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Characters and Teachings of The Book of Mormon: Lesson 41—Jesus Instructs the Nephites

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Abstract: The objective of this lesson is to show the great compassion of Jesus toward the Nephites who manifested such great faith in him, and his love for children.

Theology—Characters and Teachings

of The Book of Mormon

Lesson 41—Jesus Instructs the Nephites

Elder Leland H. Monson

(Text: The Book of Mormon: 3 Nephi, chapters 15-21)

For Tuesday, October 2, 1956

Objective: To show the great compassion of Jesus toward the Nephites who manifested such great faith in him, and his love for children.

WHEN Jesus appeared to the Nephites, God, the Eternal Father introduced him as his Son “. . . in whom I am well pleased. . .” (3 Nephi 11:7). For the Nephites and for us this re-establishes and reaffirms the divinity of Christ. As a God, not merely as a great moral teacher, he gave to the Nephites the Sermon on the Mount, which we studied last year. In this lesson we turn to other instructions which this divine Being, Christ our Redeemer, gave to the Nephites.

The Law of Moses Superseded

Christ told the Nephites that he had given to ancient Israel the Law of Moses and that now the law was fulfilled. He said, “. . . I have come to fulfil the law; therefore it hath an end” (3 Nephi 15:5). He asked that they live the new law which he had and would give unto them. “Behold,” he said, “I am the law, and the light. Look unto me and endure to the end, and ye shall live . . .” (3 Nephi 15:9).

The Sheep of Another Fold

Jesus then told the Nephites that they, and the other lost tribes of Israel, had been separated from

those at Jerusalem because of the iniquity that existed among the Jews. He informed them that they were the sheep of another fold that he mentioned to the Jews.

And verily I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (3 Nephi 15:21).

He further told them that there was still another fold that should hear him (See 3 Nephi 16:1-3); and announced that he was going to visit them. (See 3 Nephi 17:4.) Jesus instructed the Nephites:

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, that through the fulness of the Gentiles, the remnant of their seed, who shall be scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief, may be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer.

And then will I gather them in from the four quarters of the earth; and then

will I fulfill the covenant which the Father hath made unto all the people of the house of Israel.

And blessed are the Gentiles, because of their belief in me, in and of the Holy Ghost, which witnesses unto them of me and of the Father.

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 (3 Nephi 16:4-7).

Jesus also said that the land was given to the Nephites, the seed of Joseph, for their inheritance:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, thus hath the Father commanded me — that I should give unto this people this land for their inheritance (3 Nephi 16:16).

The Savior then perceived that the people were weak and could not understand all the words which the Father had commanded him to speak to them at that time, so he counseled them to go to their homes and “. . . ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand . . .” (3 Nephi 17:3).

Jesus then said he must go to his Father and also to show himself to the lost tribes of Israel, but as he looked at the multitude, he saw they were in tears and their eyes seemed to implore him to stay with them a little longer.

Healing of the Sick

The Savior spoke, “. . . Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you” (3 Nephi 17:6), and he instructed them to bring any sick, lame, blind, halt, maimed, or otherwise afflicted to him.

And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him.

And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears (3 Nephi 17:9-10).

Jesus then commanded them to bring their little children. He stood in the midst of them and commanded the multitude to kneel and he prayed mightily to the Father:

. . . and the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him.

And after this manner do they bear record: The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father;

And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father (3 Nephi 17:15-17).

Blessing Little Children

The two thousand five hundred people who were assembled were overjoyed. When Jesus witnessed their great faith he told them his joy was full. As he spoke to them he wept, and “. . . took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. And when he had done

this he wept again" (3 Nephi 17:21-22). The Savior then asked the multitude to look at their little ones, and, as they looked, angels came down, and encircled the little children, and ministered unto them.

Institution of Sacrament

Jesus instituted the ordinance of the sacrament among the Nephites. The disciples were told that they must partake of the sacrament in remembrance of Christ's body and blood that it should be a testimony unto the Father that they would always remember him. They were promised that if they would do this, his spirit would always be with them, and that it would show their willingness to do that which Jesus had commanded them.

Jesus instructed the Nephites to pray always, saying:

. . . ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat (3 Nephi 18:18).

And as I have prayed among you even so shall ye pray in my church, among my people who do repent, and are baptized in my name. Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you (3 Nephi 18:16).

He instructed the disciples further that if a man is unworthy to partake of the sacrament he should be forbidden. However, he should not be cast out from among them, but be ministered to by them and be prayed for. Then, if he repents and is baptized, he should be received by them and be given the sacrament. If a man would not repent they were still to continue to minister to him in case he might return and repent. Which, if he

did, and came to the Savior with full purpose of heart, the Savior would heal him and the people would be the means of bringing salvation to him. (See 3 Nephi 18:28-32.)

Jesus then ". . . touched with his hand . . ." (3 Nephi 18:36) the twelve disciples, giving them power to bestow the Holy Ghost. He then departed from them and ascended into heaven.

