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Introduction



The image of a small portion of Michelangelo's fresco, "Creation," found above serves as metaphor for this page's means and ends.

- ? How would you characterize God's arm in the fresco?
- ? How would you characterize Adam's arm?
- ? What is the message in Adam's limp wrist? In the fact that his arm rests on his knee?
- ? How does Adam, as painted in Michelangelo's fresco, represent all of us as we engage in scripture study and seek to understand scripture, scripture's divine author and our relationship to Him?
- ? How does Adam, as painted in Michelangelo's fresco, represent all of us as we seek God's enlivening, strengthening, and saving influence and presence in our daily lives?

Michelangelo reminds us of our desperate need for God's presence in our lives if we are to follow Him and be all that He hopes us to be. In relation to this page and its purposes, we are in need of God's help as we seek to understand and apply scripture.

The questions we posed and our brief commentary concerning the fresco represent an example of our approach to each scripture reading.

Scripture readings are accompanied by general and passage-specific questions to ponder along with brief comments. In addition to the passage-specific questions associated with each reading, the reader can apply the following **general questions** to most readings. These questions come from the purposes of scripture as identified in the introduction to our site, ponderthescriptures.com, found on the site's home page

- What does this reading reveal about the character of God?
- How and what does this reading testify of Christ?
- What wisdom and knowledge does this reading provide?
- How does this reading direct the way you think and act?
- Of what dangers does this reading warn? How does it help you avoid these dangers?
- How does this reading gladden your heart, encourage you, and give you hope?
- How does this reading expand your vision and increase your expectations of the possible?
- What does this reading discern or "read" about you?
- How will you apply this reading to your life, to how you relate with others, and to how you relate to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

It is not intended that the reader ponder every question. We introduce numerous and varied questions in hopes that readers will find a question or two that catches their imagination and interest, seems pertinent to their lives, and provides an opportunity for meaningful pondering and further spiritual insight. In addition, if the reader wishes, the many and varied ponder questions allow the reader to spend additional time to consider passages from various perspectives.

Finally, we suggest that during and after your reading and pondering experience you consider how you can incorporate your thoughts and feelings from the scripture reading into your personal prayer life. As you pray, share with Heavenly Father what you thought and felt as you studied and pondered. In your prayer, seek further insight from a God who is anxious to reveal himself, his will, and his interest in our lives. Incorporating your reading and pondering into your prayers can, we think, enliven a prayer life that can all too easily become mundane, mechanical, and rote.

Helaman 3.²⁷⁻³⁰—Atonement

²⁷Thus we may see that the Lord is merciful unto all who will, in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name.

²⁸Yea, thus we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God.

²⁹Yea, we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked—³⁰And land their souls, yea, their immortal souls, at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and with Jacob, and with all our holy fathers, to go no more out.

Questionary

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation.” *

1. In our atonement reading, entitled “Why We Need Atonement” based on Mosiah 3.¹⁹, we established some of the human weaknesses that necessitated the Savior to “at-one.” In spite of such troubling human weaknesses, the Savior extends generous and earnest invitations. Today’s reading contains a few of such invitations.
? What invitations do you hear being extended to you in today’s reading?
2. In editing his history, Mormon pauses to remind us of a few of his objectives in writing. He does this through “thus we see” statements. First, the blessings:
 - “the Lord is merciful....”
 - “the gate of heaven is open....”
 - “Land their souls...at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven....”

On Mormon’s ancient title page, he wrote his purposes in editing the Book of Mormon.

“Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations...”

- ? How do Mormon’s stated objectives as found on the title page relate to his “thus we see” statements here in Helaman 3?
3. The blessings that Mormon mentions in Helaman come as a result of
 - Calling “upon his holy name”
 - Believing “on the name of Jesus Christ”
 - Laying “hold upon the word of God”? How do these actions relate to statements made on Mormon’s title page?
4. Consider the following questions:
 - ? Do you regularly feel the Lord’s mercy in your life?
 - ? If you were to die today, do you feel that the “gate of heaven” would be open to you?
 - ? Can you see yourself “landing” at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
 - “Fall: Our Need of Atonement”
 - “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”
 - “At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

helaman 4.²²⁻²³— just scripture

And that they had altered and trampled under their feet the laws of Mosiah, or that which the Lord commanded him to give unto the people; and they saw that their laws had become corrupted, and that they had become a wicked people, insomuch that they were wicked even like unto the Lamanites. And because of their iniquity the church had begun to dwindle; and they began to disbelieve in the spirit of prophecy and in the spirit of revelation; and the judgments of God did stare them in the face.

Questionary

- ? How do corrupt political leaders and the corrupt laws they pass corrupt individual citizens?
- ? What does it tell you about the members of the Church that as their society and government became ever more corrupted, they themselves partook of that corruption?
- ? How do members of God's Church keep sufficient distance between themselves and the national government so that they do not become enmeshed in the evils and collapse of that government?

helaman 5.²⁻³— just scripture

For as their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good, therefore they were ripening for destruction, for the laws had become corrupted. Yea, and this was not all; they were a stiffnecked people, insomuch that they could not be governed by the law nor justice, save it were to their destruction.

Questionary

- ? What is Mormon telling us about the Nephites when he asserts that if the people were governed and tried in a just manner, it would produce their “destruction”?
- ? To what degree is this observation appropriate to the current legislative and judicial circumstances in the U.S.?
- ? How would the current occupant of the American White House, a.k.a., Caligula, fair if he were to be held to account today by God’s just laws?

helaman 5.⁴⁰⁻⁴⁷— atonement

^{40*}The Lamanites said unto [Aminadab]: “What shall we do, that this cloud of darkness may be removed from overshadowing us?”

⁴¹And Aminadab said unto them: “You must repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ, who was taught unto you by Alma, and Amulek, and Zeezrom; and when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you.”

^{42*}They all did begin to cry unto the voice of him who had shaken the earth; yea, they did cry even until the cloud of darkness was dispersed. ^{43*}When they cast their eyes about, and saw that the cloud of darkness was dispersed from over-shadowing them, behold, they saw that they were encircled about, yea every soul, by a pillar of fire. ⁴⁴And Nephi and Lehi were in the midst of them; yea, they were encircled about; yea, they were as if in the midst of a flaming fire, yet it did harm them not, neither did it take hold upon the walls of the prison; and they were filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory. ⁴⁵And behold, the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words. ^{46*}There came a voice unto them, yea, a pleasant voice, as if it were a whisper, saying:

^{47*}“Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world.”

Q

uestionary

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Justification: How We Repent and Change.” *

1. In a previous readings focused on “How we repent and change,” we identified four elements of forgiveness, conversion, or spiritual rebirth that are found in the account. As a reminder, they are:
 - An individual and spiritual *crisis*.
 - Confessing of sin and a pleading *prayer* offered on the part of the person or persons in crisis for relief from the crisis.
 - A *response* from the Lord to the prayer offered in crisis.
 - A statement of the reason that the Lord responded as he did to the individual’s prayer in crisis.

