

## Comments on 3 Nephi 18

This chapter recounts Jesus' comments dealing with the administration of the sacrament, which are primarily aimed at the 12 disciples.

There are a couple of interesting things to note about Jesus' institution of the sacrament among the Lehites. In the previous chapter Jesus was about to leave, but relented as the crowd didn't want him to go (cf. 17:1-4). His original intent was not to institute the sacrament at this point. His original intent was probably to institute it on the next day, as we see in 20:1-9. Why then would Jesus have done it now, instead of just waiting? This brings us to the next interesting point.

Note in v. 4-5 and then v. 9 it says the disciples and the multitude ate and drank "and were filled". They didn't just take a small portion of bread and a sip of wine, as a token as we do today, they made a meal of the bread and wine. Now, if we review the contents of ch. 11-17 we must conclude that it took some considerable time for all of the events described therein to transpire. Over the course of that time people are going to get hungry. Jesus provides a meal and teaches them what the sacrament means all at once. If this meal does coincide with the Passover Seder, then this would be Jesus again reinterpreting the Seder into the Sacrament. But, it seems likely the next day's Sacrament would have been intended as that, given the ad hoc nature of this meal.

Jesus had compassion on the multitudes and fed them during his mortal ministry (cf. Matt. 15:32), and the very first sacrament occurred during the Passover Seder (cf. Matt. 26:26), which is a full meal. So, feeding the Lehite multitude and introducing the sacrament at the same time would be expedient. And, the concept of relating the necessity of eating to sustain life with a religious principle is one common to Semitic culture, cf. Deut. 8:3.

Thus, Jesus' feeding the multitude because of their hunger explains why he instituted the sacrament a day earlier than originally intended.

1 AND it came to pass that Jesus commanded his Disciples that they should bring forth some bread and wine unto him. 2 And while they were gone for bread and wine, he commanded the multitude that they should sit themselves down upon the earth. 3 And when the Disciples had come with bread and wine, he took of the bread and brake and blessed it; and he gave unto

the Disciples and commanded that they should eat. 4 And when they had eaten and were filled, he commanded that they should give unto the multitude. 5 And when the multitude had eaten and were filled, he said unto the Disciples: Behold there shall one be ordained among you, and to him will I give power that he shall break bread and bless it and give it unto the people of my church, unto all those who shall believe and be baptized in my name. 6 And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread and blessed it and given it unto you. 7 And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

8 And it came to pass that when he said these words, he commanded his Disciples that they should take of the wine of the cup and drink of it, and that they should also give unto the multitude that they might drink of it. 9 And it came to pass that they did so, and did drink of it and were filled; and they gave unto the multitude, and they did drink, and they were filled. 10 And when the Disciples had done this, Jesus said unto them: Blessed are ye for this thing which ye have done, for this is fulfilling my commandments, and this doth witness unto the Father that ye are willing to do that which I have commanded you. 11 And this shall ye always do to those who repent and are baptized in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

v1-11 Jesus has the disciples bring bread and wine (v. 1) and tells the rest of the people to sit down (v. 2). When the disciples return with the bread and wine, Jesus blesses it and has the disciples (v. 3) and then the multitude partake (v. 4). Jesus then tells the disciples that one of them will be ordained to do the same (v. 5) following his example (v. 6). Jesus then explains the symbolism of the bread, and tells them as long as they do this the Spirit will be with them (v. 7). The blessing (v. 8) and filling repeats with the wine (v. 9). Jesus then blesses the people for keeping his commandments (v. 10) and explains to them the wine represent the blood he shed for them, and as long as they do this they will have the Spirit with them (v. 11).

These verses are arranged as a synthetical parallelism, with the administering of the bread paralleling the administration of the wine. Lynn's arrangement is more detailed than mine. Below I present a simplified version so as to emphasize the main doctrinal points:

A - (v. 3) he took of the bread and brake and blessed it; and he gave unto the disciples and commanded that they should eat.

B - (v. 4-5) And when they had eaten and were filled, he commanded that they should give unto the multitude. And when the multitude had eaten and were filled

C - (v. 7) this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

A - (v. 8) he commanded his disciples that they should take of the wine of the cup and drink of it, and that they should also give unto the multitude that they might drink of it.

B - (v. 9) And it came to pass that they did so, and did drink of it and were filled; and they gave unto the multitude, and they did drink, and they were filled.

C - (v. 11) and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me ye shall have my Spirit to be with you.

Note in v. 7 there is the additional symbolism of the bread representing his body which they have witnessed firsthand.

v1 "some bread and wine", the text doesn't explicitly mention anything miraculous about the crowd of 2500 being fed with bread and wine, but there certainly must have been something along the lines of Matt. 14:14-21 occurring. It would not be possible for the 12 disciples to carry enough bread and wine to feed 2500 people such that they are filled.

