

# Mosiah 4-6 – S03E16

“A Mighty Change”

As the Nephites internalise King Benjamin’s message, it works a miraculous change in their hearts, in their futures, and in their very characters. In what ways was this message active in the Israel they left behind, and how is it active today?

I’m Mark Holt, and this is Gospel Talktrine.

Welcome to Gospel Talktrine. We’re still this week discussing King Benjamin’s address from Mosiah chapters 2 through 5. Today our topic of study is Mosiah chapters 4 through 6, “A Mighty Change”.

## Last week’s listener question: A proof by contradiction

A couple of questions that I wanted to discuss from last time. I had a question about the example of *Malfeous* that I brought up, so I wanted to go into that a little bit deeper. Basically, what I did without realising it, was I began a “proof by contradiction,” and I’ll explain what that is.

In philosophy, if you want to prove something, one of the ways is to assume it’s not true, and then prove that what that assumption leads you to doesn’t work. So, just to give you a little background on what I discussed last time. King Benjamin said, “There is no other name by which man can be saved, except by the name of Jesus Christ.” So what I was doing was “Let’s assume there was another name,” and from there we would go on to prove that it doesn’t work. And thereby we can show that Jesus Christ *is* the only name.

To give you another example, to make it a little more clear – I’ll get back to the Malfeous thing in just a minute, and explain what I meant – but to give you another example, let’s imagine that you lived on one plateau. And you know that God is on the next plateau over. But separating you is this uncrossable chasm. And then a man comes and says, “You know what, I know where there is a bridge, that we can get across this chasm, and we can get to God.” And you follow this man, and he leads you to a bridge, and the bridge does indeed lead you to God.

Now, wouldn’t you think that man was – first of all, you’d think he was great, but if you found out, “You know what, I lived right next to this chasm, and then he took me away from this chasm first, and then he brought me through this dangerous path, where I was subject to being lost, and attacked, and eventually I made it back to the chasm, and to the bridge, and went across.”

But then you found out there was a closer bridge to where you lived. You would think that that man, instead of being a great guide, you would think he was a poor guide.

And so that was what I was trying to show. If there was another name that could lead us to God, that was easier to follow than Jesus Christ, then wouldn’t the prophets be terrible people, terrible guides, if they hadn’t shown us that other name.

But no prophet has done that. No prophet in the Old Testament, in the Book of Mormon, in modern times, in the New Testament, no one has ever talked about any other name.

## Anti-Christs in the Book of Mormon: Salvation by following the law of Moses

Except now, we have in the Book of Mormon, we have the number of anti-Christs who believe that there is another name, and the name that they choose is Moses. They think, “If we just follow the law of Moses, then that’s enough, right?” And that was where I was going with all of that, assuming there was another name, because all of the anti-Christs in the Book of Mormon seem to have latched onto the law of Moses as the way that they can be saved.

## Is there another name we can be saved by?

And the wicked priests of King Noah, that’s the name that they latched onto. “There is another name that we can be saved by, and the name is Moses, and the name is whatever,” and I chose Malfeous as an example.

But they weren’t prophets, this is the problem. So if we assume that there was some other name, what we also have to assume is that every prophet who has ever testified of God has been a cruel or a terrible guide, has been someone who has been either lying to us, or doesn’t know.

And that is the way that we can know that Jesus Christ is the only name, because we know that these prophets have been guided by God all along. And any time you felt the spirit, that spirit, if it hasn’t shown you the way you can get to God without Christ, then it’s been lying to you. Unless that way doesn’t exist.

## King Benjamin’s message: There is no better way to get to God than by Christ

And so that’s the point that King Benjamin was making, is that way doesn’t exist. “You all think that this way exists, you all think there is some easier way, and it’s just not true. There is no better way to get to God than by Christ.” And not only did he claim it, but he shows it. He shows it very clearly by demonstrating that God is just, first of all, that all of us don’t deserve anything from God, because we’re unrighteous servants, we’re unworthy, we’re unprofitable servants. And God is ultimately worthy.

And so if we want to qualify to be with God, then we have to go through the means that he has given us to qualify, in spite of the fact that we don’t deserve it. And all of this is incredibly merciful on the part of God. So that is the real message.

So when Benjamin says, “There is no other name by which you can be saved,” to his audience that was really important, because a lot of them thought there was another way. They thought that the law of Moses would save them. Or that they thought that they didn’t really need any salvation, that salvation wasn’t really an issue, it wasn’t a problem.

That’s the issue today, by the way. So many people are aetheists, and they believe that there is no need for salvation, period. “Why should we be saved? There is no such thing as hell. There is no such thing as God, so how can there be a hell?”

And so, for us as well as the people in that time, we need to realise the importance of making the argument that there really is no other name by which man will be saved, than Jesus Christ.

So I was doing that in a probably more involved way than I needed to. But I was trying to make the point that in the Book of Mormon time, that there where many people who believed that there was another name, and that that name was the law of Moses. We’re going to run into that again, we going to discuss this again when we study the chapters that deal with Abinadi. They’re very fascinating chapters.

So that was a wonderful question. If you have a question, please send me email at gt@gospletalktrine.com.

## Circumstances at King Benjamin’s address are similar to the Feast of Tabernacles

A couple of other things that I wanted to bring up from last time now. You remember – because they still apply to this week’s lesson, King Benjamin’s address is still going on – you remember, we tied in the circumstances surrounding the address of King Benjamin to the Old Testament sabbatical festival of Sukkot, or the Feast of Tabernacles. And this was time when the Israelites would travel to Jerusalem, and pitch tents for a week, and be around the Temple, and do this so they could commemorate the dwelling in tents of the ancient Israelites during the Exodus.

## Lehi received a covenant similar to Abraham

Now one of the points that I made last time was the Nephites have basically created, or lived, a new version of all of the Old Testament covenants. All of the important ones, anyway. The Abrahamic covenant, I mentioned how Lehi received a similar covenant, that mentioned posterity, and it mentioned land, and it mentioned blessings. Similar to the Abrahamic covenant.