? While the story found in today’s reading tells a real-life story about how Nephi and Lehi were delivered from a physical prison, it also tells the story of a group of people who were delivered from a spiritual bondage, and were spiritually reborn. Look for the four elements above of spiritual rebirth.
 2. The multitude was encouraged to pray “even until ye shall have faith in Christ.”
 - ? What does this mean to you?
 - ? What would it look like to pray until one has faith in Christ?
 3. The “cloud of darkness” here is literal. However, it also plays a symbolic role.
 - ? What is its symbolism?
 4. We read that the multitude heard “a pleasant voice, as if it were a whisper, saying: ‘Peace, peace be unto you, because of your faith in my Well Beloved, who was from the foundation of the world.’”
 - ? What do you see and hear when you imagine this experience in your mind?
 - ? What does it mean to you that Jesus “was from the foundation of the world”?
 - ? Have you heard God speak peace to you and been “filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory”?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”
“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”
“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”
“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”
“Justification: How We Repent and Change”
“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”
“Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”
“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
“Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

helaman 7.⁴⁻⁶— just scripture

“And seeing the people in a state of such awful wickedness, and those Gadianton robbers filling the judgment-seats—having usurped the power and authority of the land; laying aside the commandments of God, and not in the least aright before him; doing no justice unto the children of men; condemning the righteous because of their righteousness; letting the guilty and the wicked go unpunished because of their money; and moreover to be held in office at the head of government, to rule and do according to their wills, that they might get gain and glory of the world, and, moreover, that they might the more easily commit adultery, and steal, and kill, and do according to their own wills—now this great iniquity had come upon the Nephites, in the space of not many years...”

Questionary

- ? Ecclesiastes proclaims that “there is no new thing under the sun” (1.⁹). In light of Caligula’s innumerable evils, including the most recent revelations of Caligula’s treasonous behavior visa via Ukraine, how in the world can this passage not make one think of him and lead one to equate him and his co-conspirators with the infamous and society destroying Gadianton Robbers?
- ? This passage keeps coming to mind as I contemplate Caligula’s recent commutations of unquestionable and proven criminals’ sentences while, at the same time, he sought revenge on innocent, patriotic Americas who believed in and were committed to their oaths to country. How, in God’s name, is Caligula not a modern version of an ancient Gadianton robber?

helaman 12.²⁻³— just scripture

Yea, and we may see at the very time when he doth prosper his people, yea, in the increase of their fields, their flocks and their herds, and in gold, and in silver, and in all manner of precious things of every kind and art; sparing their lives, and delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; softening the hearts of their enemies that they should not declare wars against them; yea, and in fine, doing all things for the welfare and happiness of his people; yea, then is the time that they do harden their hearts, and do forget the Lord their God, and do trample under their feet the Holy One—yea, and this because of their ease, and their exceedingly great prosperity. And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him.

Questionary

- ? How familiar and applicable to today is the assertion made in today's passage that humans are naturally inclined to forget God and become focused on temporal wealth?
- ? What do you do to combat this natural inclination?
- ? What do you do to combat this inclination in your society?

helaman 13.¹⁷⁻²⁰— just scripture

¹⁷And behold, a curse shall come upon the land, saith the Lord of Hosts, because of the peoples' sake who are upon the land, yea, because of their wickedness and their abominations.¹⁸And it shall come to pass, saith the Lord of Hosts, yea, our great and true God, that whoso shall hide up treasures in the earth shall find them again no more, because of the great curse of the land, save he be a righteous man and shall hide it up unto the Lord. ¹⁹For I will, saith the Lord, that they shall hide up their treasures unto me; and cursed be they who hide not up their treasures unto me; for none hideth up their treasures unto me save it be the righteous; and he that hideth not up his treasures unto me, cursed is he, and also the treasure, and none shall redeem it because of the curse of the land. ²⁰And the day shall come that they shall hide up their treasures, because they have set their hearts upon riches; and because they have set their hearts upon their riches, and will hide up their treasures when they shall flee before their enemies; because they will not hide them up unto me, cursed be they and also their treasures; and in that day shall they be smitten, saith the Lord.

Questionary

Today's reading is the fifth of eleven readings from Helaman 13.

1. Verse 17 is an important transitional verse. In the previous reading, Samuel spoke of Nephite “wickedness and abominations” without specificity as to the nature of the wickedness or abomination. In verse 17, Samuel speaks once more, and for the final time, of Nephite “wickedness and abominations.” For the first time, Samuel mentions a “curse,” which he will mention eight more times in the following six verses. Having not mentioned a “curse” before, it is clear that with verse 17 he shifts his focus.

In addition to the threat of a curse, repeated eight times in the six verses following verse 17, Samuel speaks of “treasure” or “treasures” eight times in the same span. In addition, he speaks of “riches” five times in the same verses. The threatened curse is aimed at the Nephite economy.

On the various pages of this site, we have spoken often of the “law of restoration.” To put it briefly, this law stipulates that “rewards,” whether positive or negative, are commensurate with actions, either good or bad. If someone is unmerciful, they will be treated unmercifully. If someone is threatening toward others, they will be threatened. There are times when a text does not stipulate the specific nature of the wickedness but will stipulate the punishment. The punishment tells us all we need to know about the sin, for the punishment is appropriate to and commensurate with the crime.

- ? So, Samuel had spoken initially of “wickedness and abomination” without specificity as to the nature of the wickedness. Now, Samuel speaks of an economic curse with great specificity. Taking the law of restoration into account, what does this suggest concerning the nature of Nephite “wickedness and abomination?”
 - ? Can you see that the Nephite “wickedness and abomination” involved “treasures,” “riches,” or economic principles and practices?
2. In verse 8 and 12, Samuel accused the Nephites of having “hard hearts.”
 - ? What does Samuel have to say in today's reading about Nephite hearts?
 - ? Again, what does this movement from generality to specificity tell you about the nature of Nephite sin?
 - ? What, do you think, does it mean to “hide up treasures” unto the Lord?
 - ? How would you feel and how would you answer if we rephrased the previous question as follows: “What does it mean to dedicate economic efforts and rewards to God?”
 - ? What is God likely to do with them (Not that he needs us to supply them)?
3. The opposite of “hiding up treasures unto the Lord” seems to be “setting the heart upon riches.”
 - ? What does this setting of the heart upon riches look like?
 - ? On which side of the scale are you?

- ? On which side of the scale is our society?
- ? What would an economic “curse” look like in today’s world?
- ? Have we experienced such curses?
- ? Based upon our economic policies and the uses to which we put our economic gains, should we expect a societal economic curse?

- ? How does “punishment” or, better “consequence” inform one concerning the nature of the sin?
How do consequence and sin relate to each other?
- ? What does it mean, do you think, to “hide up treasures unto the Lord”?
- ? What are the indications that one has “set their hearts upon their riches”?

