

## **General Comments on 3 Nephi 12-14**

The resurrected Christ recounts the Sermon on the Mount to the surviving Lehites. The account most closely follows that appearing in the Gospel of Matthew, but there are some noteworthy changes.

A number of the changes are simple clarifications, making explicit what was otherwise implicit. For example, in 12:3 Jesus puts a condition of "who come unto me" on the blessing pronounced on the "poor in spirit", or those who are depressed. This is intuitive as there is nothing intrinsically good about being depressed, but those who turn to the Lord in their afflictions are blessed, cf. Alma 32:13. Another example is 12:6 where Jesus indicates those who hunger after righteousness are filled with the Holy Spirit. And the insertion of 13:25 and 14:1 indicate plainly the intervening text is aimed specifically at the twelve disciples and not the general body of believers, which is ambiguous in the Matthew account.

Culture-dependent references are omitted, as in the case of 12:20 where the reference to Pharisees and scribes is omitted and in 13:32 the reference to the Gentiles is omitted.

Probably the most significant consistent thematic change in the text is that of the fulfilment of the Law of Moses. As in the case of 12:18-19 the Matthew account discusses the necessity of keeping the Law until it is all fulfilled while the 3 Nephi account talks about the Law being fulfilled. The same thing happens in 12:46-48 where the Matthew account condemns the present hypocrisies under the Law while the 3 Nephi account emphasizes that the Law simply doesn't apply anymore. This is what spurs the discourse on the Law in 15:1-10.

The single most significant change in the text is that of 12:48. The Matthew account has Jesus telling the people to be perfect as his Father is perfect. The 3 Nephi account has the resurrected and exalted Christ telling the people to be perfect even as He Himself and His Father are perfect. This clarifies the context of the command to be perfect as what Jesus is saying is the goal is to end up resurrected with eternal life. It is not a command to be utterly flawless in mortality as people commonly take it to mean, it is an admonition to have eternal life as the goal.

For detailed comments on the content of 3 Nephi 12-14 see my comments on Matt. 5-7.

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