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Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon: Lesson 42—Christ's Ministry Continued

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Abstract: The objective of this lesson is to show that strict adherence to the Gospel Plan is necessary for eternal life.



LESSON DEPARTMENT

Theology—Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon

Lesson 42—Christ's Ministry Continued

Elder Leland H. Monson

(Text: The Book of Mormon: 3 Nephi, chapters 22-30)

For Tuesday, November 6, 1956

Objective: To show that strict adherence to the Gospel Plan is necessary for eternal life.

The Prophecies of Isaiah

JESUS spent considerable time discussing the scriptures with the Nephites. He told them to search the words of Isaiah saying, “. . . a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah” (3 Nephi 23:1). Jesus further quoted the prophecies of Isaiah, assuring the people that his kindness should not depart from Israel, that his covenant to his people should not be removed (3 Nephi 22:10), that no weapon directed against them should prosper.

Addition of Samuel the Lamanite's Prophecy

After Jesus had expounded all the scriptures unto them which they

had received, he said unto them: “. . . Behold other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not.” He said to Nephi, “. . . Bring forth the record which ye have kept.” After “. . . he cast his eyes upon them . . .” Jesus pointed out that the prophecies of Samuel the Lamanite that “. . . many saints . . . should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them . . . at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me . . .” (see 3 Nephi 23:6-9) had not been written in the record. So it was written as he commanded.

Malachi's Words Given

Jesus commanded also that they should write the words which the Father had given to Malachi. (See

3 Nephi chapters 24 and 25.) After they were written, then the Lord expounded them. These words of Malachi include the law of tithes and offerings and foretell of the coming of:

... Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord;

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse (3 Nephi 25:5-6).

The Savior told the people:

... These scriptures, which ye have not with you, the Father commanded that I should give unto you; for it was wisdom in him that they should be given unto future generations (3 Nephi 26:2).

Savior Expounds All Things From Beginning

And he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory — yea, even all things which should come upon the face of the earth, even until the elements should melt with fervent heat, and the earth should be wrapt together as a scroll, and the heavens and the earth should pass away;

And even unto the great and last day, when all people, and all kindreds, and all nations and tongues shall stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

If they be good, to the resurrection of everlasting life; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of damnation; being on a parallel, the one on the one hand and the other on the other hand, according to the mercy, and the justice, and the holiness which is in Christ, who was before the world began (3 Nephi 26:3-5).

Mormon tells us:

... there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things

which Jesus did truly teach unto the people (3 Nephi 26:6).

Jesus taught the people:

... for the space of three days; and after that he did show himself unto them oft, and did break bread oft, and bless it, and give it unto them (3 Nephi 36:13).

He wrought many mighty miracles among the Nephites and:

... he did teach and minister unto the children of the multitude of whom hath been spoken, and he did loose their tongues, and they did speak unto their fathers great and marvelous things, even greater than he had revealed unto the people; and he loosed their tongues that they could utter.

... on the morrow ... the multitude gathered themselves together, and they both saw and heard these children; yea, even babes did open their mouths and utter marvelous things; and the things which they did utter were forbidden that there should not any man write them (3 Nephi 26:14, 16).

From this time on the disciples began "... to baptize and to teach as many as did come unto them; and as many as were baptized in the name of Jesus were filled with the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 26:17).

Jesus Christ Names His Church

As the disciples were gathered together "... united in mighty prayer and fasting" (3 Nephi 27:1) after having preached to the people and baptized them, Jesus appeared in their midst and asked: "... What will ye that I shall give unto you?" (3 Nephi 27:2). Because of disputations among the people concerning the name of the Church, the disciples asked that he tell them "... the name whereby we shall call this church" (3 Nephi 27:3). Jesus' answer was direct and final:

And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel (3 Nephi 27:8).

The Gospel Defined

Jesus, then, told the Nephites he had given to them his gospel, and defined the gospel for them:

Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you — that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—

And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.

And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.

And this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words.

And no unclean thing can enter into the kingdom; therefore nothing entereth

into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my gospel; and ye know the things that ye must do in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do (3 Nephi 27:13-21).

Jesus also informed the disciples that men would be judged out of the books, but he made it known to them that “. . . all things are written by the Father; therefore out of the books which shall be written shall the world be judged” (3 Nephi 27:26). The disciples were informed by Jesus that they were to judge the Nephites, and that his joy was great, even unto fulness, because of them and the generation then alive. He pointed out to them, however, that his heart sorrowed for the people of the fourth generation:

. . . for they are led away captive by him even as was the son of perdition; for they will sell me for silver and for gold, and for that which moth doth corrupt and which thieves can break through and steal (3 Nephi 27:32).