Helaman 13.³²⁻³⁷— just scripture

³²And in the days of your poverty ye shall cry unto the Lord; and in vain shall ye cry, for your desolation is already come upon you, and your destruction is made sure; and then shall ye weep and howl in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts. And then shall ye lament, and say:

³³O that I had repented, and had not killed the prophets, and stoned them, and cast them out. Yea, in that day ye shall say: O that we had remembered the Lord our God in the day that he gave us our riches, and then they would not have become slippery that we should lose them; for behold, our riches are gone from us. ³⁴Behold, we lay a tool here and on the morrow it is gone; and behold, our swords are taken from us in the day we have sought them for battle. ³⁵Yea, we have hid up our treasures and they have slipped away from us, because of the curse of the land. ³⁶O that we had repented in the day that the word of the Lord came unto us; for behold the land is cursed, and all things are become slippery, and we cannot hold them. ³⁷Behold, we are surrounded by demons, yea, we are encircled about by the angels of him who hath sought to destroy our souls. Behold, our iniquities are great. O Lord, canst thou not turn away thine anger from us? And this shall be your language in those days.

Questionary

1. Today's reading, the 10th in a 11 part series on Helaman 13, contains a remarkable lament—a lament that Samuel prophecies will be offered when the curses he has pronounced upon the Nephite nation (verses 17-23) come to fruition.
? What emotional affect does this lament have upon you?
2. In cursing the nation, with its “treasures” and “riches,” Samuel did not specify, exactly, the nature of the curse though, of course, we assumed the nation would experience a loss of the “treasures” and “riches” that were its highest priority. In placing the nation's future lament on the lips of its citizens, however, Samuel does specify what would happen to the economic gains that meant so much to the nation.
? What words does Samuel use to indicate the fate of the nation's economic well-being?
? What thoughts and feelings accompany each of their wealth's fates?
Slippery (slip away)
Lost
Gone
Taken
3. The lamentation over the loss of the nation's riches is juxtaposed with the lament over their rejection and persecution of the prophets.
? How does this help you understand the nature of the prophetic message that the nation rejected?
? Why were the prophets so intent on delivering an economically based message?
4. Consider each of the following laments concerning the collapse of society that are found in Revelation 18.
“Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies” (verses 2-3).

“And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, and

cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying,

‘Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought’” (verses 11-17).

“And they [traders] cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her’” (verses 19-20).

“Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth” (verses 21-24).

- ? What “echoes” or similarities in language, mood, and meaning do you between these laments from Revelation and that found in today’s reading from Helaman 13?
- ? What is the significance of the heavy emphasis on “economy” in both Helaman 13 and Revelation 18?
- ? Obviously, both ancient Nephite and latter-day societies have similar attitudes toward economic issues, and thus similar destructive outcomes. Where does our society stand today in relation to economic attitudes and the potential destructive outcomes?
- ? What is it about immoral economic attitudes and practices that is such a sure predictor of societal outcomes and such a sure indicator of looming collapse and destruction?

3 Nephi 1.¹³⁻¹⁴

¹³Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfil all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets. ¹⁴Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfil all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh. And behold, the time is at hand, and this night shall the sign be given.

Questionary

Today's reading is the 27th in a series of Advent readings that will continue throughout the month of December.

1. In today's reading, the speaker makes a number of statements. Consider these

“come *I* into the world”

“*I* will fulfil all that which *I* have caused to be spoken...”

“*I* come unto my own, to fulfil all things which *I* have made known...”

I “do the will, both of the Father and of the Son”

- ? Who is the speaker here?

This probably seems like an obvious, even stupid question. But I ask it sincerely and with purpose.

- ? How does it alter your appreciation and understanding for these statements if we answer that the speaker here is Yahweh, God of the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon?

2. As you consider that it is Yahweh, who, the night before he leaves his divine abode and comes to earth, tells Nephi that he was coming “to do the will, both of the Father and the Son,” consider the following questions.

? To whom does “Father” refer?

? To whom does “the Son” refer?

? How would you feel and what would you think if we suggested that both refer to Yahweh—Yahweh is “Father” as the disembodied God who is speaking to Nephi from heaven, and “the Son” as Yahweh tabernacled in clay?

? What are your thoughts, then, when you consider that Jesus, as the tabernacled God, Yahweh, fulfilled the desires and plans that He had made as the disembodied Yahweh before coming to earth?

3. With the arrival of Christmas, we invite you to consider and ponder the following three questions.

? What did Jesus' birth mean to you as a youth?

? What does it mean to you today?

? How do you think the meaning and importance of Jesus' birth will change for you over the years to come?

3 Nephi 6.^{10-12, 14}— just scripture

¹⁰In the twenty and ninth year there began to be some disputings among the people; and some were lifted up unto pride and boastings because of their exceedingly great riches, yea, even unto great persecutions; ¹¹for there were many merchants in the land, and also many lawyers, and many officers. ¹²And the people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and their chances for learning; yea, some were ignorant because of their poverty, and others did receive great learning because of their riches.... ¹⁴And thus there became a great inequality in all the land, insomuch that the church began to be broken up...

Questionary

1. In verse 10, the inspired editor/writer, Mormon, writes of “pride and boastings” that led to “disputings” and “persecutions” among the Nephites. All these evils he attributes to “their exceedingly great riches.”
 - ? To whom does the pronoun, “their” refer? The entire culture in general or specific segments of the population?
2. We often get into the habit of reading scripture verses as if they are self-contained units with complete ideas nestled in them. However, we should note that verses 10-11 are one sentence and must be read together to extrapolate an entire message. Note, then, that after mentioning the “pride and boasting,” the “disputings,” and the “persecutions” in verse 10, Mormon continues his sentence in verse 11 with “for.”
 - ? What does this “for” suggest to you?
 - ? Reread verses 10-11, replacing Mormon’s “for” with “because.” Does this alter your reading of these verses in any way? If so, how?
 - ? What do you think and how do you feel when you consider Mormon’s message: “There was great “pride and boasting” and “disputings,” and “persecutions” because there were many “merchants,” “lawyers,” and “officers”?”
 - ? Why, do you think, does the author link social “disputings” and “persecutions” with social elites?
3. Verse 12 discusses the creation and perpetuation of extreme economic and social inequality.
 - ? How do social elites create and perpetuate extreme economic and cultural inequality?
4. The author criticizes a culture in which educational opportunities are determined by the economic resources available to the individual.
 - ? How do you feel about this observation?
 - ? What would this author say after observing our current educational opportunities?
 - ? How do you feel about people being defined and divided according to their “riches and their chances for learning”? How does God define and divide individuals?
 - ? What do you think and how do you feel when you see that the author lays no blame on the poor or ignorant for their poverty or ignorance?
5. Verse 14 lays the weakening of God’s Church squarely on the shoulders of inequality.
 - ? How does economic and cultural inequalities contribute to the weakening of spirituality?
 - ? How does the following verse enhance your understanding and appreciation of today’s reading?

“Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld” (DC 70.14).
 - ? All in all, how similar or dissimilar do you feel American society is to that of Nephite society as Mormon describes it?
 - ? Who is speaking of the evils of inequality in today’s society? Who is silent about them? What does this suggest about the “inspiration” of the various social commentators, public officials, preachers, prophets, etc.?

