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Stories from the Book of Mormon: Lesson 7—Christ's Visit to the Nephites

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Abstract: This lesson's objective was to show that Christ visited the Nephites and established His Church among them, emphasizing the importance of baptism.

Stories from the Book of Mormon

Lesson 7—Christ's Visit to the Nephites

For optional use of Relief Societies in stakes and missions in countries other than the United States, in lieu of social science.

Tuesday, May 23, 1944

Note: For the full effect of the lesson it is imperative that the teacher and the class have at hand the Book of Mormon.

Lesson objective: To show that Christ visited the Nephites and established His Church among them, emphasizing the importance of baptism.

THE most powerful and far-reaching event in the Book of Mormon is the appearance of the risen Christ to America. This visitation stands as the towering height which all the prophets of the new world, who lived either before or after His coming, emphasize as the classic theme in their writings. The events which lead up to this appearance are dramatically told in the words of Samuel the Lamanite who was sent by God to warn the city of Zarahemla.

Eighty or more years had passed under the rule of the Judges, during which time the Nephites had passed through periods both of peace and trouble; for often they had forgotten the words of the prophets and their predictions of Christ. So it was with the people in the land of Zarahemla in the year 6 B.C. Because of the hardness in the hearts of the people in this land at that day, the Lord had sent again unto them a prophet called Samuel the Lamanite whom they had driven from their city before. And Samuel spoke unto the people from the city wall proclaiming with a loud and warning voice:

“Behold, I, Samuel, a Lamanite, do speak the words of the Lord

which he doth put into my heart; . . . that the sword of justice hangeth over this people Yea, heavy destruction awaiteth this people . . . and nothing can save this people save it be repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, who surely shall come into the world, and shall suffer many things and shall be slain for his people” (Helaman 13:5-6).

“Ye do not remember the Lord your God in the things with which he hath blessed you, but ye do always remember your riches . . . yea, your hearts . . . do swell with great pride, unto boasting, and unto great swelling, envyings, strifes, malice, persecutions, and murders, and all manner of iniquities. For this cause hath the Lord God caused that a curse should come upon the land, and also upon your riches . . .” (Helaman 13:22-23).

“ . . . Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name. And behold, this will I give unto you for a sign at the time of his coming; . . . there shall be no darkness, insomuch that it shall appear unto man as if it was day.

“Therefore, there shall be one day

and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night; and this shall be unto you for a sign; for ye shall know of the rising of the sun and also of its setting; therefore they shall know of a surety that there shall be two days and a night; nevertheless the night shall not be darkened; and it shall be the night before he is born.

“And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you.

“And behold this is not all, there shall be many signs and wonders in heaven.

“And it shall come to pass that ye shall all be amazed, and wonder . . .” (Helaman 14:2-7).

And so it did come to pass five years after the predictions of Samuel the Lamanite that the signs of Christ's birth in Jerusalem were shown forth in the heavens to the great amazement of the nations who lived upon the American continent. But beyond all power of human understanding were the sorrows and woes that befell these people about thirty-three years later at the crucifixion of the Savior. Then, indeed, were other words of Samuel which he had also spoken, that day from the walls of Zarahemla remembered, for he had said:

“ . . . behold, in that day that he shall suffer death the sun shall be darkened and refuse to give his light unto you; and also the moon and the stars; and there shall be no light upon the face of this land, even from the time that he shall suffer death, for the space of three days, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead.

“Yea, at the time that he shall yield up the ghost there shall be thunderings and lightnings for the space of many hours, and the earth shall shake and tremble; and the rocks which are upon the face of this earth . . . shall be broken up;

“Yea, they shall be rent in twain, and shall ever after be found in seams and in cracks, and in broken fragments upon the face of the whole earth, yea, both above the earth and beneath.

“And behold, there shall be great tempests, and there shall be many mountains laid low, like unto a valley, and there shall be many places which are now called valleys which shall become mountains, whose height is great.

“And many highways shall be broken up, and many cities shall become desolate.

“ . . . that while the thunder and the lightning lasted, and the tempest . . . that darkness should cover the face of the whole earth for the space of three days” (Helaman 14:20-24, 27).

The people were told that out of the darkness should come a still small voice from the heavens that should be heard throughout the land; and notwithstanding it should be a small voice it would pierce every soul to the center.

Then through the terrible darkness did come the still small voice saying:

“Wo, wo, wo . . . unto the inhabitants of the whole earth except they shall repent; for the devil laugheth, and his angels rejoice, because of the slain of the fair sons and daughters of my people; and it is because of

their iniquity and abominations that they are fallen!

"Behold, that great city of Zarahemla have I burned with fire, and the inhabitants thereof.

"And behold, that great city Moroni have I caused to be sunk in the depths of the sea, and the inhabitants thereof to be drowned" (Nephi 9:2-4).

"O all ye that are spared because ye were more righteous than they, will ye not now return unto me, and repent of your sins, and be converted, that I may heal you?" (3 Nephi, 9:13).

"And verily I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice . . ." (3 Nephi, 15:21).

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning . . . and in me hath the Father glorified his name . . . I am the light and the life of the world . . ." (3 Nephi 9:15; 18).

And thus Christ did come to a

remnant of the tribe of Joseph, the Nephites, who lived upon the great continent of America—in fulfillment of prophecy. And not only did He come, but He stayed long enough to establish His Church among this people, and to say unto them, "Blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized." His was a gospel of positive action for the believer. In the plain and beautiful words which He spoke to the Nephites may be found the way for one to become a member of His Church.

Suggestions for Active Reading and Discussion

So essential is the ordinance of baptism that the Savior stressed its need over and over again. Read chapter 18 of 3 Nephi and note the number of times and the different ways in which the Savior brings into His commands the important ordinance of baptism.

No better parting assignment to end this course of lessons on *Stories From the Book of Mormon* could be given than to suggest a careful reading of chapters 8 to 26 of 3 Nephi, bearing in mind the closing verse of chapter 26, which reads: "And they who were baptized in the name of Jesus were called the church of Christ."

REBINDING

Alice Morrey Bailey

Let's take our book to the binder—
 Too many pages are lost;
 Some remaining are bitter,
 Others are stormy and tossed,
 It has been carelessly handled,
 Trampled with thoughtless feet,
 Left in the garden, neglected—
 Wide open to wind and sleet.
 We learned so late what was precious,
 The cover is old and torn;
 But we still have the day that you kissed me,
 And the day that our son was born.