## Lehi was a patriarchal figure to the Nephites, similar to Abraham and Jacob

Now I don’t say that it’s been supplanted, but what I would say is the Nephites have their own patriarchs to look to, in addition to Abraham.

And Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So what did Jacob do? Jacob, who was later renamed Israel? He gave a patriarchal blessing at the end of his life to each of his sons, and a couple of his grandsons, he created the twelve tribes, by making this blessing, and Lehi did a similar thing. So, for the Nephites, Lehi was a similar figure, in their pantheon of patriarchs, you might say. As Abraham was, and as Jacob was.

## Parallels to other Old Testament covenants

Similarly, Moses had a covenant, and that covenant was, we think of it mostly as being the Ten Commandments, but it was the entirety of the Mosaic law. And this was revealed to him on Mount Sinai, and then he gave it to the people, as they were travelling through this crucible of the Exodus.

And then finally, the final covenant, the major covenant of the Old Testament is the Davidic covenant, which is a covenant between God and David, that his line should never fail, that through his seed there would be a kingdom that would never end. And God would bless all of humanity through it, all of the house of Judah, all of the house of Israel, through David’s line, and it would never fail him, a king on that line.

Now, in an earthly sense that promise was not fulfilled, because David’s line did eventually fail. Although it held on for many generations. However, Christ came from David’s line. Christ was the fulfilment of that promise, that there would never fail, a descendant of David, and now we know that that’s true, because Christ’s reign will never fail. An important covenant in the Old Testament.

And we now have a new Solomon, in King Benjamin and King Mosiah who followed him. So we’ll discuss a few more of those parallels this time.

## The Gospel will be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people: new temples announced for Dubai and Shanghai

I wanted to say – I didn’t mention last time – but I was really, really amazed, to a jaw dropping extent, in general conference when President Nelson revealed the new temples that will be built, especially the two in Dubai and Shanghai. So, in my opinion, and this is just Mark Holt talking, it’s not any sort of doctrine, but when I look at the things that need to happen, as we get closer to the second coming of Jesus Christ, one of them is, that the Gospel will be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

And as far as peoples go, I’ve always thought there are two main peoples for who it will probably be a long time before the Gospel is being preached, and that is the Muslim world and mainland China. And in the space of about ten seconds or thirty seconds, President Nelson revealed that temples will be built in both of those places. A major step forward in either instance.

Now I could be wrong about my interpretation about the events leading up to the second coming, and I could be wrong about what those temples mean. But I also could be right, so in any case it’s very, very interesting, and I was very emotionally affected and very excited. So that’s very good news, I think it’s wonderful how the kingdom of God is moving forward, and just taking giant strides.

## Website update

I wanted to mention that I’ve worked really hard on the <gospeltalktrine.com> website, and I brought it up to date with all of the episodes from this year, from the Book of Mormon. And there are descriptions, transcriptions, and my notes have all been scanned for all of those lessons. So if you want to know more about the way that I prepare the lessons, or if you want to *read* what I’ve spoken rather than *hear* it spoken, then visit <gospeltalktrine.com>. And thanks to Paul Castro among others, who have been noted on the website, for those transcriptions. We appreciate it so much; we couldn’t do it without you.

## This week’s lesson material

So we’ve addressed King Benjamin talking to the Nephites in a general way. The specific chapters for this week are Mosiah chapters 4 through 6, so we’ll get to these chapters right now.

## Another parallel to Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles)

At the beginning of [Mosiah chapter 4](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/4?lang=eng&id=2), we find that the Nephites have already heard the first part of King Benjamin’s message. And that message is so powerful, that in Mosiah chapter 4 they’ve all fallen to the earth. So, I’m going to make another parallel here, between the Israelites and the Nephites.

So, verse 1:

“[After] king Benjamin had made an end of speaking the words which had been delivered unto him by the angel of the Lord, that he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.”

Now, first of all, in modern Judaism, we find a parallel: Sukkot is the one time at which Jews are allowed, or it is recommended, that they pray prostrate on the ground, of with their faces to the earth.

This is still a modern-day convention, and there are some indications in the Bible, but there are more indications in extra-Biblical sources, that this is an ancient tradition. That around the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews prayed with their faces to the ground, or they fell to the earth.

So isn’t it interesting that we would find this same behaviour among the Nephites, at a time when they are engaging in a gathering that is very similar to the Feast of Tabernacles? And as we hypothesised last week – well I didn’t say these exact words – what I’m going to say now is, I think this may even have been their instantiation of the Feast of Tabernacles. In other words, King Benjamin is saying, “We haven’t done this Feast of Tabernacles in a long time, but I can find evidence for it in the scriptures, and I think we should start doing it again.”

Or, “We find evidence for it in the plates of Nephi, and in the brass plates, and I think we should start doing it again, now that we’ve rebuilt the Temple.”

## Did King Benjamin’s address occur during the Feast of Tabernacles? (and other questions)

So I wrote a question down here on my notes: First of all, King Benjamin’s address was certainly a coronation, it was certainly a solemn assembly, it was almost certainly a sabbatical feast according to the law of Moses. So the question is, was that address the Feast of Tabernacles? (Or *Sukkot*, as it’s known in Hebrew.) Was it the dedication of a new temple? Did it happen in a sabbatical year? (In other words, every seven years, when the Nephites would refrain from agriculture.) Or did it happen in a Jubilee year? (Every fifty years, when they would forgive debts, and release slaves, and return property to those who’d been borrowed from, et cetera.)

So those are questions that are up in the air. I do believe that the answer to “Did this address occur around the Feast of Tabernacles?” – I do believe the answer is yes.

## Parallels between King Benjamin’s speech and Solomon’s dedication of the Temple

So that being the case, we can refer to another Feast of Tabernacles mentioned in the scriptures, this time in [2 Chronicles 7](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/2-chr/7?lang=eng). And you’ll find that after King Solomon had given his dedicatory prayer of the Temple, that the glory of the Lord fills the Temple, and fire even comes down from heaven, and this is the beginning of 2 Chronicles 7, and actually lights the fire and consumes the burnt offering of the sacrifices on the alters.