- ? What is the relationship between the “disputings” and “persecutions” and there being many “social elites” (businessmen, judicial personnel, and government officials) who helped create and perpetuate an extreme economic and cultural inequality?

3 Nephi 11.⁹⁻¹¹— atonement

⁹*He stretched forth his hand and spake unto the people, saying:

¹⁰“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world. ¹¹And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning.”

Questionary

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

1. Jesus said that in doing what he had done he had “suffered the will of the Father.”
 - ? Why, do you think, Jesus speaks of “suffering” the will of the Father?
 - ? What does it say about the character of Father that Jesus did precisely as the Father willed
2. In seeking relief from his terrible ordeal, Jesus asked, “remove this cup from me.” We have seen and examined this imagery before, but it is worth repeating.
 - ? Have you ever wondered why, in this terrible moment, Jesus resorted to a metaphor—the metaphor of a cup—rather than just saying outright what he meant, “stop the pain”?
 - ? Why, do you think, did he resort to this this particular imagery of a cup?
 - ? What is the significance of the “cup”?

Consider the following passages.

Mosiah 3.²⁵⁻²⁷

Isaiah 51.^{17& 22}

Ezekiel 23.³²⁻³⁴

Revelation 17.⁴⁻⁶

DC 43.²⁶

Psalm 11.⁶

Jeremiah 25.^{15-17, 27}

Revelation 14.¹⁰⁻¹¹

Alma 40.^{26;}

DC 101.¹¹

Psalm 75.⁸

Jeremiah 51.⁷⁻⁹

Revelation 16.¹⁹

D&C 29.¹⁷

- ? After reading these passages, what do you think was “in” Jesus’ cup?

The following words are associated with this cup:

“Torment... as a lake of fire and brimstone”

“Awful view of... guilt and abominations”

“Shrink from the presence of the Lord”

“State of misery and endless torment”

“Snares, fire and brimstone”

“Horrible tempest”

“Dregs”

“Fury”

“Cup of trembling”

“Be moved and mad”

“Be drunken, and spue, and fall”

“Astonishment and desolation

“Wrath of God”

“Indignation”

“Fierceness of his wrath”

“Cast out”

“Unclean”

- ? What does all of this language suggest to you about the nature of Jesus’ suffering?

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“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living Jesus’ life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
“The Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

3 Nephi 11.¹²⁻¹⁷— atonement

¹²*When Jesus had spoken these words the whole multitude fell to the earth; for they remembered that it had been prophesied among them that Christ should show himself unto them after his ascension into heaven. ¹³*The Lord spake unto them saying:

¹⁴“Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet, that ye may know that I am the God of Israel, and the God of the whole earth, and have been slain for the sins of the world.”

¹⁵*The multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth one by one until they had all gone forth, and did see with their eyes and did feel with their hands, and did know of a surety and did bear record, that it was he, of whom it was written by the prophets, that should come. ¹⁶And when they had all gone forth and had witnessed for themselves, they did cry out with one accord, saying:

¹⁷“Hosanna!
Blessed be the name of the Most High God!”

And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.

Q

uestionary

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation.” *

1. Jesus extended this generous and earnest invitation to the Nephite multitudes: “Arise and come forth unto me, that ye may thrust your hands into my side, and also that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet.”
 - ? In what manner might the same invitation be extended to you?
 - ? Has any such invitation been extended to you?
 2. We are told that the “multitude went forth, and thrust their hands into his side, and did feel the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet; and this they did do, going forth *one by one* until they had all gone forth.”
 - ? What does it say about the character of Jesus and his interest in each individual that he took the time—with 2500 hundred people, this surely took many hours—to permit the multitude to handle him “one by one”?
 3. Today’s reading ends with these words and actions of the multitude, : ““Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God!” And they did fall down at the feet of Jesus, and did worship him.” Take a few minutes to close your eyes and imagine this scene.
 - ? What do you see in your mind?
 - ? What does it sound like?
 - ? What do you feel?
 - ? Have you felt a similar response to the Savior’s ministry to you?
- ? Close your eyes and imagine that you are one of the thousand plus individuals present when the Savior visited. Imagine that you are waiting your turn. What are you thinking and feeling as you wait?
- ? Now, imagine it is your turn to touch Jesus. What do you think and feel?
- ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate actually being able to bow down at Jesus’ feet?
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“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”
“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”
“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”
“Justification: How We Repent and Change”
“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”
“Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”
“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
“Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

3 Nephi 17.⁵⁻¹⁰— atonement

⁵*When Jesus had thus spoken, he cast his eyes round about again on the multitude, and beheld they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them. ⁶And he said unto them:

“Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you. ⁷Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy. ⁸For I perceive that ye desire that I should show unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you.”

⁹*When he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him. ¹⁰And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears.

Q

uestionary

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation.” *

1. In this reading, we read that the multitude “did look steadfastly upon [Jesus] as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them.”
 - ? How do you feel as you read of the multitudes attraction to Jesus?
 - ? What is it that attracts individuals to him so powerfully?
 - ? Have you felt that you were in his presence? How did you feel when in his presence?
 - ? Have you felt his attraction in your own life?
 - ? What do you feel when you read that the multitude bowed “down at [Jesus’] feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears”?
 - ? Can you relate to the multitude’s response to Jesus?
2. Have a look at the list of those to whom Jesus extends his invitation to come unto him to be comforted and healed.

The lame
The blind
The halt
The maimed
The leprous
The withered
The deaf
Those afflicted in any manner

Now look at the list of those who were comforted and healed

The sick
The afflicted
The lame
The blind
The dumb
Those afflicted in any manner

- ? What is the impact, emotional and otherwise, of these long lists of individual's invited and ministered to?
- ? Do you have an "affliction" of any type—temporal, emotional, spiritual—concerning which you would have the Savior comfort and heal you?
- ? What is the impact of these long lists on your confidence in the Savior's generous, and sincere willingness to minister to you?

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"Justification: How We Repent and Change"

"Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement"

"Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement"

"Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement"

"Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me"

3 Nephi 17.¹¹⁻¹⁸— atonement

¹¹And *he commanded that their little children should be brought. ¹²So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst; and the multitude gave way till they had all been brought unto him. ¹³*When they had all been brought, and Jesus stood in the midst, he commanded the multitude that they should kneel down upon the ground. ¹⁴And *when they had knelt upon the ground, Jesus groaned within himself, and said: “Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel.”

¹⁵And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him. ¹⁶And after this manner do they bear record: The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father; ¹⁷and no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.

¹⁸*When Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome.

Q

uestionary

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Glorification: The Savior’s resurrection, ascension, and enthronement”

1. Jesus’ resurrection is important in relation to our faith in the reality of our resurrection and in our very ability to be resurrected.
 - ? But, without Jesus’ ascension and enthronement, where would we be without his advocacy and his ability to exercise power in our lives today, while we continue in mortality?
 - ? How does today’s reading relate to the theme of Jesus’ resurrection, ascension, and enthronement?
 - ? How does it relate to Jesus’ advocacy for each of us?
 - ? How do you feel as you hear the multitudes joy and wonder at hearing Jesus pray for them?
 - ? How would you feel to hear your name escape Jesus’ lips as he prays for you?
 - ? Have you experienced or sensed in any way Jesus advocating for you at any time?
 - ? If you have felt Jesus advocating personally for you, how has it impacted your life?
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 - “Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
 - “Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

3nephi 19.²⁴

And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father, he came unto his disciples, and behold, they did still continue, without ceasing, to pray unto him; and they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray, and they were filled with desire.

