

LESSON 11
“Press Forward with a Steadfastness in Christ”
2 Nephi 31-33

OVERVIEW:

Nephi teaches of the doctrine of Christ. Nephi teaches that we must press forward and endure to the end. Nephi speaks of the importance of feasting on the words of Christ. Nephi declares that people will believe his words if they believe in Christ.

This passage marks a transition point. Nephi is going to change subjects—from the workings of the Lord in the future to the practicalities of living the gospel. Chapters 31-33 represent the conclusion of Nephi’s great record. True to form, Nephi will speak in great plainness so that there can be no question as to what one must do to obtain eternal life. Let’s look at the subject matter of the next three chapters as a handbook or recipe for obtaining eternal life. Nephi discusses repentance (v. 5, 11-13), baptism (v. 4-19), the gift of the Holy Ghost (v. 12-18), obedience (v. 10-12), enduring to the end (v. 15-16, 20), following Christ (v. 10, 16), faith, hope, and charity (v. 20. 2 Ne 33:8-11), feasting on the words of Christ (v. 20, 2 Ne 32:3), following the Spirit (2 Ne 32:5,8), and prayer (2 Ne 32:8-9). What a brilliant collection of principles! A more complete blueprint for salvation could hardly be written.

SCRIPTURES:

THE SECOND BOOK OF NEPHI
CHAPTER 31

Nephi tells why Christ was baptized—Men must follow Christ, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure to the end to be saved—Repentance and baptism are the gate to the strait and narrow path—Eternal life comes to those who keep the commandments after baptism. [Between 559 and 545 B.C.] (About 55 years have passed since they left Jerusalem. Nephi was probably about 70 years old.)

1 AND now I, Nephi, make an end of my ^aprophesying unto you, my beloved brethren. And I cannot write but a few things, which I know must surely come to pass; neither can I write but a few of the ^bwords of my brother Jacob.

2 Wherefore, the things which I have written sufficeth me, save it be a few words which I ^amust speak concerning the doctrine of Christ; wherefore, I shall speak unto you plainly, according to the plainness of my prophesying.

3 For my soul delighteth in ^aplainness; (Hugh Nibley: “If the Book of Mormon said only what we wanted it to we wouldn't need it. But we do need it. It is written ‘according to the plainness of the word of God’ (Jacob 2:11), ‘in plainness, even as plain as word can be’ (2 Nephi 32:7). It needs no handbook (not even this one) to explain its meaning. ‘I glory in plainness,’ said Nephi (2 Nephi 33:6), ‘for my soul delighteth in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work, . . . for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding’ (2 Nephi 31:3). So that leaves us pretty much without excuse.” (*Since Cumorah*, p. 387)) for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the ^bunderstanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their ^clanguage, unto their understanding.

4 Wherefore, I would that ye should remember that I have spoken unto you concerning that ^aprophet (John the Baptist) which the Lord showed unto me, (Nephi saw a vision of the mortal ministry of Christ.) that should baptize the ^bLamb of God, which should take away the sins of the world.

5 And now, if the Lamb of God, he being ^aholy, should have need to be ^bbaptized by water, to fulfil all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be ^cbaptized, yea, even by water! (“Nephi, to dramatize the importance of baptism, tells us that the Savior had to be baptized to “fulfill all

