

TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 4, Lecture 98
3 Nephi 11
Christ at the Nephite Temple

For those of you who weren't here last week, I'm Brother Welch from over in the Law School and will be trying to lecture to you for the next couple of sessions while Brother Nibley is over in Egypt. I gave you an assignment to memorize something in the Sermon on the Mount or the Sermon at the Temple. By a show of hands how many of you remembered to do that and actually memorized a few verses. That's good. I'd be curious to know which ones you memorized. [Response from first student is not audible, except that he memorized 3 Nephi 11:34.]

So the teaching of the gospel doctrine is there—right “off the bat,” one of the first things [Jesus] needs to cover. Which one did you memorize?

“I did 3 Nephi 12:3–9 [the Beatitudes], and I also memorized the Matthew ones so I could see when he used the word *all* and when he didn't.”

Good comparison. Well, I hope that you'll keep that up, that you will continue to enrich your understanding of those things, and that it will pay you rich dividends as you internalize those things and make them a part of your life. I'll make a couple of comments before we get started on the subject matter. First, I'd like to remind you again that tomorrow evening is the Richard Rust lecture in the Tanner Building at 7:30. I think you'll be well rewarded if you come. On the roll coming around you'll see where you can check there next time if you do attend. A couple of you asked for a list of books that have been written by scholars about the Sermon on the Mount. I've listed on the board the names of a few: Hans D. Betz, W. D. Davies, Joachim Jeremias, Harvey McArthur, Georg Strecker, and Hans Windisch. Those that were written in German have all been translated into English fairly recently. I take a different approach than most of them, as you will see, but there is a wealth of valuable information in those materials for you if you would like to consult those texts.

Today, I would like to turn our attention to the content of the message of Jesus in the first part of the Sermon at the Temple. This is a sobering, deeply spiritual experience that the Nephites there at the temple in Bountiful were blessed to participate in. I am always humbled whenever I approach this text. I hope and pray that as we go through this material you will be in tune with the Spirit, and that things can be opened to your minds and your understanding. As King Benjamin said, these texts are here that we can relive the experiences that those people were blessed to experience. I hope you will strive to understand this material, not only with your mind but also with your heart, that you can have the blessings of the gospel and the fullness of the priesthood that these materials offer to you and invite you to come unto.

Last week we went through some the basic background material and established that this was a sermon (more than a sermon) delivered in a ritual or festival context at a sacred temple in a covenant-making setting, and that it was part of an esoteric body of literature. Several times the disciples are told that they cannot write or tell everything that is going on here. This invites us to imagine and strive to understand what else might have been going from the clues that are given to us. We have to realize—and this is one of the things that your typical Gentile scholarship on the Sermon on the Mount doesn't do—that what we are given here is only a glimpse of a greater reality and greater experience beyond that which could be recorded there in the records.

I think it goes without saying that if Jesus only had a short time to spend with the Nephites, what he would have taught them would have been things of ultimate importance. It is at the temple that we should expect to find, and in fact do find, a systematic and single presentation of the entire gospel—one that puts you into perspective with all that has gone on, where you have come from, why you are here, and what it will take for you to achieve exaltation. As we will see, this is in fact what we find in the Sermon at the Temple. I will suggest to you an interpretation that invites you to let your mind think about temple, covenant, sacred, and secret kinds of things as we go through this material. I'm not suggesting that what the Nephites had was exactly the same as what you will encounter and have encountered in Latter-day Saint temples, but the elements are there. They are there in a more astonishing and more profound manner than anyone has previously suspected.

Let me come back to the Sermon on the Mount for just a minute, though. There is a problem with the Sermon on the Mount for most non-Latter-day Saint interpreters. It is fair to say that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew has been a real puzzle for those people who have tried to understand it. Take, for example, a statement from Joachim Jeremias: "What is the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount? This is a profound question and one which affects not only our preaching and teaching, but also, when we really face up to it, the very roots of our existence. Since the very beginning of the church, it has been a question with which all Christians have had to grapple, not only the theologians among them, but in the course of the centuries a whole range of answers have been given to it." What is the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount? Hans D. Betz commiserates: "New Testament scholarship up to the present has offered no satisfactory explanation of this vitally important text." I could read you a number of these. Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "In modern times it remains possible to understand and interpret the Sermon on the Mount in a thousand different ways."