Questionary

- ? What does it mean that those who were praying had “it given unto them what they should pray”?
- ? Have you experienced this sort of inspiration—feeling your prayers directed?
- ? What does it mean that “they were filled with desire”? How does this compare to your day to day prayers?

3 Nephi 27.³⁰⁻³² — just scripture

³⁰And now, behold, my joy is great, even unto fulness, because of you, and also this generation; yea, and even the Father rejoiceth, and also all the holy angels, because of you and this generation; for none of them are lost. ³¹Behold, I would that ye should understand; for I mean them who are now alive of this generation; and none of them are lost; and in them I have fulness of joy.

³²But behold, it sorroweth me because of the fourth generation from this generation, for they are led away captive by him even as was the son of perdition; for they will sell me for silver and for gold, and for that which moth doth corrupt and which thieves can break through and steal. And in that day will I visit them, even in turning their works upon their own heads.

Questionary

1. In this passage, Jesus informs his disciples that they and those who have accepted him have brought him great joy, “even unto fulness.” In addition, the Father and “all the holy angels” rejoice because of them.
 - ? How does this make you feel when you read it?
 - ? To what degree could it be said of you that you bring joy and rejoicing to Father, Son, and angels? Why do you answer as you do?
2. Jesus follows this up with the far less happy news that “the fourth generation from this generation,” far from bringing him joy and rejoicing, causes him sorrow.
 - ? Why does he sorrow over them?
 - ? What specific sin is at the heart of their rebellion and his sorrow for them?
 - ? What is the significance of the fact that Jesus focuses on the materialism of the fourth generation as the source of their rebellion and his sorrow?
 - ? How do you feel about Jesus’ emphasis on materialism rather than other sins that are so often thought of and mentioned as more serious?
3. Jesus suggests that in their sinful materialism, the fourth generation is following the example of “the son of perdition.”
 - ? To whom is Jesus referring?
 - ? What were the circumstances of his materialism?

Consider the following passage concerning Cain, or “the son of perdition.”

²⁹And Satan said unto Cain: “Swear unto me by thy throat, and if thou tell it thou shalt die; and swear thy brethren by their heads, and by the living God, that they tell it not; for if they tell it, they shall surely die; and this that thy father may not know it; and this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands.”

³⁰And Satan sware unto Cain that he would do according to his commands. And all these things were done in secret. ³¹And Cain said: “Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain.” Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan, and he gloried in his wickedness.

³²And Cain went into the field, and Cain talked with Abel, his brother. And it came to pass that while they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him. ³³And Cain gloried in that which he had done, saying: “I am free; surely the flocks of my brother falleth into my hands.”

³⁴And the Lord said unto Cain: “Where is Abel, thy brother?”

And he said: “I know not. Am I my brother’s keeper?”

“...And Cain said unto the Lord: “Satan tempted me because of my brother’s flocks. And I was wroth also; for his offering thou didst accept and not mine...” (Moses 5.^{29-34, 38}).

- ? What role did materialism play in Cain’s rebellion against God and his becoming “the son of perdition”?

- ? How do you feel about materialism being so intimately tied to “perdition”?
- ? What is it about materialism that makes it so intimately tied to “perdition”?
- ? Given the present state of materialism in the world today, many are playing with the fire of perdition. How do you feel about this observation?
- ? Given your present materialism, how close to the edge of perdition are you walking? Why do you answer as you do and how sure of your answer are you?
- ? Are changes in attitude and behavior in order? If so, what?

4nephi 1.²⁻³—just scripture

*In the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another. And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift.

Questionary

1. This passage speaks of the lack of contention and disputation, of justice, of economic equality, and of the absence of either rich or poor.
 - ? What is the relationship between these elements of a just society?
 - ? What is the relationship between “contentions and disputations” and economic inequality?
 - ? How does economic inequality contribute to “contentions and disputations”?
 - ? What types of “contentions and disputations” do we see due to the extreme inequality found in American society?
2. The passage says that because of these societal conditions—the lack of contention and disputation, justice, economic equality, and the absence of either rich or poor—all partook freely “of the heavenly gift.”
 - ? What, do you think, is the “heavenly gift” that everyone so universally enjoyed?

Consider the following passage.

“Nevertheless, in your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld” (DC 70.¹⁴).

- ? How does this passage relate to the observations made in today’s reading?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you consider that “the heavenly gift” mentioned in today’s reading is related to and perhaps the same as experiencing “the abundance of the manifestations of the spirit”?
 - ? What do you think and feel when you contemplate that one’s access to the Spirit and its greatest gifts are in part contingent on economic conditions, especially the presence or absence of economic equality?
 - ? Given our current level of economic inequality found in our society, what is the likelihood that our citizenry, Christian or not, is partaking of “the heavenly gift” or “the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit”?
3. Before mentioning the lack of contention and disputation, of justice, of economic equality, and of the absence of either rich or poor, the passage reports that “the people were all converted unto the Lord.”
 - ? How does an individual’s conversion to the Lord inspire and move them to act so as to eliminate contention, disputation, injustice, economic inequality, and the existence of rich or poor? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? Given the relationship between true spiritual conversion and the desire to work for peace, justice, and economic equality, can one really think of themselves as “converted” if they do not desire advocate for, and work toward peace, justice, and economic equality?
 - ? Given this relationship, what is the nature and level of your conversion? Why do you answer as you do?
 4. There was not only an absence of “poor,” there was also an absence of “rich.”
 - ? What do you make of this observation?
 - ? How do you feel about there being no “rich”?

I have often listened, in dismay, as individuals debated about the meaning of “equality” when

discussing economic inequality—a discussion that always suggests to me that many are not comfortable with economic equality for fear that somehow, they may be shortchanged and someone else overly compensated. O.K., whatever. But there can be no doubt that under any definition our society is currently grossly unequal in economic matters and thus unconverted, devoid of the full benefits of the Holy Spirit, as today's reading suggests, and engrossed in sin: "It is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin" (DC 49.²⁰).

? How do you respond to this assertion?

4 Nephi 1.²⁴⁻²⁶— just scripture

²⁴And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world. ²⁵And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them. ²⁶And they began to be divided into classes; and they began to build up churches unto themselves to get gain, and began to deny the true church of Christ.

Questionary

1. The inspired writer of scripture lists several indicators of apostacy and sin that crept into Nephite society after 200 years of remarkable righteousness.
 - ? What indicators of apostacy and sin do you find?
2. The reader is welcome to number differently than I, but I find 5 indicators of apostacy and sin that crept into Nephite society.
 - They “were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world. And from that time forth
 - “They did have their goods and their substance no more common among them.”
 - “They began to be divided into classes”
 - “They began to build up churches unto themselves to get gain.”
 - They “began to deny the true church of Christ.”
 - ? How do you feel about these indicators of sin and apostacy? Surprised by them? Expect others? Surprised by any absences?
 - ? After reviewing John the Baptist’s indicators of true repentance for various classes of people, consider the connection between his insights into repentance and those found here concerning sin and apostacy.