righteousness" (2 Nephi 31:5). The doctrine is both little understood and marvelously important. In the high spiritual sense there is no righteousness without willing submission to all the ordinances of salvation. No more perfect example could be found than Christ himself. Christ, who was sinless, had to be baptized in order to be considered righteous. To be righteous, as the word is used in its highest spiritual sense, means far more than being sinless, pure, or merely good. Righteousness is not simply the absence of evil or impropriety; it is the active seeking of the mind and will of the Father and compliance with that will once it has been obtained...Neither John nor Jesus could have been considered righteous had the baptism not taken place. In the general sense, righteousness was understood to embrace the filling of obligations or the observance of legal requirements. In a more strictly religious sense, it was understood to mean conforming to the will of the Father." (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 1, p. 361) Bruce R. McConkie: "Nephi explains that Christ did fulfill all righteousness in being baptized in that: 1. He humbled himself before the Father; 2. He covenanted to be obedient and keep the Father's commandment; 3. He had to be baptized to gain admission to the celestial kingdom; and 4. He set an example for all men to follow. (2 Ne. 31:4-11.) Our Lord's baptism 'showeth unto the children of men the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them.' (2 Ne. 31:9.) If even the King of the kingdom could not return to his high state of pre-existent exaltation without complying with his own eternal law for admission to that kingdom, how can any man expect a celestial inheritance without an authorized and approved baptism?" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 71) As baptism was required of Christ so that he might be an heir of salvation, so it is required of all who seek that blessing. Extending this principle beyond the ordinances of baptism, Joseph Smith taught that "if a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord. TPJS, p. 308. Christ is our example in all things. He ceases to be that if we excuse him from compliance with the ordinances of salvation or the obligation to keep the commandments. It would hardly be consistent to announce one system of salvation for Christ and another for the rest of mankind, and then to stoutly maintain that Christ's actions are the example to be followed... Christ was not baptized for a remission of sins, for he neither had committed sin nor would do so. He required neither redemption nor deliverance. Our Savior was baptized because baptism is requisite for entrance into the kingdom of God. DCBM, 1:361-3. Would Christ command us to be married and have children if he did not do it himself?)

6 And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfil all righteousness in being baptized by water?

7 Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he showeth unto the children of men that, according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be ^aobedient unto him in keeping his commandments.

8 Wherefore, after he was baptized with water the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the ^aform of a ^bdove. (The past tense is used regarding Jesus' baptism. Hebrew text is in "prophetic perfect." This was a natural way for Hebrews to speak. Isaiah 1 uses this "prophetic perfect" in speaking of the destruction of Israel as if it already happened. When prophets speak in the future tense, they are usually conditional prophecies. Joseph Smith taught that the Holy Ghost descended in the "sign" of the dove. The sign of the dove was instituted before the creation of the world, a witness for the Holy Ghost, and the devil cannot come in the sign of a dove. The Holy Ghost is a personage, and is in the form of a personage. It does not confine itself to the form of the dove, but in sign of the dove. The Holy Ghost cannot be transformed into a dove; but the sign of a dove was given to John to signify the truth of the deed, as the dove is an emblem or token of truth and innocence. TPJS, p. 275-76)

9 And again, it showeth unto the children of men the straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the ^agate, by which they should enter, he having set the ^bexample before them.

10 And he said unto the children of men: ^aFollow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we

^bfollow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?

11 And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son. (Baptism is a sign to God, to angels, and to heaven that we do the will of God, and there is no other way beneath the heavens whereby God hath ordained for man to come to Him to be saved, and enter into the kingdom of God, except faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, and any other course is in vain; then you have the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost. TPJS, p. 198. Baptism serves four purposes: 1. It is for the remission of sins. 2. It admits the repentant person to membership in the Church and kingdom of God on earth. 3. It is the gate to the celestial kingdom of heaven, that is, it starts a person out on the straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life. 4. It is the means whereby the door to personal sanctification is opened. Mormon Doctrine, p. 70.)