"bread", if the group is observing the Passover then the bread provided would be unleavened, like matzoh.

"wine", whether it was fermented or not is unclear as the term can be in reference to either fermented or unfermented juice.

v2 "they should sit themselves down", during the events of the preceding chapter Jesus has the people rise (cf. 17:19) and then the angels appear and all the people witness it (cf. 17:23-25). They probably had to move about through the crowd as in 11:14-15 for the people to retrieve their children and witness the angels. But, now that Jesus has finished blessing the children, he wants them to sit back down again, perhaps so his voice will carry better over the people. It doesn't seem likely he would have to ask them to sit down to keep their attention.

v4 "and were filled", while this might be a figurative reference to being filled with the Spirit, the text reads quite literally as being filled with bread and wine. Jesus does mention the Holy Spirit in v. 7 and 11 but does not connect the "filling" with the Spirit.

12 And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall do these things. And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock. 13 But whoso among you shall do more or less than these are not built upon my rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation; and when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon them, they shall fall, and the gates of hell are ready open to receive them. 14 Therefore blessed are ye if ye shall keep my commandments, which the Father hath commanded me that I should give unto you. 15 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him. 16 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.

v12-16 Jesus then commands the 12 disciples to practice the sacrament to remember him. If they do, then they will be blessed as they will be built on a sure foundation (v. 12). Those who do not practice the sacrament according to Jesus' command will be damned (v. 13).

Those who keep Jesus' commandments, which he received from his Father, will be blessed (v. 14). Jesus then gives them some more commandments. They ought to be on their guard and pray daily, otherwise the adversary will captivate them (v. 15). And, they should follow Jesus' example and therefore pray among

the baptized members of the ecclesia, even as he has prayed among them (v. 16).

v12 "ye shall do these things", in this case Jesus has the disciples fetch bread and wine and bring it to him so as to administer the sacrament. However, on the next day it is provided miraculously. In this case Jesus is telling the disciples to follow his example in getting the bread and wine and administering the sacrament, as opposed to expecting them to provide it miraculously as he did. In other words, Jesus is setting an example for them here which he expects them to follow. He does not expect them to follow the example of providing the sacrament miraculously.

v13 "but whoso among you shall do more or less than these", as is the case in 4 Ne. 1:27.

v16 "I am the light", meaning he is the example, as is indicated by the next line in the text. He is the light of truth (D&C 88:6-7), meaning the manifestation and ideal example of what truth represents with respect to how you ought to live your life.

17 And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words unto his Disciples, he turned again unto the multitude and said unto them: 18 Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. 19 Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name; 20 And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you. 21 Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed. 22 And behold, ye shall meet together oft; and ye shall not forbid any man from coming unto you when ye shall meet together, but suffer them that they may come unto you and forbid them not; 23 But ye shall pray for them, and shall not cast them out; and if it so be that they come unto you oft ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name. 24 Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up--that which ye have seen me do. Behold ye see that I have prayed unto the Father, and ye all have witnessed. 25 And ye see that I have commanded that none of you should go away, but rather have commanded that ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see; even so shall ye do unto the world; and whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation.

v17-25 is an expansion on the themes of v. 15-16 but aimed at the multitude instead of the 12 disciples. Note the themes here shift away from the individual, as Jesus was addressing 12 individuals in v. 15-16, to the immediate family and the ecclesia, the body of the church. Compare and contrast the two sets of commands:

15 Verily, verily,  
I say unto you,  
ye must watch and pray always,  
lest ye be tempted  
by the devil, and  
  
ye be led away captive by him.

18 Behold, verily, verily,  
I say unto you,  
ye must watch and pray always  
lest ye enter into temptation;  
for Satan  
desireth to have you,  
that he may sift you as wheat.  
19 Therefore ye  
must always pray  
unto the Father in my name;  
20 And whatsoever ye shall ask  
the Father in my name,  
which is right,  
believing that  
ye shall receive,  
behold it shall be given  
unto you.  
21 Pray in your families  
unto the Father,  
always in my name,  
that your wives and  
your children may be blessed.  
22 And behold,  
ye shall meet together oft;  
and ye shall not forbid  
any man from coming unto you  
when ye shall meet together,  
but suffer them  
that they may come unto you  
and forbid them not;

16 And as I have prayed among you  
even so shall ye pray  
in my church, among my people

in my name.

23 But ye shall pray for them,  
and shall not cast them out;  
and if it so be that  
they come unto you oft  
who do repent and are baptized  
ye shall pray for them  
unto the Father,  
in my name.

Behold I am the light;

I have set an example for you.

24 Therefore,  
hold up your light that  
it may shine unto the world.  
Behold I am the light  
which ye shall hold up--  
that which ye have seen me do.  
Behold ye see that  
I have prayed unto the Father,  
and ye all have witnessed.  
25 And ye see that  
I have commanded that  
none of you should go away,  
but rather have commanded that  
ye should come unto me, that  
ye might feel and see;  
even so shall ye do  
unto the world; and  
whosoever breaketh  
this commandment  
suffereth himself to be led  
into temptation.

