

Comments on 3 Nephi 10

1 AND now behold, it came to pass that all the people of the land did hear these sayings, and did witness of it. And after these sayings there was silence in the land for the space of many hours; 2 For so great was the astonishment of the people that they did cease lamenting and howling for the loss of their kindred which had been slain; therefore there was silence in all the land for the space of many hours.

3 And it came to pass that there came a voice again unto the people, and all the people did hear, and did witness of it, saying: 4 O ye people of these great cities which have fallen, who are descendants of Jacob, yea, who are of the house of Israel, how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you. 5 And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not. 6 O ye house of Israel whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart. 7 But if not, O house of Israel, the places of your dwellings shall become desolate until the time of the fulfilling of the covenant to your fathers.

8 And now it came to pass that after the people had heard these words, behold, they began to weep and howl again because of the loss of their kindred and friends.

v1-8 The voice of the Lord, as documented in the preceding chapter, was heard throughout all the land, and the people are astonished by it (v. 1). Silence prevails for many hours as the people stop lamenting over the destruction (v. 2), presumably to reflect on what the Lord has just told them.

After some time, the voice of the Lord again speaks to them such that they all hear it (v. 3). The Lord tells the survivors they are of Israel and He gladly blesses them and gathers them (v. 4), but they refuse to follow Him (v. 5). How often will the Lord gather Israel? As often as they repent and return to Him (v. 6). And if they do not, then they will be left desolate until the covenant with the Patriarchs is fulfilled (v. 7).

When the people hear this, they take up their lamenting for the dead again (v. 8). It is plain to them the destruction they faced was a result of their own rebellion against the Lord.

v4-7 Based upon subject, these verses can be arranged as follows:

A - 4 O ye people of these great cities which have fallen, who are descendants of Jacob, yea, who are of the house of Israel,

B - how oft have I gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and have nourished you.

C - 5 And again, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, who have fallen; yea, O ye people of the house of Israel, ye that dwell at Jerusalem, as ye that have fallen; yea, how oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens, and ye would not.

C - 6 O ye house of Israel whom I have spared, how oft will I gather you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, if ye will repent and return unto me with full purpose of heart.

B - 7 But if not, O house of Israel, the places of your dwellings shall become desolate

A - until the time of the fulfilling of the covenant to your fathers.

A distilled summary would be:

A - Fallen people who are of the house of Israel

B - I gathered and nourished you

C - how oft would I gather you, yet ye would not

C - I will gather you if ye will repent

B - If not, your dwellings shall become desolate

A - until the fulfilling the covenant to your fathers

This is classic covenant theology per Lev. 26 and Deut. 28. As long as Israel rejects the Lord, He will punish them. And when they repent, He will gladly receive them.

Note the ironic manner in which the B's are the opposite of the A's and C's. When the Lord blesses His people they tend to rebel against Him, and when the Lord punishes His people they tend to repent.

v4-7 These verses repeat the woe Jesus cast upon the Jews at Jerusalem in Matt. 23:37-38, but tailor it to the Nephite cities.

9 And it came to pass that thus did the three days pass away. And it was in the morning, and the darkness dispersed from off the face of the land, and the earth did cease to tremble, and the rocks did cease to rend, and the dreadful groanings did cease, and all the tumultuous noises did pass away. 10 And the earth did cleave together again, that it stood; and the mourning, and the weeping, and the wailing of the people who were spared alive did cease; and their mourning was turned into joy, and their lamentations into the praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord Jesus Christ, their Redeemer.

11 And thus far were the scriptures fulfilled which had been spoken by the prophets. 12 And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared-- 13 And they were spared and were not sunk and buried up in the earth; and they were not drowned in the depths of the sea; and they were not burned by fire, neither were they fallen upon and crushed to death; and they were not carried away in the whirlwind; neither were they overpowered by the vapor of smoke and of darkness.

v9-13 After three days the darkness disperses and the tremors cease (v. 9). The lamenting of the survivors ceases as well and it turns to joy in their Redeemer (v. 10), as they were spared the destruction. All things had happened just as the prophets of the Lord had predicted (v. 11). And it was those who did not reject and kill those prophets (v. 12) who survived the destruction (v. 13).

v9 "three days", according to Samuel's prophecy, the three days of darkness coincide with the three days between Christ's death and resurrection, cf. Hela. 14:20. The symbolism of the darkness dispersing upon Christ's resurrection is obvious.

14 And now, whoso readeth, let him understand; he that hath the scriptures, let him search them, and see and behold if all these

deaths and destructions by fire, and by smoke, and by tempests, and by whirlwinds, and by the opening of the earth to receive them, and all these things are not unto the fulfilling of the prophecies of many of the holy prophets. 15 Behold, I say unto you, Yea, many have testified of these things at the coming of Christ, and were slain because they testified of these things. 16 Yea, the prophet Zenos did testify of these things, and also Zenock spake concerning these things, because they testified particularly concerning us, who are the remnant of their seed. 17 Behold, our father Jacob also testified concerning a remnant of the seed of Joseph. And behold, are not we a remnant of the seed of Joseph? And these things which testify of us, are they not written upon the plates of brass which our father Lehi brought out of Jerusalem?

v14-17 Mormon now parenthetically comments directly to the reader concerning all of the predictions of the prophets concerning the destruction (v. 14) at the coming of Christ (v. 15). Zenos, Zenock (v. 16) and Joseph all testified concerning the remnant of the seed of Joseph, which is what the Lehites are. All of their prophecies are written on the Brass Plates (v. 17).

These verses read very much like Mormon is referring the reader to the Brass Plates, especially v. 17. While Mormon has access to them, unfortunately we do not at present.

18 And it came to pass that in the ending of the thirty and fourth year, behold, I will show unto you that the people of Nephi who were spared, and also those who had been called Lamanites, who had been spared, did have great favors shown unto them, and great blessings poured out upon their heads, insomuch that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto them-- 19 showing his body unto them, and ministering unto them; and an account of his ministry shall be given hereafter. Therefore for this time I make an end of my sayings.

v18-19 At the end of that year those who survived the great destruction have the great blessing of seeing the resurrected Christ (v. 18) and having Him minister them personally (v. 19).

v18 "in the ending of the thirty and fourth year", the great cataclysmic destruction occurred on the fourth day of the first month and Jesus' appearance to them occurs at the end of that year. This means there was almost a year between the destruction of ch. 8 and his appearance to the Lehites in ch. 11.

The year probably spans from Passover to Passover. We know Christ was crucified on Passover, and he appears to the Lehites almost a year later when a great multitude of them were gathered to the Temple in Zarahemla. As Passover was one of the great Biblically instituted Feasts of ingathering, the timing and the ingathering suggest it was that event.

"soon after the ascension of Christ", this phrase leads readers to typically believe the period of time between Jesus' resurrection and appearance to the Nephites was short. What does "soon" mean though? It's use in the Book of Mormon and in the Bible is ambiguous. Sometimes it means years (cf., 1 Ne. 7:14, Hela. 8:26) and sometimes it means immediately (cf. Mosiah 8:6). In the case of an ambiguous term such as this it is better to rely on the unambiguous metric of 3 Ne. 8:5 and 3 Ne. 10:18.

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