12 And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, (2 Nephi 31 is a most distinctive scriptural text. In verse 11 Nephi records the words of the Father to him. In verse 12 the voice of the Son comes to him. The pattern repeats itself in reverse order in verses 14 and 15; in verse 14 we have a record of that spoken by the voice of the Son, verse 15 the voice of the Father. Apparently Nephi finds himself in conversation with both members of the Godhead. If such is the case, this is a singular occasion, inasmuch as revelation since the fall has normally come by and through Jehovah, who is Jesus Christ. The prophet Enoch seems to have had an experience similar to Nephi's (Moses 7:50, 53, 59). Those instances wherein Elohim has appeared or spoken have been for the purpose of introducing Jesus Christ as His Son. In compliance with the principle of divine investiture of authority, there are also numerous instances wherein the Son has spoken for and in behalf of the Father. DCBM, 1:364 However, for those who have had the Second Comforter, Joseph Smith explained that Christ will introduce us to the Father, so maybe this is actually a record of Nephi being instructed by the Father.) saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father ^agive the Holy Ghost, like unto me; (An intelligent being, in the image of God, possesses every organ, attribute, sense, sympathy, affection that is possessed by God himself. But these are possessed by man, in his rudimental state, in a subordinate sense of the word. Or, in other words, these attributes are in embryo and are to be gradually developed. They resemble a bud, a germ, which gradually develops into bloom, and then, by progress, produces the mature fruit after its own kind. The gift of the Holy Ghost adapts itself to all these organs or attributes. It quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands, and purifies all the natural passions and affections and adapts them, by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates, and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings, and affections of our nature. It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness, and charity. It develops beauty of person, form, and features. It tends to health, vigor, animation, and social feeling. It invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man. It strengthens and gives tone to the nerves. In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart, light to the eyes, music to the ears, and life to the whole being. Parley P. Pratt, Key to the Science of Theology, p. 61) wherefore, ^bfollow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do. (Follow the example of Jesus, be baptized like He was.)

13 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall ^afollow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no ^bhypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real ^cintent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are ^dwilling to take upon you the ^ename of Christ, by ^fbaptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the ^gbaptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the ^htongue of angels (2 Nephi 32:3), and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel. (Bruce R. McConkie: "The baptism of the Spirit is called the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost...By the power of the Holy Ghost -- who is the Sanctifier (3 Ne. 27:19-21) -- dross iniquity, carnality, sensuality, and every evil thing is burned out of the repentant soul as if by fire; the cleansed person becomes literally a new creature of the Holy Ghost. (Mosiah 27:24-26.) He is born again. "The baptism of fire is not something in addition to the receipt of the Holy Ghost; rather, it is the actual enjoyment of the gift which is offered by the laying on of hands at the time of baptism. 'Remission of sins,' the Lord says,

comes 'by baptism and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost.' (D. & C. 19:31; 2 Ne. 31:17.)" (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 73) Joseph Smith: "You might as well baptize a bag of sand as a man, if not done in view of the remission of sins and getting of the Holy Ghost. Baptism by water is but half a baptism, and is good for nothing without the other half—that is, the baptism of the Holy Ghost." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 366 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 166))

14 But, behold, my beloved brethren, thus came the voice of the Son unto me, saying: After ye have repented of your sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by the baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, and can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the tongue of angels, and after this should ^adeny me, it would have been ^bbetter for you that ye had not known me. (The worst enemies of the Church are among those who were once members of it. Such leave the Church but find it impossible to leave it alone. Thereafter, their lives are devoted to opposition to those truths that once afforded them peace and joy. Obviously it would have been better for them to have never known the truth than to become enemies to it. DCBM, 1:366)

