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Lesson XV. The Second Coming

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Abstract: The appearance to the Nephites—The ministry of Jesus—The second coming—Signs to precede—The coming in glory—A New Jerusalem—The coming to the Temple—The promise to the three apostles—The ancient prophets—An ensign—A marvelous work—The last dispensation—The restoration predicted—When to be restored—To whom to be restored—The records of the Nephites—Witnesses—The purpose of the book—The second coming and the restoration.

GUIDE DEPARTMENT.

Teachings of the Book of Mormon.

LESSON XV.

THE SECOND COMING.

A great multitude was assembled around the temple in the land Bountiful. A confusion of subdued voices revealed the wondering, awe-stricken state of mind of the people. Not long before this time, a miracle of darkness had prevailed over the land for three long, terrible days. The earth had trembled, rocks had been rent, the waters had rushed in and covered sinking cities, and dry land had raised itself convulsively out of the sea. It had been a time of fearful cataclysm. The crowds before the temple were discussing the marvelous changes that had taken place. They were discussing, too, the nature of one Jesus Christ. For their prophets had declared that these mighty convulsions of nature were signs of His cruel death in the home of their fathers.

And while they were thus conversing in awesome tones, a voice called suddenly to them, as it were from heaven. The voice was neither harsh nor loud, but so penetrating that it pierced them to their very souls and caused their hearts to burn. However, the multitude did not understand what the voice had said to them. A second time it called to them. Yet they did not catch the message. Again the third time the voice called. The multitude understood. Turning their eyes, as one man, they looked steadfastly toward heaven, whence the sound came. This is what the voice said to them the third time:

"Behold my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name: hear ye him."

Then there descended out of heaven a man clothed in a white robe. He came down to the multitude, and stood in the midst of them. The people were astonished; they knew not what to do, for they thought it was an angel had appeared to them. But the heavenly personage spoke to them, and declared Himself thus:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world."^a

It was, indeed, the Christ. So were fulfilled the predictions of the Nephite prophets that He should minister personally to the Nephite church. For many days He taught the people, repeating the instructions He had given to the Jews, and expounding the scriptures. He organized His church, too, and appointed apostles, and prophets, and elders, and other officers of the priesthood to look after its interests. But in a short time He left the people of Nephi. He returned to heaven whence He came; and it was understood among His people, that, after many years, when the purposes of the Lord should be accomplished, He would come again, to establish righteousness finally upon the earth.

It is this doctrine of the second

^aIII Nephi 11:1-11.

coming of the Christ that we shall examine in this lesson.

During His own ministry to the Nephites, Jesus did not leave them ignorant of the fact that He should come again to the earth. He declared, in expounding to them the meaning of the fourth chapter of Malachi, that "the great and dreadful day of the Lord should come; but that before that time Elijah should come to prepare the way."^b Then, further to explain the doctrine to the Nephites, "he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that He should come in His glory."^c This first coming was not, therefore, the glorious coming of the Lord. At another time—a second time—the Lord shall come attended with hosts of angels, in glory and in triumph.

By the time of that second coming, there shall be established a New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem shall be upon the land of the Nephites, and the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of the people.^d There shall be a temple there. And when the Lord shall come, He shall come suddenly to His temple, there to sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.^e Three of the Nephite apostles were promised that they should see the fulfilment of all these things; for Jesus said to them, "Ye shall never taste of death, but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father, unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled, according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory, with the powers of heaven."^f

But it was not only the Nephites who lived during the ministry of the Christ who knew that He should

come again the second time. All the Nephite prophets seem to have foreknown the second advent. Jacob, the brother of Nephi First, taught, that, "according to the words of the prophet, the Messiah will set Himself again the second time to recover them [the people of the Lord]; wherefore, He will manifest Himself unto them in power and great glory."^g

But the second advent is to be characterized, according to Book of Mormon teachings, by more than merely a display of power and glory. The words of the prophet Isaiah are accepted by the Mormon prophet. In the day that the Lord shall set His hand a second time to recover His people, "He shall set up an ensign for the nations," and the children of Israel shall be gathered to one place.^h Nor is that all. Nephi, to whom apparently all things were known, declared that there should be a second coming, and that at the time of that coming, the Lord "will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men."ⁱ The nature of the marvelous work, Nephi describes. And amongst other things, in that day shall the record of the Nephites come forth.^j This shall be the final dispensation—the last time that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in the power of the priesthood. "After that, the end cometh soon."^k

Thus, the Book of Mormon teaches clearly, first, that Jesus Himself declared plainly that He should come again the second time to recover His people; secondly, that the prophets before Christ taught also that Christ should come a second time; and thirdly, that in

^bIII Nephi 25:5, 6.

^cIII Nephi 26:1-3.

^dIII Nephi 20:21-22.

^eIII Nephi 24:1-3; 21:22-25.

^fIII Nephi 28:7.

^gII Nephi 6:14.

^hII Nephi 21:11-14.

ⁱII Nephi 25:17, 18.

^jII Nephi 29.

