heaven's unwillingness to open to us. If silence prevails, it is mankind who stopped the dialogue." (ibid pg 111-113) If asking must precede receiving, and if Joseph Smith was also required to ask before the great revelations of this dispensation were unfolded to him, then all must ask. Failing to ask causes the way to be hedged up and prevents Heaven from answering. (ibid pg 116)

Book of Mormon Study – Ether 1-5

Online zoom Sunday School, 15 Nov 2020

(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Back in Alma 37 we discussed how economical the writing must have been that was used on the 24 plates from which this record was taken. (See notes on Alma 37:21)

A Note about what archeology tells us about the Jaredite people. Leland and I watched a video by Wayne May a few months ago. The topic of the location of Book of Mormon lands is controversial, so I won't dwell on it here in this lesson, but as I've said before, I trust what the Book of Mormon says about itself ("this land") and things that Joseph Smith has said, so I'm led to believe there is much credibility to the North American model as the location for Book of Mormon peoples. Some things that stood out to me from his research is that these people appear to be direct descendants from Ham's Lineage and were very large people. He also gives some interesting perspective on their route to this land. You can watch the video here:

Jaredites in North America, Wayne May

<https://youtu.be/butFgqLu7TY>

Stick of Joseph footnote Ether 1:32

Orihah: Probably meaning "my light (אורי) is Yah" (the suffix "ihah" appears in many Jaredite names).

Stick of Joseph footnote Ether 1:33

and according to the word...: This agrees with Targum Jonathan on Gen. 11, which reads, "And the Word of YHWH was revealed against the city, and with Him seventy angels, having reference to seventy nations, each having its own language, and thence the writing of its own hand: and He dispersed them from thence upon the face of all the earth into seventy languages. And one knew not what his neighbor would say: but one slew the other; and they ceased from building the city" (Targum Jonathan on Gen. 11:8).

Ether 1:34-40

Cry again unto the Lord, and it may be that he will turn away his anger from them who are our friends, that he confound not their language.

There is a deference of reverential respect of God by Jared and his brother in these verses that is almost foreign to our modern Gentile way of thinking and understanding. There's a sense of "Oh God, please have mercy on us". Sometimes I wonder if I'm more inclined to approach God as a buddy or pal who I touch base with once in a while to ask special favors from.

Ether 2:6

They built barges. Ether 2:16 they build barges after the manner of the previous ones.

Ether 2:9-12

What must we (Gentiles) do to avoid being swept away?

Ether 2:10

...this is a land which is choice above all other lands;

Land choice above all other lands. Chapter 1:43, "*And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed upon all the face of the earth.*" Comparative language. More numerous greater in wealth, in blessing than all other people, lands etc.

We tend to look at these things in comparisons. Comparative nature of this is where our prideful focus tends to look at. Big, better, best. Bronze, Silver, Gold medals.

Printer's manuscript on Ether 2:15 has an added word, "*for it shall be a land [of] choice above all other lands.*"

Ether 2:14 (also v 4-5)

Lord came again unto the brother of Jared, and stood in a cloud and talked with him.

I find this imagery of God speaking to the brother of Jared in a cloud interesting.

The Day of Atonement was the day in which there was a method provided to Aaron to enter into the Holy of Holies without being destroyed. The entirety of the ordinance reaches out to cleanse: first, Aaron or his successor High Priests; then to cleanse the Temple; then to cleanse all of Israel. In the context of the Day of Atonement, there is a prescribed use of incense. It symbolizes the cloud covering the presence of God, just as the cloud covered Sinai when Moses entered the Lord's presence. The full account of the rite is set out in Leviticus 16. The account reads in part:

*And the Lord spake unto Moses **after the death of the two sons of Aaron**, when they offered before the Lord, and died; And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that **he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat**, which is upon the ark; that he die not: for **I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat**. ...And he shall take a **censer full of burning coals of fre from of the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail**: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not. (Leviticus 16:1–34)*

Here we have the elements from Sinai put into the Holy of Holies. The High Priest is to enter with coals from the altar of sacrifice. Onto the coals the incense is placed to produce the smoke and scent of this

holy cloud, which symbolizes the bright cloud associated with God's presence. Unlike the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies was a small cubical room which would fill with the smoke of incense rather quickly. The cloud was to envelope both the High Priest and the Mercy Seat. Inside that cloud, the High Priest would be in the symbolic presence of God. This is a clearly symbolic recreation of the elements we find when God associated with Moses on the Mount.

So the Messiah's life necessarily included ascension through a cloud, or veil, into the presence of God. He was touching on one of the required elements of His ministry in this event. Therefore, the incident on the Mount of Transfiguration satisfied one of the required elements of the Law of Moses which identifies the Lord's anointed. (Denver Snuffer, Road to Emmaus, TDS Vol 1, pg 16-17)

Ether 3

This account that we are reading in the record of Ether occurred before Christ came. Christ was a future expectancy, not an historical figure from the past. The faith exhibited by the brother of Jared in this account is faith in an unfilled future expectancy. If you think you have a thin basis for your faith in Christ because you didn't live in His day, think about how difficult it would be to have confidence in a Redeemer whose life was still future. The details of the date and time of His birth were unknown. The circumstances of Him coming into mortality, the ministry and the sermons that He delivered, the sacrifices and the healings He gave during mortality, the temptations He faced, the dilemmas He confronted, all were unknown and unaccomplished. We know a great deal concerning Him now. None of that was known at the time the book of Ether was composed.

We have greater evidence. We have a greater testimony in front of us concerning Christ than did this man. We have greater reason to believe in Christ than did this man. We have far more witnesses and justification for having confidence in the promises of Christ. We, unlike him, have the New Testament, we have the Book of Mormon including his record in front of us. We have Joseph Smith's revelations and Joseph Smith's testimony. We have the temple rites, with their ceremonial depiction of the return back into the presence of the Lord through the veil. We have restored again to us, partially, the book of Enoch in the Pearl of Great Price. We have restored to us a far more complete account of Abraham's testimony in the Pearl of Great Price. And we have a great deal more of the corrected account of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. Therefore, when we read this third chapter of the book of Ether, we should recognize we come to this challenge with a significantly greater collection of advantages, if we will receive them and use them, than the one who composed the record Moroni abridged here. Keep all of this in mind as we read this account. (See Denver Snuffer, A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit, beginning pg 231, TDS Vol 2, PDF version)

Ether 3:1

[The brother of Jared] did molten out of a rock sixteen small stones; and they were white and clear, even as transparent glass; and he did carry them in his hands upon the top of the mount...

How big are "small stones" that "he did carry them in his hands"? Size of eggs? When was the last time you came from the refrigerator of your garage to the kitchen carrying 16 eggs in your two hands?

In an exchange with my bishop last year I wrote:

Recall the story of the Brother of Jared who took 16 small stones to the top of the mountain and "cried again unto the Lord." (Ether 3:1) This is the 10th time in the record of the brother of Jared, in which, he "cries" unto the Lord. Throughout the record of the brother of Jared, never once does the word "pray" or "prayer" appear as part of the record. When the voice of Moroni enters into the narrative, the word "prayed" appears in Moroni's aside. But in the record of the brother of Jared, he does not ever use the word "pray" or "prayer," he "cried." Consider for a moment, the difference between being someone who prays unto God, and someone who cries unto God. Consider the position in which the petitioner has voluntarily placed himself, when instead of coming in prayer, he comes crying out unto the Lord. Keep that word in mind. Eleven times it is used in the Book of Ether to describe the brother of Jared. The only time the word "prayer" appears is in Moroni's interruption. That is the way you can know Moroni was abridging a record written by somebody else. Moroni does not use the same word as the person whose records he was abridging. He uses "prayer" — but only one time. This is what he cried out: "O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant..." Crying, asking Him not to be angry, reducing himself to be merely a servant, because of his "weakness before thee." What is this man's attitude? How is this man approaching the throne of God? How does he view himself? How does he regard God? Why does this man have such faith? Why does this man attract the attention of God? Why is God willing to speak to such a man, such a vessel as this? What is it about this attitude of this man that tells you his heart is right before God?

"...for we know that thou art holy. [This is the contrast, "my weakness," compared to "your holiness".] and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires." [He said he was doing what God asked him to do. God commanded him. He did not think himself qualified, but was obeying what God told him to do. This is the attitude of the man. This is what the heart of the man reflects. These words explain why he "cries" to God.]

"Behold, O Lord, thou hast smitten us because of our iniquity, and hast driven us forth, and for these many years we have been in the wilderness; nevertheless, thou hast been merciful unto us. O Lord, look upon me in pity, and turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth across this raging deep in darkness; but behold these things which I have molten out of the rock."

There is no pride here. There is no resentment at being chastened. There is acceptance of the chastening hand of God. There is no proclamation by the man that he was worthy. It is quite the opposite, he declares he is unworthy. He has no resentment for having been punished. It is the opposite, he recognizes every stumble

along the way is justified, is reasonable, is earned, and was appropriate. Because God, who cares for His children, upbraids and disciplines His children.

This text in Ether chapter 3 is probably the best single text in existence to study about gaining the knowledge of God, and the process by which it is gained. Most importantly, it exposes the attitude possessed by the person who comes back to be redeemed. It tells you, not directly, it tells you indirectly by telling you what the brother of Jared did.

Also consider Alma chapter 22 involving Lamoni's father, the King. Look at the father beginning in verse 17 of Alma chapter 22: "And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried mightily, saying:" [It was not the words of the prayer that provoked the attention of heaven. Although his prayer was in fact needed, relevant, and exactly what the Lord answered. It was what came before.] This was the King. The King who could have people killed if he chose to do so. This was the one who, like God among his people, exercised the power of life and death. This was the one who could exact taxes from them. This was the one who had absolutely no reason to do what he did here. Look what he did. He prostrated himself on the ground and he "cried out mightily." He didn't pray. He mirrored exactly what the brother of Jared did when he approached God. In the depths of humility and in the sincerity of his heart, he showed absolutely an appreciation for the difference between himself on the one hand, and God on the other.

To me these examples reflect the kind of faith that is able reach through the veil and connect us to heaven. (email to Bishop Gabrish, 23 Aug 2019)

[Ether 3:4-5](#)

And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness; and they shall shine forth unto us in the vessels which we have prepared, that we may have light while we shall cross the sea. Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this. We know that thou art able to show forth great power, which looks small unto the understanding of men.

He was not asking for this to see a light show. He asked for this out of pity and concern, charity and intercession for others who would otherwise be left in the dark. He is trying to do something to bless and benefit others in a very practical way. He hopes to make the lives of others better. He was not doing this for himself. He was doing it on behalf of his people. (Denver Snuffer, A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit, continued.)

[Stick of Joseph footnote Ether 3:4](#)

According to the Midrash Rabbah on Gen. 6:16 (as well as Rashi on Gen. 6:16), Noah's Ark was lit by a precious stone called the tzohar which "glowed brightly."

Ether 3:6-8

And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger.

The only thing that the brother of Jared ever sees at this point, is His finger. The Lord may stretch forth His hand, but the only thing seen is His finger.

Let's assume for the moment I have eight in one hand and eight in the other, as the brother of Jared. Let's assume someone else touches it in my hand. It is impossible to touch the stone in a man's hand without the one holding the stone feeling it has been touched.

We read this record, but we fail to notice what was really happening. The stones were in his hands, eight and eight, and the Lord touched them one by one with His finger. Now, there is nothing in this record that suggests that after the last stone gets touched, or after the stone the Lord was touching at the moment that the finger is seen, there were any more stones remaining to be touched. They were touched. First one, then another, one by one. Sixteen times this was repeated. This record read fairly suggests to me that the brother of Jared stood there and witnessed 15 of the 16 stones, felt the touch on 15 of the 16 stones, before on the very last stone he saw the finger of the Lord. Think about that for a moment. Think about coming into contact, admittedly through a stone, but coming into contact with the Lord when He manifests Himself for the first time to man physically.

And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood...

That is the way the Lord chose to manifest Himself in this incident. He appeared "like flesh and blood" because He came physically into contact with 16 stones.

...and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear. And the Lord saw that the brother of Jared had fallen to the earth; and the Lord said unto him: Arise, why hast thou fallen? And he saith unto the Lord: I saw the finger of the Lord, and I feared lest he should smite me; for I knew not that the Lord had flesh and blood.

It frightened him to realize that the God who controls all things had flesh and blood. This was a great secret that ought not get out, and now he knows it. Knowing it frightened him. He thought he was intruding into space he shouldn't, and he felt convicted that somehow that was something he ought not know. (ibid)

Ether 3:9-11

And the Lord said unto him: Because of thy faith thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood; and never has man come before me with such exceeding faith as thou hast; for were it not so ye could not have seen my finger. Sawest thou more than this? And he answered: Nay.

He didn't see the hand—he saw the finger, and he didn't see more than this.

The way I choose to read verse 9 is:

...and ~~never has man~~ **[none of those now living have]** come before me with such exceeding faith...

Nay; Lord, show thyself unto me. And the Lord said unto him: Believest thou the words which I shall speak?

This is a necessary prerequisite because what the Lord is about to speak to him will be covenantal. When it comes to prophecy, covenants, commitments by God, what He's about to do requires the brother of Jared to have faith in God's true nature. He needed to have a correct understanding of God's attributes. This was required before God could show him all things. (ibid)

Ether 3:12-17

And he answered: Yea, Lord, I know that thou speakest the truth, for thou art a God of truth, and canst not lie. And when he had said these words, behold, the Lord showed himself unto him, and said: Because thou knowest these things ye are redeemed from the fall; therefore ye are brought back into my presence; therefore I show myself unto you. Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have life, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters. And never have I showed myself unto man whom I have created, for never has man believed in me as thou hast. Seest thou that ye are created after mine own image? Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh. And now, as I, Moroni, said I could not make a full account of these things which are written, therefore it sufficeth me to say that Jesus showed himself unto this man in the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites.

What was the body Jesus showed Himself unto the Nephites in?

Recent email to Jesse Bardsley, 19 Sep 2020:

Ron uses John 4:24 to support that God is spirit. Joseph Smith would also agree. "the Father being a personage of spirit, glory, and power" (Lectures on Faith 5:2). God having a body of flesh and bone comes from D&C 130, which can be traced to Joseph Smith only indirectly through 2nd and 3rd party sources. Section 130 of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants first appeared as canon in the 1876 edition prepared by Orson Pratt under the direction of Brigham Young. For original sources see Joseph Smith Papers (JSP), Journals Vol. 2:323–326, (Dec. 1841 – April 1843), 2 April 1843. Willard Richards didn't accompany Joseph Smith on his four-day trip to Ramus, IL, and reconstructed the Joseph Smith Journal entry from the Journal of William Clayton. See JSP, Journals Vol. 2:403–405, Appendix 2, 1–4 April 1843. The Words of Joseph Smith (WJS), 169, 267n3. See note 14.

For me, I trust the direct source to Joseph Smith of Lectures on Faith over D&C 130. But then how do I reconcile the teaching that the Father has a body of flesh and bones?

In Ether 3:15-16, when the Lord showed himself to the Brother of Jared, we read Christ's words:

Yea, even all men were created in the beginning after mine own image. Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.

