

THE LORD. HATH SPOKEN

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NUMBER FOUR

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken (Isaiah 1:2).

Brief Review of Previous Numbers

In Number Three of this series it was set forth that the Lord revealed himself and His Son Jesus Christ to the young man Joseph Smith, who henceforth would be a witness for God among men: The Truth about God and the Son of God in that completed revelation proved to be in accordance with what is revealed about God in the Old Testament and in the New. It also harmonized the idea of God as a personality-in the sense of his being an Individual-with the idea of God being everywhere present, and everywhere present with power-God immanent.

The next step in working out the purpose of God in the New Dispensation, was to broaden the foundations of faith for men. Faith, the ordinary, simple faith, which is an incentive to human action, ultimately rests upon evidence, and if the evidence be increased the faith will be increased accordingly.

So proceeding in the course of speaking to this present generation, God brought forth what is known as

The Book of Mormon

Following is a brief account of this book by Joseph Smith:

In this important and interesting book the history of ancient America is unfolded, from its first settlement by a colony that came from the Tower of Babel, at the confusion of languages, to the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian Era. We are informed

by these records that America in ancient times **has** been inhabited by two distinct races of **people**. The first were called Jaredites, and came directly from the Tower of Babel. The second race came directly from the city of Jerusalem, about six hundred years before Christ. They were principally Israelites, of the descendants of Joseph. The Jaredites were destroyed about the time that the Israelites came from Jerusalem, who succeeded them in the inheritance of the country. The principal nation of the second race fell in battle towards the close of the fourth century. The remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country. The people were cut off in consequence of their transgressions, and the last of their prophets who existed among them was commanded to write an abridgment of their prophecies, history, etc., and to hide it up in the earth, and that it should come forth and be united with the Bible for the accomplishment of the purposes of God in the last days.

The Resurrected Christ in America

The all-important matter connected with the Book of Mormon is the fact that it gives an account of the visit of the resurrected Christ to the people of the western world. It also gives an account of the Christ teaching the Gospel to men of the western world, and founding a Church among them, which ministered the Gospel to the salvation of many through several generations.

The manner of the appearing of the Christ to the people of America was on this wise: During the crucifixion of the Christ in Judea, and the period of his body lying in the tomb, America, in fulfillment of predictions of inspired prophets among the people, was visited by dire calamities of storm and tempest and earthquakes, followed by three **days** of intense and continuous darkness. Following these calamities, as a company of survivors in a land called Bountiful were viewing and commenting upon the great changes wrought by tempest and earthquakes, and were speaking of the Christ, of whose death and resurrection these **terrible** disturbances in nature had been a sign, according to their prophets, they were thrilled by hearing a voice vibrate through the air. At first they understood not what was said, but the third time they heard it they understood, for it said:

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

Then out of the expanse of heaven they beheld a man descending. He was clothed with a white robe, and he came down and stood in the midst of them and said:

Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world; and behold, I am the light and the life of the world, and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the **which** I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning. And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, the whole multitude fell to the earth, for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should show himself unto them after his ascension into heaven. (III Nephi Ch. 11:10, 11, 12).

The Church in Ancient America

The visitation of the Christ to this people was attended by the calling of twelve disciples to found a church, and to teach the Gospel; the ordinances of which, together with the law of righteousness, which ever attends upon the gospel, were expounded. The Sermon on the Mount, first delivered in Judea, was repeated in substance, and all the ordinances of the Church of God were established for the salvation of the people.

Righteousness prevailed through several generations, then came the period of spiritual and moral declension which resulted in the barbarism in which the American race was found at the advent of the Europeans in the western world, 1492.

Thus in this New Dispensation, in which God is speaking, was brought forth a new Witness for God and the Christ; a New Witness to the great truth that salvation is of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "the Lord Omnipotent." (Book of Mormon, Mosiah, 3:17 id, 5:8 and 2nd Nephi 25:20).

It was for the purpose of convincing "the Jew and the Gentile, that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE ETERNAL GOD," that the Book of Mormon was written, sealed up and preserved from destruction, and brought forth in these last days. (See title page of the Book of Mormon, a transcript from the original plates, explaining the purposes for which the Book was written).

If the world-hunger for knowledge of the Christ is as great as Rev. John Watson declares it to be (see No. 2 this series for reference); if indeed, "a parchment but six inches square, containing fifty words which were certainly spoken by Jesus, would count for more than all the books which have been published since the first century," then of how much more value is a whole book that might well be accepted as a veritable "Fifth Gospel," (the Book of III Nephi within

the Book of Mormon is the one more especially in mind), which gives great enlightenment on the Life and Mission of the Christ, and whole discourses from the teachings of Messiah in America.

This visitation of the Christ to the western world, the inhabitants of which were *mainly* descendants of Israel, came to pass in fulfillment of one of the Christ's own prophecies, while yet among the disciples' in Judea.

And 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. (St. John 10:16).