15 And I heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the ^awords of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that ^bendureth to the ^cend, the same shall be saved. (Neal A. Maxwell : "Our emphasis, therefore, should be on 'doing' and 'becoming,' not just on surviving; on serving others, not just serving time. Thus this quality of graceful endurance includes, but is more than, hanging on 'for one moment more.' Passing beyond breaking points without breaking takes the form of endurance." (*Not My Will, But Thine*, p. 115) "Hence we are not merely to exist to the end but are to persist in coping with what is occurring in the holy present. If we will follow the example of 'the Son of the living God,'" great things await us (see 2 Nephi 31:16). 'Nevertheless, he that endureth in faith and doeth my will, the same shall overcome, and shall receive an inheritance upon the earth when the day of transfiguration shall come' (D&C 63:20). 'And all they who suffer persecution for my name, and endure in faith, though they are called to lay down their lives for my sake yet shall they partake of all this glory' (D&C 101:35). Even yesterday's spiritual experience, however, does not guarantee us against tomorrow's relapse. Persistence thus matters greatly. More than a few, for instance, have had supernal, spiritual experiences only to fall away later; or, more often, merely to pull off to the side of the road, though intending only a brief rest stop. Hence the emphasis on enduring well to the end is wise, simply because we are at risk till the end!...Included in the enduring process is meeting the test of being constantly improved. Remodeling is costly and painful. But how can we realistically expect the arduous process of putting off the old man and putting on the new man to be otherwise?" (*If Thou Endure It Well*, p. 122-3) Marion G. Romney: "If I had the power, I would impress every member of the Church with the transcendent import to himself of strictly obeying the principles of the gospel. In these remarks I hope I can so present this matter that at least one of you will join with me in a resolution to make a greater effort to do so in the future than we have ever made in the past. With the great prize of eternal life set before us, and in light of the emphasis the Lord has put upon the fact that this eternal life is attainable only upon condition that we 'endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God,' it does seem to me, that no Latter-day Saint should be content to stand day after day in the same place on the way to eternal life. "...Because there are so many people about us who have no vision of the goal to which we are inspired by the gospel, we are in danger of becoming surfeited with the things of the world and are apt to slacken in our daily striving to move onward in our quest for eternal life. It has therefore been one of the burdens of Church leadership in all dispensations to encourage the Saints to keep these things constantly in their remembrance." (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1956, p. 16) Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: "Today, tomorrow, next week is the time for our preparation. In fact, it's a lifelong effort; it does not stop until we are SAFELY DEAD with our testimony still burning very brightly. We ought to reverence life and cherish every minute of it. It should be so precious to us that we feel compelled to commit ourselves to making each day the very best day that we can, preparing ourselves someday to meet our Heavenly Father.")

16 And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall ^aendure to the end, in following the ^bexample of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved.

17 Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. **For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and ^abaptism by water;** and then cometh a ^bremission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost. (The gate is both repentance and baptism. The gift of the Holy Ghost brings about a remission of sins. Baptism is the gate to the path that leads to exaltation.)

18 And then are ye in this ^astrait and narrow ^bpath which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which ^cwitnesses of the ^dFather and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive.

19 And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow ^apath, I would ask if all is ^bdone? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken ^cfaith in him, ^drelying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to ^esave. ("It is essential for any person to have an actual knowledge that the course of life which he is pursuing is according to the will of God to enable him to have that confidence in God without which no person can obtain eternal life. It was this that enabled the ancient Saints to endure all their afflictions and persecutions and to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing (not believing merely) that they had a more enduring substance (Heb 10:34). Having the assurance that they were pursuing a course which was agreeable to the will of God, they were enabled to take not only the spoiling of their goods and the wasting of their substance joyfully, but also to suffer death in its most horrid forms knowing (not merely believing) that when this 'earthly house of this tabernacle [was] dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens' Such was and always will be the situation of the Saints of God. Unless they have an actual knowledge that the course they are pursuing is according to the will of God, they will grow weary in their minds and faint...For a man to lay down his all-his character and reputation, his honor and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children and even his own life also, counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ—requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of God. It requires actual knowledge, realizing that when their sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest and be a partaker of the glory of God." Joseph Smith, Lectures on Faith, p. 67-68)

20 Wherefore, ye must press forward with a ^asteadfastness in Christ (One is steadfast in Christ when he pursues an undeviating course of obedience and righteousness. DCBM, 1:367), having a perfect brightness of ^bhope, and a ^clove of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and ^dendure to the end (of your mortal life), behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have ^eeternal life. (Bruce R. McConkie: "Sometimes someone will say: 'Well, I have been baptized into the Church; I am a member of the Church; I am a member of the Church; I'll just go along and live an ordinary sort of life; I won't commit any great crimes; I'll live a reasonably good Christian life; and eventually I will gain the kingdom of God.' I don't understand it that way. I think that baptism is a gate. It is a gate which puts us on a path; and the name of the path is the straight and narrow path. The straight and narrow path leads upward from the gate of baptism to the celestial kingdom of heaven. After a person has entered the gate of baptism, he has to press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, as Nephi expresses it, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men; and if he endures to the end, then he gains the promised reward." (*Conference Report*, Oct. 1950, p. 16 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p.34) Neal A. Maxwell: "We need to feast upon the words of Christ in the scriptures and as these words come to us from living prophets. Just nibbling occasionally will not do. (See 2 Nephi 31:20 and 32:3.) Feasting means partaking with relish and delight and savoring—not gorging episodically in heedless hunger, but partaking