“And the people asked him, saying, ‘What shall we do then?’
He answereth and saith unto them, ‘He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.’
Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, ‘Master, what shall we do?’
And he said unto them, ‘Exact no more than that which is appointed you.’
And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, ‘And what shall we do?’
And he said unto them, ‘Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages’” (Luke 3.¹⁰⁻¹⁴).
 - ? How do you feel about the signs of repentance, sin and apostacy being found in individual and societal attitudes and the uses of material resources?
 - ? Why did not I make “lifted up in pride” and “wearing of costly apparel...” two separate indicators?
 - ? How are our choices in “fashion” a reflection of our pride or humility?
 - ? What is it about economic inequality that it becomes a good predictor of the internal moral character of the individual and society?
 - ? What does it mean to “build up churches... to get gain”?
 - ? How do we built up and twist doctrine to justify our natural drive to “get gain”?
 - ? How does the perverted doctrine that “gain is righteousness” (see 1 Timothy 6.⁵) or “gain is indicative of right behavior” a “denial” of “the true church of Christ”?
 - ? As you consider the inspired writers commentary on the state of sin and apostacy that was found in Nephite society, how do you suppose he would judge your society?
 - ? What individual adjustments could you make in your life to avoid being spoken of in the same manner as Mormon speaks of Nephites?
 - ? What could you do and encourage in relation to public policy in your society to try to assist it

in not being spoken of as Mormon speaks of Nephite society?

Mormon 8.³⁵⁻³⁷— just scripture

Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts. For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.

Questionary

It is hard to imagine Moroni being any more accurate about our present evil age than he is here. Note that, once again, it is society's materialism and its accompanying objectification and denial of the poor upon which God focuses his criticism.

- ? What specific modern-day societal attitudes, policies, and behaviors match Moroni's description?
- ? To what examples would you point to confirm Moroni's accusation that "churches" "love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted" (do not limit yourself only to what they actively do or don't do institutionally, but to political choices and associations that they make as well)?

Mormon 8.³⁸⁻⁴⁰— just scripture

O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world? Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not? Yea, why do ye build up your secret abominations to get gain, and cause that widows should mourn before the Lord, and also orphans to mourn before the Lord, and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground, for vengeance upon your heads?

Questionary

1. After informing us that “Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me” (8.³⁹), Moroni ask, “Why have ye polluted the holy church of God?”
 - ? To whom is Moroni speaking?
 - ? To what “holy church” is Moroni referring?
2. Moroni sees that latter-day American Christianity values “the praise of the world” over “the value of an endless happiness.”
 - ? How does latter-day American Christianity seek “the praise of the world”?
3. Moroni accuses members of latter-day American Christianity of letting the “hungry,” “needy,” “naked,” “sick,” and “afflicted” “pass by you” and of “notic[ing] them not.”
 - ? How do we ignore and refuse to help these vulnerable populations?
 - ? How do we let the “sick” “pass by” us and “notice them not”?
 - ? How does this apply to the lack of affordable health care for so many?
 - ? How does this language suggest a more hardened attitude toward the vulnerable than a simple statement that they refused to help them might suggest?
4. Moroni calls latter-day American Christianity, “Pollutions.”
 - ? How do you feel about this neglect of the vulnerable being labeled as a “pollution” of “the holy church of God”?
 - ? How applicable is Moroni’s criticism to American Christianity today?

Ether 3.²— Atonement

²O Lord, thou hast said that we must be encompassed about by the floods. Now behold, O Lord, and do not be angry with thy servant because of his weakness before thee; for we know that thou art holy and dwellest in the heavens, and that we are unworthy before thee; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually; nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires.

Questionary

Today's reading is a portion of a prayer that the brother of Jared offered as he sought assistance in preparation for his people's journey across the oceans in "barges" whose design God had revealed.

1. We have identified this passage as one that speaks to the fall and our need for atonement.
 - ? What do you find in this reading that justifies our inclusion of it in this topic of our atonement series?
2. The brother of Jared confesses that "we know... that we are unworthy before thee."
 - ? Why does he confess his and our unworthiness?
 - ? How do you feel about it?
 - ? Who else can you identify in scripture who makes the same confession?
 - ? Why is it so important for us to make such confession?
 - ? How is the prayerful confession of such unworthiness and our easy doing of evil an act of faith?
3. The brother of Jared goes on to confess that "because of the fall our natures have become evil continually."
 - ? How do you feel about this confession?
 - ? Do you agree with the brother of Jared's estimation of humans? Of you? Why do you answer as you do?
 - ? How does this compare/agree with the following statements found in the Lectures on Faith (Lecture 3)?

"But secondly: Unless he was merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, long suffering, and full of goodness, *such is the weakness of human nature, and so great the frailties and imperfections of men*, that unless they believed that these excellencies existed in the divine character, the faith necessary to salvation could not exist; for doubt would take the place of faith, and *those who know their weakness and liability to sin*, would be in constant doubt of salvation, if it were not for the idea which they have of the excellency of the character of God, that he is slow to anger, and long suffering, and of a forgiving disposition, and does forgive iniquity, transgression and sin. An idea of these facts does away doubt, and makes faith exceedingly strong."

"Question 17: Is it not also necessary to have the idea that God is merciful, and gracious, long suffering and full of goodness?"

Because of *the weakness and imperfections of human nature, and the great frailties of man; for such is the weakness of man, and such his frailties, that he is liable to sin continually*, and if God were not long suffering, and full of compassion, gracious and merciful and of a forgiving disposition, man would be cut off from before him in consequence of which he would be in continual doubt and could not exercise faith: for where doubt is, there faith has no power, but by man's believing that God is full of compassion and forgiveness, long suffering and slow to anger, he can exercise faith in him and overcome doubt, so as to be exceedingly strong."

4. The brother of Jared follows his firm confession of unworthiness and inclination to sin with “nevertheless, O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee.”
 - ? How do you feel about this “nevertheless”?
 - ? How easy or difficult is it to “call upon” God for help when you are especially cognizant of our unworthiness and liability to sin? Why do you answer as you do?

5. Consider the following passage from Joseph Smith History (verses 28-29).

“I was *left to all kinds of temptations*; and, mingling with all kinds of society, I *frequently fell into many foolish errors*, and *displayed the weakness* of youth, and the *foibles of human nature*; which, I am sorry to say, *led me into divers temptations, offensive in the sight of God*. In making this confession, no one need suppose me guilty of any great or malignant sins. A disposition to commit such was never in my nature. But *I was guilty* of levity, and sometimes associated with jovial company, etc., *not consistent with that character which ought to be maintained by one who was called of God* as I had been. But this will not seem very strange to any one who recollects my youth, and is acquainted with my native cheery temperament.

