

Book of Mormon 16
Ye Shall Be Called the Children of Christ
(Mosiah 4-6)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is further inspirational background on the significance of King Benjamin's speech).

I. King Benjamin's words, as guided by an angel, had a powerful effect upon the people.

- A. They bowed to the earth in great humility (Mosiah 4:1).
- B. They received the Spirit because of their acceptance and faith (Mosiah 4:2).
- C. They felt great joy due to the remission of sins and a beautiful peace of conscience (4:3).

II. King Benjamin counseled them **to always retain in remembrance this remission of their sins.**

- A. In doing so, they should no longer have any desire to injure another (4:13).
- B. President Joseph F. Smith recounted the time of his baptism when these very things occurred. He wrote, "I speak of the influence and power of the Holy Spirit that I experienced when I had been baptized for the remission of my sins. The feeling that came upon me was that of pure peace, of love and of light. I felt in my soul that if I had sinned --- and surely I was not without sin --- that it had been forgiven me; that I was indeed cleansed from sin; my heart was touched and I felt that I would not injure the smallest insect beneath my feet. I felt as **though I wanted to do good everywhere to everybody and to everything. I felt a newness of life, a newness of desire to do that which was right. There was not one particle of desire for evil left in my soul.** I was but a little boy, it is true, when I was baptized, but this was the influence that came upon me, and I know that it was from God, and was and ever has been a living witness to me of my acceptance of the Lord" (Conference Report, April 1898, pp. 65-66). (Emphasis added)

III. Benjamin taught if we truly love God we'll succor others, as we are succored by Him (4: 16).

- A. Our substance does not belong to us but to God (4: 22).
- B. To retain a remission of our sins we must impart of our substance to the poor (4: 26).
- C. We must feed and clothe others, both **physically and spiritually. Both are important.**
 - 1. We know how to feed and clothe others physically, but how do we feed and clothe others spiritually?
 - *We feed others spiritually when we teach them the gospel.**
 - *We clothe others spiritually when we help the living go to the temple,**
 - *We clothe the deceased when we go to the temple and do their temple work.**

D. King Benjamin stressed we are all, after all, beggars before God.

Elder Enzo Busche's father had been unsure in life if God existed. After Enzo joined the church, however, the father noticed that Enzo was happy and more content, and he came to recognize the value of his new belief and his church. He urged him to stay close to it. He seemed to feel himself unworthy, at his age, however, to ask God to take him into his fold, having so long neglected him. In time he passed away.

Later, Elder Busche had a powerful dream. In it, he heard a knock on the door and saw a young man who then opened it. This man seemed extremely earnest in his duties, and said to

Enzio, "We are ready." It was only then that he realized that his father was with him, standing behind him, and seemingly not allowed to enter the door. Furthermore, his father, who had always been very confident and dignified, seemed *now like a pleading beggar. It seemed his eyes pleaded "don't forget! This is important --- the most important thing that can ever happen to me!"* (Emphasis added).

After the vision had ended, Elder Busche understood that he had been blessed to see the missionary who had taught his father the gospel in the Spirit World. He also realized the message was that his father was now ready, and was pleading, like a beggar, with him not to forget him, but to see that his temple work was done.

This experience reinforces the truth taught by King Benjamin. We are all indeed beggars. All of us would be spiritually destitute if it were not for the atonement of Jesus Christ. When we recognize the word "Atonement" means "to cover," the sense of our being in rags, as are most beggars, becomes very real --- for without Christ's atonement we would be clothed only in spiritual rags. **All of us truly must beg for the covering of Christ's atonement.**

IV. The Spirit wrought a mighty change in the hearts of the people (Mosiah 5:2).

A. This change was so great they could prophesy (5:3).

B. There awakened in their hearts a longing to covenant with God (5:4).

V. Because of their great spiritual experience and covenant with Christ, the people were **spiritually begotten of Christ, and thus would become his spiritual sons and daughters** (5:7).

A. Now as sons and daughters, they would automatically take upon themselves His name.

B. Christ would know the name by which they were called, for it was by *His* name (v. 9-10).

C. For faithful followers this name would never be blotted out.

D. The faithful should always retain this name written in their foreheads (v. 13).

E. This is realized, in part, when Christ is never out of one's thoughts, although it also has significance to sacred work done in the temple.