And in verse 3:

“3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

And so, again, we can compare this with [Mosiah 4:1](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/4?lang=eng&id=1#p1). “[W]hen king Benjamin had made an end of speaking” they felt the glory of the Lord so powerfully that they fell to the earth, “for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.”

“And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified.” [[Mosiah 4:2](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/4?lang=eng&id=2#p2)]

So it’s very similar. There are some key differences. And we’ll discuss why those differences are important. At the same time, we shouldn’t ignore the fact that this is a very similar occurrence: a king is speaking, he is talking to God, and of God, and his visions of God, and then the glory of the Lord visits the people, they fall upon the earth, and they proclaim their awe and wonder of God and his majesty, and they thank him, and ask for his blessing. This is a very similar occurrence.

## What did atonement mean to the Nephites?

Now again, in [verse 2](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/4?lang=eng&id=2#p2) they say, “O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ.” Now, *atoning* is a word for us that has a meaning that is only connected to the Atonement of Christ. But for these Nephites, and especially for Israelites, this would have had a meaning that was connected to [Exodus chapter 24](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/ex/24?lang=eng).

Now Moses has recently undergone the first Day of Atonement, and now he’s in the first Sukkot, or the first Tabernacles, and he has made sacrifices, and he’s collected some of the blood. And in verse 8 it says:

“8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.”

So, for them, this was atoning blood, it was blood of the sacrifice, because on the Day of Atonement this blood is what buys them, you might say, the forgiveness of God for their sins.

Now, to say that Christ underwent an atonement is a reference to that sacrifice. To call Christ’s sacrifice an atonement is a reference to the Old Testament Day of Atonement.

In any case, the Nephites have had an experience similar to the ancient Israelites, standing by the Mount Sinai, where the prophet is sprinkling the blood of the atonement upon them. They are saying to him, “Have mercy on us, and” – perhaps in reference to this scripture in Exodus 24:8, perhaps in reference to that they’re saying – “apply the atoning blood of Jesus Christ upon us. We can see there is a better way than just blood and sacrifices. We now know, based on what you’ve told us about Jesus, that it’s not Moses that saves us, it’s not the law of Moses. You’ve told us there is no other name by which we can be saved. So apply this atoning blood of Jesus. It’ll be even better than the blood of a sacrifice. He is our saviour.”

So they have realised the fullest extent od God’s plan, and they’re asking for it to take effect. Because they see their own sinful nature. This is the whole point of King Benjamin’s talk – as it has been up to this point, and as it will be going forward – is to show them their unworthiness, and God’s worthiness.

And they see that now so clearly that they need it to end. They need God to intervene, they see the need for God to intervene on their behalf.

## Similarities to Nehemiah 8 and 13: Ezra reinstitutes the Feast of Tabernacles

And briefly, one more similarity. If we were to skip forward to a chapter to Mosiah chapter 5, [verse 5](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/5?lang=eng&id=5#p5). The Nephites say to King Benjamin, “We’re willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will,” and I won’t read that entire verse, but at this point the people are willing to enter into a covenant with God.

Now, if you were to read in the book of Nehemiah, and just to remind you what Nehemiah is, its’s the story of the Jews coming back to Jerusalem after a long absence away in Babylon, and then rebuilding the Temple, and rededicating it. And Ezra discovers exactly what the Feast of Tabernacles is, and says, “We’re going to reinstitute this festival, this sabbatical festival, by celebrating Sukkot, and by entering into a covenant.”

And that’s why I asked the question earlier. Are they instituting this feast? Or have they been doing it every year? Because if they’re instituting it, then it’s very similar to what happened in Nehemiah [chapters 8](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/neh/8?lang=eng) and [13](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/neh/13?lang=eng). You can see there an account of these people – just read those two chapters if you like – and you can see there an account of the ancient Israelites, after returning from Babylon, making a covenant during the Feast of Tabernacles, at the time of the crowning of the king, and of the dedication of a Temple.

## Why is the similarity between ancient Israel and ancient Zarahemla important?

So, this is very important, and we’re going to talk about why this similarity between ancient Israel and the ancient Zarahemla is so important, and why it would matter if it was in fact the Feast of Tabernacles. And why it matters to us today; why it matters to them, and why it matters to us today.

## Recommended article: “King Benjamin and the Feast of Tabernacles”

So, that’s enough about those parallels. I want to point out a couple of resources that I used to learn more about this. My favourite was an article by John Tvedtnes. He’s a former Hebrew professor at the University of Utah, and also taught linguistics at the BYU Jerusalem Centre, and at the BYU Salt Lake Centre. So, very knowledgeable about ancient Hebrew culture, and this is a 24 page document, a 24 page article, that is very, very involved, very interesting. It’s called “[King Benjamin and the Feast of Tabernacles](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?filename=7&article=1018&context=mi&type=additional).” Again, that’s by John Tvedtnes.

So that’s a wonderful resource if you want to know more about this, if I haven’t already given you more than you can handle.

## The Nephites receive a remission of sins through faith in Jesus Christ

So, what happens next is, that the Nephites experience the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. They learn that it is the Holy Ghost that forgives sins. Or perhaps better spoken, that Jesus Christ that forgives sins through the intermediation of the Holy Ghost. Now the real meat of Mosiah 4 occurs right there at the beginning in those [first three verses](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/4?lang=eng&id=1-3#p1). They are so struck, they are so affected by King Benjamin relating his story of his vision of the angel, that they fall to the earth, they proclaim their need for forgiveness from God through Christ, and then they receive it, all in three verses.

Now the rest of this chapter is King Benjamin. Now he sees that they are more prepared for a better message, so he keeps – this happens a couple or more times when he sees how prepared they are for the next thing he might say, then he’s able to reveal more truth to them.

## A sense of our nothingness: not shame, but humility

So now he talks to them about how they might *retain* a remission of their sins. He can see that they have *obtained* a remission of their sins, and now he talks to them about how they can *retain* it.