In consequence of these things, *I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections*; when, on the evening of the above-mentioned twenty-first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night, I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one.”

- ? What was Joseph Smith praying to know on this 21st of September?
- ? How are the brother of Jared’s and Joseph Smith’s examples similar?
- ? How do you feel about Joseph’s confidence “in obtaining a divine manifestation” in a moment when he was feeling “guilty,” “offensive,” and “condemned” so intensely?
- ? How likely are you to feel and act similarly? Why do you answer as you do?

- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:

“Fall: Our Need of Atonement”

“Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”

“At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”

“Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”

“Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”

“Justification: How We Repent and Change”

“Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”

“Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”

“Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”

“Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

Ether 12.^{32-34 & 41}— atonement

³²And I also remember that thou hast said that thou hast prepared a house for man, yea, even among the mansions of thy Father, in which man might have a more excellent hope; wherefore man must hope, or he cannot receive an inheritance in the place which thou hast prepared. ³³And again, I remember that thou hast said that thou hast loved the world, even unto the laying down of thy life for the world, that thou mightest take it again to prepare a place for the children of men. ³⁴And now I know that this love which thou hast had for the children of men is charity; wherefore, except men shall have charity they cannot inherit that place which thou hast prepared in the mansions of thy Father.

⁴¹And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. Amen.

Questionary

This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation.” *

1. We most often think of charity in terms of thoughts, feelings, and actions that exists between individual mortals. But today’s reading provides a different perspective on charity.
 - ? Who offers charity in today’s reading?
 - ? Who is encouraged to accept the offered charity in today’s reading?
 - ? Of what does the offered charity consist?
 - ? Do you possess charity in the sense that you have accepted Jesus’ offered charity as expressed in his suffering and death for you?

2. Consider the attributes of charity as found in 1 Corinthians 13.⁴⁻⁸ (also Moroni 7.⁴⁷):

“Charity suffereth long,
and is kind;
charity envieth not;
charity vaunteth not itself,
is not puffed up,
Doth not behave itself unseemly,
seeketh not her own,
is not easily provoked,
thinketh no evil;
Rejoiceth not in iniquity,
but rejoiceth in the truth;
Beareth all things,
believeth all things,
hopeth all things,
endureth all things.
Charity never faileth...

- ? How do these charitable attributes relate to Christ and how he, then, treats and responds to you, whether in strength or in weakness?
3. After describing the charity that Jesus possesses for and toward us, Ether “commend” that we “seek this Jesus.” He does so hoping that “the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost... may be and abide in [us] forever.”
 - ? How, do you think, does “charity” relate to “grace”?
 - ? If we understand charity, as Moroni does in today’s reading, to be the “love which [Christ has] for the children of men” what does it mean for an individual to “have charity”?

- ? What does it mean that we “cannot inherit that place which [Christ has] prepared for us” without possessing the “love which [he has] for [us]”?
- ? What can you do to more fully follow Moroni’s “commendation” that you “seek this Jesus”?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
 - “Fall: Our Need of Atonement”
 - “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”
 - “At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”
 - “Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”
 - “Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”
 - “Justification: How We Repent and Change”
 - “Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”
 - “Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”
 - “Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
 - “Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

Moroni 7.²⁰⁻²⁵— atonement

²⁰And now, my brethren, how is it possible that ye can lay hold upon every good thing? ²¹And now I come to that faith, of which I said I would speak; and I will tell you the way whereby ye may lay hold on every good thing.

²²For behold, God knowing all things, being from everlasting to everlasting, behold, he sent angels to minister unto the children of men, to make manifest concerning the coming of Christ; and in Christ there should come every good thing. ²³And God also declared unto prophets, by his own mouth, that Christ should come. ²⁴And behold, there were divers ways that he did manifest things unto the children of men, which were good; and all things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them.

²⁵Wherefore, by the ministering of angels, and by every word which proceeded forth out of the mouth of God, men began to exercise faith in Christ; and thus by faith, they did lay hold upon every good thing.

Q

uestionary

1. This reading is one in a series of readings on Atonement that we entitle, “Fall: Our Need of Atonement.” *
 2. The phrase, “every good thing” is repeated several times in today’s reading.
 - In verse 19, Moroni exhorts us to “lay hold upon *every good thing*.”
 - In verse 20, Moroni asks “how is it possible that ye can lay hold upon *every good thing*?”
 - In verse 21, Moroni informs us that he is going to answer his own question about how we may lay hold of *every good thing*.
 - In verse 22, Moroni teaches that “in Christ there should come *every good thing*.”

? What does this phrase suggest to you?
? What does this repetition suggest about Moroni’s intent in chapter 7 as a whole?
 3. In verse 24, Moroni says, “All things which are good cometh of Christ; otherwise men were fallen, and there could *no good thing* come unto them.”
 - ? How do you feel about Moroni’s assertion that without Christ “no good thing” could come to us?
 - ? Do you believe this?
 - ? Why, do you feel, could we obtain no good thing on our own and without Christ?
 - ? What does this tell you about “fallen” or “the natural man”?
 4. In the remainder of the chapter, verses 27-48, Moroni lists a few of the good things that we can ask for and receive through Christ.
 - ? What are these “good things”?
- * The following ten titles are part of our atonement series:
- “Fall: Our Need of Atonement”
 - “Grace: The Savior’s Generous and Earnest Invitation”
 - “At-one-ment: The Savior’s unity and connectedness with us”
 - “Sacrifice: What Jesus Suffered for Us”
 - “Glorification: The Savior’s Resurrection, Ascension, and Enthronement”
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 - “Renewal: The Hope, Joy, Peace, and Power of Atonement”
 - “Sanctification: Imitating and living a life of Atonement”
 - “Thanksgiving: In Praise of Atonement”
 - “Song of the Righteous: A Song unto Me”

Moroni 7.⁴²⁻⁴⁸

⁴²Wherefore, if a man have faith he must needs have hope; for without faith there cannot be any hope.

⁴³And again, behold I say unto you that he cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be meek, and lowly of heart. ⁴⁴If so, his faith and hope is vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly in heart; and if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.

⁴⁵And charity suffereth long,
and is kind,
and envieth not,
and is not puffed up,
seeketh not her own,
is not easily provoked,
thinketh no evil,
and rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth,
beareth all things,
believeth all things,
hopeth all things,
endureth all things.

⁴⁶Wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail—⁴⁷But charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him. ⁴⁸Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.

Questionary

1. We changed the formatting of the scripture for this reading so that the qualities that reflect charity are in a list form. These attributes represent ideals toward which we must strive. They are also, however, the attributes of Christ, since he is the perfect possessor of charity. Charity is, in fact, a name for the love that Christ himself possesses and feels for others.
 - ? Look at each attribute of Charity and consider how Christ's possession of each of the attributes influences the way he relates to you.
 - ? For example, if Christ, "thinketh no evil," ("he doesn't focus on what is wrong") what does this suggest about how and what he thinks of you?
 - ? One more example: Does it change the way you approach him to know that he "is not easily provoked? If so, how?
2. Now, reconsider each attribute and how you might apply each one of them in a relationship you have with another.
 - ? For example, how would you feel and how would you impact others if you didn't "focus on what is wrong with others"?