If the usual commentary explanation of this passage be given, namely, that Jesus had in mind the Gentiles as the "other sheep" of the passage quoted (see Dummelow's Commentary on St. John 10:16), then let them be reminded that so far as the personal ministry of Jesus was concerned—and St. John 10:16 doubtless refers to his personal ministry—Jesus himself said to his disciples:

I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 15:24).

Therefore when he said "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," etc., it must have been some branch of the house of Israel and not the Gentiles, whom the Christ had in mind. And his own prophecy was fulfilled when he visited the branch of the house of Israel in America.

A Witness for the Gospel as Well as for the Christ

This book, so strong a witness for the divinity of Jesus Christ, and his redemptive work, is equally strong as a witness for the Gospel-God's plan for the salvation of men: "I say unto you," one of the prophets of the book is represented as saying, "that there shall be no other name given, nor any other way, nor means Whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent Salvation was and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent." (Mosiah 3:17, 18).

Ordinance Formulas Supplied

The Book of Mormon supplies a baptismal formula for the remission of sins, given by the Lord Jesus himself; both

the candidate and the administrator are to stand down in the water; and the administrator shall say, calling the person to be baptized by his or her name—

Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Then shall the candidate be immersed in the water, “and come forth out of the water.” (3rd Nephi, 11:25, 26). By this ordinance men receive remission of sin and are prepared for the baptism of the Holy Ghost which shall unite the life of men with the life of God; they are born again. This direction coming from the Lord Jesus himself settles all questions relative to baptism.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

For the perpetuation of the spiritual life created by baptism of the water and of the spirit—the re-birth of men into fellowship with God—the Lord's supper is instituted. The prayer of consecration in the ordinance is given by the Lord. In it are gathered up and presented in one view all the great fundamentals of the Gospel:

O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen. (Moroni 4 :3.)*

There is the most perfect prayer in all the literature of men. I say it without fear of one other being produced that shall surpass it. It is so perfect that not one word can be added to it, or one taken from it, without marring it. Without qualification, what was once said by Arch Deacon Paley of the Lord's Prayer, can be said of this prayer; but more emphatically said of this prayer.

For a succession of solemn thoughts, for fixing the attention upon a few great points, for suitability, for sufficiency, for conciseness without obscurity, for the weight and real import-

*The prayer of consecration upon the wine or water used to symbolize the blood of Christ is similar in import.

ance of its petitions, it is without an equal or a rival. (Paley's Evidences of Christianity).

This prayer consecrating the symbols of the Christ's flesh and blood is not only a prayer, but a confession of Faith; and in it, I repeat, are found all the fundamentals of the Gospel.

Confession of Faith

Faith in God, the Eternal Father is confessed, in this prayer, both as creating power, and as sustaining and directing power of the creation; for "Father," including fatherhood, means both these functions:

Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is affirmed;

Faith in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world is confessed.

Faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ is witnessed by the broken bread which is the symbol of the broken body of the Lord, by whose wounds men are healed; by acceptance of which atonement, with repentance and obedience men are forgiven their sins, and taken into fellowship with God.

Then as second part follows the solemn covenant of men:—their willingness—

To take upon them the Name of Christ;

To always remember him;

To keep the commandments which he has given them;

Then the climax of it all, and the full meaning of all that has gone before—the purpose of it—

That they may always have the Master's, the Christ's Spirit, to be with them.

What a center of Christian unity is here. What a splendid gathering in of glorious rays of Christian fundamentals into one radiant sun of Truth and Light. It is sufficient for a Christian creed for the world. Let men but gather to it, and solemnly, and frequently, and with faith repeat that creed, and enter into those few but sacred obligations, and there is established at once a holding power for Christian truth that the world has not known,

and does not know. Does not analysis, though brief and incomplete, prove all I have claimed for this prayer-creed? Whence came it?

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken.

The prayer-creed, so suitable to promote Christian Unity, **came from God and no other.**

Selected Passages from the Book of Mormon

PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE BOOK WAS WRITTEN:

. . . To show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers, and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever, and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations. (From the Ancient Title Page of the Book of Mormon).

Lord, the Gentiles will mock at these things (i. e., writings in the Book of **Mormon**) . . . And when I had said this, the Lord **spake** unto me, saying, Fools mock, but they shall mourn, and my grace is sufficient for the meek. (Ether **12:23**, 26).

I know that the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he **commandeth** them. (I Nephi **3:7**).

Behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things. Adam fell that men might be, and men are, that they might have joy. (II Nephi **2:24**, 25).

DIVINE TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH OF THE BOOK OF MORMON PROMISED.

And when ye shall receive these things (i. e., in the Book of Mormon), I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true, and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. (**Moroni 10:14**).

For further information read the Book of Mormon, the American Volume of Scripture, which may be obtained of any of our traveling Elders: or by writing to any of the Mission Offices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Number Five of this series will deal with the restoration of Divine Authority to man, and the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth in the last days, and for the last time. Be sure to obtain and read it.