So verses 5 and 6, he reiterates the fact that they are… I’ll read verse 5 to you:

“5 For behold, if the knowledge of the goodness of God at this time has awakened you to a sense of your nothingness, and your worthless and fallen state.“

Now this doesn’t mean that man is worthless, but that we are in a worthless state. In other words, we don’t have anything that we can boast of before God. As I mentioned last time, we don’t actually have anything we can offer directly to God. It is only by serving each other that we can serve God, because he doesn’t need anything from us directly. And this is what he means.

So when you see your nothingness, basically what that means is, that we’re nothing without God, the only things that we have of value are the things that God has given us, the gifts that we have *from* him. And I say that because there are two routes that we can go when we hear about our own nothingness, and when we read about our own nothingness. One is shame, and one is humility. And if you take this word *nothingness*, and it pushes you into shame, you won’t be travelling the route that the prophet intended us to travel. The word *nothingness* is intended to push us into humility, and help us to realise always on whom we need to depend, to find our worth, to find our value.

And he says that explicitly in verse 11:

“11 And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God…”

And we’ll skip a little bit:

“…and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility…”

So this is the intent, is that we understand the glory of God, the greatness of God, our own unworthiness, and allow that to make us humble ourselves in the depths of humility. And then we can receive a remission of our sins, and retain it.

## Share of what God has blessed us with, with those who are in need

Now, the rest of chapter 4, you’ll remember this very well, I think this sticks in the mind of a lot of people, because he talks about what happens when we meet a beggar, when we meet somebody who call upon us to share of our goods, our wealth with them.

So King Benjamin’s admonition to all of us, is that we don’t allow the beggar to make his plea unto us in vain. A lot of people liken this to how you treat a panhandler in the street. That was probably the place where the Nephites encountered their beggars, right? So, does this mean that you always have to give money to panhandlers? I’m not going to make a big deal out of interpreting that this way. This is not the way I interpret King Benjamin chapter 4.

What it means is that we share of what God has blessed us with, we share it with those who are in need the way that it best benefits them. And we don’t judge them while we do it.

So one of the things King Benjamin says is, “If somebody asks you for help, and you immediately judge that person, and think ‘Oh well, he’s brought his own current state, what ever that is, upon himself, so I’m not going to give anything to this person,’ then you are guilty of the very thing that God has done to you. Which is, look at your unworthiness and still bless you. And so you’ve just shown God that you’re not worthy of the blessings that you’ve received.”

So, is it best to always share money, to give cash to a panhandler? In my opinion, it’s probably not. It enables a lot of very poor choices and poor behaviour. But, is it incumbent upon me to judge the people who cross my path, and say, “Well, this person’s only going to spend it on drugs?” No, what’s best for me is to decide, as Elder Holland said, at the end of this last conference, once we’re done with corona virus, we’re going to go out and we’re going to conquer poverty and conquer hunger. He was very passionate about those two things. As was, by the way, Jesus Christ. And it’s very appropriate for an apostle to have that viewpoint.

There are those who believe that the proper place for addressing poverty and hunger is with a government program, and there are those who believe that it isn’t, but it is certainly appropriate for an apostle of Jesus Christ – who was always concerned about the poor – to be concerned about poverty and hunger. And so this is King Benjamin saying, the way that we deal with these beggars is basically – Jesus said, “If you want God to forgive your sins, then you need to forgive each other.” This is King Benjamin saying, “If you want God to receive your pleas for blessings, then you will share your blessings with each other.”

It’s almost the same principle, and in fact, King Benjamin ties it to forgiveness towards the end of the chapter. He says in [verse 26](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/4?lang=eng&id=26#p26):

26 And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of *retaining* a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath. [Emphasis added.]

The rest of the chapter is sort of details around that lesson. And one of the most notable quotes from this chapter comes from verse 19: “For behold, are we not all beggars?” Again, you might remember – I can’t remember the exact talk – but Elder Holland said those very words in General Conference not too long ago. He said, “Aren’t we all beggars? Don’t we need to share with each other of our substance?”

In other words, “Doesn’t God respond, when we ask? Sharing helps us retain the forgiveness of sin that we just – all of us, all of us Nephites – that we just received because of the Holy Ghost, because of our willingness to act righteously. Sharing helps us retain that remission of sins.”

So the fruits of out conversion, when we are converting to God, then the fruits of that conversion are, that we are going to treat each other better. It’s not just sharing our worldly goods or wealth; it’s also returning to each man his due. In other words, living the Golden Rule.

## “And now, O man, remember, and perish not”

And this chapter is capped off with, what was called when I was in seminary, this might date me a little bit, but, these were called ‘scripture mastery verses,’ 25 verses in the Book of Mormon that the seminary department recommended that we all memorise. And this was one of them. So that tells you how important it is. I’ll read to you [Mosiah 4:30](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/4?lang=eng&id=30#p30):

“30 But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. *And now, O man, remember, and perish not*.” [Emphasis added.]

And that last sentence is really the important thing. Remember. Please just remember. You’ve made a covenant here. Remember it, and perish not.

## Can talking of consequences actually be a message of love?

He’s already, at the end of chapter 2, and at the end of chapter 3, he has talked about the consequences, he painted a very vivid picture of what hell feels like, he’s likened it to a lake of fire and brimstone. This burning lake. If you were dropped in the middle of the lake, even just a normal lake, you’re going to have a really hard time swimming your way out of there. You might drown. And that’s what it would feel like, except that the lake is fire and brimstone. Can you imagine? And you’ll be there forever, right?

This is a very potent image. The suffering will be so intense, your consciousness of your own guilt will be so intense it will feel like you were dropped into a lake of fire and brimstone. And so it’s terrible. The prospect of not being forgiven is really terrible. Please remember, remember that you’ve received a remission of your sins, and don’t perish.