^kJacob 6:2.

the dispensation of the second coming, there should be accomplished a marvelous work and a wonder, then shall the end come.

The marvelous work and a wonder can refer to no other thing than the restoration of the Gospel. The Nephite prophets set forth plainly the fact that the world would depart from the way of the Lord and bring about a great apostasy.¹ With equal plainness they taught that in the last days the Gospel should be restored to men with all the authority belonging to it. "Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall forever remain in that awful state of blindness, which thou beholdest they are in, because of the plain and most precious parts of the Gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, whose formation thou hast seen."^m What then will the Lord do? He will manifest Himself to the world, and deliver His Gospel in clearness, simplicity, and fulness."ⁿ

When is the restoration to happen? In a day, we read in the book of Nephi, when the Nephites shall have been destroyed for their unbelief.^o In a day, says Mormon, "when it shall be said that miracles are done away."^p Is it necessary to name the year? Surely not. Four hundred years after Christ the Nephites were destroyed. From that day to this there has been no period in history that answered so completely to the simple description given by Mormon as our own modern period of progress and achievement. This age alone has found it unnecessary to have the Lord God work miracles for its welfare. So

¹I Nephi 8:20-23; II Nephi 28:1-5; Alma 45:8-14; Mor. 8:10.

^mI Nephi 13:32-36.

ⁿII Nephi 25:17, 18.

^oII Nephi 26:14-16.

^pMormon 8:26.

the Book of Mormon prophets saw our times, and predicted that in our times the Gospel should be restored.

Moreover, it was asserted that the Gospel should be restored through the medium of a man of God, named Joseph.^q One of the tasks set him should be to bring to light—out of the ground—the record of the Nephites.^r This record should be translated by the power of God and should be well attested by witnesses.^s

"These last records which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto Him, or they cannot be saved."^t

These two great events are thus bound together in the teachings of the Book of Mormon. The Christ came in the meridian of time to offer Himself as a sacrifice that man might be redeemed from the consequences of the fall. That coming was an actual coming in the flesh. The sacrifice was real. In person, Jesus ministered to the Jews. In resurrected person, He ministered to the Nephites. But this ministry, and this divine sacrifice, did not accomplish all the purposes of God. Through them man gained general salvation. As we have already learned; to gain an exaltation, man must be given the opportunity of living the Gospel of salvation. So the Gospel must be preached to every nation, kindred,

^qII Nephi 3:6-15.

^rII Nephi 27:6-9; 26:16; Mor. 8:26.

^sII Nephi 27:12; Ether 5:2-4; II Nephi 27:13-14.

^tI Nephi 13:38-40.

tongue, and people.* Since the authority of the priesthood, and the right understanding of the Gospel, were lost through wickedness and unbelief, the Gospel must be restored. Then the servants of the Lord shall go forth for the last time to cry repentance unto the world. After that, the end will come soon. For in that day—in the dispensation of the fulness of times—the Lord will come suddenly to his temple.

"But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like unto a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap."^a

OUTLINE.

The appearance to the Nephites—The ministry of Jesus—The second coming—Signs to precede—The coming in glory—A New Jerusalem—The coming to the Temple—The promise to the three apostles—The ancient prophets—An ensign—A marvelous work—The last dispensation—The restoration predicted—When to be restored—To whom to be restored—The records of the Nephites—Witnesses—The purpose of the book—The second coming and the restoration.

^aMor. 9:22.

^aIII Nephi 24:1-3.

QUESTIONS.

1. Relate the story of the appearance of Jesus to the Nephites.
2. What did Jesus do while amongst the Nephites?
3. How did Jesus explain the fourth chapter of Malachi?
4. What is the New Jerusalem?
5. Where is it to be located?
6. When is it to be established?
7. To what building will Jesus come?
8. What promise was made to the three Nephite apostles?
9. What did Jacob teach of a second coming?
10. When will the Lord set up an ensign for the nations?
11. What kind of work should be accomplished at the second coming?
12. Summarize what is taught of the second coming.
13. What is the marvelous work and a wonder?
14. What did the Nephites know of a great apostasy?
15. What did the Nephites teach of the restoration?
16. When should the restoration take place?
17. Through whom should the restoration take place?
18. What task relating to the Nephites should be given to the restorer?
19. What is the purpose of the Book of Mormon?
20. How are the restoration and the second coming bound together?

LESSON XVI.

THE JUDGMENT.

It is said that a Maya priest of old sang impressively of the end of the world. Here is a translation from the Spanish of Father Lizana, parish priest of Itzamal, who recorded the prediction in the original:

"At the close of the ages, it hath been decreed,
Shall perish and vanish each weak god of men,
And the world shall be purged with a ravening fire.

Happy the man in that terrible day,
Who bewails with contrition the sins of his life,
And meets without flinching the fiery ordeal."^a

So sang the Maya priest. But the Mayas were not the only Indian people who looked forward to a time when earthly things should come to an end. It is reported that

^aBrinton. *The Myths of the New World*, p. 256.