What's the problem? Why is it that Betz, who is the dean of the Divinity School at the University of Chicago, feels that there has yet to be an adequate explanation given of the Sermon on the Mount? Well, there are a number of problems. One of the main concerns is the question, what holds it all together? Is the Sermon on the Mount simply a scrapbook of miscellaneous sayings of Jesus that have been thrown together out of context—organized by Matthew some time after the death of Jesus? Or is it a coherent sermon delivered by the Master with some underlying organization and structure that, however elusive it may be, is indeed there. There have been a number of attempts made by people to try to organize and conceptualize the theme of the Sermon on the Mount. What does it mean? You'll have people suggesting, for example, that the theme of the Sermon on the Mount is the fulfillment of the old law by Jesus. Others will say, "No, the theme is 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you,' " the golden rule. The problem with any of these interpretations is that none of them can account for the text as a whole. None of them can explain why, if that is the theme, Jesus says certain things as he does. If the theme, for example, is "do unto others and be good to everyone," what then is the statement "cast not your pearls before the swine" doing in the sermon, which seems to say the opposite? Wouldn't you, if you were a swine, want to have good things offered to you?

We have to then turn to some kind of a higher-level explanation, rather than something thematic within the text, in order to find a way to draw the text together and offer an explanation of what is going on in the Sermon on the Mount. The Book of Mormon offers us such a solution. It asks us to think as we read this text about temples, covenant making, etc. As far as I know, it is the only interpretation that will account adequately for all of the elements in the speech, and it does so masterfully. Consider for just an overview the *prima facie* case that what we are talking about here is some kind of a ritual text. As you have seen in your review of this material, it begins in chapter 11 with certain initiatory kinds of ordinances—concerns about ordination to the priesthood, baptism, and a few other things that have to be taken care of before you can go on into the instruction portion of the text. When you get to the actual commandments that are

given, Jesus labels these his commandments several times, but only in the Book of Mormon. This is not a term that is known from the New Testament in this context.

First, we go through, in 3 Nephi 12:18–19, the giving of the law of obedience. What is that law of obedience? It is that we must sacrifice and bring the broken heart and contrite spirit. As the Nephites learned in 3 Nephi 9, as the voice of Jesus spoke from the heavens, that is now the replacement, the new law of sacrifice that they are to live. Next we go to an instruction about not being angry or speaking evil of one another. The third instruction pertains to the law of chastity, and he teaches the importance of the new understanding of the commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” He then teaches them the law pertaining to generosity toward those who are in need, which has been identified in the Doctrine and Covenants as the law of the gospel, as we will see in a minute. He then goes on to explain that they must reach yet to a higher order and teaches them that they must be totally committed to the kingdom of God, that a man cannot serve two masters. A man must serve either God or mammon, and he tells us what we must do in order to lay up treasures in heaven with our wealth.

There are other elements that are involved as well. Even a person who is completely unfamiliar with the Latter-day Saint temple could readily see how a number of other elements in the Sermon on the Mount could easily be placed into a ritual context. For example, we will see that the use of beatitudes was a common and initial statement of promises in mystery religions and in ritual to tell the initiate what the ultimate blessings of obedience would be. We will see that there is a requirement in the Sermon on the Mount that if anyone has hard feelings against his brother, he should lay his gift at the altar and go and be reconciled before coming to proceed any further. There are instructions in the Sermon on the Mount as to how to swear one’s oaths. They should not be sworn by the heavens or by the earth, but they should simply be a *yes* or *no*. There is instruction as to how to pray in a group context, and ultimately Jesus robes his disciples in garments more glorious than the temple garments of even Solomon, and then explains to them how they will pass through the judgment and ultimately be admitted into the presence of God. That is just a skeleton, but it should suggest to you at least a *prima facie* case that invites closer scrutiny of each aspect of this speech in a ritual context.

