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Your Question Answered by Joseph Fielding Smith Regarding Mosiah 15

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Abstract: This article states that there have been many intelligent, honest men who never heard the gospel and will not be held accountable for their sins, for their acts were done in faith and obedience to what they had been taught.

QUESTION: *"In the fifteenth chapter of Mosiah we read that those who lived before the coming of our Savior, who never heard of him and never had salvation declared to them had part in the first resurrection at the time*

ANSWER: This question is in reference to the teachings of Abinadi as follows:

"And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ—for so shall he be called.

"And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection.

"They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them; thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death.

"And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord." (Mosiah 15:21-24.)

The millions of souls who have lived on the earth at a time and place when the gospel was not here, due to the transgressions of their fathers, cannot be judged by the standards which the pure gospel proclaims. Many of the people living in the pagan world were intelligent, industrious, honest in their dealings with their fellows, but were unfortunate to be descendants of those who in earlier ages rejected the gospel which had been declared to them, and therefore their descendants were raised in idolatry. The Lord declared through his prophets that the children are not answerable for the sins of their parents.

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for their fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin." (Deut. 24:16.)

YOUR QUES- TION

ANSWERED BY
**JOSEPH
FIELDING
SMITH**
PRESIDENT OF
THE COUNCIL
OF THE TWELVE

the Savior arose, and have eternal life. Will you please enlighten us in regard to this as we wonder how and why this could be, without them having heard the message of the gospel when living in this world?"

After the scattering of the people to all parts of the earth, they fell away from the teachings of Noah. Generation after generation came and passed in idolatry. Yet many of these children were otherwise intelligent. They had accepted the worship of images and false gods because of the traditions of their fathers. Among these peoples were many of the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Persians, and peoples who had spread out all over the face of the earth. These people were not responsible for their condition. They had followed the teachings of their fathers and lived and died in their ignorance of di-

vine truth taught to Adam, to Noah, and to Abraham. We are taught that we will be punished for our own sins, but what of these millions who sinned ignorantly, not having any knowledge of the mission of the Son of God? According to the divine plan the truth of the gospel must eventually be declared to them, for it is written that "... the voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not see, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated." (D&C 1:2.) So we discover that the Lord, in his great mercy, will remember the heathen as well as Israel, and that justice will be meted out to every soul. We have the assurance that every soul who was ignorant of the truth when living shall have the gospel taught to him, although it may be delayed to the days when he is in the spirit world.

We are taught that people cannot be punished for what they did not know. Therefore Abinadi said of those who died in their ignorance:

"And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them. (Continued on page 214)

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all? The magic formula is easy to remember and makes good eating, too.

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Protein-rich foods—2 servings of meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dried beans, and peas.

Milk—1 quart or more, or some cheese, ice cream, etc.

Whole grain or enriched cereals and breads—several servings.

Since this won't fill up most teens, add more of any group or of other foods.

Why have teens been singled out for attention? Because studies over the country indicate that they can profit by improving their eating habits. In fact, teen girls are the group most likely to be cheating themselves where good nutrition is concerned. Among the 800 teens studied in the western region, six out of every ten girls and four out of every ten boys had poor diets. No time for a good breakfast, snacks that satisfy temporarily but that give few building materials, fear of gaining weight, busy schedules that interfere with regular meals—all add up to poor diets.

A boy has a higher need for nutrients during adolescence than at any other time in his life. Should he eat more than Dad? Yes, indeed; if he is normally active he will need more calories than most fathers, and in addition he needs more of all the food groups in the magic formula listed above.

The girls' needs are not quite so high as the boys' because usually their activity is less strenuous, and their growth stops sooner. But even though a boy or girl has quit pushing upward, there is much finishing work to be done on the inside that requires good quality materials. Bones that have finished growing in length still need a lot of filling in in order to build the strong sturdy bones needed to carry on through adulthood. The heart and other organs continue to develop to meet the demands of this larger body. Muscle tissue, especially for the boys, makes tremendous growth if given an opportunity. Long after

maximum growth has been attained, extra nutrients are needed to make a healthy, well-built body. Doctors are concerned today about many very young mothers whose own bodies have had neither time nor adequate materials to develop properly before the demands of pregnancy are added. Many studies have shown that mature women who have had good diets have fewer complications in pregnancy and labor and give birth to healthier babies.

MEMO TO PARENTS

BY S. OMAR BARKER

*When teen habits cause you tears,
Remember that their cure is years.*

The right food can help assure important long-term gains for our children. They will have better health over the years, a longer life expectancy and produce healthier babies. What can it do for them right now? Good choices of foods can give them an improved complexion, more attractive hair, resistance to some diseases, more pep and vitality, and greater endurance and stamina. Eating well pays high dividends.

"What's to eat, Mom?" Let's try to make it easy for them to fill that cavity with things good to eat and good for them. *It is WHAT they eat that counts.*

Your Question

(Continued from page 150)

And thus the Lord bringeth about the restoration of these; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord." (Mosiah 15:24.)

We are taught that mankind through the ages will be judged by the privileges and opportunities to know the truth. If a person never had the opportunity to know anything about the plan of salvation, then surely he should not be held accountable for his deeds in the flesh on an equality with the man who knew the truth and then refused to obey it. Thousands of these people who lived in this ignorance were devout and faithful to the doctrines which they had been

taught. They cannot be held accountable for their actions which were done in faith and obedience to that which they devoutly believed and had been taught. Fortunately the Lord will judge us all by the intent of the heart as well as by our understanding. Therefore it seems that it was only a matter of justice for the Lord to do what Abinadi said he would do and permit these who innocently died in "their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them" to have part in this great resurrection. The question naturally arises: Little children who do not understand, should they die, are they redeemed through the blood of Christ? The scriptures inform us also that this is the privilege of all those who are without law:

"For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law." (Moroni 8:22.)

We may be sure that the Lord would do all things according to the law of eternal justice and that he would not punish people who in ignorance sinned and violated his commandments. It is one of the most glorious principles of truth and justice that was ever revealed that men are to be punished according to their disobedience to divine commandments, but not when they have acted innocently in ignorance of those divine edicts.

Think of the poor Lamanites converted by Ammon, Aaron, and their brethren. They had been guilty of many serious transgressions, murdering their "enemies" the Nephites, for no apparent cause, but, when the truth penetrated their souls, and they truly and humbly repented, they were forgiven, and the light of the gospel entered their souls.

One thing we should remember in reading what Abinadi said and that is this:

"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." (Mosiah 15:26.)



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