What was the body Jesus showed Himself unto the Nephites in? What is the difference between water as a solid, water as a liquid, and water as a gas? The difference between that, if you want to take a scriptural word, is "quicken." In one condition it is quickened, in another condition it is less quick. In science the difference between the two is "temperature" or heat.

God dwells in everlasting burnings. In order to be with or near Him, a man must be "quicken" to endure His presence. Does that mean that in a quickened state it is impossible for a quickened being to manifest itself in a solid form? Well, take a look at D&C 131:7

There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter.

D&C 77:2 includes the statement: "...that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal; and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual."

Rather than try to explain all this to Ron, my approach would be to just concede the point and accept that God is spirit because Joseph Smith said as much. You may have your own thoughts or ideas, but I thought it might be of interest to you in the event you might not be familiar with the history of D&C 130.

[Ether 3:13](#)

cross ref Morm 9:13, D&C 76:118

[Ether 3:18](#)

And he ministered unto him even as he ministered unto the Nephites; and all this, that this man might know that he was God, because of the many great works which the Lord had showed unto him.

This is how God is known: by His works. It is not the lightning show nor the shaking on the mountain, but it is the great works that proceed forth from Him.

See 3 Ne 11:9-17

“he did minister unto him.” Christ has a ministry. His ministry is not yet complete. His ministry includes coming and bearing His testimony, for that is the testimony of Jesus we should receive while in the flesh (D&C 76:74). That ministry continues.

About Sacred Stones

Here is an excerpt from a talk in September of last year:

Now, we've talked about this word Mashiach משיח . It means “Anointed.” Christ is the same word (but coming from a Greek root). What does it mean “to Anoint”? Why does it matter that there's an Anointing? I want to go back just a ways. We're gonna look to our father Jacob (Ya'akov), whose name was changed to Isra'el (“prevails with God”). You may recall that when he was fleeing for his life, he stopped for the night because it was dark, and he laid down, and he made a rock his pillow; and then he had a dream—a vision in the nighttime—when he saw a ladder (or a conduit/a pillar) into heaven and messengers ascending and descending, moving up and down the ladder. And at the top of the ladder, he saw God, who spoke with him and made him promises and made a covenant with him. And when Jacob rose up early in the morning, [he] took the stone that he had put for his [pillow], and [he] set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. He anointed the stone. Hmmm. And he called the name of that place Beth-el , the house of God, because he said, surely God is in this place. Now, was the place the house of God? Or was the man of the household of God because of the covenant that he just received from the Lord?

And what was the deal with this stone? He has this vision; he sees God; he receives promises; this vision involved a stone which connected him to the Divine, made him part of the house of God; and that word (when he renamed the place Bethel— Beth-el), that word gave rise to another word: Baetylus , which means sacred stones that have been endowed with life by the anointing of God.

The “sacred stone” tradition is prevalent throughout the world, through many cultures, many religions, and much of history. For example, if you happen to look in the Old Testament and you happen to appreciate Hebrew, you'll find out that Noah was commanded to build an ark. And much of the English translation is poor about what that ark contained. One of the things it said it had was a window. “Window” was a translation of the Hebrew word tsohar (zohar) . Zohar was not a window; it was a stone—it was a sacred stone that glowed, that gave light to everybody in the ark. It came from the Hebrew word zahar, which means, “to press out oil.” He had a stone, an anointed stone. Window?? Are you kidding me? In fact, in the Book of Mormon (in the record of the brother of Jared), that was fixed; it explicitly says [paraphrasing], “No, no, you can't have windows in your arks.” And lest anyone should want to misinterpret, “...but you can have stones anointed by the touch of the finger of God.” Where do you think that idea came from? Where do you think the brother of Jared got the idea to light the arks with sacred stones touched by the

finger of God? He took 16 stones up that mountain, and he came down the mountain with 18 stones—because the Lord gave him two more [urim & thumim, Ether 3:23].

Well, this idea of sacred stones and anointing is far more prevalent than you may think. You'll, of course, immediately recognize the Coronation Throne used by the British monarchs, built in 1296—built specifically to house the stone that's sitting at the bottom of it, so that the British monarch could be seated upon the stone when they were anointed to be the king. This is the... Oh, the name of it slips my mind at the moment. I apologize. [Audience chatter.] Yeah, the Stone of Scone, it's called colloquially. It's also called the Coronation Stone, and the legend is that this is the very stone that Jacob had his head laying on—that it was spirited away; that it was brought to the British Isles; and that, you know, the Scots had it, and then the British captured it from the Scots and brought it back. And in 1950, on Christmas, some Scottish nationalists stole it from Westminster Abbey and took it back, and then it was formally returned to Scotland, with much pomp and circumstance, very recently. But to this day, that idea persists.

It's in the Book of Mormon:

And the Lord said, I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem a stone which shall shine forth in darkness unto light, that I may discover unto my people who serve me, that I may discover unto them the works of their brethren — yea, their secret works, their works of darkness, and their wickedness and abominations . (Alma 17:12 RE) (See also notes on Gazel Stone from Study lesson Alma 36-38)

The point is that these anointed stones all symbolize the Messiah—Jesus Christ, the Anointed One. And this brings us right back to the fundamental question: Jesus said unto them, Did you never read in the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is to become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doings, and it is marvelous in our eyes? [This is Jesus quoting Psalms.] Therefore [I say] unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. For whoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder . (Matthew 10:13 RE) If you fall on your knees before the stone that represents Christ, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, you can be redeemed. But you don't want to be one at the last day upon whom that stone falls. Now his disciples came to him, and Jesus said unto them, Do you marvel at the words of the parable which I spoke unto them? Truly I say unto you, I am the stone, and those wicked ones reject me. I am the head of the corner . (Matthew 10:15 RE, emphasis added) (Adrian Larsen, Look Unto the Rock, 21 Sep 2019, pg 14-16)

See also:

Notes on *Gazel Stone* from study lesson on Alma 36-38.

Where did the Brother of Jared Get the Idea of Shining Stones?

<https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/knowhy/where-did-the-brother-of-jared-get-the-idea-of-shining-stones>

Ether 3:22

...when ye shall come unto me, ye shall write them...

The “coming unto me” takes place in verse 25-26. In verse 27 *"the Lord said unto him: Write these things..."*

Ether 3:25

Cross ref 1 En 90:41 (we looked at this last week).

Ether 4:1

...and for this cause did king Mosiah keep them...

Printer's manuscript has king Benjamin.

Ether 4:7

And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.

This is the ministry of the Lord. This is the comfort He promises to bring us. This text in Ether chapter 3 is probably the best single text in existence to study about gaining the knowledge of God and the process by which it is gained. Most importantly, it exposes the attitude possessed by the person who comes back to be redeemed. It tells you, not directly, it tells you indirectly by telling you what the brother of Jared did. Go thou, and do likewise. (Denver Snuffer, A Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit, continued.)

Ether 5:1-3

These are instructions to Joseph Smith.

See 2 Ne 27:22

Wherefore, when thou hast read the words which I have commanded thee, and obtained the witnesses which I have promised unto thee, then shalt thou seal up the book again, and hide it up unto me, that I may preserve the words which thou hast not read, until I shall see fit in mine own wisdom to reveal all things unto the children of men.

LDS tradition is that Joseph returned the plates back into the hands of the angel. But if he was true to these instructions, then Joseph would have sealed up and hid the plates back unto the Lord himself.

Book of Mormon Study – Ether 6-11

Online zoom Sunday School, 22 Nov 2020

(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Ether 6:6-10

*And it came to pass that they were **many times buried in the depths of the sea**, because of the mountain waves which broke upon them, and also the great and terrible tempests which were caused by the fierceness of the wind. And it came to pass that when **they were buried in the deep** there was no water that could hurt them, their vessels being tight like unto a dish, and also they were tight like unto the ark of Noah; therefore when they were encompassed about by many waters they did cry unto the Lord, and he did **bring them forth again upon the top of the waters**. And it came to pass that the wind did never cease to blow towards the promised land while they were upon the waters; and thus they were driven forth before the wind. And they did sing praises unto the Lord; yea, the brother of Jared did sing praises unto the Lord, and he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long; and when the night came, they did not cease to praise the Lord. And thus they were driven forth; and no monster of the sea could break them, neither whale that could mar them; and they did have light continually, whether it was above the water or **under the water**.*

They cried unto the Lord and the barges were brought back *above the waters*. If it's the wind that is carrying them, then how is the wind having any effect on something that is *under the water*? How is something filled with air able to sink under water? How fierce or furious is the storm that is able to drive a vessel filled with air under water? Were the occupants of these vessels wearing seat belts? Did the previous experience in building vessels help prepare them and teach them things to better equip this second set of barges with improvements (see Ether 2:6 and 16)? Is it more the current, rather than the wind, that is carrying them to the land of promise? What role might the wind have in influencing the current that is actually taking them?

I almost get the impression these vessels are rather submarine like. I just have a hard time trying to conceptualize vessels filled with air going under water. I also have a hard time conceptualizing wind having much effect in blowing a round or "tight like unto a dish" shaped vessels.

*the brother of Jared did sing praises unto the Lord, and he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long; and when the night came, they did not cease to praise the Lord.
(verse 9)*

Note that these praises were sung (we talked about singing in a previous lesson - see note on Morm 7:7). And this praising continued into the night. How did they know day from night inside the barges? Where else do we hear this kind of language being used – crying unto the Lord all the day long and into the night? It reminds me of Enos.

And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. (Enos 1:4)

Makes me wonder if there is more to what is being said in this verse in Ether. Perhaps understanding what was going on with Enos can give better perspective on what we see happening here as well (see earlier lesson on Enos).

...no monster of the sea could break them, neither whale that could mar them; (verse 10)

What other things in the sea beside whales are large enough or dangerous enough to break a ship?

Ether 6:11

344 days.

The Phoenicia trip in 2008 around Africa took 2 years.

"Built in 2008, the Phoenicia is an exact replica of a wrecked Phoenician ship found in Marseille. The Phoenicians, an ancient civilization born in the region we now know as Syria nearly 3,000 years ago, were legendary sailors...

According to London's "The Phoenicians: The Greatest Sailors Exhibition," as early as "600 BC a fleet of Phoenician ships was said to have embarked on an epic journey to circumnavigate Africa." In 2008, the crew of the newly-built Phoenicia set out to prove that the myth was, in fact, history.

After a two year voyage in a copy of a 3,000-year-old ship, the Phoenicia dodged Somalian pirates and extreme weather, sailing into the history books—the epic tale of the Phoenician explorers was no myth. However, not satisfied with one groundbreaking voyage, the crew of the Phoenicia is now on a mission to prove that the Phoenicians sailed to America over 2,000 years before Columbus." (The Phoenicia: A Voyage to Rewrite History, By Madeleine Handaji, Nov 4, 2019.

<https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2019/11/286022/phoenicia-voyage-history-america/>

In Nephi's case, the winds took them as well.

*And it came to pass after we had all gone down into the ship, and had taken with us our provisions and things which had been commanded us, we did put forth into the sea and **were driven forth before the wind** towards the promised land...*

*And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did guide the ship, that we **sailed again** towards the promised land. And it came to pass that **after we had sailed** for the space of many days we did arrive at the promised land; and we went forth upon the land, and did pitch our tents; and we did call it the promised land. (1 Ne 18:8, 22-23)*

After his brothers loosed him from the mast he took the Liahona and it worked and he was able to guide the ship.

And it came to pass after they had loosed me, behold, I took the compass, and it did work whither I desired it... And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did guide the ship, that we sailed again towards the promised land. (ibid, 21-22)

If the Lord was causing the winds to take the ship, why did Nephi need to guide it? Were the Jaradites involved in directing or steering their vessels in any similar way? Was there any communication between the members in the eight separate vessels? How great effect does wind have on dish shaped barges without masts? (It seems that current would have a greater effect on moving a dish shaped barge than wind.)

344 days out on the water? How did they survive that long? They brought animals (verse 4).

I'm reminded of the boy and his sheep from *The Alchemist*, by Paul Coelho

He arose and, taking up his crook, began to awaken the sheep that still slept. He had noticed that, as soon as he awoke, most of his animals also began to stir. It was as if some mysterious energy bound his life to that of the sheep, with whom he had spent the past two years, leading them through the countryside in search of food and water. "They are so used to me that they know my schedule," he muttered. Thinking about that for a moment, he realized that it could be the other way around: that it was he who had become accustomed to their schedule.

But there were certain of them who took a bit longer to awaken. The boy prodded them, one by one, with his crook, calling each by name...

The day was dawning, and the shepherd urged his sheep in the direction of the sun. They never have to make any decisions, he thought. Maybe that's why they always stay close to me.

The only things that concerned the sheep were food and water. As long as the boy knew how to find the best pastures in Andalusia, they would be his friends. Yes, their days were all the same, with the seemingly endless hours between sunrise and dusk; and they had never read a book in their young lives, and didn't understand when the boy told them about the sights of the cities. They were content with just food and water, and, in exchange, they generously gave of their wool, their company, and--once in a while--their meat.

If I became a monster today, and decided to kill them, one by one, they would become aware only after most of the flock had been slaughtered, thought the boy. They trust me, and they've forgotten how to rely on their own instincts, because I lead them to nourishment.

Some years ago I met a guy from Trenton who raised rabbits for meat. He told me that on slaughter day he could tell that the animals knew, yet they exhibited a calmness and acceptance of this fate. There was no sense of anxiety or fear in them.

If people are going to choose to eat meat, which many do, then as Temple Grandin says "We owe it to them" to ensure that they have a happy, healthy and cruelty free life. We also must ensure that their end of life process upholds the Humane Slaughter Act, and we implement the strictest and most humane ways possible to avoid pain and suffering.

When asked if her work in slaughter houses makes her sad, she said, "Well no, everything dies. Nature can be harsh. Those cattle wouldn't have existed if they had not been bred."

Consider the example being presented in this. The animal lives their life in the moment, being taken care of. It does not worry or fret about where the next meal is coming from. Doesn't concern itself with the things of tomorrow, "*Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.*" (Matt 6:34)

Animals live in the present moment, trusting when hunger comes food will be there. And it is. The animal is provided for. Then one day we may expect, like Joseph, to be led like a lamb to the slaughter. Think about that. To go, willingly, wittingly, and be at peace with it. It's a powerful example what we learn from animals. From an animal's perspective, life is good, and death is just part of it all. No worries.

I know this is easy to say, yet we still worry.

If you think that your burdens that you carry are great, remember the burdens carried by the Son. He faced burdens inordinately greater than yours. All of us should be tested to our limit. All of us should be "proven" by the experiences we endure. The only way to test some things is to destroy them. The only way to test you through mortality is to cause mortality itself, with the eventual coming of death. That is the way this probation works. (Denver Snuffer, Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit, TDS Vol 2, pg 234)

Ether 6:17

And they were taught to walk humbly before the Lord; and they were also taught from on high.

What does it mean to be taught from on high? Could it be anything like what Nephi taught in 2 Ne 32:5-6?

Ether 6:19

And the brother of Jared began to be old, and saw that he must soon go down to the grave; wherefore he said unto Jared: Let us gather together our people that we may number them

They numbered their people before they went down to their graves. Yet for David in 2 Sam 24, numbering the people was a sin?