Bestowal of Holy Ghost

Word soon spread among the people that Jesus would appear on the next day. On that day, the twelve disciples appeared before the assembled group. The assembly was so large that it was divided into twelve groups, over each one of which a disciple presided. The disciples prayed that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them. ". . . Nephi went down into the water and was baptized And he baptized all those whom Jesus had chosen" (3 Nephi 19:11-12). When they came up out of the water ". . . the Holy Ghost did fall upon them . . ." (3 Nephi 19:13). Angels came down and ministered to the disciples. While this was taking place ". . . Jesus came and stood in the midst and ministered unto them" (3 Nephi 19:15).

Jesus went a short distance and prayed as follows:

Father, I thank thee that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen; and it is because of their belief in me that I have chosen them out of the world.

Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words,

Father, thou hast given them the Holy Ghost because they believe in me; and thou seest that they believe in me because thou hearest them, and they pray unto me; and they pray unto me because I am with them.

And now Father, I pray unto thee for them, and also for all those who shall believe on their words, that they may believe in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one (3 Nephi 19:20-23).

After Jesus had finished praying, he commended the disciples on their faith, saying:

. . . So great faith have I never seen among all the Jews; wherefore I could not show unto them so great miracles, because of their unbelief.

. . . there are none of them that have seen so great things as ye have seen; neither have they heard so great things as ye have heard (3 Nephi 19:35-36).

Jesus then commanded the multitude and the disciples to arise and cease praying, but he admonished them to pray always in their hearts.

Jesus miraculously provided the sacrament and:

. . . he brake bread again and blessed it, and gave to the disciples to eat.

And when they had eaten he commanded them that they should break bread, and give unto the multitude . . . he also gave them wine to drink . . . (3 Nephi 20:3-5).

The Gospel in the Latter Days

The Savior advised the Nephites that in the latter days the gospel should be preached to the Jews and that they would accept it. "Then," he said, "will the Father gather them together again, and give unto them Jerusalem for the land of their inheritance" (3 Nephi 20:33).

That the people of the latter days might be fully aware of the time when these events would occur, Jesus gave the Nephites the sign of the Father's work. ". . . this is the thing which I will give unto you for a sign," he said, "for verily I say unto you that when these things which I declare unto you, and which I shall declare unto you hereafter of myself, and by the power of the Holy Ghost which shall be given unto you of the Father, shall be made known unto the Gentiles that they may know concerning . . . this my people who shall be scattered by them . . . it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel" (3 Nephi 21:2, 7).

Jesus further told the Nephites that a great work should be accomplished at that time and that there would be many who would not believe it ". . . although a man shall declare it unto them" (3 Nephi 21:9).

Concerning the Gentiles in that day, Jesus said: "Yea, wo be unto the Gentiles except they repent . . ." (3 Nephi 21:14). On the other hand, he pointed out, if they would repent and ". . . hearken unto my words . . ." he would establish his church among them:

. . . and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance (3 Nephi 21:22).

Jesus was deeply concerned over the Gentiles and the Jews of the last days when the record of the Ne-

phites should come forth amongst them. He stressed the importance of the sacrament in the lives of the Nephites, informing them that it would help them to remember him, that it would be a witness unto the Father that they did remember him. He also was grateful unto his Father that the disciples had been given the Holy Ghost as a companion. The Savior's emphasis upon the sacrament and upon the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, indicates the great importance of these ordinances. Sometimes, however, partaking of the sacrament becomes so routine in our lives that we do not derive the full benefit from it. Only as we live worthily and meditate upon the meaning of the sacrifice of the Savior and the covenants we

take, can we get the full blessing that accompanies proper participation. After we have been baptized and confirmed and have received the Holy Ghost, we must continue to be faithful, to live the gospel, if we are to have the Holy Ghost and its influence to direct our lives.

Questions on the Lesson

1. What miracles did Jesus perform among the Nephites?
2. What did Jesus say about the latter-day Gentiles?
3. What did he say about the latter-day Jews?
4. Discuss the importance of the ordinance of the sacrament.
5. Discuss the significance and blessings attached to the bestowal of the Holy Ghost.

Visiting Teacher Messages— Book of Mormon Gems of Truth

Lesson 41—"Yea, Wo Unto Him That Shall Deny the Revelations of the Lord and That Shall Say the Lord No Longer Worketh by Revelation . . ."
(3 Nephi 29:6).

Leone O. Jacobs

For Tuesday, October 2, 1956

Objective: To show that faith in continuous revelation is essential to a testimony of the truth of the gospel.

CONTINUOUS revelation is the foundation stone upon which The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is built. It was also by means of this principle that the Church was restored in these latter days. When the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820 that principle was reaffirmed in modern times.

Many people discount divine

revelation entirely, saying such belief is purely mythical, that the scriptures are only unproved tradition. Others say that revelation is no longer necessary, that God gave all the instructions needed for the welfare of mankind, in ancient days. But Latter-day Saints ". . . believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great