gratefully, dining with delight, at a sumptuous spread carefully and lovingly prepared by prophet-chefs over the centuries. These words plus the gift of the Holy Ghost will tell us all things we should do. The scriptures, ancient and continuing, are the key of knowledge...Appreciation for and the acceptance of the scriptures and the words of the living prophets are much more important steps than many realize. The Lord has said, ‘. . . he that will not believe my words will not believe me—that I am.’ (Ether 4:12.) To turn aside His teachings is to turn away from Him, and disdain for His doctrines is disdain for Him.” (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, p. 28) “Since feasting on the word of God has a ‘more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than... anything else’ (Alma 31:5), the more of the word of God we have and act upon, the more we will press forward. Much spiritual energy is necessary for the marathon of discipleship.” (*A Wonderful Flood of Light*, p. 11) After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the saints. TPJS, p. 150. One who has made his or her calling and election sure has met and passed the tests of mortality. For him the day of judgment has been advanced, and the Lord seals an exaltation upon him. DCBM, 1:368)

21 And now, behold, my beloved brethren, this is the ^away; and there is ^bnone other way nor ^cname given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God. And now, behold, this is the ^ddoctrine of Christ (The doctrine of Christ is the plan and system whereby the children of God fulfill all righteousness through taking upon themselves the name of Christ in baptism, receiving and obeying the principles and ordinances of the gospel, and then enduring to the end in faith. DCBM, 1:368), and the only and true doctrine of the ^eFather, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is ^fone God, without end. Amen.

CHAPTER 32

Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost—Men must pray and gain knowledge for themselves from the Holy Ghost. [Between 559 and 545 B.C.]

1 AND now, behold, my beloved brethren, I suppose that ye ponder somewhat in your hearts concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way (Now that you’re on the path, what are you going to do? Ask the Lord for guidance and the Holy Ghost will guide you.). But, behold, why do ye ponder these things in your hearts?

2 Do ye not remember that I said unto you that after ye had ^areceived the Holy Ghost ye could speak with the ^btongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the Holy Ghost? (We are not being told simply that those who are properly baptized and have received the Holy Ghost can receive revelation; what we are being told is that it cannot be denied them. As the day follows the night so the light of heaven will shine upon them. By it Nephi here taught that such will be shown all things that they should do; and Joseph Smith was told that by it we might know all things that are expedient for us. Such is the doctrine of Christ. By the light of the Spirit that path leading to the presence of God is clearly marked, and all that we must do to traverse that path is plainly manifest. DCBM, 1:369)

3 ^aAngels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, ^bfeast upon the ^cwords of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will ^dtell you all things what ye should do. (As you read the scriptures, the Spirit will tell you what to do with your life. Enduring to the end including doing all the things we’re supposed to do in this life. Bruce R. McConkie: “Loaves and fishes perish, but there is a food which is eternal, ‘which endureth unto everlasting life.’

This is the food he is prepared to give them; it is the everlasting word, the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. As the woman of Samaria was invited to drink living water and never thirst more; so they were invited to eat living bread and never hunger more. This bread was available, without money and without price, from the Son of Man.” (*The Mortal Messiah*, Book 2, p. 371) Ezra Taft Benson: “More than at any time in our history we have need for greater spirituality. The way to develop greater spirituality is to feast on the words of Christ as revealed in the scriptures. One of the most significant happenings in recent Church history is the publication of the new editions of the standard works with the new footnotes and other helps. I think we can say without exaggeration that never before in any dispensation have the Saints been so abundantly blessed with the words of the Lord and His prophets. Now our challenge is to do as the Lord commanded: “Study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men” (D&C 11:22). (*Conference Report*, April 1984, p. 7) Elder Rulon T. Burton: “I add my voice to these wise and inspired brethren [referencing President Spencer W. Kimball, Bruce R. McConkie and Boyd K. Packer] and say to you that one of the most important things you can do as priesthood leaders is to immerse yourselves in the scriptures. Search them diligently. Feast upon the words of Christ. Learn the doctrine. Master the principles that are found therein. There are few other efforts that will bring greater dividends to your calling. There are few other ways to gain greater inspiration as you serve.” (From the General Priesthood Meeting, Apr. 1986, as quoted in the *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 81-2))