And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly. (2 Sam 24:10)

So if it's a small number it's ok, but if it's a large number it's not? The account of David in 2 Sam 24 is confusing to me. I see this as a completely sensible thing for Jared and his brother to do. Number your people, count them. How many grandkids do I have?

The numbering of the people was something God told Moses to do:

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. (Ex 30:11-12)

This verse in Exodus 30 is the basis for a "Temple tax" among the Jews. This Temple tax is mentioned in 4 Maccabees. Footnote for 4 Maccabees 3:20 in OTP refers to the "Temple tax" as "the annual half-shekel as paid by the Jews to the priests: Ex 30:12; 2Chr 24:6". But Dead Sea Scrolls 4Q159 Frag 1 Col 2:6-7 says:

[... concer]ning [the Ransom:] the money of the valuation which a man gives a ransom for his life shall be half [a shekel in accordance with the shekel of the sanctuary]. He shall give it only o[nce] in his life. (DSSNT pg 205)

Did the Jews twist something over time where culture and traditions have turned it into something more than what it was originally meant to be? Are such things possible in our time? Is over 150 plus years long enough for culture and traditions to affect and twist some things that Joseph Smith revealed? (The Word of Wisdom is one thing that comes to mind.)

There seems to be more going on in the 2 Sam 24 account with David than a judgement upon David and Israel for taking a census of the people. David intercedes for the people and the plague was stopped (2 Sam 24:15-25). David purchased the threshing floor upon which the temple would be built (ibid 24-25). The record in Chronicles places this right after a great victory over the Philistines. The 1 Chronicles account actually gives a reason for this being a sin, it was because Levi and Benjamin were not counted.

And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword. But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab. And God was displeased with this thing; therefore he smote Israel. (1 Chronicles 21:5-7)

Other references to this account in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha may add some additional insight:

And I saw and implored in the Lord's presence and said, "Let it be enough, Lord, to make your hand heavy on Jerusalem by bringing gentiles (upon her)."

For they ridiculed (her) and did not refrain in anger and vicious rage, and they will be finished unless you, Lord, censure them (= gentiles) in your anger. (Pss of Sol 2:22-23, OTP)

And this account from Eupolemus:

Then David, his son, assumed power. He subdued the Syrians dwelling by the river Euphrates and in the region of Commagene and the Assyrians in Galadene and the Phoenicians; he also fought against the Idumaeans, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Itureans, the Nabataeans and the Nabdaeans, he further waged war against Souron, the king of Tyre and Phoenicia; and he compelled them to pay tribute to the Jews. With Vapors, the king of Egypt, he made a treaty of friendship. Since David wanted to build a temple for God, he asked God to show him a place for the altar. Then an angel appeared to him standing above the place where the altar is set up in Jerusalem and ordered him not to set up the temple, because he was defiled with human blood and had waged war for many years. His name was Dantean. He gave him a command that he should entrust the building to his son but that he should get ready the materials suitable for the construction: gold, silver, bronze, stones, cypress and cedar trees. (Eupolemus 30:3-6, OTP)

Ether 6:30

*And it came to pass that Orihah did walk humbly before the Lord, and did remember **how** great things the Lord had done for his father, and also taught his people **how** great things the Lord had done for their fathers.*

What is the difference between *how* great things the Lord has done and *what* great things the Lord has done? Does D&C 93 give us any insight on this?

*I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know **how** to worship, and know **what** you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness. (D&C 93:19)*

Ether 7:4

And when Corihor was thirty and two years old he rebelled against his father, and went over and dwelt in the land of Nehor; and he begat sons and daughters, and they became exceedingly fair; wherefore Corihor drew away many people after him.

Corihor, appears to be the first (of many) of the Jaradites to rebel against his father. If the people since the time of King Benjamin had a more complete account of this record (book of Ether), at least those portions that were permitted, then it could have been known more about the person after whom the land of Nehor was named. Could the Nehor in Alma have taken on himself the name of Nehor as sort of a title, based on something he might have known from existing writings of his day? How much of Nephite culture has been shaped and influenced by the Jaradite record. We see evidence of its influence throughout the Book of Mormon.

See heading of chapter 10 and 11 for a synopsis of the Jaradites. Notice King Benjamin's speech and how after translating this record he sets up a system of judges among the people.

Ether 8:5

And it came to pass that they did give battle unto him by night.

And behold they did give battle to them by night. This passage is mentioned, not as a passing thought, but deliberately. I wonder what significance Moroni had in mind for us in being deliberate in pointing out this detail.

Ether 8:11

And now Omer was a friend to Akish; wherefore, when Jared had sent for Akish, the daughter of Jared danced before him that she pleased him, insomuch that he desired her to wife. And it came to pass that he said unto Jared: Give her unto me to wife.

Was Herodias likewise inspired by secret plans of old?

But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatever she would ask. (Matt 14:6-7)

Ether 8:23-24

Wherefore, O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should be shown unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins, and suffer not that these murderous combinations shall get above you...

Wherefore, the Lord commandeth you, when ye shall see these things come among you that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation,

The greatest way the adversary keeps us in a state of slumber is to prevent us from looking about and awakening to the awful situation we find ourselves. Hugh Nibley commented on more than one occasion that there is nothing quite as annoying as being awakened out of a deep sleep. No one really likes that. When it comes right down to it, unconsciousness is a very pleasurable thing, particularly when you awaken to what we face here. (Denver Snuffer, *Mission of Elija Reconsidered*, TDS Vol 1, pg 72)

Every one of us should walk fearfully before God, not because God is not generous, but because what He offers can turn you into a devil. The only way to be prepared and not fall is to realize the enormous peril you potentially present to the universe. Before you get in a position to enjoy the status God offers to us all, you need to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, exactly like Paul said (Philippians 2:12). (Denver Snuffer, *Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit*, TDS Vol 2, pg 238)

"What God offers can turn you into a devil." - It's what we have seen happen with watchers, or Cain, or any of these secret combinations are attempting to do. This knowledge, when abused or wrongfully applied, or in the wrong hands, is dangerous. God trusts us. It's what the parable *The Great Competition* teaches. It's not that God is threatened when such knowledge gets in the wrong hands. I think it's more of a mercy that God reserves some things and holds them back until a person has proven themselves worthy of it.

Ether 8:25

For it cometh to pass that whoso buildeth it up seeketh to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries; and it bringeth to pass the destruction of all people,

We should realize that in our day, whatever it means by secret combinations, it will be something that affects all nations. As if that isn't clear enough, it's worth repeating. One important message that we are getting from the Book of Ether, specifically in the commentary by Moroni, to **us**, specifically directed to us as gentiles in our day, is to be warned about secret combinations in the last day that will seek to overthrow all nations. Why are we not talking more about this real threat in our meetings and lessons? Why is there a concerted effort to use the label "conspiracy theorist" as a negative or derisive phrase in our society today?

Bret Weinstein, *How the Magic Trick is Done* (<https://youtu.be/bz0oxlZ3xlg>)

(53:57 min) And finally, a related point is there is an assumption that when your opponent makes gains, there has been a conspiracy. Now, we have to deal with this issue of conspiracy a little carefully because it is one of those third rail issues that divides every room. But the fact is, we all know conspiracies happen. There are real conspiracies. And we all know that many allegations of conspiracy are false. The difficulty is that conspiracy is a challenge to Occam's razor which is an essential principal to figuring out what is true. Conspiracies confound Occam's razor. They game Occam's razor. But I now find myself in a very funny position which is, because I have many friends left at Evergreen on the faculty, among the students, and on the staff, I hear things about what's taking place on the campus. There's currently a conspiracy theory that involves me. And why I was successful at surviving their challenge. And I know its false. I can't necessarily convince anybody else this, but, the very fact that I'm in a position to say well that conspiracy didn't happen and that I'm one of very few people who can say for sure that that's the case, is a very powerful position to be in. Nonetheless, to hear that conspiracy theory bubbling through the campus as an explanation for why they found themselves so embarrassed, in the case of their protest against me is fascinating. So their assumption is, if you make gains against them, you have engaged in some kind of conspiracy.

We looked at some of Weinstein's observations earlier in lesson on Alma 43-52 (see note on Alma 46:1-8):

Were it the objective of this social justice movement to confront the much more difficult problems and to confront them at the full level of nuance, I would be interested in seeing those problems addressed...

So what is it that this movement is actually trying to achieve? Now remember I'm arguing that there are actually two groups embedded in one movement. One of those groups is really hoping to achieve some kind of equality... But then there's the other faction. The faction that I'm arguing is actually driving the agenda of the movement.

*(Bret Weinstein, How the Magic Trick is Done, starting at 29:09 min,
<https://youtu.be/bz0oxlZ3xlg>)*

*"Am I alleging a conspiracy? No. What I have seen functions much more like a cult in which the purpose is only understood by the leaders, and the rest have been seduced into a carefully architected fiction. Most of the people involved in this movement earnestly believe that they are acting nobly to end oppression. Only the leaders understand that the true goal is to turn the tables of oppression. Something is seriously and dangerously amiss. At this moment in history the center does not hold. Partisan polarization and political corruption have rendered government ineffective, predatory, and often cruelly indifferent to the suffering of American citizens. Tribalism is the natural result." (Bret Weinstein Testifies to Congress on The Evergreen State College riots, Free Speech & Safe Spaces,
<https://youtu.be/uRIKJCKWla4>)*

Ether 10:5-6

Riplakish... did tax them with heavy taxes; and with the taxes he did build many spacious buildings. And he did erect him an exceedingly beautiful throne;

How much like King Noah? Noah "*built many elegant and spacious buildings... And he also built him a spacious palace and a throne in the midst thereof*" (Mosiah 11:8-9).

Earlier the brother of Jared said surely kings lead to captivity (6:23). The word I have in mind in relation to taxes is bondage. Is bondage in the form of being over taxed a form of captivity?

Ether 10:9-11

Morianton... did do justice unto the people, but not unto himself

This goes to show that even unrighteous kings can still treat their subjects justly. It can be done. (Imagine that.)

Ether 11:1-2

Many prophets. Why are there many prophets, and in our day why do we insist there can only be one?

Book of Mormon Study – Ether 12-15

Online zoom Sunday School, 29 Nov 2020

(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Faith and Hope

Ether 12:4-9

*Wherefore, whoso believeth in God might with surety **hope for a better world**, yea, even a place at the right hand of God, **which hope cometh of faith**, maketh an anchor to the souls of men, which would make them sure and steadfast, always abounding in good works, being led to glorify God. And it came to pass that Ether did prophesy great and marvelous things unto the people, which they did not believe, because they saw them not. And now, I, Moroni, would speak somewhat concerning these things; I would show unto the world that **faith is things which are hoped for and not seen**; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith. For it was by faith that Christ showed himself unto our fathers, after he had risen from the dead; and he showed not himself unto them until after they had faith in him; wherefore, it must needs be that some had faith in him, for he showed himself not unto the world. But because of the faith of men he has shown himself unto the world, and glorified the name of the Father, and prepared a way that thereby others **might be partakers of the heavenly gift**, that they might **hope for those things which they have not seen**. Wherefore, ye may also **have hope, and be partakers of the gift, if ye will but have faith**.*

Faith is things hoped for but not seen. How does this definition relate to how the word is used later in verse 32?

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Rom 8:24-25)

See also our earlier discussion on Alma 32:21.

Ether 12:10-12

Behold it was by faith that they of old were called after the holy order of God. Wherefore, by faith was the law of Moses given. But in the gift of his Son hath God prepared a more excellent way; and it is by faith that it hath been fulfilled. For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showed not himself until after their faith.

The day of salvation appears tenuously, almost as gossamer as a spider web, and if you don't lay hold of it, it is lost. Then generations can come and go while singing hymns to the pride of their ancestry and the greatness of their religion, while they all go to hell. Because when the Lord sets His hand, He sets it

exactly the same way every time. It always requires faith to come aboard and requires faith to even see it is underway. The Lord does not work except by faith. (Denver Snuffer, Lecture 7, Christ - Prototype of Saved Man, TDS Vol 2, pg 183)

Ether 12:26

And when I had said this, the Lord spake unto me, saying: Fools mock, but they shall mourn; and my grace is sufficient for the meek, that they shall take no advantage of your weakness;

See our discussion of this verse from our lesson on Nov 1st, on Morm 2:15.

Ether 12:27

And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.

Everything that we have been put through and every challenge that we have been given and every weakness that we possess, have all been given to us in a studied way to bring us, hopefully, to our knees. To bring us, hopefully, to feel the chastening hand of God, so that we, in our day, in our circumstance, can look upon it all as a gift, because it surely is. (see Denver Snuffer, Broken Heart and Contrite Spirit, TDS Vol 2, pg 239)

This verse is also a reminder that no man can be trusted, for all men are weak. Even Peter, the night of the Lord's trial, was a broken reed. If you put your weight on that, it would pierce your hand. That is what men are but not who our Lord is, for His course is straight. He does not even cast a shadow to the right or left, for His course is true. (see Denver Snuffer, Christ - Prototype of the Saved Man, TDS Vol 2, pg 207)

This is one reason I felt drawn to pen a new verse to the primary song, Follow the Prophet and submitted it to the church:

*Jesus was the Word, creator of the earth
He is the Prince of Peace, Son of the virgin birth
In the garden and the cross He suffered for our sin
By faith, grace, and repentance, I can come to Him*

*Follow the Savior, Follow the Savior, Follow the Savior, don't go astray
Follow the Savior, Follow the Savior, Follow the Savior, He knows the way
(<http://jayball.name/291/the-missing-verse/>)*

Ether 12:28

Behold, I will show unto the Gentiles their weakness, and I will show unto them that faith, hope and charity bringeth unto me—the fountain of all righteousness.

Note the order, first faith, then hope, and finally, charity. Three degrees.

Ether 12:32

*And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have ****a more excellent hope****; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared.*

Lesson on Alma 23-29, notes on Alma 28:11-12, we discussed hope used as it is here in this context as being the holy spirit of promise.

This verse includes this wonderful phrase on hope: "man must hope, or he cannot receive." What a delightful link between something within us, to something without. It is a link between our future inheritance, and a present expectation. It is a link between looking forward now, to a reality to come. We see the wonderful intangibility of a present day thought linked to what is to become concrete in the future.

"Hope," particularly as it is used here, is not well understood. We sometimes view it as a weak virtue; something of a wisp, a phantom. But in this context it is much more. It is a concrete assurance, based upon a promise or covenant.