It’s a very powerful message of love. So, a lot of time when people talk about a hellfire and damnation preacher, they say, “Oh, somebody who believes in the harsh aspect of the Gospel.” But truly when you read the address of King Benjamin, he does talk about hellfire and damnation, those two concepts come at the forefront of his teaching, and yet, you also can tell it’s a message of love.

So, that is the way that God intends it, when hell is mentioned in the scriptures, He intends it as a message of love. “Look, please, I know how terrible it will be for you, if you don’t listen to me. So this is a chance, you’ve still got time. Start listening.“

Alright, we’ve drawn some parallels between the Israelites dedicating their Temple – both the Temple of Solomon, and what is called the Temple of Zerubbabel, during the time of Nehemiah and Ezra – and the temple of Zarahemla. We’ve drawn some parallels, and it’s possible – we don’t have direct evidence of this in the scriptures, we have some indications – but it’s possible this was the time of their dedications. But if not, it was certainly a time when they were commemorating the Temple. It was definitely one of the sabbatical festivals, where the Nephites were worshipping at the Temple.

## Temples: Parallels between Israelites and Latter-day Saints

So we’ve drawn this parallel, and I want to read to you – we’re going to go back to 2 Chronicles again, this is part of the dedicatory prayer of Solomon, as he dedicates the Temple – we’re in 2 Chronicles, we’re going to go back one chapter from where we were, we’re in chapter 6, and I’m going to read [verses 24 to 31](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/2-chr/6?lang=eng&id=24-31#p24). And I’ll read the first two verses, then I’ll summarise the rest. 24 and 25:

“24 And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house;

25 Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.”

And then he goes on to talk about a couple of different scenarios. The first one was, if they should fare poorly in war. But then he goes on to talk about if there is no rain, then he goes on to talk about if there is pestilence, famine, flood, any of the number of things that can happen to a people that would be terrible.

“If they come and worship here in the Temple, then hear them, from this place, and bless them. Give them back the blessing that you’ve taken away.”

So Solomon is anticipating a time when Israelites might be less obedient. They’ve been punished, you might say, or they’ve had blessings revoked, or taken away for a time, because of their disobedience. But when they come back to the Temple, the Temple will be sort of a special place for God to hear their voice. When they come back and they make sincere repentance and supplication before God, then God please hear them.

So those are verses that I’ve kind of talked about here.

Incidentally, in the next chapter, in chapter 7, God does reveal later on to Solomon that he’s going to answer that prayer, and he says, “Look, I’m going to do this, but if they don’t repent, then they’re going to have to keep the curses that come, because those are natural consequences of their behaviour. But I am going to listen to your dedicatory prayer. And if they come back and ask me from this place to restore their blessings, I will do it.” That’s God’s covenant with Solomon, as he dedicates the Temple.

Now I want to read to you one of the paragraphs from the [Salt Lake Temple dedicatory prayer](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/temples/details/salt-lake-temple/prayer/1893-04-06?lang=eng). This is towards the end. [Third last paragraph.] This was actually quoted by President Nelson, among others, in the last General Conference. It has specific relevance today.

“Heavenly Father, when Thy people shall not have the opportunity of entering this holy house to offer their supplications unto Thee, and they are oppressed and in trouble, surrounded by difficulties or assailed by temptation and shall turn their faces towards this Thy holy house and ask Thee for deliverance, for help, for Thy power to be extended in their behalf, we beseech Thee, to look down from Thy holy habitation in mercy and tender compassion upon them, and listen to their cries. Or when the children of Thy people, in years to come, shall be separated, through any cause, from this place, and their hearts shall turn in remembrance of Thy promises to this holy Temple, and they shall cry unto Thee from the depths of their affliction and sorrow to extend relief and deliverance to them, we humbly entreat Thee to Turn Thine ear in mercy to them; hearken to their cries, and grant unto them the blessings for which they ask.”

Now this is two different ways of asking the same thing. Solomon was asking, “Look, there may come a time when thy people are separated from their blessings, and when they come to the Temple, and they ask thee, please grant them.”

In the modern-day instance, “There will come a time when the people are separated from their blessings, and maybe they can’t even come to the Temple, but when they turn their hearts to this place – or as the Nephites did when they turned their tents to this place, and the doors of their tents are open to the Temple, and they turn their faces and they regard the temple, and their hearts are upon it – then restore to them the blessings that they’ve lost. Turn” – as President Woodriff said – “turn thine ear in mercy to them, harken to their cries, and grant unto them the blessings for which they ask.”

Now, in case you haven’t noticed what I’ve been doing, I’ve been drawing a parallel between the Nephites and their worship at the Temple of Zarahemla, and the Israelites and their worship at the Temple of Solomon. And now I’ve just drawn a parallel between the Israelites and the Latter-day Saints.

So the first parallel was one of several parallels, right? The feast of Tabernacles and all the different ways in which they’re worshiping. And now I’ve drawn a parallel between the Feast of Tabernacles and the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple.

## Temples: Parallels between Nephites and Latter-day Saints

Finally, we can have several parallels between the Latter-day Saints and the Nephites. So this is like a little triangle. Some of those parallels are: they were given the blessings over this entire continent where the Church was established. Which blessings have now been established over the whole earth, over all of the people who would join themselves to the Latter-day Saints. That of prospering in the land, that this would be a blessed land unto the Lord, that the people in this land would have a new covenant, and that they were all facing the Temple.

So now we have all these parallels, we have this triangle. And you can look at my notes, you can see my notes on my website starting tomorrow. At the top I’ve placed the Latter-day Saints, and on one leg of the triangle the ancient Israelites and the Temple of Solomon, and on the other leg the ancient Nephites and the Temple of Zarahemla. And on each of those different sides of the triangle are the parallels we can draw.

Now the point of all this is, we can find ourselves in the same position, towards the Temple and towards God, and towards our difficulties, as were the ancient people. And this is a very deliberate parallel that God created, the author of our circumstances, that he created, so that – number one – that we could learn from the scriptures, and know how to get out of it, and – number two – this is the nature of how he blesses us. He’s teaching us, from the scriptures, that when we have a Temple, that gives us a powerful way… it’s almost like a megaphone from earth to heaven. That even if we can’t – as we learned in the dedicatory prayer of the Salt Lake Temple – even if we can’t arrive physically at the Temple, we can still turn our faces towards it, as the Nephites did, and pray, and plead with God, and turn our hearts in that direction, for his blessing.