I propose that we go through the forty-seven elements that I’ve listed of the Sermon at the Temple. I don’t know how far we will get into them today. I’d like you to think as we talk about each of these stages, if you assume a temple or covenant-making context, how each element makes better sense. If it is understood in connection with defining a covenant relationship between man and God, [consider] how it makes better sense in connection with establishing a new order of a covenant people, and how it makes better sense if you imagine it being ritualized, or having at least the capacity of being built into a ritual ceremony. One of the main features of ritual in ancient Israel and elsewhere is to take the great, momentous events between God and man and ritualize those events. The momentous events in the Garden of Eden lend themselves to ritualization. The momentous events of God appearing at Mount Sinai become the basis of Israelite temple ritual as they reenact, remember, and renew the covenant that was made at Sinai. Three days before the appearance of God on Mount Sinai, the Israelites washed themselves and washed their garments to present themselves before they finally “chickened out” in Exodus 19. But that became a ritual part of their observance of that same kind of thing, as most of their ceremonies then became three-day observances. Here, too, we have Jesus speaking three days to the Nephites. It would be, therefore, quite logical for the Nephites also to have ritualized the momentous teachings of Jesus which brought in a new heaven and a new earth in their world.

As we look at these individual elements, I also invite you to think and share with me if you know of others that I haven’t thought of, corroborating factors. Usually, the interpretation that we have been given by people of the Sermon on the Mount is a kind of bland, ethical sort of thing—that Jesus is just teaching ethical principles. It’s nice to turn the other cheek, for example. Therefore, people haven’t thought in terms of temple or ritual origins or connections. We should look for

corroborating factors, both in the esoteric literature of early Christianity of the ancient Near East and in temple typology around the world. Does Jesus mention that we should become a fruitful tree because that is a part [of temple typology]? That's in 3 Nephi 14, "by their fruits ye shall know them." What kind of tree is he talking about? Is it significant that it is a part of all basic temple typology, that the tree of life is present? Is that a connection, or is that linkage too obscure? Those are the kinds of questions we want to look for, especially as we consider possible connections with the Israelite temple. We know that the Nephites continued to observe the law of Moses, as we said last time. We know that, in doing so, they would have followed basic temple ritual as they knew it and as they built their temples modeled after the Temple of Solomon. One of the things that is absolutely astonishing to the Nephites about what Jesus does and gives them is how their old had become transformed into the new. That suggests to me that there are logical connections between what Jesus is giving them and what they had known before. ****help here***It wasn't that everything was just thrown away from the old and a new was put in its place, but that everything that had been given before, 2 Nephi 11 tells us, typifies of Christ and of the ultimate teaching of the gospel that he would give them here. Those kinds of connections we also need to look for.

With that in mind let's turn our attention to the specifics. First of all, before we get to the forty-seven themselves, we should realize that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew cannot be understood as just coming "out of the blue," out of nowhere. Biblical scholars have wrestled with what kind of things must be presupposed in order for the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew to make sense. For example, it must be, Jeremias concludes, presumed that the people who listened to Jesus already knew something of Jesus as the "light of the world." The light of Christ is presumed as a given in that text. When Jesus says, "I give unto you to be the light of the world," he is sharing with those people the fact that he is the light of world. That concept in Matthew 5 doesn't make much sense unless you assume that they already knew something about Jesus as the light of the world. You have to assume that the people who received the Sermon on the Mount understood something about Jesus initiating a new age; a new world had come. "Thy kingdom come"—that prayer doesn't make any sense unless you already know something of the teaching that Jesus brought a new age, the teaching that Jesus fulfilled the old law, and something of the goodness of God—that he lets the rain fall on the righteous and the wicked, for example. The idea that the disciples themselves will become Jesus' successors is also presupposed in the text of the Sermon on the Mount. It is never stated, but when he tells his disciples that they will suffer persecution for his name's sake and when he tells them that they should not give heed for the morrow, it presupposes that you already understand their role as Jesus' successors.

Jeremias, pages 26–29, tries to explore, just from the text of the New Testament what some of this background must have been against which the Sermon on the Mount has to be understood. It's interesting to me that as you go down his list (I've just given you the main points of his list), each of those elements is prepared and presented in the material that precedes 3 Nephi 12. In other words, I think he has come fairly close to understanding the preface to the Sermon on the Mount, for it is in 3 Nephi, chapters 9 and 11 that Jesus himself announces, "I am the light of the world." It is there that he explains that he has fulfilled the law—"in me is the law of Moses fulfilled" (3 Nephi 9:17). It is clear that the goodness of God stands behind what Jesus is doing, as the Father himself announces Jesus, "This is my beloved Son." Certainly, the role of the disciples as the successors of Jesus is spelled out as he ordains them. One of the things he attends to throughout this is the ordination and giving them power so that they can continue the ministration of the gospel after he leaves.