"Hope" comes from knowing the Lord has promised a person something. As the Lord has assured us, He does not make and then break promises. When He promises something, He will deliver it. As He has said in D&C 1:38: "What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled." Anyone who receives a promise from Him has an absolute certainty. However, the promises of the Lord are invariably about the future, even if the immediate future. To Abraham, the promise of a son (Gen 18:10) preceded Isaac's birth by many years (Gen 21:1-2). To Joseph the promise of his brothers and father bowing to him (Gen 37:5-11) was given in a dream many years before he was actually sitting in power in Egypt (Gen 45:7-10). From the time of the promise to Moses that Israel would be delivered by his hand (Exo 8:10), to the time Israel was delivered out of Egypt (Exo 12:31), there were many months, trials, confrontations and difficulties. Between the promise given, and the realization of the promise, there was only "hope." It was "hope" linked to faith, but hope, nonetheless. This is the kind of "hope" spoken of here. It is not a vague notion, or whimsical possibility. It was trust and confidence springing from a promise given to a person by God. It is something far greater, more profound, more strongly felt, more firmly based than just expectancy from vague desire. (see Denver Snuffer, Eighteen Verses, pg 63-64)

Ether 12:35

*Wherefore, I know by this thing which thou hast said, that if the Gentiles have not charity, because of our weakness, that thou wilt **prove** them, and take away their talent, yea, even that which they have received, and give unto them who shall have more abundantly.*

In the Book of Abraham (3:26), a pre-earth discussion occurs between God, Christ, and a council that included Satan. The discussion concerned creating this world and sending all of us here to "prove them

herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them[.] (The word “prove” is frequently used in LDS scripture in a similar context: 2 Nephi 11:3; D&C 98:12-14; 124:55; and 132:51.) What if we envision that “testing” as necessarily destructive? After all, we are all going to die. If the process of “proving” involves establishing our limit by the circumstances we find ourselves in, our lives are a revelation to us of what we can do, what we really are, and how we respond to a process that will end, in this phase, with our descent into the grave. (see Denver Snuffer, Brigham Young's Telestial Kingdom, TDS Vol 1, pg 142)

The language in this verse has clear implication of Christ's parable of talents. We have no indication in the Book of Mormon that Moroni would have known anything about that parable. How would Moroni have been familiar with this parable?

Ether 12:39

And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things;

How does Christ speak when he speaks with man?

The Lord's public execution was designed to humiliate Him. Onlookers were expected to have contempt for anyone executed that way. He foretold the world shall rejoice (John 16:20) at His disciples' sorrow.

In contrast, His triumphant resurrection was private. He appeared only to a few (and initially, only to women). He endured public shaming, reserving His greatest triumph to quiet privacy between confidants. Our Lord is meek, and although greater (see D&C 19:18) and more intelligent than us all (see Abraham 3:19), yet He condescends to speak with us in plain humility. (Denver Snuffer, Doctrine of Christ, TDS Vol 3, pg 232)

Ether 12:41

And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. Amen.

This is a description of what Christ did before He became flesh to dwell among us. This is who He was before the world was. He went from grace to grace until He was “called the Son of God.” This is very important. Our Lord Jesus Christ advanced by degrees, from grace to grace, before He entered this world, long before He took upon Him mortal flesh here, He experienced a long period of development. He acquired through that development sufficient grace to be “called the Son of God.” And this is the prototype of the saved man!

This is what you must be or else not be saved (see LoF 7:9). These are the "first principles of the Gospel" (see King Follet discourse, TPJS pg 345) so that you can understand who it is that you worship, and how to worship Him. As long as you are here in this mortal venue, clothed in mere flesh, you have the great endowment and capacity to offer a sacrifice to God. You are in the ideal condition to develop the ability to exercise faith in Him. You couldn't do it if you were continuously living in His presence. You will not

return to His presence until you first develop that faith. Therefore, you are in an ideal, even enviable, place here.

You will be amazed at the grace it is possible to acquire, if you will only do so while in this dark place. You are here to accomplish a great deal. This creation was designed as an opportunity to sharply contrast good and evil. It is a testing or proving ground. That is exactly why you are here. This is a glorious opportunity. You wanted it. You shouted for joy at the idea of coming here to experience this veil of flesh. Therefore, you should rejoice again now, because salvation is free and offered to us all. (see Denver Snuffer, Christ - Prototype of the Saved Man, TDS Vol 2, pg 190)

What is grace?

Grace is the free, unmerited love and favor of God. It is also enabling power. Many Christians focus on the first part of this definition while ignoring the second.

Grace is a gift, but the gift must be received. Only those willing to “receive” it merit grace (see D&C 88:28-35). It is “received” in the way the Lord ordained and in no other way. There is no space between faith in Christ and behavior evidencing that faith. There is no dichotomy between “grace” and “works” because it is by one’s conduct that he or she merits grace. Christ received grace by the things He did. The manner by which each person receives grace is through keeping His commandments (see D&C 93:18-20). Grace — or power to move closer to God — is also an increase of light. Light grows only as one moves closer to it. But man has choice, and he must elect to move closer to the light. If man receives the light from Him, he receives grace, and he becomes more like Him. He will be more gracious and patient with others. How was the Lord able to accomplish all He did? In Abraham 3:14-21 the Lord explains, I am the Lord thy God, I am more intelligent than they all. He was more intelligent because He grew from grace to grace until He understood all things — because He had been through all things, He had descended below all things, and He had risen above all things — therefore He comprehends all things. Comprehension of the “doctrine of Christ” is not based on the command of a vocabulary or mastery of an argument. It is based on gathering light. Light is gathered by heed (obedience) and diligence alone.

“We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light communicated from heaven to the intellect...” (TPJS, 51; DHC, 2:8; from “The Elders of the Church in Kirtland, to Their Brethren Abroad,” Jan. 22, 1834, published in Evening and Morning Star, Feb. 1834, 135.)

By following the light one has received already, one grows in light (see D&C 50:17-24). This process leads to the “perfect day” where the light has chased away all darkness. This is how all, like Christ, can grow from grace to grace until they also receive a fullness (see D&C 93:18-20). As man keeps the commandments, he gains light and truth. Experience will be his guide. It works. If anyone finds this odd or difficult to grasp, he just needs to keep the commandments, and he will find it becoming increasingly easy to understand. Man will get light and truth as he follows the process. Do it, and see it unfold. This is the way in which Christ grew from grace to grace. This is how He received the fullness. It is also the way man can get greater grace, greater light and truth. It is the way man will obtain the fullness of light and truth. Moroni first asked Christ to give the gentiles grace (see Ether 12:36-37), but Christ could not

promise it. Therefore, Moroni asked that the gentiles seek for it; Moroni pled for the latter-day gentiles to seek grace. It is through grace one can obtain charity. It is through charity one can bless others.

Ether 13:13

And I was about to write more, but I am forbidden; but great and marvelous were the prophecies of Ether;

What is appropriate to be explained, and what is appropriate not to be explained? Why does the Book of Mormon draw lines and say, “At this point in the record, it’s not permitted for me to cover this—I was about to write this, but I’m forbidden from doing so”? Or Nephi saying, “I was about to give you the rest of this story, but the Lord said you can’t do that” (see 1 Nephi 14:24-25)?

There is a very good reason why information is withheld—there’s actually more than one, but there’s one that ought to be front and center: The more information that becomes available which instead ought to be held in sacred solitude, the more you equip the pretenders and the deceivers to improve their false act, the more equipment you hand to them with which to develop an illusion and a mirage that will deceive and take people from the Lord. But more importantly, when you get to the end of what the Lord was teaching to the Nephites, there is power in the government of God. When it got hijacked in the beginning, by the time you get down to the time of Noah, the Earth was so corrupted that Satan held a great chain over the Earth (see Moses 7:26). He had chained the earth and laughed at his accomplishment. How did he manage to get the whole Earth bound down into a great chain? He did so by imitating the government of Adam. He did so by binding together, in a false way, things that God would put together in a Godly way. Right now the struggle on this Earth is over the agency of man. Every facet—economic difficulties, governmental difficulties, business, religion, society, entertainment—it is all a struggle about destroying the agency of man. In order to prevent Zion, the adversary knows he has now but a little time. The only way to make sure that Zion does not accomplish the objective that God wants it to accomplish is by curtailing the ability of people to choose. Take away the right to say, the right to speak, the right to preach. Take away and categorize it as false or hateful or, if you can, criminalize the right to speak of Zion. If you can’t do that, then simply murder in order to prevent the agency of man. Men must/women must come willingly to the Lord. They have to voluntarily accept the invitation from Him. Compulsory means cannot be used. Everywhere you look right now, the struggle is over the agency of man. Some things are absolutely essential and needful, more than the mysteries of God. (see Denver Snuffer, Doctrine of Christ, TDS Vol 3, pg 240)

Stick of Joseph footnote Ether 13:17

The Hebrew word for “earth” is *eretz* ארץ, which can mean “earth” or “land.” This verse refers only to Yeredites; thus, “land” fits the context better than “earth.”

Ether 13:21

And he should only live to see the fulfilling of the prophecies which had been spoken concerning another people receiving the land for their inheritance; and Coriantumr

should receive a burial by them; and every soul should be destroyed save it were Coriantumr.

See Stick of Joseph footnote Mosiah 21:26:

Note that the discovery of Coriantumr shortly after the final destruction of the Yeredite nation may have taken place much earlier (perhaps around ~ 550), with only the report of that discovery being made during the days of Moshiyah the 1st. (cf Omni 1:19-21)

Ether 14:12

And it came to pass that he fought with Lib, in which Lib did smite upon his arm that he was wounded;

Alma fought with Amlici (Alma 2:29-31). Other examples (Moroni contending with Zarahemna comes to mind in Alma 44). Leaders contending with leaders tends to be a practice among these peoples. "Yea, even Amalickiah did himself come down at the head of the Lamanites." (Alma 51:12). Unlike Gentiles who's leaders stand back and far away and send their troops out to contend. Was the tradition of leaders leading their armies into battle and leaders contending in the front hand to hand with the leader of the opposition a practice among israel? DSS War Scroll. David, Saul? What about Spartains, Alexander the great, etc? It was when David stayed home from the battle that he got in trouble.

Ether 14:25

*And thus we see that the Lord did visit them in the **fulness** of his wrath, and their wickedness and abominations had prepared a way for their everlasting destruction.*

What does it mean, *fulness of his wrath*?

*And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God or they shall be swept off when the **fulness of his wrath** shall come upon them. ... And the **fulness of his wrath** cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity. ... And it is not until the **fulness of iniquity** among the children of the land that they are swept off. ... And this cometh unto you, O ye gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God, **that ye may repent and not continue in your iniquities until the fulness be come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land hath hitherto done.** (Ether 2:9-12)*

*And thus the Lord did pour out his blessings upon this land, which was choice above all other lands; and he commanded that whoso should possess the land should possess it unto the Lord, **or they should be destroyed when they were ripened in iniquity; for upon such, saith the Lord: I will pour out the fulness of my wrath.*** (Ether 9:20)

*My heart hath been weighed down with sorrow from time to time, for I have feared, lest for the hardness of your hearts, the Lord your God should come out in the **fulness of his wrath upon you**, that ye be cut off and destroyed for ever, or that a cursing*

should come upon you for the space of many generations, and ye are visited by sword and by famine, and are hated, and are led according to the will and captivity of the Devil. (Lehi to Laman and Lemuel, 2 Ne 1:17-18)

Compare this with the definition in context of what it means to *gain a fullness*.

Fullness: Completion of development. Each stage of experience has its own definition of what it means to gain a fullness. Fullness in the preexistence is not the same thing as a fullness in mortality. In turn, the fullness of mortality is not the same thing as the fullness that comes next. Each stage of development has conditions, limitations, and an agenda. Right now one is only accountable for seeking a fullness of what pertains to mortality. “We are not here to ‘get exalted.’ We are here to continue progression which began a long time before our current birth. At the moment, you are being ‘added upon’ by what you experience here (see Abraham 6:2). At some point, you will have received what you need in this sphere, and can move on to the next stage of development. When you have gained everything you need from this life, you will have received the ‘fullness’ from God. It is called the ‘fullness’ because it is all that can be obtained here. It is not possible, however, to inherit everything God ultimately offers while here.”

Jesus lived as the example, proving the pattern for redemption from the Fall as he progressed from grace to grace, until he received a fullness, or in other words, grew in light and truth until he was filled with truth and stands as the light of the world. And in this way He qualified to be called to become the Son of God, because He received not of the fullness at the first. And I, John, bear record that He received a fullness of the glory of the Father. And He received all power, both in heaven and on earth, and the glory of the Father was with Him, for he dwelt in Him.⁴ The Lord explained in the “Answer to Prayer for Covenant” that the fullness is to receive the truth of all things, and this too from me, in power, by my word and in very deed (T&C 157:53, see D&C 93:11-14).

[Stick of Joseph footnote Ether 15:11](#)

From the Hebrew root ram רם (Strong’s 7410), “to be high.” (See footnote to M’raman 3:1 [Mormon 6:2]).

Book of Mormon Study – Moroni 1-6

Online zoom Sunday School, 6 Dec 2020

(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Moroni 1:4

Wherefore, I write a few more things, contrary to that which I had supposed; for I had supposed not to have written any more; but I write a few more things, that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren, the Lamanites, in some future day, according to the will of the Lord.

Did you notice the absence of gentiles in this statement?

Moroni 2

*The words of Christ, which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, as he laid his hands upon them— And he called them by name, saying: Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; and after ye have done this ye shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it, for **thus do mine apostles**. Now Christ spake these words unto them at the time of his first appearing; and the multitude heard it not, but the **disciples** heard it; and on as many as they laid their hands, fell the Holy Ghost.*

Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands is a gift that was given to *apostles* and Nephite *disciples*. Is there any scriptural justification for the practice of the Holy Ghost being given by any other than apostles?

Power is given that by laying on of hands to give Holy Ghost. Is there a difference between authority and power?

Ordaining Priests and Teachers

Moroni 3:1

The manner which the disciples, who were called the elders of the church, ordained priests and teachers

Assume you know nothing of our current traditions or practices in the church and that you are reading these verses for the first time with no pre-conceptions of the meaning of the words used. There are three designations introduced in Moroni 3. Elders, who were the disciples, priests, and teachers. It does not indicate any more than that there were those who were ordained to such designation. There is no mention of priesthood. There is no mention of age or sex of the recipients. There is no indication that any other than the disciples do the ordaining. There is no mention that they were required to have been baptized before being ordained. They were ordained "to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end... according to the gifts and

callings of God unto men; and they ordained them by the power of the Holy Ghost, which was in them." Compare with D&C 20 where these offices and members are called "to warn, expound, exhort, and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ. (verse 59)" We visited the topic of offices in the church in our discussion of Alma 4:18.

In Moroni chapter 4 it is only the elders and the priests who administer the flesh and blood of Christ unto the church. Where in 3 Nephi, when Christ gave power to administer this ordinance, it was only given to one (3 Ne 18:5). Here, not only do all the disciples have this power, but so also do priests who have been ordained by them. The only difference we are given between the designation of priest and teacher is that teachers are not mentioned in the administration of ordinance of the flesh and blood of Christ.

In chapter 6 we read that "*elders, priests, and teachers were baptized.*" If they were baptized prior to being ordained, then this would be talking about a re-baptism. Just as Christ taught in 3 Nephi (11:23), there is a requirement for these being baptized (or re-baptized), "*and they were not baptized save they brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it.*"

Moroni reminds us that this requirement extends to all:

Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins. And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.

Verse 4 continues:

And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost

This reminds us of 2 Ne 31:13-14 and the discussion of what it means to speak with the tongue of angels.

