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"We Had A Hope of His Glory"

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Abstract: The ancient Israelites, the Jaredites, and the Nephites all knew of Christ and benefited from following his gospel. Jesus is the Savior of all mankind and hope and happiness come through living his teachings.

Ancient prophets in both the Old World and the New testified of Jesus. Thus, two records bear witness of his advent, as Book of Mormon prophets proclaim:

“WE HAD A HOPE OF HIS GLORY”

*by H. Donl Peterson**

The greatest message of hope that mankind has ever been given is that Jesus Christ is the Savior and Redeemer of the world. Every prophet who has been called to lead his fellowmen has proclaimed this great principle. It was Jesus who overcame death that all might live again, clothed with perfected, resurrected bodies. It was Jesus who gave us a plan which, if faithfully followed, will enable us to live with him in that eternal abode that is prepared for the faithful. That plan is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This wonderful gospel is not just a preparatory measure for our next estate; its implementation in mortality guarantees peace of mind and direction to enable all of us to enjoy *right now* the most productive and meaningful lives possible. Father Adam, after having the gospel plan explained to him, wisely testified that “. . . In this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.” (Moses 5:10.)

The Book of Mormon Testifies

The prophets of the Middle East whose writings appear in the Old Testament were well acquainted with the teaching of the coming of Christ. Book of Mormon prophets were also inspired to look forward to the advent of Christ and frequently expressed this marvelous prophecy to the people.

The prophet Jacob, who lived nearly 600 years before the birth of Christ, dedicated his record to showing future readers that he and other ancient prophets were familiar with Christ's mission:

For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but also all the holy prophets which were before us. (Jacob 4:4.)

(For Course 12, lessons of August 3 and 10, “A Leader Learns About Christ's Teachings”; for Course 13, lesson of September 7, “The Great Plan”; for Course 18, lesson of August 17, “Christ—Our Standard”; for Course 25, lessons of September 14 and 21, “What Is the Book of Mormon?” and “For Our Profit and Learning”; for Course 27, lesson of October 5, “The Believing Heart”; for Course 29, lesson of October 26, “The Savior's Advent Predicted”; to support family home evening lessons 2 and 3; and of general interest.)

The Book of Mormon contains the religious accounts of several ancient peoples, all of whom bore witness of Christ.

The Jaredites Bear Witness

The Book of Ether contains the writings of the earliest Book of Mormon peoples, the Jaredites, who came to the western hemisphere at the time of the Tower of Babel. The brother of Jared, the prophet leader of the original Jaredite colony, saw Christ in spirit form and learned from him of his earthly ministry to come and of his great plan of redemption for the people of this earth. (See Ether 3 and 4.) A great succession of Jaredite prophets followed the brother of Jared. They also taught the people about Jesus and warned them when their courses of action were contrary to the Lord's gospel plan.

Prophets of the Brass Plates

When the Nephite Colony left Jerusalem (about 600 B.C.) and came to the western hemisphere, they brought with them the sacred records of their people. These records were preserved on brass plates. Hence, these ancient sacred writings are referred to in the Nephite account as “the plates of brass.”

These plates mentioned three prophets of whom we are previously not aware in sacred writ—Zenos, Zenock, and Neum. Their prophecies pertaining to the advent of Jesus Christ are particularly vivid. Zenock spoke of Christ's crucifixion and proclaimed the mercies Christ had bestowed upon men. The people of his day, spiritually blind, stoned Zenock to death. (See 1 Nephi 19:10; Alma 33:15-17.)

Zenos prophesied of the three days of darkness, the sign of Christ's death for those upon the isles of the sea. Zenos also spoke of the calamities awaiting the Jewish people “because they crucify the God of Israel, and turn their hearts aside, rejecting signs and wonders, and the power and glory of the God of Israel.” (See 1 Nephi 19:10, 13.) The longest

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chapter in the Book of Mormon is Jacob 5, wherein we find the prophecy of Zenos pertaining to the future of the house of Israel. The prophet Jacob, in summarizing the allegory of Zenos, asked:

Behold, will ye reject these words? Will ye reject the words of the prophets; and will ye reject all the words which have been spoken concerning Christ, after so many have spoken concerning him? . . . (Jacob 6:8.)

Nephi, son of Helaman, spoke of the numerous prophets who had previously testified of Christ, and then referred to the fate of Zenos when he stated:

And now I would that ye should know, that even since the days of Abraham there have been many prophets that have testified these things; yea, behold, the prophet Zenos did testify boldly; for the which he was slain. (Helaman 8:19.)

Neum, the third prophet quoted from the brass plates, mentioned that Christ would be buried in a sepulchre. (See 1 Nephi 19:10.)

The Nephites Knew of Christ

A particularly powerful passage of scripture is found in the writings of King Benjamin. Apparently most of the third chapter of Mosiah is the words of an angel explaining the meaning and purpose of the advent of Christ. The angel proclaimed: "Awake . . . for behold, I am come to declare unto you the glad tidings of great joy." Then he explained to King Benjamin in detail the future life and ministry of Christ. The following passage is very clear and meaningful. It speaks of "the Lord Omnipotent" coming down from heaven to "dwell in a tabernacle of clay" and to "go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles . . . and curing all manner of diseases . . . he shall cast out devils . . . and, lo, he shall suffer . . . even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people. . . . 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." (See Mosiah 3:5-8.)

The angel continued to explain Christ's purpose in coming, his scourging and crucifixion, and his resurrection and judgment. (See Mosiah 3:9-10.)

This concise and powerful description shows the explicit understanding the Nephites had of the coming of Christ. And there are many other such testimonies throughout their history, such as these:

Lehi: "Yea, even six hundred years from the time that . . . [we] left Jerusalem, a prophet would the

Lord God raise up among the Jews—even a Messiah . . . a Savior of the world." (See 1 Nephi 10:4-17.)

Nephi: "And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (See 2 Nephi 31:17-21.)

Jacob: "Behold, my soul delighteth in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ; for, for this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him." (2 Nephi 11:4; see also chapter 9.)

Jarom: ". . . Look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was. . . ." (Jarom 11.)

Abinadi: "Have they not said that God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth? Yea, and have they not said also that he should bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, and that he, himself, should be oppressed and afflicted?" (Mosiah 13:34, 35.)

Alma the elder: ". . . Behold, the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and the Son of God cometh upon the face of the earth. And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem . . . she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God." (See Alma 7:9-13.)

Amulek: ". . . Behold, I say unto you, that I do know that Christ shall come among the children of men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it." (See Alma 34:8-16.)

Samuel the Lamanite: "For behold, he surely must die that salvation may come; yea, it behooveth him and becometh expedient that he dieth, to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, that thereby men may be brought into the presence of the Lord." (See Helaman 14:15-18.)

Thus Book of Mormon prophets join with those of the Bible to proclaim the great truth and singular hope that Jesus truly is the Christ, the Savior of all mankind.

Library File Reference: JESUS CHRIST—DIVINITY.