4 Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ^aask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.
5 For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will ^ashow (revelations of God to you personally) unto you all things what ye should do. (“There is no doubt, if a person lives according to the revelations given to God’s people, he may have the Spirit of the Lord to signify to him His will, and to guide and to direct him in the discharge of his duties, in his temporal as well as his spiritual exercises. I am satisfied, however, that in this respect, we live far beneath our privileges.” (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. and arr. by John A. Widtsoe, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973, p. 32. If a man is baptized and ordained to the Holy Priesthood, and is called upon to perform duties which pertain to that Priesthood, it does not follow that he must always have the Holy Ghost in person present with him when he performs his duty, but every righteous act which he may perform legally will be in force and effect, and will be acknowledged of God, and the more of the Spirit of God he possesses in his ministrations, the better for himself, and those will not suffer any loss unto whom he administers. Therefore, the presentation or gift of the Holy Ghost simply confers upon a man the right to receive at any time, when he is worthy of it and desires it, the power and light of truth of the Holy Ghost, although he may often be left to his own spirit and judgment. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 60-61)

6 Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and there will be no more doctrine given (Nephi tells his people that there shall be no more doctrine given them until Christ personally ministers among them. The full significance of this prophecy comes only in the reading of his visit in 3 Nephi. Let it suffice at this point to say that at that time the law of Moses was done away with among the Nephite people, the covenant of sacrament given them, and government of the Church reorganized with the calling of the Twelve, and undoubtedly Christ instructed them in the performance of vicarious ordinances as he did among the people of the Old World during his forty-day ministry. DCBM, 1:370) until after he shall ^amanifest himself unto you in the flesh. And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do.

7 And now I, Nephi, cannot say more; the Spirit stoppeth mine utterance (Joseph Fielding Smith: “Now what were the consequences of not praying, as they are recorded in this book regarding the Nephite people? Let me tell you. In the very same chapter, and in the verse preceding...Nephi says this: “Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and there will be no more doctrine given until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh...When he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things

which he shall say unto you ye shall observe to do. And now I, Nephi, cannot say more.’ “Why not? Because the people had refused to pray. Because they had hardened their hearts, even in his day. Therefore the Lord closed his mouth, and said, there shall be no more doctrine till Christ comes, so far as you are concerned, and I cannot say more, because the Lord won’t permit it. ‘The spirit stoppeth mine utterance, and I am left to mourn because of the unbelief and the ignorance and the stiffneckedness of men, for they will not search knowledge nor understand great knowledge when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be.’ Now that applies in our day. We have members of the Church to whom this ought to be read. They are not here; they do not come to conference. But men who have hardened their hearts, men who will not pray, men who will not search knowledge, who are not acquainted with the revelations of God as they have been made known unto us in these books and given unto us in this dispensation, notwithstanding the fact that the knowledge which has been given unto us is plain and easily to be understood. They shut their hearts against it, and refuse to search and to find that which the Lord has declared, which is for their eternal salvation and the salvation of all the world. Naturally such people are in darkness. We cannot afford to do that.” (*Conference Reports*, Oct. 1919, p. 145) “Revelation is promised us through our faithfulness; so, also, is knowledge pertaining to the mysteries and government of the Church. The Lord withholds much that he would otherwise reveal if the members of the Church were prepared to receive it. When they will not live in accordance with the revelations he has given, how are they entitled to receive more? The people in the Church are not living in full accord with the commandments the Lord has already required of them. “...We have little occasion to clamor for more revelation when we refuse to heed what the Lord has revealed for our salvation. However, the authorities are directed by revelation, and this is apparent to all who have the spirit of discernment. The Lord has not forsaken his people, although they have not always put their trust in him.” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p. 283)), and I am left to mourn because of the ^aunbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the ^bstiffneckedness of men; for they will ^cnot search ^dknowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in ^eplainness, even as plain as word can be. (Nephi was about to explain more than the doctrine of Christ, but was not allowed because of our unbelief. But if we have faith, and ponder, and seek, we can know what Nephi was not permitted to write.)

