

March 18–24: 2 Nephi 31–33, "This is the Way"

Overview

Back in chapter 30 Nephi stated that he had finished his writings. But at the beginning of this weeks lesson he tells us that he feels that he should write, “a few words... concerning the doctrine of Christ.”

Evan A. Schmutz

Nephi was in the process of finishing his last engraving on the record. He wrote, ‘And now, my beloved brethren, I make an end of my sayings’ (2 Nephi 30:18). But soon after, the Spirit urged Nephi to return to his record and write a concluding message.... ‘Wherefore, the things... I have written sufficeth me, save it be a few words... I must speak concerning the doctrine of Christ’ (2 Nephi 31:2).

“How eternally grateful we are for those ‘few words’ and for the Spirit compelling Nephi to write them. Nephi’s treatise on the doctrine of Christ is a treasure to those who feast upon it.” (CR, April 2023)

Baptism

Nephi expounds on Christ's baptism and identifies the reasons why it was essential for even Christ to be baptized.

2 Nephi 31:4-11

4 Wherefore, I would that ye should remember that I have spoken unto you concerning that prophet which the Lord showed unto me, that should baptize the Lamb of God, which should take away the sins of the world.

5 And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water, to fulfil all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water!

6 And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfil all righteousness in being baptized by water?

7 Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he showeth unto the children of men that, according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments.

8 Wherefore, after he was baptized with water the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove.

9 And again, it showeth unto the children of men the straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them.

10 And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father?

11 And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my

Beloved Son.

What reasons are given that it was essential even for Christ to be baptized?

(He humbled himself before the Father
Kept the Father's commandments
Showed us the straitness of the path and narrowness of the gate
Set example for us to follow)

Robert D. Hales

“Jesus was baptized to fulfill His Father’s commandment that sons and daughters of God should be baptized. He set the example for all of us to humble ourselves before our Heavenly Father. We are all welcome to come into the waters of baptism. He was baptized to witness to His Father that He would be obedient in keeping His commandments. He was baptized to show us that we should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (CR, Oct. 2000)

2 Nephi 31:13

13 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.

How does Nephi describe the focus that we must apply to follow Christ and receive the baptism of fire?

(full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent)

Joseph B. Wirthlin

“Nephi taught that we must walk the path of faith 'with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God.' We know that 'a double minded man is unstable in all his ways' and that we cannot 'serve two masters.'

“The Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind.'... The Savior declared that the first and great commandment is, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' Only when we give our all and overcome our pride and walk the path of faith without deviation can we honestly sing, 'Lord, accept our true devotion.'” (CR, April 1997)

The Holy Ghost

Christ tells us the Father will give the Holy Ghost to all who are baptized in His name.

2 Nephi 31:12

12 And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do.

What must we do before we can receive the gift of the Holy Ghost from the Father?

Joseph Smith

"There is a difference between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not taken this sign or ordinance upon him, the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God would have left him. Until he obeyed these ordinances and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of hands, according to the order of God." (HC 4:555)

After we have received the gift of the Holy Ghost what must we do to retain it?

Joseph Fielding Smith

"I believe... that we have a great many members of this Church who have never received a manifestation through the Holy Ghost.... Therefore, a great many members of the Church do not have that guidance, Then some cunning, crafty individual will come along teaching that which is not true, and without the guidance which is promised to us through our faithfulness, people are unable to discern and are led astray. It depends on our faithfulness and our obedience to the commandments of the Lord if we have the teachings, the enlightening instruction, that comes from the Holy Ghost. When we are disobedient, when our minds are set upon the things of this world rather than on the things of the kingdom of God, we cannot have the manifestations of the Holy Ghost." (BYU Speeches of the Year, 25 Oct. 1961)

What are some of the blessings that we can receive if we live so the Holy Ghost will be our constant companion?

Parley P. Pratt

"The gift of the Holy Spirit... inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness, and charity.... It develops and invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man.... In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart, light to the eyes, music to the ears, and

life to the whole being.” (Key to the Science of Theology, pg. 96-97)

Bruce R. McConkie

“By the power of the Holy Ghost -- who is the Sanctifier -- dross iniquity, carnality, sensuality, and every evil thing is burned out of the repentant soul as if by fire; the cleansed person becomes literally a new creature of the Holy Ghost. He is born again.

