

Comments on 3 Nephi 23

In this chapter, Jesus continues teaching the people (v. 14), specifically endorses the writings of the prophet Isaiah (v. 1-5), and then has them correct an omission (v. 6-13).

1 AND now, behold, I say unto you, that ye ought to search these things. Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah. 2 For surely he spake as touching all things concerning my people which are of the house of Israel; therefore it must needs be that he must speak also to the Gentiles. 3 And all things that he spake have been and shall be, even according to the words which he spake. 4 Therefore give heed to my words; write the things which I have told you; and according to the time and the will of the Father they shall go forth unto the Gentiles. 5 And whosoever will hearken unto my words and repenteth and is baptized, the same shall be saved. Search the prophets, for many there be that testify of these things.

v1-5 After a series of selective Isaiah (cf. 20:32-45, 21:8-10, 21:29) and Micah quotes (cf. 20:16-19, 21:12-13) and a lengthy quote of Isaiah (ch. 22), Jesus recommends the people study the Old Testament Prophets (v. 5), and particularly emphasizes study on the book of Isaiah (v. 1). These prophets have spoken about all things that relate to Israel, so they have commented on the relationship between Israel and the Gentiles as well (v. 2). All of the things they have spoken will be fulfilled (v. 3, cp. 15:6-8). Thus, Jesus admonishes them to pay attention and write down what he has told them so His words will go to their ancestors through the Gentiles (v. 4). And whoever, Gentiles or Israelite, will receive and pay attention to those written words, will repent, be baptized and be saved (v. 5).

6 And now it came to pass that when Jesus had said these words he said unto them again, after he had expounded all the scriptures unto them which they had received, he said unto them: Behold, other scriptures I would that ye should write, that ye have not. 7 And it came to pass that he said unto Nephi: Bring forth the record which ye have kept. 8 And when Nephi had brought forth the records, and laid them before him, he cast his eyes upon them and said:

9 Verily I say unto you, I commanded my servant Samuel, the Lamanite, that he should testify unto this people, that at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me that there were many saints who should arise from the dead, and should appear unto many, and should minister unto them. And he said unto them: Was it not so? 10 And his disciples answered him and said: Yea, Lord, Samuel did prophesy according to thy words, and they were all fulfilled. 11 And Jesus said unto them: How be it that ye have not written this thing, that many saints did arise

and appear unto many and did minister unto them? 12 And it came to pass that Nephi remembered that this thing had not been written. 13 And it came to pass that Jesus commanded that it should be written; therefore it was written according as he commanded.

14 And now it came to pass that when Jesus had expounded all the scriptures in one, which they had written, he commanded them that they should teach the things which he had expounded unto them.

v6-14 Jesus is teaching the people the meaning of various Scriptures (v. 6) when an omission in the testimony of one of the prophets is addressed (v. 7-13). After correcting this omission, Jesus returns to expounding the Scriptures and tells the people to teach what they have just learned from him (v. 14).

v7-13 Jesus has Nephi bring the written records to him (v. 7) and when Nephi sets them before him he looks at them (v. 8) and asks Nephi whether Samuel's prophecy concerning the resurrection of the dead was fulfilled (v. 9). Nephi responds affirmatively (v. 10), and Jesus asks him why the prophecy wasn't written down (v. 11). At which point Nephi realizes it wasn't (v. 12), and Jesus tells him to write it, and he does so (v. 13).

v6 "other scriptures I would that ye should write", it would appear from this statement that while Jesus was expounding the meaning of the scriptures he had to fill some things in, including the omitted detail from Samuel and some of the words of Malachi. After giving them these scriptures, he continues teaching, cf. 26:1.

Thus, it would appear the text from 24:6-26:2 are all a continuation of Jesus' teaching from ch. 20-23 without any real interruption. But, Mormon abridges out a considerable amount of material in 24:6-26:2 and only keeps the two sections of text which Jesus explicitly stated must go to future generations, cf. 26:6-8. So, while ch. 20-23 are extremely detailed recounting of Jesus' teachings, ch. 24-25 are extremely selective recountings of Jesus teachings per 26:2 and 26:6-9. Mormon apparently summarizes the material he omitted in 26:3-5.

v7 "bring forth the record which ye have kept", this indicates Jesus was not reading along the Nephite record and expounding their meaning when he discovered something missing. He was teaching them the meaning of various scriptures and came to some point where he knew, presumably by inspiration, their written record was lacking. Verse 8 says Jesus "cast his eyes upon

them", suggesting he didn't search through them to any great degree, but only looked at them.

v9 "my servant Samuel, the Lamanite", some have suggested the omission of this statement by Samuel is potentially indicative of racism or bigotry among the Nephites as Samuel was a Lamanite. This seems unlikely as it was Nephi and his father Nephi who kept the records and they apparently documented everything else which Samuel said. It was probably an honest oversight. Now, this is not to say the Nephites at the time were not generally bigoted against the Lamanites, as that certainly appears to be the case, cf. Hela. 14:10. It is only to say that Nephi and his father Nephi were probably not bigots.

"Was it not so?", there is no explicit statement in the 3 Nephi account of there being resurrected persons seen, and yet there must have been as Nephi responds affirmatively. It is possible the angels of 17:24-25 and 19:14-15 are in fact resurrected beings (cf. D&C 129:1). If this is the case, then they were seen by many people as predicted.

The potential problem with this reading is the prediction by Samuel (cf. Hela. 14:25) and the statement by Jesus in this verse that the resurrected people should be seen "at the day that the Father should glorify his name in me", suggesting the day of his resurrection, not a year later when the angels of 17:24-25 and 19:14-15 are seen by the Lehite multitudes.

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