[A Look at Priesthood Authority in The Church](#)

In 2016 my sister in law, Judy Ball, together with her siblings, published a labor of love, a history of their ancestors from Nauvoo. I took opportunity to read it and in April of last year I wrote a 6 page book review on their book, Nauvoo Period Ancestors , and sent it to Judy. From the review:

Page 416: Joseph William tells that when he was a boy working on the farm with his father he attended school "for about two years. During that time I was ordained a Deacon". Then he "worked on the farm with my father for a few summers. We worked on the Lewiston Canal to bring the water in until I was about 13 years old." This means he could have been ordained a Deacon at around 10 years old. That would have been 1874. Brigham Young's priesthood reorganization 3 years later in 1877 more clearly defined roles of the offices, but did not establish ages for the offices. William Hartley wrote an article in the Journal of Mormon History that explores the evolution of the established ages for Aaronic Priesthood.

"The earliest mention of ordained deacons is in the Painesville Telegraph on 25 October 1831. The first priests were fifty-nine-year old Joseph Smith, Sr., forty-seven-

year-old Martin Harris, and two thirty-year-olds, Hyrum Smith and Newell Knight. Among the first teachers were forty-nine-year-old Hezekiah Peck, thirty-two-year-old Christian Whitmer, thirty-year-old Hiram Page, and twenty-year-old William Smith. Titus Billings, one of the first deacons, was thirty eight. During the Church's first decade, Aaronic Priesthood offices were conferred on a few selected youths including William F. Cahoon, ordained a priest at seventeen, Don Carlos Smith, ordained to "the priesthood at 14," and Erastus and James Snow, teachers at fifteen and seventeen respectively. Such cases are few." (Journal of Mormon History Vol. 22, No. 1, 1996, pg 85 <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1026&context=mormonhistory>)

What caught my attention was that in Brigham Young's 1877 priesthood reorganization epistle it "clearly assumed that Aaronic Priesthood holders would be adults" (ibid pg 106), and that it wasn't common until a year later we begin to see an increased ordination of youths (pg 107). So Joseph William's ordination at around age 10 doesn't seem like it would have been common within the church at that time, but not taboo either.

After the 1877 priesthood reorganization the age of ordination of boys evolved. "[O]rdination was not linked to any particular age. In Hooper and West Weber Wards, leaders ordained 'all the boys above fourteen years.' 'The duties of a deacon are so easy,' a Tooele leader noted in 1881, 'that a boy of 12 or 14 years can do the duties.' Nineteenth Ward in Salt Lake City, during the 1870s and 1880s, ordained boys as young as nine and as old as nineteen. In 1887, Apostle Francis M. Lyman told Contributor readers that 'all our young men of fifteen years and upward receive some degree of the Priesthood.'" (pg 108)

By 1879 Joseph William writes, "When I became the age of 15, they ordained me an Elder."

Apparently, consideration for ordination must have been given more for maturity and circumstance than for age. "What Aaronic Priesthood ordinations [Brigham] Young's sons received, if any, are not known, but at least ten of his seventeen sons who survived childhood received Melchizedek Priesthood ordinations and endowments between the ages of eleven and seventeen, on average at 16.9 years. Apostle Wilford Woodruff, when called to a mission in 1849, ordained nine-year-old Wilford, Jr., a priest "so he could act in his father's absence to administer the Lord's supper to the family." (pg 100)

This topic led me to pull out and read my line of authority yesterday.

Rulon Ball Jr. received the Melchizedek Priesthood and was ordained an Elder on March 21, 1982, by Rulon S. Ball.

Rulon S. Ball was ordained a High Priest, April 16, 1968 by William J. Critchlow Jr.

William J. Critchlow Jr. was ordained a High Priest, December 16, 1934 by George F. Richards.

George F. Richards was ordained an Apostle, April 9, 1906 by Joseph F. Smith.

Joseph F. Smith was ordained an Apostle, July 1, 1866 by Brigham Young.

Brigham Young was ordained an Apostle Feb., 14, 1835 under the hands of the three witnesses, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris.

The three witnesses were called by revelation to choose the twelve apostles and on Feb., 14, 1835 were blessed by the laying on of hands of the presidency, Joseph Smith Jr., Sidney Rigdon and Fredrick G Williams, to ordain the twelve Apostles. (History of the Church, Vol. 2, pp. 187-188)

Joseph Smith Jr. and Oliver Cowdery received the Melchizedek Priesthood in 1829 under the hands of Peter, James and John.

Peter, James and John were ordained Apostles by the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 15:16)

From 1921 to 1945 under Heber J Grant, the decision was made to ordain brethren to offices in the priesthood in the church but not to confer the priesthood. For over two decades, ordinations were performed without conferring priesthood.

CONFERRING THE PRIESTHOOD.

To prevent disputes over this subject that may arise over the procedure presented on page 169, we draw attention to the fact that until recently, from the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith, ordinations to the Priesthood were directly to the office therein for which the recipient was chosen and appointed, in form substantially as follows:

As to the Melchizedek Priesthood—V "By authority (or in the authority) of the Holy Priesthood and by the laying on of hands, I (or wee) ordain you an Elder, (or Seventy, or High Priest, or Patriarch, or Apostle, as the case may be), in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and confer upon you all the rights, powers, keys and authority pertaining to this office and calling in the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

As to the Lesser Priesthood—"By (or in) the authority of the Holy Priesthood I (or we) lay my (or our) hands upon your head and ordain you a Deacon (or other office in the Lesser Priesthood) in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and confer upon you all the rights, powers and authority pertaining to this office and calling in the Aaronic Priesthood, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ Amen."

In reference to the form of procedure mentioned on page 169, and that set forth in this addendum as adopted by the leading authorities of the Church from the beginning, our beloved and departed President, Joseph F. Smith, when questioned concerning them, decided, as of record, "It is a distinction without a difference," and "either will do."

Persons, therefore, who have been ordained in either way hold the right to officiate in all the duties of their respective offices in the Priesthood.

*Heber J. Grant,
Anthon H. Lund,*

Charles W. Penrose,
First Presidency [1919]

During President Grant's tenure, ordination could be made to office without conferring priesthood, it being the view that ordination to office was enough. The issue had been controversial for two decades before President Grant decided the matter. Apostle Rudger Clawson wanted it resolved in 1902, when he brought it up for discussion among the First Presidency and Twelve.

President McKay changed the practice to confer priesthood first, then ordain to an office. The changes raise a question of whether, during the practices of that time period, a man was ordained to an office in the church without having priesthood conferred upon him; or instead if although ordained to an office without conferring the priesthood he nevertheless was granted priesthood. It was a matter of controversy before being settled. Most Mormons today are unaware the controversy ever existed. Now the view is generally entertained in the church that what happened in whatever form it happened was sufficient. It was a "distinction without a difference" and "either will do." (Denver Snuffer, Passing the Heavenly Gift, pg 309-311)

Now I'm curious to know when William J. Critchlow Jr. was ordained Elder (& priesthood conferred)? Researching the dates it looks like if he was ordained an Elder before age 29, he had priesthood conferred, and my line would not be broken by the decade's long interruption in priesthood conferral.

When Kelsey had moved in with us over 2 years ago, and Fredrick was still living here with us, I started focused attempt to hold Family Home Evenings. We started by opening up the Book of Mormon. One of the first lessons was a look at the Testimony of the Three Witnesses from the front material.

From my notes on this lesson we took note that 1838 was a terrible year for Joseph Smith.

Oliver Cowdery was not alone in forsaking Mormonism and Joseph Smith in 1838. Many of the most prominent members and leaders of the church likewise abandoned Joseph that year.

David Whitmer, another of the Three Witnesses, resigned his membership in 1838, but was not formally excommunicated. His brother John Whitmer, the church historian, was excommunicated and took the history with him, refusing to return it to Joseph.

On July 4, 1838 Sidney Rigdon delivered the infamous "Salt Sermon," warning that dissenters were worthy of being "trodden, like salt that lost its savor" under the feet of the saints. Because of the talk, former close friends and church leaders Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, W.W. Phelps and Lyman E. Johnson were warned to leave Far West or face "a fatal calamity." They became enemies of Joseph. Mormons were in turmoil. In response to the threats against these men, all but Phelps fled Far West.

Rigdon's Salt Sermon did not just threaten disaffected Mormons. He also threatened a "war of extermination" against the non-Mormons of Missouri if they did not stop annoying the Mormons. The threats ignited anti-Mormon opposition. Many of the

disaffected Mormons changed sides and joined the Missouri mobs attacking Mormon settlements. These former leaders used their credibility as insiders to incite greater anger and hostility toward the church. The animosities soon turned into armed conflict and arson.

Many of these former Mormon leaders signed affidavits accusing Joseph Smith and his church organization of criminal and moral wrongdoing. Thomas Marsh, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, signed an affidavit on October 24, 1838 condemning and blaming Joseph for causing all the violence. The Marsh allegations were endorsed by a second affidavit from fellow apostle Orson Hyde.

In calmer days, both Marsh and Hyde would recant their sworn affidavits. But in 1838 their statements were thought to be entirely truthful, and provided justification for the Missouri political leaders, militia and general population to see Joseph Smith and Mormons as a clear and present danger to them and their property.

While Avard was acting in the role of a surgeon, the battle of Crooked River was fought on October 24, 1838. The Extermination Order was issued immediately after, on October 27, 1838. Three days later, October 30, 1838 at Haun's Mill, the Missouri Militia, led by Colonel William Jennings, Sheriff of Livingston County, massacred a group of Mormons. Some even after they surrendered. None of the Missouri Militia were killed. The Mormon dead totaled at least 17, including a 78 year-old Revolutionary War veteran, whose body was decapitated and dismembered after he had surrendered, and two boys, ages 9 and 10.

Joseph Smith was tricked by George Hinkle into surrendering at the city of Far West while it was under siege. He thought he was going to meet with Missouri Militia leaders to negotiate peace. Hinkle lied to Joseph and brought him and other leaders to the militia, to be immediately arrested for treason.

On November 1st Joseph was sentenced to death "at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning in a public square at Far West." Militia leader Donaphin refused to carry out the order, and Joseph's life was spared.

Joseph Smith wrote several documents while imprisoned in Missouri. Specific dissidents are named and their treachery explained in those documents.

Joseph wrote about the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon (David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris) along with William McLellin, John Whitmer, Thomas Marsh and Orson Hyde. All of these were identified in a condemnation written by Joseph in Liberty Jail. (see JSP Documents Vol. 6, pp. 307-308.)

Joseph was not fooled by these men. He recognized they were traitors and liars. But he revealed to his wife his own spirit of forgiveness about them. Writing from jail to his wife, after 5 months and 5 days of imprisonment, Joseph counseled Emma "neither harbor [sic] a spirit of revenge." (JSP, Documents Vol. 6, p. 405.) Joseph's advice to his wife contrasts sharply with the revealed word from the Lord to Joseph.

Early in 1839, after nearly a half-year of imprisonment, Joseph Smith wrote a letter from Liberty Jail to the saints. The letter included several revelations. In one the

Lord said those men who bore false witness against Joseph “shall not have right to the priesthood nor their posterity after them from generation to generation[.]” Even as late as the 1830s it was possible for men to so offend God that He will curse both them and their posterity from any right to the priesthood.

Such a heavy cursing raises two questions: First, upon whom was this curse imposed? Second, what did they do to merit such a heavy burden?

The probable candidates who earned this cursing are those Joseph identified in his letters describing the lies and false testimony against him. They were: George Hinkle, John Corrill, Reed Peck, Sampson Avard, William McLellin, John Whitmer, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, Thomas Marsh, Orson Hyde and WW Phelps. Each of these men and their wrongdoings are mentioned by Joseph Smith in his correspondence from jail in Missouri.

The three witnesses to the Book of Mormon are in almost every priesthood line of authority throughout Mormonism. Think of the irony of that for a moment. They were cursed and “shall not have right to the priesthood nor their posterity after them from generation to generation” yet Mormons point to them as the source through which the priesthood authority has descended until today.

(<http://denversnuffer.com/2018/01/cursed-denied-priesthood/>)

On the topic of priesthood authority, the Roman Catholic Church and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints advance mutually incompatible propositions. If the Catholics have retained priesthood, there was no reason to restore it. If the Mormons had it restored to them, then it needed to return because the Catholics lost it. Catholic claims to priesthood are rejected by Mormons because we understand priesthood authority is not immutable, and it can be lost. If priesthood cannot be lost, then the Catholic claims are justified. If Mormon claims are correct, it is necessary for priesthood authority to recognize it can be lost by apostasy from the truth. (Denver Snuffer, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, pg 319)

Briefly, Donatus was of the view that personal virtue was needed for one holding a priestly ordination to remain with authority. He believed his presiding Bishop who fled persecution and turned over his sacred writings to be burned, forsaking his flock and his faith, was unworthy to return to office once the persecution ended. Donatus was himself true to the faith and crippled by the torture inflicted upon him. Ultimately, the Catholic Church determined Donatus' teachings were heretical, and personal worthiness was not required. Augustine would rail against this "Donatist Heresy" because the human condition was inherently flawed, and ordination could not change that. Therefore, reasoned Augustine, for any person to hold authority, the authority must be held by a flawed man. As a result, personal worthiness became irrelevant. Good reasoning, to be sure. But profoundly false doctrine. (Denver Snuffer, *Eighteen Verses*, pg 242-243)

Unless and until superior priesthood authority withdraws permission to exercise priestly functions, a legitimately ordained holder of the priesthood may continue to perform valid priesthood ordinances—however unrighteous he may personally be, however dead to spiritual promptings, and however unlikely it may be that he will ever actually exercise his priesthood. [Ftnt: The ancient Christian church faced this

problem in the form of the Donatist schism, which was finally declared heretical in ad 405. The Donatists held that unrighteousness in a bishop or priest invalidated any and all ordinances that he might have performed. However, the Synod of Arles determined in ad 314 that the validity of baptisms and ordinations and the like did not depend upon the worthiness or merit of the officiator. (On the Donatists and the related Novatianist and Meletian movements, see David Christie-Murray, A History of Heresy [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989], 96–97.) Granted, the Christian church at this period was essentially apostate, but Latter-day Saints take basically the same position, and for good reason. If serious sin, as such, invalidated priesthood ordinances, we could never know whose marriage was legal, or who was really a member of the church. Did the man who ordained you to the priesthood have a secret, unrepented sin? Then your ordination is invalid. Your mission was illegitimate, any converts you baptized are actually nonmembers, and you are living in adultery since you should never have been admitted to the temple. Any of your converts who served missions and baptized are similarly fraudulent, and the consequences ripple onward and outward in utterly unforeseeable ways. How could we ever be sure of anything?] (Peterson, Daniel C. Authority in the Book of Mosiah. Provo: FARMS Review, Vol 18, 1, 2006, p. 164-165.)

Now, I've pointed out some challenging things that gives rise to question our traditional view of priesthood in the church. I don't do this to make you question your testimony, but so that you understand there can be challenging things with church history. Many have left the church when they discover some challenging things with church history. This need not be the case. Better you hear it from me in this setting than to be confronted with it and surprised later from less trustworthy sources with intentions to lead you away.