Now, around the earth, we find ourselves in need of God’s blessing. We are all separated from our temples right now. And what a wonderful time it is to remember that we have a rich history, both in modern times and in ancient times, of God being able and willing to extend his blessings onto the earth, through the temples, and through the faithfulness of the people who care about the temples.

## Jeremiah’s prophesy is fulfilled among the Nephites

Now, if you have your scriptures open up in front of you, I want you… you’re going to be able to follow along if you just open up to [Jeremiah chapter 31](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/jer/31?lang=eng), and you’re going to be able to follow along with the rest of the lesson. It might be beneficial to also have Mosiah open, but I’ll kind of read the important passages from Mosiah.

So, as I mentioned last time, that I didn’t want to steal the thunder from this week’s lesson by talking about it too much last time, but I’m going to read these four verses from Jeremiah again. And then I want to point out the different ways in which this prophesy has been fulfilled among the Nephites. So Jeremiah 31, verses 31 to 34 read:

“31 ¶ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord:”

Now that’s the first two verses. You remember we read the verse in this lesson, we read the verse in Exodus 24, where he makes that covenant, and Moses sprinkles the blood on the people. And what he says to them is, “You’re going to be my people, and I’m going to be your God.” That was the covenant, that was the Mosaic covenant.

And Jeremiah was saying, “That covenant was broken, the Israelites, they turned out to be unfaithful participants in this covenant, and therefore, God is going to try again.”

In verse 33: “This” – not according to that covenant –

“33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

So I’m going to try the same covenant, because I will be their God, and they will be my people, but this time I’m going to put the law in their hearts, I’m going to write it in their hearts.

So I want to point out a couple of verses here in Mosiah 5. First of all, [verse 5](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/5?lang=eng&id=5#p5):

“5 And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days, that we may not bring upon ourselves a never-ending torment, as has been spoken by the angel, that we may not drink out of the cup of the wrath of God.”

So they obviously have received a change to their hearts, they’ve been changed from inside out. God has put it on their inward parts. In verse 7, Benjamin replies:

“7 And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that *your hearts are changed* through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.” [emphasis added.]

So I want to read again from Jeremiah: “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” Now, I mentioned before, there is no other name by which they can be saved. He repeats that doctrine in verse 8. We’re now back in [Mosiah 5:8](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/5?lang=eng&id=8#p8):

“8 And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh;”

And we’ve proven that, right? We’ve proven it by contradiction.

“therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.”

## Is baptism required to fulfil Jeremiah’s prophesy?

Now notice what’s missing from this, by the way. They haven’t been baptised. A lot of times when we read Jeremiah 31, we think, “Jeremiah is talking about the new covenant that will only exist when Jesus Christ comes to the earth. The new covenant that he instituted when he brought about the ordinance of the Sacrament. The covenant that exists when John the Baptist started baptising people.”

Now we could probably debate about whether the Nephites practised baptism. We do know from the Joseph Smith translation that baptism was taught to the Old Testament patriarchs, and we know from the Pearl of Great Price that Adam himself was baptised. So this is definitely an ancient doctrine. However, we also have evidence – by the absence of baptism in the Old Testament – we also have evidence that this truth was lost at some point.

Jews at the time of Christ, they did perform ritual washings by immersion in what were called *mikva’ot* [singular: *mikveh*] in these subterranean washing chambers. They’re almost like baptismal fonts. But the ordinance that they performed there was not that similar to baptism. It wasn’t performed in the same way. Nevertheless, there are a lot of similarities between ritual purification and baptism.

But is does seem that John the Baptist was starting something new in New Testament times, when he began to baptise everyone. And so this is a truth that had been lost. And perhaps this truth was also lost among the Nephites. In other words, there making a covenant did not equal baptism. It was not the exact same covenant. The point was, he says, “You have already taken upon you a covenant, to follow the will of God. Now I’m telling you, that in addition to that, because you did that, you’ve qualified yourselves to take upon you the name of Christ. And if you do that, you can be saved.”

So, baptism eventually came to include all of these facets in one ordinance. But it doesn’t seem that these Nephites, at this time, had access to the convenience of that symbolism. They just had to, one: make a covenant, to follow God, and perform the other aspects of the baptismal covenant, which is mourn with those who mourn, and lift up the hands that hang down, strengthen the feeble knees, all the things that Benjamin has been encouraging them to do. And then: take upon them the name of Christ. He has basically taught baptism in every means, except the actual physical act.

So I wanted to bring that to your attention, because, a lot of times when we read Jeremiah, we think that’s the only way. Nevertheless we can see, by drawing all of these parallels, we can see that the Nephites are fulfilling every aspect of Jeremiah’s prophesy.

We’ll get to the last couple here. In [verse 12 of Mosiah 5](http://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/bofm/mosiah/5?lang=eng&id=12#p12):

“12 I say unto you, I would that ye should remember to retain the name –“

(He’s already given them the name of Christ that they would take upon themselves.)

“– retain the name written always in your hearts, that ye are not found on the left hand of God, but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be called, and also, the name by which he shall call you.”

So this name should be written on their hearts. I’m going to read verse 33 of Jeremiah 31 again:

“[T]his shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

So he is reiterating the Mosaic covenant: “I will be their God, and they shall be my people,” but this time it will actually work, because he’ll have a faithful participant on the other end of the covenant.

In verse 15 of Mosiah 5, King Benjamin says this:

“I would that ye should be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life,”

When he says “*seal you his*,” he is saying that “You will be God’s people, and he will be your God.” So in other words, he first says – in chapter 5 he says all of these things – he says “You’ve been changed, the law has been put into your inward parts,” “You need to have it written on your hearts,” and finally, that “He will be your God, and you will be his people.”