While covering the identical themes of watching, praying and following Jesus' example, the commands to the separate groups are different based upon their responsibilities. The 12 disciples are to watch over themselves (v. 15) and pray for the members of the ecclesia, following Jesus' example (v. 16). The multitude are to watch over themselves (v.18), pray deliberately (v. 19-20), pray over their families (v. 21) and pray for and fellowship people are who are not part of the ecclesia, following Jesus' example (v. 22-25).

v19 "whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation", a warning against pride and elitism, cp. Alma 32:5, 4 Ne. 1:26.

26 And now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he turned his eyes again upon the Disciples whom he had chosen, and said unto them: 27 Behold verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you another commandment, and then I must go unto my Father that I may fulfil other commandments which he hath given me.

28 And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it; 29 For whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink of my flesh and blood ye

shall forbid him. 30 Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out from among you, but ye shall minister unto him and shall pray for him unto the Father, in my name; and if it so be that he repenteth and is baptized in my name, then shall ye receive him, and shall minister unto him of my flesh and blood. 31 But if he repent not he shall not be numbered among my people, that he may not destroy my people, for behold I know my sheep, and they are numbered. 32 Nevertheless, ye shall not cast him out of your synagogues, or your places of worship, for unto such shall ye continue to minister; for ye know not but what they will return and repent, and come unto me with full purpose of heart, and I shall heal them; and ye shall be the means of bringing salvation unto them.

33 Therefore, keep these sayings which I have commanded you that ye come not under condemnation; for wo unto him whom the Father condemneth. 34 And I give you these commandments because of the disputations which have been among you. And blessed are ye if ye have no disputations among you. 35 And now I go unto the Father, because it is expedient that I should go unto the Father for your sakes.

v26-35 Jesus turns his attention back to the 12 disciples (v. 26), and gives them instructions on the administration of the sacrament before he has to leave (v. 27).

He tells them not to give the sacrament to anyone who is unworthy (v. 28), as eating it unworthily will bring damnation on the person (v. 29). But, even though the person should not be offered it, they still should be permitted among the congregation and ministered to. And, if the person repents and is baptized then they may partake (v. 30). If they repent, then they are not to be considered part of the ecclesia (v. 31), but even still, they should not be excluded from the congregation as they may eventually repent (v. 32).

He indicates to the disciples that as long as they do these things they will avoid condemnation (v. 33) as well as contention (v. 34). He then tells them he must leave, and that it is advantageous for them that he does leave (v. 35).

v35 Jesus doesn't spell out why it is expedient for him to leave, and exactly how it is for their sake. The footnotes on the 1981 edition Book of Mormon suggest Jesus' role as advocate and intercessor, but there isn't anything in the context suggesting Jesus is going to his Father to do that. Rather, Jesus' earlier statement in 17:4 suggests he needs to go off and see others of scattered Israel.

From the context, I would have to assume what Jesus is referring to is what happens in 19:1-3. The longer he stayed there with them the less time this group had to spread the word



that Jesus would be back tomorrow. As it was people "did labor exceedingly all that night" so they could see him the next day. Had he waited any longer these people might have been excluded.

36 And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of these sayings, he touched with his hand the Disciples whom he had chosen, one by one, even until he had touched them all, and spake unto them as he touched them. 37 And the multitude heard not the words which he spake, therefore they did not bear record; but the Disciples bare record that he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost. And I will show unto you hereafter that this record is true. 38 And it came to pass that when Jesus had touched them all, there came a cloud and overshadowed the multitude that they could not see Jesus. 39 And while they were overshadowed he departed from them, and ascended into heaven. And the Disciples saw and did bear record that he ascended again into heaven.

v36-39 Jesus then touches and speaks to each of the twelve disciples (v. 36) giving them authority to give the Holy Ghost to people (v. 37). After he gives all of them the authority, a cloud overshadows the entire multitude such that they cannot see (v. 38), and Jesus ascends into heaven. The multitude does not see, but the disciples do see Jesus ascend into heaven (v. 39).

v36 "he touched...the disciples", we are informed in Moroni 2 what it is Jesus said and did.

v37 "he gave them power to give the Holy Ghost", this strongly suggests the Lehites did not previously have the Melchizedek Priesthood, as if they did why would Jesus then re-ordain them? Throughout the Book of Mormon text preceding this the Holy Ghost is falling on worthy people (cf. Mosiah 18:14), there are no accounts of laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

v38 "a cloud", the presence or Spirit of God is commonly characterized by the presence of a cloud, cf. Exod. 13:21, Exod. 19:9, Num. 11:25, Isa. 6:4.

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