There was a statement attributed to Joseph Smith, often repeated, "I have set up the Kingdom, no more to be thrown down forever nor never to be given to another people." (The comment comes from Dimick B. Huntington in 1878, thirty five years after it was supposed to have been said by Joseph). If the statement was accurately reported, the statement may not mean what we have come to claim. Moses was removed, and his priesthood with him, but Israel remained nonetheless "chosen." They were not "thrown down," nor was the Lord's work done by another people. They remained the Lord's people in a limited, condemned state. The church's preferred interpretation presumes the statement is accurate, and means we suffer from no such failing. But our interpretation contradicts the Lord's prophecy about the inevitable rejection of the fullness by the gentiles (3 Ne 16:10) as well as many other passages of the Book of Mormon that we have discussed in these lessons.

Each person should answer the question for themselves about how the Latter-day Saints' current standing before the Lord seems to them. Even if you give the most optimistic assessment of the restoration and current condition of the church, it can do nothing for the individual Latter-day Saint. We must all find salvation for ourselves. Each person must get their own covenant, their own promise of election directly from God, or find themselves departing this life uncertain of their eternal state. When the promise of salvation is given by the Lord directly to an individual, he can know for certain his standing. It appears from the explanation given in scripture that we must choose between relying on the

arm of flesh and promises given by men, and the work do God spoken directly to us (see e.g. 2 Ne 28:31-32). (see Denver Snuffer, *Passing the Heavenly Gift*, pg 304-305)

You look at Caiaphas prophesying that it is better that one man should perish than that the people should be destroyed, which he spoke not of himself but because the Spirit moved upon him to speak those words. That's confirmed in the gospels in Acts. That's confirmed. What that is saying, is that God is capable of using the guy who in his corruption intended to say, we have to kill Jesus because he's going to disrupt our culture, when others hearing that statement said, of course, Christ is going to die to redeem his people from their sins because he is the offering that all of those rites under the Law of Moses pointed forward to, and so he will be the offering of sin, so that the people are not lost. It doesn't have anything to do with preserving the Jewish hierarchy, the Sanhedrin, and the high priest in Jerusalem, it had to do with redeeming mankind. (Denver Snuffer, *Cursed - Denied Priesthood* transcription, pg 13)

The focus of attention on priesthood really does distort the whole picture. All of the miraculous things that Melchizedek accomplished – quenching the violence of fire, closing the mouths of lions, causing rivers to run out of their course – all of those things were accomplished by Melchizedek without the priesthood. When Paul goes through the list of things that got accomplished by faith he's talking about the power of faith; he's not talking about priesthood, or ordination, or office, or authority. The fact is that most of what we think belongs to the franchise called "priesthood" really should be viewed as the evidence or the absence of faith. Priesthood has a really limited bundle of rights and responsibilities that, at its most basic level, involves baptism and blessing the sacrament. At its most basic level. (Denver Snuffer, *Cursed - Denied Priesthood* transcription, pg 14-15)

Moroni 3:4

And after this manner did they ordain priests and teachers, according to the gifts and callings of God unto men; and they ordained them by the power of the Holy Ghost, which was in them.

Power of the Holy Ghost: Cross reference to 3 Ne 19:8-18

Moroni 4:2

And they did kneel down with the church

Compare:

And the elder or priest shall administer it; and after this manner shall he administer it—he shall kneel with the church and call upon the Father in solemn prayer (D&C 20:76)

If the practice of kneeling is plainly given in scripture, why do we not kneel when we do the sacrament today? Could the forsaking of this practice be considered a change to a holy ordinance? (see Isa 24:5)

Moroni 5

In 3 Ne 8:8 we read where Christ had the disciples administer the wine to the multitude. There is no mention of the blessing pronounced upon the wine. Here Moroni clarifies that it was blessed and provide us the words of His blessing.

Moroni 6:7-8

And they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them; and whoso was found to commit iniquity, and three witnesses of the church did condemn them before the elders, and if they repented not, and confessed not, their names were blotted out, and they were not numbered among the people of Christ. But as oft as they repented and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven.

We discussed church discipline in our study of Mosiah 26:21-39

As often as they repented they were forgiven. One profound example that comes to mind is Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. History is filled with all of the foibles of mankind's weakness. The amazing thing to me is that the closer I've looked at Joseph Smith the more he stands up to scrutiny. He had one enormous flaw. He tended to think that everyone has the same heart he has. Everyone was just as good and decent and penitent as he was. Joseph had liars lying to him and he accepted as though they were telling him the truth and he honored them as though they were telling the truth but they weren't, time and time again. (see Denver Snuffer, *The Restoration's Shattered Promises and Great Hope*, pg 24)

Moroni 6:9

And their meetings were conducted by the church after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach, or to exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done.

Compare with this counsel from modern revelation:

But notwithstanding those things which are written, it always has been given to the elders of my church from the beginning, and ever shall be, to conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit. (D&C 46:2)

In March I wrote on my blog:

When the standard curriculum of church meetings and conferences does not go deeper than basic milk, and my craving for deeper life sustaining meat is filled by a personal study, how do I avoid the natural tendency to become prideful because I think I now know more than others? Joseph Smith eluded to this very dilemma in his letter to the church from Liberty Jail (words that belong somewhere between verse 25 and 26 of our Doctrine and Covenants section 121):

"How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations — too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of

*God, according to the purposes of His will, from before the foundation of the world! We are called to hold the keys of the mysteries of those things that have been kept hid from the foundation of the world until now. Some have tasted a little of these things, many of which are to be poured down from heaven upon the heads of babes; yea, upon the weak, obscure and despised ones of the earth. **Therefore we beseech of you, brethren, that you bear with those who do not feel themselves more worthy than yourselves, while we exhort one another to a reformation with one and all both old and young, teachers and taught, both high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female; let honesty and sobriety, and candor, and solemnity, and virtue, and pureness, and meekness, and simplicity crown our heads in every place and in fine, become as little children, without malice, guile or hypocrisy.***” (TPJS, p 137, emphasis mine)

In the end, when it comes to receiving light and truth from God, I don't believe education is of any real advantage. Humility is the only real, great advantage that any soul ever possesses. On this point, I have to admit, I don't feel in possession of any great advantage.

Book of Mormon Study – Moroni 7-9

Online zoom Sunday School, 13 Dec 2020

(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Real Intent

Moroni 7:6-9

for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing.

The Book of Mormon uniquely uses the term “real intent.” “Real intent” is required for acceptable prayer: “it [is] counted evil unto a man if he shall pray and not with real intent of heart.” (verse 9) And, to obtain the gift of the holy ghost, real intent is mandatory: “I know that if ye shall follow the Son with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ by baptism — yea, by following your Lord and Savior down into the water according to his word — behold, then shall ye receive the holy ghost.” (2 Ne 31:13)

Repentance is also dependent upon “real intent” to obtain forgiveness: “But as oft as they repented and sought forgiveness with real intent, they were forgiven.” (Moroni 6:8)

The best description of “real intent” comes from the resurrected Nephi (church tradition calls him Moroni*), who appeared to Joseph Smith and revealed the existence of a buried record. After informing Joseph of the plates and departing, Nephi returned and after repeating the same message again, he added this: “a caution to me, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father’s family) to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbid me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive but that of building his kingdom, otherwise I could not get them.”

This is Joseph Smith’s best explanation of “real intent.” He got it from an angel.

Christ continually alluded to “real intent” as He explained His ministry: When praying for those who believed in and would follow Him: “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” (John 17:20-21)

When answering a question about His Father, Christ explained: “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him... he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.” (John 14:7-10)

When praying and suffering in Gethsemene, He acknowledged His submission to the Father's will: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt 26:39)

When He defined who He was to the Nephites, His identity was tied directly to submission to the Father: "I have drank out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning." (3 Ne 11:11)

The tendency to seek our own will is evil. It is also evil to feign we cooperate with heaven, when our real desire is to get something from heaven. "Real intent" involves the authentic, complete submission to the will of Heaven because that has become your sole objective. Not to get a great reward. Not to negotiate some blessing here and now. Not to become great in the eyes of Heaven. Just to have no other object in mind than to glorify God. It is the intent to not be influenced by any other motive but building His kingdom.

Service to God mustn't be done for another desire or motive, or it is not "real intent" and is accounted as evil.

God's will should be good enough to justify seeking to do it. In the beginning it was not good enough to keep Adam and Eve awaiting the command to partake of knowledge of good and evil. Instead they acted in pursuit of something desirable to benefit them, even though it was not yet God's will for them. They acted apart from God's will. They transgressed because they rebelled.

Christ was the opposite of our first mortal parents. He acted only on His Parent's will. He acted with "real intent" in all He said, did and thought.

[Stick of Joseph footnote Moroni 7:6](#)

As we read in the Mishnah: "... all are the same, the one who offers much and the one who offers little, on condition that a man will direct his intention to Heaven" (m.Menachot 13:11).

[Stick of Joseph footnote Moroni 7:8](#)

As we read in the Talmud: "... all the charity and kindness done by the heathen is counted to them as sin, because they only do it to magnify themselves" (b.Baba Batra 10b).

[Moroni 7:12-13](#)

Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually. But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.

From Hugh Nibley:

The situation is plainly stated in Moroni 7:12 when he talks about inviteth and enticeth. Here you have them balanced. Moroni is the most instructive book in the Book of Mormon. He tells us that Satan is always inviting and enticing us in one direction. But at the same time the Lord is doing exactly the same thing; he is inviting and enticing us in the opposite direction. Who decides which direction you go in? Well, you do. The enticing and inviting are equally balanced. We allow Satan, our common enemy, [to tempt us]. Does he make himself overpoweringly persuasive so that you can't possibly resist him? In that case you haven't sinned. He's not given that power; you are given the power to resist. He can only deceive. All the power you give him, as the Book of Mormon tells us, is by deception. If you want to follow, that's why you'll do it—that's all there is to it. It's up to you to decide. We are being pulled equally in two directions. Which orbit will you be drawn into? The one you prefer.

This is psychologically sound, too. Every moment of the day the mind must pick out and focus on one particular thing. All the rest becomes background. Who decides what the mind focuses on? You select it and it's up to you. The things you wish to focus on and dwell on are the things which you choose. Talk about this life becoming a time of probation! The choices you make every minute announce where your preferences are. They make clear where you stand, what your values are, and everything else. You give yourself away every hour of the day. It's marvelous because it goes on right to the end. As Nephi tells us, God prolongs our lives so we will have more chance to repent. That's the great blessing of it. You have to make a choice. It's not just the "two ways." The ancients used to talk about the "two ways." But the way of light and the way of darkness are before us at all times. You have the choice of the one or the other, and there is no middle way because they lead in opposite directions. As Heraclitus said, "The up road and the down road are one." They lead in opposite directions. Being on the up road depends on the way you are facing, whether you are doing up or whether you are going down. To be righteous is to be facing up. You may be right at the bottom of the road and a miserable rat. To be lost, to be wicked is to be facing down, no matter how high you may be. (Hugh Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 2, BYU 1988-1990, pg 201)

Moroni 7:25

Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing; and thus it was until the coming of Christ.

And thus it was that man began to exercise faith in Christ. How does this line up with what is taught in Lecture of Faith 2:

Adam thus being made acquainted with God, communicated the knowledge which he had unto his posterity... Which laid the foundation for the exercise of their faith, (LoF 2:31)

Here's my summary of this line of thought from Lecture 2:

First, in the garden Adam had first-hand knowledge of God. He conversed with him face to face, was permitted to stand in his presence, and received instruction from Him. (Gen 2:15-17,19-20)

Second, we see that though man did transgress, his transgression did not deprive him of the previous knowledge he had. Though he was cast out from the garden of Eden, his knowledge of the existence of God was not lost, neither did God cease to manifest his will unto him. (Gen 3:8-10, 16-24)

Third, Adam communicated the knowledge which he had unto his posterity, and by this means the idea of the existence of God was first communicated to mankind. This laid the foundation for the exercise of their faith, through which they could obtain a knowledge of God's character and also of his glory. (Gen 4:1-2, 25-26, and ch 5)

This is how, in the first instance*, God became an object of faith for man (as the only being in whom faith could center for life and salvation). Also we see from this that man's testimony of God is based upon this foundation, which excited the enquiry and diligent search of the ancient saints, to seek after and obtain a knowledge of the glory of God. It was human testimony, and human testimony only, that excited this enquiry. It was the credence they gave to the testimony of their fathers that aroused their minds to enquire after the knowledge of God.

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom 10:14-15)

* Not meaning the evidences that are manifested by the works of creation. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: even his eternal power and Godhead." (Rom 1:20) I mean the evidences by which the first thoughts were suggested to the minds of men that there was a God who created all things.

Notice that it is through human testimony only that excites this enquiry in the first instance:

*We have now clearly set forth how it is, and how it was, that God became an object of faith for rational beings; and also, upon what foundation the testimony was based, which excited the enquiry and diligent search of the ancient saints, to seek after and obtain a knowledge of the glory of God: and we have seen that **it was human testimony, and human testimony only, that excited this enquiry, in the first instance in their minds...** (LoF 2: 56)*

Joseph Smith, in this Lectures on Faith, is discussing how in the first instance God *became an object of faith* for man. Moroni is talking about how man *began to exercise faith* in God. Notice that in addition to "every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God", Moroni says that men began to exercise faith in Christ "by the ministering of angels". Joseph Smith has given us this further clarification in Doctrine and Covenants:

*...there are no angels who minister to this earth but **those who do belong** or have belonged to it. (D&C 130:5)*

Angels can me mortal. How can a mortal become an angel? Might it involve speaking with the tongue of angels as Nephi talks about in 2 Ne 31:13? In the remarks about human testimony above, Joseph

referenced Rom 10:14-15. It's worth reflecting on that verse and what it means "how shall they preach, except they be sent?"

Lecture 2 concludes with this profound statement:

*we have seen that it was human testimony, and human testimony only, that excited this enquiry, in the first instance in their minds—it was the credence they gave to the testimony of their fathers—**this testimony having aroused their minds to enquire after the knowledge of God, the enquiry frequently terminated, indeed, always terminated, when rightly pursued, in the most glorious discoveries, and eternal certainty.***

Moroni 7:30

For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness.

I was impressed with this blog post from several years ago:

When I first joined the LDS Church I thought every Latter-day Saint had revelations, visitations by angels, and miracles in their lives. I thought, the Joseph Smith story was the common experience for those who were members of this Restored Church.

It took a few years before I realized that it was the exception, not the rule, that such miraculous experiences took place. I learned that most saints were more akin to Hugh Nibley's description of his grandfather, a member of the First Presidency, who said that if he ever saw an angel he would "jump out the window."

I think there is a tendency to avoid discussing any contemporary occurrence of the miraculous in our individuals lives within the Church because of the frequent association of such things with deceivers and the deceived. In contrast to that fear, Moroni affirms that angels appear only to those with "a firm mind." (Moroni 7: 30.) How odd it is that we have this juxtaposition: On the one hand, in our day it is viewed as being evidence of a weak mind, or dubious character, and on the other Moroni asserts it is evidence of a "firm mind." One or the other has to be incorrect.

I think such things are experienced less because we talk of them less. As we talk of them less, we increase our doubts about such things. Doubt and faith cannot coincide.

So was Christ weak-minded or of "a firm mind?" Was Saul of Tarsus deceived or a deceiver, or instead a godly man who received notice from heaven? What of Joseph, Alma, Moses, Peter, Mary, Elizabeth, Agabus, and John?