Let's then turn to some of the specific, initial steps that Jesus and this ceremony present to the Nephites. One: It begins with a thrice-repeated announcement from the heavens. It's interesting that this begins with a soft, small, piercing voice that comes out of heaven. It's not understood at first. It has to be repeated three times before it can be heard, and as it is increasing in clarity and loudness the people finally comprehend what it is saying, "Behold, my Beloved Son, in whom I

am well pleased . . .” It is a way, as you can imagine, of presenting a voice, speaking from heaven from an unseen source, that announces and initiates the ceremony. The presence of God is thereby established, and his involvement in all else that precedes is unmistakable.

Two: Total silence falls upon the people, and they are said to have opened their ears. It’s kind of hard to imagine opening your ears. You can open your eyes, but to open your ears [seems strange]. If the sound is there, it’s hard not to hear it. But in a ritual context, the opening of the eyes and the opening of the ears is symbolic of opening your heart and your understanding to the mysteries—to the secrets, to the rituals, to the sacred things that will then unfold. We know this from King Benjamin’s speech (Mosiah 2:9), where he says, “I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view.” Functionally, something like this could certainly be analogized to what we see in early Christian ritual coming from Cyril of Jerusalem. Brother Nibley has already spelled this out for you in the appendix of *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, that one of the initial ordinances given to early Christians was the anointing of eyes and ears. Cyril says that they ritualized this and said, “. . . that you might receive hearing ears of the mysteries of God.”

It’s another clue of what we are talking about here when the text tells us that their eyes and ears were opened. In fact that happened to them. It will happen to others as this is ritualized and handed down as a part of preparing them “that your eyes may see and your ears may hear.” Jesus specifically said in connection with the teaching of the parables that the reason that he speaks in parables is so that everyone won’t understand. You think, why on earth is Jesus not wanting everyone to understand? Well, there are some things that people aren’t yet ready to receive. He will give them and let them understand at the level at which they are prepared to receive. The same thing is true with the temple. Hardly anything is taught in the temple that cannot be taught outside the temple. Those principles and doctrines are all there for everyone to hear and see, but it is only in certain connections that you really see and you are fully taught.

Three: This is 3 Nephi 11:7. The third point is that the people finally understand the words being spoken by the Father. “Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.” What we have here is the presentation of a pattern, showing that God the Father does not personally minister to human beings. He does things by sending representatives. He sends his Son down to carry out assignments. Jesus very clearly understands and expresses his representative role in all that he does with the Nephites; at the end (3 Nephi 18:35) he says, “And now I go unto the Father, because it is expedient that I should go unto the Father for your sakes.”

What is expedient about his returning? He is returning and reporting, and it is expedient—a word that is used always in the Book of Mormon in connection with the efficacy of saving ordinances. Check the use of that unusual word. It doesn’t mean *expedient* in the sense of “just pragmatic” or “this is an expedient kind of solution, a short cut to get out of a problem.” No, it’s *expedient* meaning “expediting, efficient, effective.” He will then go to report and ascend to the Father, as the disciples bore record.

Four: In 3 Nephi 11:8, the next step is that Jesus then himself comes down. One of the roles of sacred ritual is always to bring the sublime down to earth, and earth up to heaven. The coming down is important, and indeed Jesus comes down, “descending out of heaven . . . clothed in a white robe.” Graphically, he came down with teachings and instructions. He also came robed in garments that are worthy of mention, but given no further elaboration here.

Five: The fifth thing that is mentioned is the great silence that continues. The mouths of the people are closed, and it says, “They durst not open their mouths, even one to another.” They didn’t know what this meant. They didn’t recognize this being at first.