“The baptism of fire is not something in addition to the receipt of the Holy Ghost; rather, it is the actual enjoyment of the gift which is offered by the laying on of hands at the time of baptism. ‘Remission of sins,’ the Lord says, comes ‘by baptism and by fire, yea, even the Holy Ghost.’ (D. & C. 19:31)” (Mormon Doctrine, pg.73)

Strait and Narrow Path

Nephi describes where repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost places us

2 Nephi 31:17-18

17 Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.

18 And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye entered in by the way ye should receive.

What must we do enter the gate that puts us on the strait and narrow path?

(For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost)

Bruce R. McConkie

"When we come out of the world and join the Church, when we become members of this kingdom, we get on a path which is named the 'strait and narrow path.' Membership in the Church starts us out toward a goal which is called eternal life. Baptism is not an end in itself; it is the beginning of the process of working out our salvation with fear and trembling before the Lord." (CR, Oct. 1955)

Nephi tell us what we need to do to progress along the path

2 Nephi 31:19-20

19 And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for ye have not come thus far save it were by the word of Christ with unshaken faith in him, relying wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save.

20 Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

What are some of the things that we must do to progress along the path?

(press forward with a steadfastness in Christ
having a perfect brightness of hope
a love of God and of all men
feasting upon the word of Christ
endure to the end)

Neal A. Maxwell

"The... imagery of pressing forward suggests... earnestness and energy and not a passive stroll.... The imagery also emphasizes a direction-forward, not side trips and detours.... Pressing forward suggests an enthusiastic, relentless progress along the path, 'with a steadfastness in Christ'." (Wherefore Ye Must Press Forward, pg. 34)

Russell M. Nelson

"To feast means more than to taste. To feast means to savor. We savor the scriptures by studying them in a spirit of delightful discovery and faithful obedience. When we feast upon the words of Christ, they... become an integral part of our nature." (CR, Oct. 2000)

Nephi perceives that he has not been plain enough, that we still wonder what to do after we are on the path. So he tells us exactly how to find out.

2 Nephi 32:1-5

1 And now, behold, my beloved brethren, I suppose that ye ponder somewhat in your hearts concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way. But, behold, why do ye ponder these things in your hearts?

2 Do ye not remember that I said unto you that after ye had received the Holy Ghost ye could speak with the tongue of angels? And now, how could ye speak with the tongue of angels save it were by the Holy Ghost?

3 Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.

4 Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

5 For behold, again I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.

How do we learn about what it takes to progress along the path?

(Feast upon the words of Christ. They will TELL you all things what ye should do.

The Holy Ghost will SHOW you all things what ye should do)

Jorge F. Zeballos

“If we are to do God’s will, if we are to be responsible to Him, we must begin by learning, understanding, accepting, and living according to His will for us.... Having the desire to do what is right is not enough if we do not make sure to understand what our Father expects from us and wants us to do....

"We know that the path that leads to the 'tree, whose fruit [is] desirable to make one happy' [and] 'the way, which leadeth unto life'—is narrow. It takes effort to journey along the path, and 'few there be that find it.'

"Nephi teaches us that 'the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.' Then he adds that 'the Holy Ghost ... will show unto you all things what ye should do.' Thus, the sources that allow us to learn our duty are the words of Christ that we receive through ancient and modern prophets and the personal revelation that we receive through the Holy Ghost." (CR, April, 2015)

Nephi tells us that the Father himself stated how important it is to endure to the end

2 Nephi 31:15-16

15 And I heard a voice from the Father, saying: Yea, the words of my Beloved are true and faithful. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

16 And now, my beloved brethren, I know by this that unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he cannot be saved.

Joseph B. Wirthlin

“Enduring to the end is the doctrine of continuing on the path leading to eternal life after one has entered into the path through faith, repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost. Enduring to the end requires our whole heart....

“Enduring to the end means that we have planted our lives firmly on gospel soil, staying in the mainstream of the Church, humbly serving our fellow men, living Christlike lives, and keeping our covenants. Those who endure are balanced, consistent, humble, constantly improving, and without guile. Their testimony is not based on worldly reasons—it is based on truth, knowledge, experience, and the Spirit.” (CR, Oct. 2004)

Nephi's witnesses that the Book of Mormon will tell us how to follow Christ

2 Nephi 33:10

10 And now, my beloved brethren, and also Jew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good.

Ezra Taft Benson

“We hardly fathom the power of the Book of Mormon, nor the divine role it must play, nor the extent to which it must be moved...”

“[God] has revealed to me the absolute need for us to move the Book of Mormon forward now in a marvelous manner. You must help with this burden and with this blessing which He has placed on the whole Church.”
(CR, Oct. 1988)