F. The faithful should continue to anxiously serve the Lord, for how can one know the Master whom one has not served (v. 13), for our thoughts would be far from Him.

G. Those bearing His name should always abound in good works.

H. Then Christ will seal us His (v. 14).

I. It is significant that Mosiah then took the names of all those who so covenanted.

VI. There are highly significant ways people take upon themselves the name of another.

A. One is that just described here. Children are given the name of their father.

1. It is interesting that Jesus' Hebrew name (as translated directly into English) would have been Joshua ben Joseph. (For on earth he was known as the son of Joseph).

2. One of the meanings of the name Joseph, as told by Hugh Nibley, is "Suffering Servant."

3. The Savior told his disciples to "take upon your cross and follow me." This would apply to all who become His spiritual children, who are asked to walk in their Father's footsteps.

As I partake of the sacrament and covenant to "take upon" myself the name of Christ, I feel this includes this concept. I feel I am covenanting to do far more than being called a "Christian." To me, I am covenanting to bear that part of His name which means I am willing to suffer in service for His sake (i.e., I am willing to bear all things for the sake of His name).

B. Another way of taking the name of someone else is by marriage --- **the bride taking the name of the bridegroom**. Jesus used this concept to teach of His relationship to us.

1. This is made most clear in John's "Revelation," where Christ's covenanted people are referred to as a "Bride" and Himself as the Bridegroom.

2. "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev 21:2).

3. As the vision continued, John saw Christ's people, who serve Him, and he saw that **"his name shall be in their foreheads"** (Rev 21:4).

4. Furthermore, in Jewish wedding traditions, when the bridegroom asked someone to be his wife, he offered a cup of wine. If she drank of this cup, it signified that she was indeed willing to take upon herself his name, by becoming his wife.

5. When I partake of the sacrament, I try to remember this tradition as I drink the cup, and it makes my willingness to "take upon myself His name" even more personal and meaningful.

This causes reflection **on the very intimate relationship between Christ and His people. I realize what a holy concept it is to "take upon myself His name."** I also then reflect upon and rejoice in **temple ordinances which remind me that I, as other faithful members, am sealed up as His.**

VII. Those who are willing to take upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ, [which includes serving Him and our fellow men], **will find themselves upon the right hand of God. Those who refuse to do so will find themselves upon His left hand (Mosiah 5:9-10).**

A. Interestingly, the name Benjamin means "Son of the right hand" (*BD* 620). King Benjamin's life showed he fulfilled that role.

B. The concept of being either on the right hand or left hand of God was portrayed on many of the thousands of ancient plates found in Michigan [mentioned in lesson 15].

C. Jesus stressed this concept Himself in His final recorded parable to His disciples in Jerusalem (Matthew 25:31-46). He promised that at His Coming He would divide the people into the sheep and the goats, with the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left.

Again, final division would come from how we serve our fellow men: whether we give drink to the thirsty, food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and comfort to those who are in prison.

If we understand all Jesus and King Benjamin taught, above ministering to physical needs, **our greatest efforts should be to minister spiritual food and drink (By sharing His Gospel); to help clothe the naked (With the covering garment of His Atonement); and by not only visiting those in prison who are captive, but by helping set them free! (By performing sacred Temple ordinances for them).**

The reason these spiritual services are most important is because **they will bless the lives of those we serve for all Eternity**, while any physical service rendered is usually temporary.

VIII. King Benjamin ended his kingship, not only by placing a new, consecrated, righteous king upon the throne, but by appointing "priests to teach the people, that thereby they might hear and know the commandments of God, and to stir them up in remembrance of the oath which they had made" (Mosiah 6:3). Thus he sought to further minister to their spiritual needs. He tried in every way to make God's teachings continue to have full effect upon their lives.

IX. Note that Mosiah, the new king, began his reign at the age of thirty, also a "type" of Jesus Christ the True and Future Heavenly King. His life too would exemplify Christ's (Mosiah 6:6-7).