Question: Christ could choose to just appear, but why is it that he always descends or ascends until he disappears? Is there any symbolism in that? Answer: Well, beyond the coming down, I guess it is helpful for a person when you receive a visitation to know where he is coming from. I would rather have him come down than come up. I don’t know that there is any more symbolism than that. This connection between the heaven and the earth though is quite prominent. In the visions in the apocalyptic literature, it is always the prophet who is being taken up into heaven. So one would assume that the heaven coming down to meet him will have to come physically down—although you are right. If Kolob happened to be on the other side of the earth in its rotation, he ought to be coming up through the earth. We don’t know what kind of a landing it was, but it’s a graphic kind of thing. And again, it’s the sort of thing that lends itself to a dramatic representation or repeating for other people to be taught—sort of the thing that occurred. Well, I think the silence is important. The other place, of course, that silence was mentioned is back in 3 Nephi 10:1. After the voice had spoken from heaven and after the destruction and the darkness, you can imagine the agony that people would have gone through as they sat there “for the space of many hours,” it says in complete silence. After all the lamenting, weeping, and tumult they were just absolutely silent for many hours.

Six: Following the silence that is mentioned in the text, point number six is that the people were invited to identify this visitor by the marks on his hands. At first, of course, the Nephites were confused and very cautious, not knowing exactly who it was who was visiting them. But as they discussed it and first thought he was an angel or a messenger (of course, in Greek and Hebrew the word for *messenger* and *angel* are the same), they finally realized that it was the Lord himself. This confusion was only removed as Jesus stretched forth his hands and identified himself as “Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.” Here we have another instance of a place where the Nephites would have recognized, quite probably, the way in which some old aspect of their beliefs had now become fulfilled and new in the visitation of Christ. It is found in Zechariah, a prophet who lived and worked shortly after the time of Lehi in Israel, that we read, they shall look upon me whom they have pierced. “And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.” The identification by marks on the hand was also something that early Christians understood. For example, in the “Odes of Solomon,” one of the earliest sets of hymns that were used by the Syriac saints in Damascus, we read from the words of one of their texts, “I extended my hands and approached my Lord, for the expansion of my hands is his sign.”

Seven: On realizing who this divine visitor who was with them was, the Nephites responded by falling down. Bowing down—or certainly more dramatically, falling down in full prostration before the Lord—is not only an instinctive response when coming into the presence of a being so sublime, but also a very common element of ritual. Prostration had certainly long been a part of the customary rituals and practices of the Nephites, as we learn in Mosiah 4. Right at the beginning of that chapter, the people, in response to the words of the angel given by Benjamin, all fall down and cry to Benjamin to apply the atoning blood that their sins might be taken away.

Following that is point eight: Jesus asks the people to arise one by one and to come forth and thrust their hands into his side, “and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet.” All of the people then went forth and did this one by one. We have no idea exactly how long this would have taken. There were some 2,500 people who were present—men, women, and children. Perhaps they went individually one by one; perhaps they went as family groups. We don’t know how long each one was allowed to linger as they worshipped and revered their Savior, who they then knew with a surety was the Savior of the world. Perhaps no more than a brief, even token, contact would have been possible in some circumstances. We just don’t know exactly how

long was involved here. It would have taken quite a while if they delayed and lingered to savor that wonderful moment.

Once they had all had the opportunity to pass before Christ, point number nine is the response which seems to be in unison as the entire group sang out with one accord, “Hosannah, blessed be the name of the most high God.” This is reminiscent of Melchizedek’s blessing of Abraham, found in Genesis 14. At this point we might say their mouths were truly opened. The silence was broken with the shout of *Hosannah*, which in Hebrew means “save now.” This phrase is somewhat puzzling to many biblical scholars. It has been alternatively interpreted as an intercessory prayer, asking that the Lord might now send salvation; asking for assistance, that it be given to the Messiah. It has also been understood as some kind of royal supplication addressed to the Messiah, or perhaps a call of triumphant joy. Whatever it was, we know that the phrase *Hosannah* had great Messianic significance, and that it was associated with the anticipated coming of the Messiah, with the cleansing of the temple, and was certainly at home in Israelite temple ritual.

The Hallel, an ancient festival hymn which was a part of Israelite temple liturgy, reads “Hosannah. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.” (Psalm 118.) This was certainly well known in Israel, so it is significant, I think, that in this temple context at the temple in Bountiful all of these Nephites broke forth, crying out in unison spontaneously with this familiar liturgical temple expression. With that, they all fall once again at the feet of Jesus and worship him.