He has reiterated every aspect of what Jeremiah has taught in verse 33.

Finally – this is verse 34 of Jeremiah 31:

“[T]hey shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord:”

Now, if we go forward into chapter 6 of Mosiah, in verse 2;

“[I]t came to pass that there was not one soul, except it were little children, but who had entered into the covenant and had taken upon them the name of Christ.”

I’m going to read this again – this is from Jeremiah 31:34:

“[T]hey shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.”

So right in order, in Mosiah chapters 5 and 6, we have an account of Benjamin almost certainly being aware that he is fulfilling this prophesy of Jeremiah. And if Benjamin isn’t aware, then Mormon certainly is, because he has ordered this account in such a way, as to create almost a one-to-one correspondence between Jeremiah’s prophesy and the address of King Benjamin.

## Parallel with Jeremiah 31:34: “I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more”

Finally, we have one last sentence in this passage in Jeremiah:

“[T]hey shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” [[Jeremiah 31:34](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/jer/31?lang=eng&id=34#p34)]

Now we go back to Mosiah 4, verse 3:

“[I]t came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the words which king Benjamin had spoken unto them.”

Now, the way that Jeremiah explains it is that the people, whoever the people are that the covenant shall be made with, they will make this covenant because they have received a remission of their sins. And if we look at this account, it has happened exactly that way. First, they received a remission of their sins, and then, in order, they go through every one of the characteristics of this covenant described by Jeremiah in chapter 31.

It is truly astounding, and I think it’s totally deliberate on the part of King Benjamin. He was aware that he was creating a people that Jeremiah had described. In fact, I believe – I think it’s supported by this text – I believe that that was the intent. That this was a plan, of Benjamin. That he said, “I’m going to give this talk, and I’m hoping…” It says, you know, he can’t have predicted that they would make this choice, but later on, after they’ve cried out to make this covenant, he says “This is the thing that I hoped you would do.”

And so he planned for them to be forgiven of their sins. And then he brings the content on from Jeremiah’s prophesy. He brings on this content that will provide this new covenant for them. And in this way, the people of Nephi become the people of Christ every bit as much as anyone in the New Testament.

## A chiastic structure in Mosiah 4 that is similar to Jeremiah 31: “My friends and my brethren, my kindred and my people”

One more aspect I want to point out. In verse 34, Jeremiah says “[T]hey shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother.”

Now if we go back to Mosiah 4:4, “King Benjamin again opened his mouth and began to speak unto them, saying: My friends and my brethren, my kindred and my people.”

So the way that they would teach in Jeremiah’s prophesy is, you would teach your neighbour, and you would teach your brother. What King Benjamin says, “My friends” slash neighbours, right? The people with whom I have a connection, *not of family*; “my friends and my brethren.” And so Jeremiah says, “every man his neighbour, and every man his brother.” Mosiah says, “My friends and my brethren.”

And then in a chiastic structure, meaning: the first and the second, and then the second and the first, (in the reverse order), he says “My *friends* and my *brethren*, my *kindred* and my *people*.” So he goes from the relationship by friendship to the relationship of kinship. And then he says kinship again, and then back to friendship. So, “My friends and my brethren, my kindred and my people.”

Mosiah has identified the two classes of people that Jeremiah talks about. These are the people that are going to teach each other the ways of Christ. Except that they will already know, it will all be written in their hearts.

So, down to the way that King Benjamin addresses his people, is all taken directly from Jeremiah 31. It’s truly astounding!

## King Mosiah obeys the paragraph of Kings in Deuteronomy 17

Now I’m going to finish my lesson this week by talking about why all that matters. Before I get there, I’m going to say that finally chapter 6 ends with the end of the talk and everyone returns home. King Mosiah then does the same thing his father did. It says in verse 7, the last verse of Mosiah 6:

“7 And king Mosiah did cause his people that they should till the earth. And he also, himself, did till the earth, that thereby he might not become burdensome to his people, that he might do according to that which his father had done in all things.”

Now this is a clear reference to what is called *the Paragraph of Kings*. And that is found in Deuteronomy 17. I won’t read the whole thing, but it is part of the law of Moses, when Moses gave a clear instruction to the Israelites “Look, there will come a time when you’re established in the land of Canaan, that you’re moving into now, when you may appoint over yourselves a king. And when you do, this is how your kings have to behave themselves. Number 1: The king needs to be from among thy brethren” – and you’ll notice the single most common way that Benjamin addresses his people is *my brethren*; so he is showing them that he is abiding by the paragraph of kings in Deuteronomy 17, [verses 14 to 20](https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/ot/deut/17?lang=eng&id=14-20#p14) – “from among thy brethren.”

Verse 16:

“16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.”

And verse 18 and 19 talk about how the king needs to act towards the scriptures, and reading them often, and reading them to the people. And finally, that he needs to remain humble, verse 20:

“20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left.”

Now incidentally, the fact that this has ended right where it began, with the king displaying his willingness to work alongside his people in humility, this displays a chiastic structure, that either was intended on the part of King Benjamin, or maybe it was Mormon’s chiasmus that he imposed upon the events. But in either case, that’s a fascinating structure that exists here, that I wish we had time to go into. Something for you to think about if you like.

Now we already talked about how there is a Nephite parallel, you might say, of the covenant of Abraham, and the lineage of the patriarchs, through Lehi. And we’ve talked about how King Benjamin is maybe a modern-day – for the Nephites – a new Solomon. And Benjamin is showing himself to be a better Solomon, because Solomon multiplied wives and gold and horses unto himself, exactly as was forbidden in the law of Moses, in this paragraph of kings here in Deuteronomy 17.

But, obviously, King Benjamin was very familiar with the law of Moses, and especially the paragraph of kings, because he took care to obey it, every day of his life. And not only that, but he taught it to his sons so faithfully that his son obeyed it. And he didn’t multiply wealth to himself by nature of his position as king, but instead, worked in the fields, tilled the earth himself. He became a farmer and a king, rather than disobey the law of Moses.