8 And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the ^aSpirit which teacheth a man to ^bpray ye would know that ye must ^cpray; for the ^devil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.

9 But behold, I say unto you that ye must ^apray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall ^bpray unto the Father in the ^cname of Christ, that he will ^dconsecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the ^ewelfare of thy soul. (Bruce R. McConkie: “There is nothing in the gospel that is better designed to keep the attention of men centered on God, on righteousness, and on their duties than is prayer. Every thought, word, and act is influenced or governed by the nature and extent of one’s communion through prayer with Deity. Over and over again the revelations command: Watch and pray always, lest ye enter into temptation.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, p. 581-2) Joseph Smith: “We would say to the brethren, seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields. Follow the directions of the Book of Mormon, and pray over, and for your families, your cattle, your flocks, your herds, your corn, and all things that you possess; ask the blessing of God upon all your labors, and everything that you engage in. Be virtuous and pure; be men of integrity and truth; keep the commandments of God; and then you will be able more perfectly to understand the difference between right and wrong-between the things of God and the things of men; and your path will be like that of the just, which shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 247))

CHAPTER 33

Nephi's words are true—They testify of Christ—Those who believe in Christ will believe Nephi's words—They shall stand as a witness before the judgment bar. [Between 559 and 545 B.C.]

1 AND now I, Nephi, cannot write all the things which were taught among my people; neither am I ^amighty in writing, like unto speaking; for when a man ^bspeaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men.

2 But behold, there are many that ^aharden their ^bhearts against the Holy ^cSpirit, that it hath no place in them; wherefore, they cast many things away which are written and esteem them as things of naught.

3 But I, Nephi, have written what I have written, and I esteem it as of great ^aworth, and especially unto my people. For I ^bpray continually for them by day, and mine ^ceyes water my pillow by night, because of them; and I cry unto my God in faith, and I know that he will hear my cry.

4 And I know that the Lord God will consecrate my prayers for the gain of my people. And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them; for it ^apersuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life ^beternal.

5 And it speaketh ^aharshly against sin, according to the ^bplainness of the truth; wherefore, no man will be angry at the words which I have written save he shall be of the spirit of the devil.

6 I ^aglory in ^bplainness; I glory in truth; I glory in my Jesus, for he hath ^credeemed my soul from hell.

7 I have ^acharity for my people, and great faith in Christ that I shall meet many souls spotless at his judgment-seat.

8 I have charity for the ^aJew—I say Jew, because I mean them from whence I came.

9 I also have charity for the Gentiles. But behold, for none of ^athese can I hope except they shall be ^breconciled unto Christ, and enter into the ^cnarrow ^dgate, and ^ewalk in the ^fstrait path which leads to life, and continue in the path until the end of the day of ^gprobation.

10 And now, my beloved brethren, and also ^aJew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and ^bbelieve in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall ^cbelieve in Christ ye will believe in these ^dwords, for they are the ^ewords of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they ^fteach all men that they should do good. (“The Book of Mormon is the most Christ-centered scriptural record ever published. Every doctrine within its covers is but an appendage to a central theme- the testimony that Jesus is the Christ. All who believe in Christ will believe the words of this book. One cannot truly believe in the Bible and at the same time not believe in the Book of Mormon. ‘There is not that person on the face of the earth,’ Brigham Young said, ‘who has had the privilege of learning the Gospel of Jesus Christ from these two books [the Bible and the Book of Mormon], that can say that one is true, and the other is false. No Latter-day Saint, no man or woman, can say the Book of Mormon is true, and at the same time say that the Bible is untrue. If one be true, both are; and if one be false, both are false.’ (JD 1:38.) To believe the words of one is to believe the words of both (see Mormon 7:9).” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 1, p. 375))