Disciples Granted Their Desires

It was then that Jesus turned to his disciples and asked, one by one, “. . . What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?” (3 Nephi 28:1). Nine of them said: “. . . We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that

our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom" (3 Nephi 28:2). Jesus commended them and promised them that when they reached the age of seventy-two that they would find rest with him in his kingdom.

Turning to the three remaining disciples he asked: ". . . What will ye that I should do unto you, when I am gone unto the Father?" (3 Nephi 28:4). Recognizing the sorrow in their hearts ". . . for they durst not speak unto him the thing which they desired," (3 Nephi 28:5), he said:

. . . Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me.

Therefore, more blessed are ye, for 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 (3 Nephi 28:6-7).

Mormon was forbidden to name these three disciples in the record. He knew their names, however, and he had seen them and they had ministered unto him (3 Nephi 28:26). Mormon knew also that they would minister unto many others in the future, unto the Gentiles, the Jews, the scattered tribes of the house of Israel, and that they would perform a great and marvelous work among them.

After the three disciples were granted their wish, they were ". . . caught up into heaven . . ." where they ". . . saw and heard un-

speakable things." (See 3 Nephi 28:2-8, 12, 36.) Later when they taught the people the gospel and were persecuted for it, the prisons could not hold them, pits could not restrain them, furnaces did them no harm, and when they were cast into dens of wild beasts, they received no harm, so great was their power.

Mormon's Warning to Those Who Deny Christ

Mormon, near the end of Third Nephi, warns all those to whom this record would come not to spurn the words and works of the Lord. ". . . Behold," he wrote, "at that day, if ye shall spurn at his doings he will cause that it shall soon overtake you. Wo unto him that spurneth at the doings of the Lord; yea, wo unto him that shall deny the Christ and his works! Yea, wo unto him that shall deny the revelations of the Lord . . . Yea, and wo unto him that shall say at that day, to get gain, that there can be no miracle wrought by Jesus Christ; for he that doeth this shall become like unto the son of perdition, for whom there was no mercy, according to the word of Christ!" (3 Nephi 29:4-7).

Gentiles Called to Repentance

Mormon also advised the people in the last days not to ". . . spurn, nor make game of the Jews, nor any of the remnant of the house of Israel . . ." (3 Nephi 29:8) for the Lord would keep his covenants to those people.

Nephi further stated:

. . . that when the Lord shall see fit in his wisdom, that these sayings shall come

unto the Gentiles according to his word, then ye may know that the covenant which the Father hath made with the children of Israel, concerning their restoration to the lands of their inheritance, is already beginning to be fulfilled.

And ye may know that the words of the Lord, which have been spoken by the holy prophets, shall all be fulfilled; and ye need not say that the Lord delays his coming unto the children of Israel (3 Nephi 29:1-2).

Mormon concludes Third Nephi with advice to the Gentiles of this day:

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 (3 Nephi 30:2).

Questions on the Lesson

1. How did Jesus define the gospel?
2. What scripture did he give to the Nephites? Why?
3. What did Jesus say regarding the house of Israel? the Jews? the Gentiles?
4. Why are Jesus' words about Elijah important?
5. What did Malachi say about tithing?
6. What did Jesus say about the name of the Church?
7. What does "sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost" mean?

Visiting Teacher Messages— Book of Mormon Gems of Truth

Lesson 42—"Pray in Your Families Unto the Father, Always in My Name,
That Your Wives and Your Children May Be Blessed" (3 Nephi 18:21).

Leone O. Jacobs

For Tuesday, November 6, 1956

Objective: To point out the blessings that come from family prayer.

PERHAPS there is no single activity in the home which results in richer blessings than does that of family prayer. If parents would only realize the rewards of this activity they would be very faithful in its observance. President Heber J. Grant said of family prayer:

I am convinced that one of the greatest things that can come into any home to cause the boys and girls in that home to grow up in a love of God, and in a love of the gospel of Jesus Christ, is to

have family prayer (*Gospel Standards*, page 25).

Families which start the day by kneeling down together in prayer receive a spiritual uplift. As each individual goes forth to his day's duties he carries with him the knowledge that the spirit of the Lord has been entreated to attend him. He goes out with the backing of his entire family, and, added to this security, is a feeling of confi-