So, King Benjamin was Solomon as he should have been.

So there’s the Nephite equivalent of the Davidic covenant, you see reflected in the fact that the Nephite kings are more righteous than the Israelite kings they left behind.

## The similarity between Nephi and Moses

Finally – we have the Abrahamic covenant, represented by the Nephite equivalent. We have the Davidic covenant represented by a Nephite equivalent – now the Mosaic covenant. The process of taking a people and giving them to God, was begun by Nephi. He’s the one who began to teach about Jesus Christ. And obviously Lehi began it too. But Nephi created this doctrine of Christ, he had this vision. The similarity between Nephi and Moses, you had this overarching vision of all of human history. And he began to teach about the need for the atonement of Christ, and how the law of Moses was actually just preparing us for the Christ.

But here – with the way that I’ve just outlined, how the people of King Benjamin exactly mirrored the prophesy of Jeremiah – this is when Nephi’s original intention finds its ultimate fulfilment. They have finally created a people, and delivered themselves unto God. So now God can be their God, and they can be his people. And this is exactly what God always intended.

## Why is this important? The allegory of the olive tree gives us the answer

Now, here’s why it’s important. I promised I would get to this. In Jacob chapter 5, we have this amazing and huge and extended allegory, written by the prophet Zenos, repeated by Jacob, where God basically tells us, “This is what I wanted from humanity. This is why I do the things I do among the houses of Israel.” And he likened them to an olive tree. And what God, the master of the vineyard wanted, in that allegory, was the fruit.

Now, obviously – if you go back to that lesson, you’ll see that the way that I likened the fruit. But obviously, God wants people to behave a certain way. He wants them to reach a certain state in their dealings with him. And we can see, at the end of this address, God has gotten this fruit.

So if you’ve ever wondered to yourself, “Why did God go to all the trouble, to give a vision to Lehi, bring him out of Jerusalem, have Nephi deal with his brothers all the way across the world, sail across the world? Was it just that so Joseph Smith would have something to pull out of the ground, centuries later, to make his Latter-day people have a new volume of scripture? Or was there some deeper purpose?

The allegory of the olive tree gives us the answer. The answer is, God wants the fruit of this tree, and the fruit of the tree is: a people who will be his people, and he will be their God. And finally, finally, God has achieved it, with the Nephites, through prophets, and through humbling themselves, and through whatever work that God has done among them, and whatever choices that they have made, he has finally achieved this fruit, exactly as was foretold in Jacob 5.

Once he takes the branches of this olive tree, and he takes them and scatters them in the vineyard, replants them elsewhere and grafts them in, and they grow up, he comes back the next time and he sees, “Wow, I’ve got wonderful fruit from where I’ve taken these branches, and how it’s every bit as delicious as I always hoped it would be.”

And God will achieve this again, incidentally, with the Nephites in 3 and 4 Nephi, after Jesus Christ visits them. He will achieve it even more dramatically.

So the whole point is, if the earth to God is an olive orchard, then this is his purpose of bringing the Nephites to where they were, is so he could have this fruit. This people who are now finally willing to make a covenant and receive forgiveness. This is what he always wanted to give humanity. And now he finally gets to do it.

## A choice between two ancient parallels: Israelites and the Temple of Solomon, or Nephites and King Benjamin’s speech at the Temple of Zarahemla

So, why is that so important? We have two ancient parallels. I’ve shown you very clearly in this lesson, how we tie into each of them. We are intimately tied to the ancient Israelites at the time of their dedication of the Temple of Solomon. We are intimately tied to the Nephites, throughout their history, but particularly at the time of their gathering to hear their prophet speak. And we get to choose which of these two people we want to be. One of them was a people who had been extended the opportunity to be God’s people, and failed.

And the other one was, this people who had, over a century before the coming of Christ, received every blessing of the atonement that had not yet even occurred in time. They had been extended the new covenant, which would only occur in the old world during the ministry of Jesus Christ, in the few years leading up to his atonement.

So we today have a parallel. You know, if we’re in this triangle with these two ancient peoples. We have a parallel to each of them. And we have before us a choice. We have a blessing that was given by a prophet, which says, “If we’re ever separated from the blessings that we want of this earth, from the ability to worship as we would like, from the ability to come unto the Temple as we need, then please hear our prayers as we dedicate our hearts unto thee. As we *write in our hearts* the words, the law, as we change our inward parts, as we become a people unto thee, as we know each man, his neighbour, as we know God, so that we don’t even have to teach it to each other, but that everyone knows, from the smallest to the largest. If we reach that point, then we are strengthening this parallel we have the Nephites.

And if we fail to reach that point, we are strengthening this parallel we have with the ancient Israelites, who eventually suffered death, conquest and exile.

## This is a personal choice

Now the prophets have told us that this is a foregone conclusion, which people we will be more like – collectively, collectively. In other words, the truth will never again be taken from the earth. But you and I have an individual choice to make. Which is: In my own life, in my own Temple, in my own heart that exists in one place which is in my own spirit, which of the parallels do I want to strengthen? Do I want to be like the ancient Israelites, and do I want to have a king, the part of me that governs, do I want to have a part that multiplies gold and wives and horses, in contradiction to God’s will and commandments?

Or do I want to be like the people who humbled themselves, just from hearing the word? Do I want to govern myself with a king who was humble all of his days, and obeyed the law of Moses? Do I want to be the people that fell upon the earth when they heard about Jesus Christ, and begged for his forgiveness? And allow the Holy Spirit to wash over me, in both a literal and a figurative baptism, where I’m forgiven of my sins, and then God can draw me ever and ever closer to him?

This is the lesson that we find in the parallels that exist in the Nephites and the Israelites, and in their parallels with us. This is the choice that is set before us; it is a clear distinction that God has given us. We see the people who are unwilling to abide by the old covenant, and who are willing to abide by the new covenant. And we get to set our foot on one of these two roads.

Let’s make the choice of the Nephites, and continue, as King Benjamin said, “in the faith of what we have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of our lives. And remember, and perish not.” In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.