Number ten: He asks one to then come forward. It was necessary for Jesus to ordain men to the priesthood. He first ordained Nephi and then eleven others. At first in the ceremony he ordains them to the Aaronic Priesthood, I assume, because he only gives them at this time the power to baptize. It won’t be until the end of the day (at the end of 3 Nephi 18) that these same twelve are given the power to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost and authority traditionally associated with the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Finally, on the baptismal and priesthood point, number eleven, Jesus then turned to explain baptism in more detail. He explained the manner of baptism, complete with the giving of the words of the prayer that the priest should offer—calling the candidate by his own name and offering the prayer that the baptism might be performed appropriately. These baptisms weren’t carried out immediately as the Nephites heard Jesus at this time. That would have taken far too much time. But they were carried out the very next morning. I’ve wondered why they didn’t stop at that point to go and actually be baptized. One reason might be that as they had come up to the temple that morning it’s quite possible that they had already properly washed and purified themselves, as an Israelite normally would have done in coming up to the temple on a routine day.

This perhaps then gives us one other instance where we might see the old form of washing and purification transformed into the new ordinance or baptism with the coming of Jesus. We know, for example, from excavations around the temple of Jerusalem, dating back to around the second century B.C., that there were *mikvaoth* or baptismal fonts lining the roads up to the temple so that those who were pilgrims coming to the temple could ritually immerse themselves and be then pure to present themselves at the temple. Those kinds of older forms of washings—which are precedented as early as Exodus 19:10 where Moses told the Israelites to wash their clothes and purify themselves against the day when the Lord would appear to them at Mt. Sinai—have now been completely replaced by the true order of baptism which Jesus instructed them in.

Point number twelve: We then turn to assuring the absence of evil from the midst of this people and this congregation. It turns out that it is a standard element of most ritual drama to experience in the ritual some kind of confrontation between the forces of good and evil—with

good confronting evil and evil being driven out and expelled. We don't see an actual ritual combat anywhere here in the Sermon at the Temple, but we do have a simple authoritative statement that the influences of evil and contention should be done away. With this simple statement we hear no more in the Sermon at the Temple about Satan or his power. Only in the Lord's Prayer do we have again a reassertion of the point that those people who have learned and have become righteous then have the ability to be delivered from evil or from the Evil One, as that Greek text may be translated.

In point number thirteen we have the mention of witnesses. Jesus identified three who would witness the making of the covenant on this occasion. This is a unique occasion; there are no other witnesses so sublime and holy as Jesus, God the Father himself, and the Holy Ghost who will witness this dispensation of the gospel in the presence of the resurrected Lord himself. So here we have three witnesses—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—witnessing of the making of the covenant and the giving of the law on this occasion. This also would have, I'm sure, been reminiscent and familiar practice to the Nephites and the Israelites. From the Old Testament we know that it is in the mouth of two or three witnesses that all things are to be established. One may think also of the three messengers who visited Abraham, or the calling of witnesses in Joshua 24:15, where Joshua says, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve" and then points out that the people themselves on that occasion were witnesses of what they had done. That is an important element of most covenant making—that it be done in the presence of witnesses—and certainly on this occasion we have that condition fulfilled as well.

After the devil is gone, number fourteen, the point turns to the interest of seeing that all people on the earth are taught the gospel. Jesus twice defines his gospel in exactly the same terms. It is the gospel of repentance, baptism, and becoming as a little child. To those who do, Jesus promises the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is the essential doctrine of the kingdom, and Jesus wants more than anything else that his ordained disciples will go forth to all the people to declare the words which he has spoken to them, for all people should have an opportunity to hear and receive these things so that all of Adam's posterity may participate in the plan of salvation and have the opportunity for exaltation.

In order to ease their way, Jesus then exhorts the people to give strict heed to the words of the disciples whom he has chosen. Point fifteen is his commending of the disciples to these people. Jesus turned to the multitude, blessed them, and admonished them with these words: "Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you and to be your servants." He blessed all who would believe their instruction and accept the words that they would speak.

We only have a few minutes left in this hour, so we will conclude this lecture. Beginning with the next lecture we will begin to move back into material that is familiar to us from Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount. We will begin there with a discussion of the Beatitudes—special blessings that some scholars have also seen to have ritual significance. I invite you to read in preparation for the next lecture especially chapters five and six of Matthew and chapters twelve and thirteen of 3 Nephi. Read them again with this model or hypothesis in mind and I promise you that you will see things there that you have never seen before. I'll look forward to seeing you next week.