11 And if they are not the words of Christ, judge ye—for Christ will show unto you, with ^apower and great ^bglory, that they are his words, at the last day; and you and I shall stand face to face before his bar; and ye shall know that I have been commanded of him to write these things, notwithstanding my weakness. (If we believe in Christ and if we are familiar with the voice of Christ, we will know that these words are his words. If we do not know that—if any who read do not—it is not a fault in the language or the authors or the translator. It is a fault in the reader. And one day, standing before the bar of God, all those who have received this book will know it.)

12 And I pray the Father in the name of Christ that many of us, if not all, may be saved in his ^akingdom at that great and last day.

13 And now, my beloved brethren, all those who are of the house of Israel, and all ye ends of the earth, I

14 speak unto you as the voice of one ^acrying from the dust: Farewell until that great day shall come.

14 And you that will not partake of the goodness of God, and respect the words of the ^aJews, and also my ^bwords, and the words which shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the Lamb of God, behold, I bid you an everlasting farewell, for these words shall ^ccondemn you at the last day. (Ezra Taft Benson: “Do eternal consequences rest upon our response to this book? Yes, either to our blessing or our condemnation. Every Latter-day Saint should make the study of this book a lifetime pursuit. Otherwise he is placing his soul in jeopardy and neglecting that which could give spiritual and intellectual unity to his whole life. There is a difference between a convert who is built on the rock of Christ through the Book of Mormon and stays hold of that iron rod, and one who is not.” (*A Witness and a warning*, pp. 7-8 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 152) Marion G. Romney: “For me there could be no more impelling reason for reading the Book of Mormon than this statement of the Lord that we shall be judged by what is written in it.” (*Conference Report*, Apr. 1960, pp. 110-111 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 152) Ezra Taft Benson: “What is the major purpose of the Book of Mormon? To bring men to Christ and to be reconciled to him...[It] helps us draw nearer to God. Is there not something deep in our hearts that longs to draw nearer to God, to be more like Him in our daily walk, to feel His presence with us constantly? If so, then the Book of Mormon will help us do so more than any other book. It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path...When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance.” (*Ensign*, Nov. 1984, pp. 6-7 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 171))

15 For what I seal on earth, shall be brought against you at the ^ajudgment bar; for thus hath the Lord commanded me, and I must ^bobey. Amen.

Additional Reading:

Moroni 7:13-17

13 But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do ^agood continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and ^benticeth to do ^cgood, and to love God, and to serve him, is ^dinspired of God. (The test to prove that the Book of Mormon is of God: Does it inspire us to do good and to believe in Christ?)

14 Wherefore, take heed, my beloved brethren, that ye do not judge that which is ^aevil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil. (We have a responsibility to make sure we judge aright.)

15 For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to ^ajudge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night. (The light of Christ will enlighten everyone to know truth from error.)

16 For behold, the ^aSpirit of Christ is given to every ^bman, that he may ^cknow good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

17 But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do ^aevil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.

D&C 20:37 *And again, by way of commandment to the church concerning the manner of baptism*—All those who ^ahumble themselves before God, and desire to be baptized, and come forth with broken hearts and ^bcontrite spirits, and witness before the church that they have truly repented of all their sins, and are willing to take upon them the ^cname of Jesus Christ, having a ^ddetermination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by their ^eworks that they have received of the ^fSpirit of Christ unto the ^gremission of their sins, shall be received by baptism into his church. (They enter through the gate onto the straight and narrow path.)

71 No one can be received into the church of Christ unless he has arrived unto the years of ^aaccountability (age 8) before God, and is capable of ^brepentance.

72 ^aBaptism is to be administered in the following manner unto all those who repent—

73 The person who is called of God and has authority from Jesus Christ to baptize, shall go down into the water with the person who has presented himself or herself for baptism, and shall say, calling him or her by name: Having been commissioned of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

74 Then shall he ^aimmerse him or her in the water, and come forth again out of the water.