Today we prefer our miracles at a distance. When we do accept the occasional miracle, we want it to be separated by culture, time and reduced to written accounts from the deceased. We think it's safer that way. Society trusts that when the miraculous has been reduced to history alone it can then safely be the stuff from

which PhD's and theologians extract the real meanings. After all, our scientific society only trusts education, certification and licensing; not revelation, visitation and ministering of angels. Well, even if that is not as it should be, it is at least as Nephi said it would be: "They deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and they say unto the people: Hearken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men. Behold, hearken ye unto my precept; if they shall say there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day he is not a God of miracles; he hath done his work." (2 Nephi 28: 5-6.) (Denver Snuffer, Jumping out a Window, 24 Feb 2010, <https://denversnuffer.com/2010/02/jumping-out-a-window/>)

To seek miracles or not?

Joseph Smith said "Because faith is wanting, the fruits are. No man since the world was had faith without having something along with it... A man who has none of the gifts has no faith" (TPJS pg 270) Should we seek gifts? Is this the same as seeking signs?

The key here is to seek *faith* - or in other words signs *follow* them that believe (D&C 63:9). Not the other way around.

During the early Kirtland era when there were a lot of false spirits that wound up creating a lot of mischief, the people were really wanting to have these miraculous signs to be given. Faith does not come from signs. It's actually impossible that as a consequence of the sign, for you to now have faith. It doesn't work that way. That's one of the reasons why Christ, when He did something miraculous like healing someone who was a leper or healing someone who was lame, He would admonish them, "Don't tell anyone about this." Because if the person who underwent this miraculous event went out and talked it up, then the people who heard that would be damaged in their ability to have faith. Because they now had a sign. And if what you do is run after signs, then you go from sign to sign, and you never develop the required faith.

By studying the scriptures and plumbing the depths of the message that we have in the scripture record that's in front of us, you can arrive at a point in your understanding in which it really doesn't matter if an angel appears to you or not. The angel's purpose is never going to be to produce faith in you. If the angel is going to produce faith in you because of their appearance, then the angel ought not appear. Because they'll turn you into a sign seeker. On the other hand, if you have developed faith by the careful study of what we've been given in the scriptures, and the presence or absence of an angel will have no effect on your faith—you will believe; you will have confidence; your understanding reaches the same depth with or without the angels presence—then there is no reason for the angel to withhold. There is no reason for him not to appear.

Christ said to tell no one because it would attract the wrong kind of follower. It would attract the adulterers. It would attract the *sign seekers*. It would attract the wrong kind of people. Satan tempted Christ asking him for signs that were self-serving. Bread for the Lord to eat when the Lord was hungry. A show of angelic support when he would be cast off the Temple's pinnacle. At his death, the wicked demanded signs from him. Spare yourself from the crucifixion; heal yourself. Signs are by their very nature self-serving and attention grabbing, and it is just inevitable. They attract followers, and the Jews knew this and feared Christ's miracles would result in him becoming greatly popular.

*Then many of the Jews who came to Mary and had **seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him**. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What shall we do? For **this man does many miracles. If we let him alone, all men will believe on him**, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. (John 11:45-48; emphasis added)*

But these would be the wrong kind of follower. The gentiles crave that sort of thing. Gentiles who try to get a sign to follow do so because their hearts are wrong. Signs follow faith. Signs follow faith by the will of God, not of man. From the Teachings and Commandments: And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall do many wonderful works (D&C 84:65-66)

From Christian radio broadcast that I listened to a few years ago (Thu 8 Sep 2016, about 11:45am) From His Heart Ministries (FromHisHeart.org) message by pastor Jeff Schreve of First Baptist Church, Texarkana, Texas.

(transcription may not be entirely accurate, I transcribed it myself because I didn't want to pay \$2 to download)

I just don't know if he's able. I'm bringing my need before him but I don't know if he is willing. I want him to be willing and I want him to do this, but I've been asking him for weeks and months and years. And I'm not getting an answer. Why doesn't he do what he did back then? You know, that's a legit question. It's a good question. The disciples prayed, in the early parts of Acts and Acts chapter 4 after they were threatened by the Sanhedrin, "don't speak any more in the name of Jesus." They prayed and they asked the Lord to give them boldness so they could speak in the name of Jesus, and they said "Lord, grant that your servants speak with boldness and Lord stretch forth your hand to heal. And do signs and wonders and miracles in our midst." Man I think that's a great prayer. I pray that prayer, but here's the truth. You see lots of miracles, just re-pleat with miracles in the 3-1/2 years of Jesus' ministry, you see lots of miracles in the early stages of the book of acts, and then the miracles start to wane. Doesn't mean God doesn't do miracles, he still does miracles, but it wasn't quite like it was. Why is that? Because the Lord uses miracles to authenticate the message. Jesus never did a miracle for a miracle's sake. His miracles always had a meaning. And/When he did a miracle to authenticate the message. And once the message was authenticated, the need for miracles or external miracles wasn't needed near what it was. [reference Mormon 9:15-20, Moroni 7:27, 2 Nephi 28: 5-6] How do I know that? Well the apostle Paul, whom God used...

Jeff goes on to recount Paul's miracle of bringing man back to life who died falling out the window. Then had to endure a thorn in the flesh that God did not remove from Paul because God said "my grace is sufficient for you".

Then he relates powerful story of Katherine Marshall, married to Peter Marshall, Chaplain of the senate in the 40's in America. From her book, *Beyond Ourselves* she relates her story. In 1942-1943 she became ill with a lung infection for 6 months. Prayed for God to heal her and nothing was happening. One afternoon she read the story of a missionary who had been an invalid for 8 years. Constantly this missionary prayed that God would make her well that she might do his work. Finally she was worn out with her futile petition and she prayed this prayer, "Alright. I give up. If you want me to be an invalid,

that's your business. Anyway, I want you even more than I want my health. You decide Lord." And in 2 weeks the woman was out of bed and was completely well. Kathrine Marshall said that spoke to her heart. So Kathrine spoke a similar prayer. Tears began to flow. She said, "I had no faith as I understood faith. I expected nothing and the gift of my sick self was made with no trace of graciousness." She just let it out there. "God if this is what you want, if this is your will for me, alright, Lord." It was what she titled the prayer of relinquishment. The result was as if she had touched a button that opened the windows of heaven. As if some dynamo of heavenly power began flowing within a few hours I experienced the presence of the living Christ in a way that wiped away any doubt and revolutionized my life and from that moment my recovery began. She goes on to say this, "through this incident God was trying to teach me something important about prayer. A demanding spirit with self will as it's rudder blocks prayer. God refuses to violate our free will. And unless free will is voluntarily given up God cannot move to answer that prayer."

Moroni 7:40

And again, my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you concerning hope. How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have hope?

Hope. We've talked about this. Faith and hope work together. They seem to build on each other in steps of degrees as we progress.

Moroni 7:46-47

President Uchtdorf wrote a First Presidency message on these verses in 2016. At the time I was home teacher to the bishop. I posted my home teaching message on my blog:

I was reading the First Presidency Message for September [2016] preparing for my Home teaching lesson this month. Something about it made me read it several times before I could put my finger on what befogged me about it...

Uchtdorf's message implies that feeling compassion and love for others and declaring our love for God is what entails charity, the pure love of Christ (referencing Moroni 7:46-47), and then asks what do we do after that?

I believe that the charity Moroni is speaking of is more than a declaration of our love for God. It's more than our feelings of compassion and love for others. When Moroni implores for us to "pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that we may be filled with this love" (v 48), he is telling us that this is a love that is bestowed upon true followers of Christ that they may become "sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him." In other words, this is a gift bestowed by God, not a simple declaration from our mouth that we possess it.

Moroni teaches us that our obligation to God is to exercise faith (v 37-39), that we may obtain a hope in Christ (v 40-43), so that we may become possessors of charity, a pure love of Christ (v 44-48), a fruit sweet and who's beauty and whiteness exceeds the whiteness of the driven snow (1 Ne 8:11; 11:8) which is the greatest of the gifts of God (1 Ne 15:36). Moroni's emphasis is on meekness (v 39, 43-44) which does not

assume we are already in possession of something we should be prayerfully seeking with all the energy of our hearts. (Jay's blog, After Love, Then What?, 8 Sep 2016, <http://jayball.name/198/after-love-then-what/>)

Moroni 8:2

My beloved son, Moroni, I rejoice exceedingly that your Lord Jesus Christ hath been mindful of you, and hath called you to his ministry, and to his holy work.

What does it mean to be called to the ministry by Christ? We make the assumption that when a bishop calls someone as the Ward Mission Leader that this person has now been called to the ministry by Christ. Is this the same thing that Mormon is talking about here in reference to his son Moroni? Can it have something to do with speaking with the tongue of angels as Nephi mentions in 2 Ne 31:13?

Moroni 8:8

the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin; wherefore the curse of Adam is taken from them in me, that it hath no power over them;

Jacob 6:6 why will ye die?

Stick of Joseph footnote Moroni 8:8

law of circumcision: The seventh rule of Hillel tells us that a passage must be understood in context, and the fifth rule of Hillel tells us that general statements and specific statements must be understood in context of one another. The general subject of this section of text deals with the principle that children below the age of accountability are not culpable to Elohim in regards to Torah observance. Moreover the "law of circumcision" is incumbent, not upon an infant, but upon a parent. "Wherefore, little children...are not capable of committing sin. Wherefore, the curse of Adam is taken away from them in me, that it has no power over them." The "law of circumcision" is given as a specific example of this principle. In other words, a child below the age of accountability is not culpable to Elohim in regards to the law of circumcision.

Moroni 8:11

Behold, baptism is unto repentance to the fulfilling the commandments unto the remission of sins.

John's baptism was called "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." (Mark 1:4, NIV).

"Peter replied, 'Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.'" (Acts 2:38 NLT)

Evangelical Christians teach that baptism is an important step of obedience in the believer's life, yet only an acknowledgment of the salvation experience already accomplished - that baptism itself has no power to cleanse or save from sin. In defense of this teaching, Moroni, Mark, and Luke, do not say that baptism

has power to cleanse or save from sin. But the scriptures do clearly teach that baptism is a requirement "unto repentance to the fulfilling the commandments unto the remission of sins."

That there has risen a belief that little children need baptism gives evidence that the original reason for baptism is founded in a belief that it is a requirement for salvation.

Mormon describe the practice of baptizing little children as a "sole mockery" (v 9) and "awful wickedness" (v 19).

The evangelical Christian argument against baptism being required is similar to what we discussed last week in the necessity for virtue in authority. The need for a person to live virtuously or be worthy of office in order to exercise priesthood or claim authority from God. Both are an argument against the need to live virtuously. We want to excuse the necessity... Because we all make mistakes, everyone is flawed, God loves us anyway, so keep your priesthood, it doesn't matter to live virtuously to have priesthood. It doesn't matter if you don't live virtuously in order to be saved. It's a similar train of thought, and it is profoundly false doctrine.

Moroni 8:25

And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling the commandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins;

Contrary to what Evangelical Christianity teaches, it is "the fulfilling the commandments [that] bringeth remission of sins".

Moroni 8:28

Pray for them, my son, that repentance may come unto them. But behold, I fear lest the Spirit hath ceased striving with them;

We discussed this in earlier lessons. See lesson on Mosiah 1-3 under heading "God Sustains Us" and lesson on Alma 23-29 under heading "Wicked Destroy Wicked and Righteous ". It comes up again here. (also again 6 verses later in :4).

Moroni 9:6

And now, my beloved son, notwithstanding their hardness, let us labor diligently; for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay, that we may conquer the enemy of all righteousness, and rest our souls in the kingdom of God.

Despite that the spirit has ceased striving with them, despite they are lost and fallen and their case is hopeless. Despite that my prayers for them are without faith (see Morm 3:12). This is a message that comes up in the hymn Press Forward Saints first and last verse.

Moroni 9:9

For behold, many of the daughters of the Lamanites have they taken prisoners; and after depriving them of that which was most dear and precious above all things, which is chastity and virtue

How much stress (or detractors might say, damage) has this verse caused to young women who have been raped? This is one of those verses that has given rise to much discussion and controversy. Young women in such a situation have taken this verse as something to heap additional fodder to feel worthless. As if being a victim isn't bad enough. Is the wording messed up in this verse, is our interpretation wrong?

* Moroni or Nephi? I don't have time to parse this subject into my own words, so I will reference this discussion found on MormonThink with a disclaimer that it contains anti-mormon material. Despite the traditional LDS view, I remain convinced that the true identity of the angel was actually Nephi.

<http://www.mormonthink.com/nephiweb.htm>

Book of Mormon Study – Moroni 10

Online zoom Sunday School, 20 Dec 2020

(goto.jayball.name/bofm)

Moroni 10:1

I write unto my brethren, the Lamanites

As we noted two lessons ago in Moroni chapter 1, "*I write a few more things, that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren, the Lamanites, in some future day*". The gentiles are not mentioned.

Stick of Joseph footnote Moroni 10:3

ponder it in your hearts: M'roni's admonition to "ponder" the "wisdom" of The Stick of Joseph parallels the process described by the Rebbe Zalman in the Tanya, whereby the wisdom of the Word of Elohim gestates in our understanding to produce a testimony through an awe and a love for Elohim "like burning coals, with a passion" for His Word. We read in the Tanya: "The intellect of the rational soul, which is the faculty that conceives any thing, is given the appellation of chochmah [wisdom]... when [a person] cogitates with his intellect in order to understand a thing truly and profoundly as it evolves from the concept which he has conceived in his intellect, this is called binah [understanding]. These [chochmah and binah] are the very 'father' and 'mother' which give birth to love of G-d, and awe and dread of Him. For when the intellect in the rational soul deeply contemplates and immerses itself exceedingly in the greatness of G-d, how He fills all worlds and encompasses all worlds, and in the presence of Whom everything is considered as nothing — there will be born and aroused in his mind and thought the emotion of awe for the Divine Majesty, to fear and be humble before His blessed greatness, which is without end or limit, and to have the dread of G-d in his heart. Next, his heart will glow with an intense love, like burning coals, with a passion, desire and longing, and a yearning soul, towards the greatness of the blessed Eyn Sof. This constitutes the culminating passion of the soul, of which Scripture speaks, as 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth...' and 'My soul thirsteth for G-d...' and 'My soul thirsteth for Thee...'" (Tanya; Likutei Amarim Chapter 3).

Stick of Joseph footnote Moroni 10:4

The "if...and" conditional structure seems stilted in English, which prefers "if...then." However, in Hebrew, this construction is correct. Its appearance here and elsewhere in the text indicates the Hebraic nature of the underlying original.

Moroni 10:5

And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

This verse requires us to consider the role and value of the Holy Ghost. Does it really have the capacity to reveal all truth? If so, how do we get it? It's worth taking some time to compare the simple formula for receiving light and truth by obedience to the Gospel, with the learning, wisdom, and theology of

men. Everyone is entitled to receive light and truth if they will connect with God through the spirit. Acquiring the wisdoms and theologies of men requires something different. The learning of men uses a different set of methods, employs a different vocabulary and requires men to be credentialed.

Acquiring knowledge of "all things" through the Holy Spirit is not something Latter day Saint intellectuals defend as a possibility. Only the scriptures and the prophets try to get us to see this message.

In these few words Moroni tells us the way mankind is offered wisdom from God. Through the Holy Ghost, we first receive "power," and then we acquire truth. Receiving "power," holds profound implications. Priestly authority allows ordinances to be performed, and sealings to take place, but it is the power of the Holy Ghost which ratifies the ordinances (D&C 121:37) and confirms the sealings (D&C 132:7). There is no authority of any kind (priestly or otherwise) if there is no corresponding empowerment by the Holy Ghost. The way in which the Historic Christian church resolved the Donatist controversy was wrong (see notes about this from our earlier lesson on Moroni 1-6 two weeks ago). No man's ordination to priestly authority is immutable. The restoration of the Gospel was needed because the wickedness of ancient priestly officiators resulted in forfeiture of priestly authority. And, within the ranks of those ordained in this new Dispensation, priestly authority can be and is lost when men do not continually repent and live in conformity with God's commandments.

The power of the Holy Ghost is the power of intelligence. From it comes revelation and understanding. Men's minds are quickened and they can know the truth of anything. As Joseph Smith described it:

"[T]he Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all Saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. This first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge, ..."
(DHC 3:380.)

Elsewhere Joseph said:

"No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator." (DHC 6:58)

Perhaps Joseph's greatest comment on the power of the Holy Ghost to make known all truth to a person came at the very end of his ministry. Just a few weeks prior to his death, Joseph made this comment:

"I am learned, and know more than all the world put together. The Holy Ghost does, anyhow, and He is within me, and comprehends more than all the world: and I will associate myself with Him." (DHC 6:308 and also TPJS p. 350)

By the second century the gifts of the Spirit began to wane, and the spread of Christianity came to depend upon the persuasiveness of oratory and rhetoric. Instead of obedience, argument and reasoning were expected to justify and buttress "faith" in Christianity. A Hellenized world required translation of Christianity into a different vocabulary which would fit into the learning of the Greeks.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the profound differences is to contrast the vocabulary of scripture with the vocabulary of the theologians.

From an email sent to local pastor Eli Brayley, 22 Sep 2017:

The authors of the New Testament were simple folk. Farmers, tradesmen, fishermen, merchants, tentmakers, and common men called to Divine responsibilities. The simple language they found sufficient to describe the things they saw and heard and understood included words we find in the bible like...

Faith / faithful

Hope / hopeful

Charity

Repentance / repent

Obedience / obey

Love

Compassion / compassionate

Shalt

Shalt not

Do

Will

Know

Believe

etc.

Compare this to the commonly used vocabulary of theologians (which to common folk must include some definition for their meaning to become clear)...

Forensic - to be used in a legal debate

Soteriology - the way of salvation

Cosmology - the understanding of explanation for creation or the universe.

Etymology / etymological - the origin of a word

Orthodoxy - the established or accepted doctrine

Anthropomorphism - like man in form; i.e., the attempt to rationalize the use of human elements in descriptions of God.

Ontological - an explanation or theory of the nature of existence.

etc.

Although these words were not necessary for the Primitive Church, nor used in scripture, they are crucial terms to be able to communicate in the language used to define the doctrines and creeds of Historic Christianity.

*In an article titled *What Really Happened at Nicea?*, James R. White from the Christian Research Institute (<http://www.equip.org/article/what-really-happened-at-nicea/>) makes what to me is an interesting admission as he labors to defend the Nicene Creed.*

He explains that "every time they came up with a statement that was limited solely to biblical terms" it was unclear. They invented and used new terminology because "they needed to use a term that could not be misunderstood." Meaning that they had to go outside the scriptures because the scriptures failed to say what they wanted said.

He elaborates that "they sought to clarify biblical truth." Here it seems he does not want to admit their extra-biblical creed was a departure, and struggles to claim the council was only accomplishing a limited and clarifying task.

There are emerging voices in Mormonism which cry out for development of a theology. One such effort has been undertaken by Sterling McMurrin. His book titled *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2000, is perhaps the most obvious effort to supply a theology for the faith he loved, but like Augustine, could not accept in its primitive form. His famous quip that 'you don't get books from angels and translate them by miracles; it is just that simple' underlies his skepticism of the whole revelatory process.

Just as faith originates through asking to know if the Book of Mormon is true, so also faith develops through seeking the Holy Ghosts' direction in all things. "By the power of the Holy Ghost you may know the truth of *all things* means more than merely the incipient faith to accept the Book of Mormon. It means the Holy Ghost is capable of imparting intelligence about the whole breadth and width of *all things*.

This process works. It requires obedience to unlock it. It does not require theological arguments or the vocabulary of the philosopher. In large measure, such things detract from the process. God's voice was meant to be heard by all who follow Him. But He insists upon us receiving His voice on the conditions He has established. None of us can gain it otherwise.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (John 10:1)

We cannot rob God. Nor can we pretend to any real knowledge about Him when it is gained only through theological argument and Neo-Platonic epistemology. If our hearts do not know Him, then our mind's arguments and rationalizations are meaningless.

Even those who receive angels, part the veil, and have an audience with Christ must rely on the Holy Ghost as the primary source of inspiration. There are limits to how frequently angels can visit. The veil parts only occasionally, even for those for whom it parts at all. However, the Holy Ghost can be a constant companion to anyone who seeks for it. The companionship guides, instructs, clarifies, and imparts pure knowledge to those willing to accept what is offered. (Most of the comments on this verse have been taken from Denver Snuffer, *Eighteen Verses*, chapter 14, Knowing All Truth)

Stick of Joseph footnote Moroni 10:8 references 3 Ne 29: 5-9

Yea, wo unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord, and that shall say the Lord no longer worketh by revelation, or by prophecy, or by gifts, or by tongues, or by healings, or by the power of the Holy Ghost! Yea, and wo unto him that shall say at that day, to get gain, that there can be no miracle wrought by Jesus Christ; (3 Ne 29:6-7)

Who would stand to get gain by saying such things?

Gifts

Moroni 10:8-19

Moroni sandwiches gifts in verses 8-19 between his discussion about faith. As Joseph noted (see Moroni 10:20-22 below), these things are tied together.

Moroni 10:9-10

For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom; And to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

What is the difference between teaching the word of wisdom or the word of knowledge?

Moroni 10:18

And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ.

Impressive list of gifts. Compare with list of gifts given in D&C 46:10-26 and 1 Corinthians 12:7-11.

Is there a tendency to justify not asking for a particular gift because that's simply just not my gift. To some is given to have great faith, but I don't feel like that's me. Shouldn't we desire and be praying for these gifts? Hugh Nibley spoke about how everyone desires gift to be healed when they're sick, but beyond that it seems we simply have no further interest in the other gifts.

Some have a gift for things, others of us may have to work harder at it, but it can nonetheless be ours if we ask for it and are willing to put forth the required effort.

Gifts can be used for good or bad. But the source of gifts still come from Christ. Just as God sustains us moment to moment (Mosiah 2:21) even in evil deeds, the gifts Christ gives us can be used for ill.

Moroni 10:20-22

Is this the same message, or a continuation of the same message from previous chapters (particularly 7)? He talks about gifts - brings us back to Joseph Smith's statement from last week, "*A man who has none of the gifts has no faith*". Moroni continues by talking again about faith, hope and charity. Does the repetition of this subject indicate the significance of these things? Is he telling us something new about these things that we didn't catch the first time? Are Lamanites more inclined to "get it" (since this is being addressed to them)?

Moroni 10:22

And if ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity.

If I want to solve my despair problem (or avoid the despair that will inevitably come when my world begins to unravel), then I must obtain hope - or a promise from God.

If you don't have faith, you can't be saved. Faith, hope, and charity are conditions for salvation.

Moroni 10:23

And Christ truly said unto our fathers: If ye have faith ye can do all things which are expedient unto me.

We are not given the source of this quote from Christ, though Mormon appears to be referencing this same source when he quoted it earlier in Moroni 7:33.

We know it is consistent with what Christ taught in Jerusalem:

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. (Mark 9:23)

And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matt 21:20-22)

We received similar words through Joseph Smith:

Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you; (D&C 88:64)

And then this warning is added:

And if ye ask anything that is not expedient for you, it shall turn unto your condemnation.

What IS expedient to ask for includes the gifts that Moroni has just been telling us about.

Moroni 10:24

And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth—that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you, it shall be because of unbelief.

At this point Moroni expands his audience from "*my bretheren, the Lamanites*" to now include "*all the ends of the earth*".

As used in the Book of Mormon, almost without exception **unbelief** means one does not understand and has not accepted true doctrine. (See e.g. Mos 26:3, Alm 32:28, Hel 6:34, Mor 7:37). The word unbelief means to accept false doctrine or to have an incomplete and inaccurate understanding of correct doctrine. Unbelief is often used in conjunction with losing truth, forsaking doctrine, and "dwindling." The phrase dwindling in unbelief is the Book of Mormon's way to describe moving from a state of belief, with true and complete doctrine, to a state of unbelief, where the truth has been discarded. Miracles end because men dwindle in unbelief.

Moroni 10:27

And I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God;

Suddenly (Speedily, Quickly): Surprisingly; in an unexpected way; being caught off-guard. "I declared what I was going to do, I did it, and you got caught off-guard." (See e.g., Isaiah 17:1. RE)

Moroni 10:30

...touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing.

What is the evil gift? (Stick of Joseph footnote references Isa 52:11)

Moroni 10:32-33

Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

If by the grace of God you are perfect in Christ. How do you become perfect in Christ, by His grace? And is that meant (or possible) in this life? Is this "perfection" that Moroni is talking about here, possible? When Christ says be ye therefor perfect, which is a commandment, and Joseph Smith says (in LoF 5:2):

But notwithstanding all this, he [Christ] kept the law of God and remained without sin, showing thereby that it is in the power of man to keep the law and remain also without sin. (LoF 5:2)

To suggest that it's impossible to become perfect in this life is to deny what the scriptures are telling us.

The Lord does not expect perfection from us at this point in our eternal progression. But He does expect us to become increasingly pure. Daily repentance is the pathway to purity, and purity brings power. (President Russell M. Nelson, We Can Do Better and Be Better, April 2019 General Conference)

From my journal, 20 Sep 2019:

Last night was our evening bi-weekly stake Book of Mormon class with Marcus Reed. The topic was Repentance and Forgiveness. There was some good discussion. Joseph Smith's quote "Repentance is a thing that cannot be trifled with every day. Daily transgression and daily repentance is not that which is pleasing in the sight of God." (TPJS, pg 148) was contrasted with President Nelson's recent conference talk where he admonished the saints about our need for daily repentance. One lady in the class

expressed confusion. One brother commented that he can reconcile this by accepting President Nelson's counsel over Joseph Smith's because he is the current prophet.

Perfection

The process of cooperating with God. People don't need to "accomplish something"; they only need to get their hearts right. Once their hearts are right, everything else follows in the ordinary course. In any event, life is not the time to enjoy exaltation; that comes later. Life is the time to overcome vanity, pride, and selfishness. It is the time to lose oneself. When one does that, it doesn't matter that he still has a great gulf between himself and perfection; he is, nonetheless, perfect. Submission is perfect. However, there is still a great work ahead of everyone seeking to attain exaltation. This life's agenda is very limited, even though the full effort involved will last many lifetimes. Men and women are not here to "get exalted." They are here to continue progression which began a long time before their current birth. At this moment, they are being "added upon" by what they experience here. At some point, they will have received what they need in this sphere and will be able to move on to the next stage of development. When they have gained everything they need from this life, they will have received "the fullness" from God. It is called "the fullness" because it is all that can be obtained here. It is not possible, however, to inherit everything God ultimately offers while here. For that, it will require a great work "even beyond the grave," as Joseph put it. Indeed, it isn't even possible to fully understand God while here in this life.

Therefore, I would that ye should be perfect, even as I or your Father who is in Heaven is perfect (3 Nephi 12:48). In the Matthew text, Christ unequivocally limited this to His Father (see Matthew 5:48); here, "perfection" is achieved by both Christ and His Father. Assuming the Matthew text is correct, the difference is significant. It is another confirmation that anyone who is mortal, including the Lord, stands in jeopardy every hour (see 1 Corinthians 15:30). He simply could not claim perfection while in mortality because mortality is a time of change, challenge, and temptation. After all, He was tempted while mortal, just as every human soul is tempted (see Hebrews 4:15). Though He chose to give no heed to it, He was nevertheless tempted (see D&C 20:22). While mortal, He looked to the Father in all things (see John 5:30). After concluding His time in mortality and achieving the resurrection of the dead, He was given all power in Heaven and on Earth (see Matthew 28:18). Therefore, if the Matthew text is correct and the differences are accounted for, then the admonition of Christ for one's own perfection is not just an earthly endeavor. It is an invitation to follow Him and His Father into a loftier state, as well (see Abraham 3:26), one where the final realization will come only as one is able to endure greater glory than a mortal may possess (see Moses 1:2,5). It is good to know this commandment is possible to accomplish (see 1 Nephi 3:7). It is hard to conceive of following the Son in this way. Yet it is He who pronounced it and He who has promised to share the throne of His Father with all who will come to Him (see Revelation 3:21).

"A harmonious symmetry of light, majesty, holiness, glory, and power are all around Him who is perfection. When I read the admonition to [be ye therefore] perfect, even as I or your Father who is in Heaven is perfect (3 Nephi 12:48), I can hardly grasp how that gulf between us could be bridged. I understand about the Lord's atonement. I have certainly been the beneficiary of it and will continue to be so. When I consider the infinite gulf between His and His Father's perfection, and my own imperfection, I am left completely stupefied at the idea it is even possible. Nevertheless, He gives no

command which He does not provide means to obey.... He provides the means, and His Father ordained the laws by which it can be done, and they provide us with free will and the capacity to choose, but we must choose. We must accept. We must press forward holding Their hands in order to arrive at last, after an infinitely long journey, in the courts of Heaven itself, fit to reside there. Be ye therefore perfect. And start on that this moment. For you haven't another moment to spare."

The word "perfect," as used in the New Testament, comes from the Latin Vulgate perfectus, meaning "complete, finished" and is a translation of the Greek teleios (τέλειος), which means: "having attained the end, complete, perfect, full-grown, mature, initiated into the mystic rites, the initiate, consecrated, having finished the course, etc."* and can be interpreted ritually as completing the ascent. "The word perfect (teleios) does not mean perfect digestion, perfect eyesight, perfect memory, and so on; it is a special word meaning keeping the whole law." (Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 438) "In a ritual setting, among the connotations of this word, this term refers to preparing a person to be presented before God 'in priestly action' Early Christians continued to use this word in this way in connection with their sacraments and their ordinances. Hugh Nibley saw that the meaning of the word teleios is namely 'living up to an agreement or covenant without fault: as the Father keeps the covenants he makes with us...the completely initiated who has both qualified for initiation and completed it is teleios, literally "gone all the way," fulfilling all requirements, every last provision of God's command.'" (John Welch, *The Sermon on the Mount in the Light of the Temple* (Farnham, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 118; 118n115.)

* Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), s.v. "τέλειος," 816–818. See also Strong's Concordance, G5046.