Moroni 9.²⁵

May Christ lift thee up,
and may his sufferings and death,
and the showing his body unto our fathers,
and his mercy and long-suffering,
and the hope of his glory and of eternal life,
rest in your mind forever.

Questionary

- ? Take a few moments to consider each of the things that Mormon hopes will “rest in [Moroni’s] mind forever.” What do you feel as you consider each? How often do they “rest in your mind”?

Moroni 10.³

Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it [how merciful the Lord hath been] in your hearts.

Questionary

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- ? What is the “it” that Moroni encourages us to “ponder”?
 - ? Is it the Book of Mormon itself, or is it the message of mercy of which it testifies?
 - ? Why would it be important to have pondered God’s mercy if one is to ask God for answers of any kind, including whether the Book of Mormon is true or not?

Moroni 10.³

³Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

Questionary

With his introductory remarks in Moroni 10.¹⁻², Moroni informs us that he is preparing to complete his record and hide it away for safe keeping. Before “sealing up these records,” however, Moroni tells us that he has a few final exhortations to issue. These exhortations will ultimately number eight in Moroni 10. Today’s is the first of eight Read, Ponder, Pray exercises focused on these final exhortations.

1. Moroni 10.3 contains the first exhortation. Here we are exhorted to “remember” and “ponder.”
? What are we to remember and ponder?

Without making too much of it, we note that when Moroni refers to the Book of Mormon text itself, he always speaks of it in the plural: “these things”— twice in verse 3 and two more times in verse 4; and “them,” once in verse 3.

However, we are exhorted to remember and ponder “it,” singular. The “it” that we are to ponder is not simply the (plural) Book of Mormon. Rather, we are to remember and ponder the singular “how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men...”

? How do you feel about understanding the object of our pondering after reading the Book of Mormon as “the mercy of God”?

? Have you done this in the past? If so, what did you learn and feel?

2. You may remember that at the beginning of the greater Book of Mormon, Nephi, in telling his story, revealed one of his principle objectives.

“And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away. But behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance” (1 Ne. 1.²⁰).

It seems that this message of the mercy of God is central to the Lord’s purposes in preserving and revealing the Book of Mormon.

? What is the difference between simply pondering the Book of Mormon as opposed to pondering the Lord’s mercy that is evidenced in the book?

? Today, we invite you to follow and experiment with Moroni’s exhortation. Take your mind back to the beginning of the Book of Mormon and, from there, let your mind make its way through the entire book. As you do so, make a list of instances when the Lord acted merciful in the lives of the individuals or groups of people.

? After doing so, take a moment to ponder over one or two of your favorite stories of mercy.

? Why do you think Moroni exhorted you to do something like this exercise?

? What do you learn and feel as you ponder the stories of mercy?

? What do you learn and feel when you ponder the significance of there being so many such stories?

? What does this suggest for the purposes or objectives of the Book of Mormon?

? What does it suggest for our reading of the Book of Mormon?

3. Consider the following quote.

“Study of the Book of Mormon is most rewarding when one focuses on its primary purpose—to testify of Jesus Christ. By comparison, all other issues are incidental.”

“When you read the Book of Mormon, concentrate on the principal figure in the book—the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God...” (Russell M. Nelson, *CR*, Oct. 1999, p. 86-87).

? How does this relate to today’s reading and the focus of our pondering?

Moroni 10.^{4-7a}

⁴And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. ⁵And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. ⁶And whatsoever thing is good is just and true; wherefore, nothing that is good denieth the Christ, but acknowledgeth that he is. ⁷And ye may know that he is, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Questionary

With his introductory remarks in Moroni 10.1-2, Moroni informs us that he is preparing to complete his record and hide it away for safe keeping. Before “sealing up these records,” however, Moroni tells us that he has a few final exhortations to issue. These exhortations will ultimately number eight in Moroni 10. We found the first exhortation in verses 3-6. Here, in his second exhortation, Moroni admonishes us to remember and ponder upon the mercy of God, especially his mercy as it is found on the pages of the Book of Mormon.

1. Today’s reading represents the second exhortation.
 - ? What does Moroni exhort you to do in today’s reading?
 - ? What role does our acceptance of God’s merciful disposition, upon which we pondered according to the first admonition, influence our decision to accept and act upon the second admonition: to pray to God for revelation?
 - ? How does our coming to appreciate and accept God’s merciful nature, influence our faith in receiving revelation in answer to our prayers?
 - ? How likely would you be to pray if you did not believe that God was merciful?
 - ? Why is it necessary for God to be merciful and act mercifully in order to answer our prayers?
2. Consider Hebrews 11.⁶

“He that cometh to God must believe... that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

 - ? How does this relate to Moroni’s first two admonitions?
3. In addition to the mercy that exists in God, Moroni mentions three things that should exist in us if we are to be fully effective in finding answers to prayer, including the specific prayer mentioned here—that of knowing the truth of the Book of Mormon.
 - ? What are those three things?
 - ? To what degree do you possess the following three things?
 - “A sincere heart”
 - “Real intent”
 - “Faith in Christ”
4. In addition to revealing the truth of the Book of Mormon, the Holy Spirit reveals the truth of “all things.” Moroni could have mentioned any number of “good things” that the Holy Spirit reveals as truth. Other than the truth of the Book of Mormon, Moroni specifically mentions only one other.
 - ? What is that one other thing?

Moroni teaches that “by the power of the Holy Ghost” we “may know that [Christ] lives.”

 - ? What does it mean to you to know that he lives?

Think of the relationship between spouses.

- ? What is the difference/relationship between one spouse knowing that their spouse lives, and one spouse being aware of and appreciating the intimate involvement of their spouse in their daily lives?
- ? Which of these represents the depth of your knowledge of Christ?
- ? What can you do to deepen your relationship with deity?
- ? What is the evidence of his being alive in you, and your being alive in him?

Moroni 10.^{7b-c}

Wherefore I would exhort you that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men, the same today and tomorrow, and forever.

Questionary

With his introductory remarks in Moroni 10.¹⁻², Moroni informs us that he is preparing to complete his record and hide it away for safe keeping. Before “sealing up these records,” however, Moroni tells us that he has a few final exhortations to issue. These exhortations will ultimately number eight in Moroni 10.

We found the first exhortation in verses 3. Here, Moroni admonished us to remember and ponder upon the mercy of God, especially his mercy as it is found on the pages of the Book of Mormon.

The second exhortation, found in verse 4-7a, Moroni admonished us pray for revelation—including especially revelation as to the truth of the Book of Mormon and God’s existence and presence.

1. Today’s reading represents the third exhortation.
? What is the third exhortation?

Moroni 10 is really the 2nd of two conclusions and farewells that Moroni wrote for the book that he and his father worked on so hard. The first is found in Mormon 9. Conclusions and farewells are important. Such moments often draw from us those things that are most important and dear to us. In both of Moroni’s conclusions, Moroni reminds the reader that God is “the same today, tomorrow, and forever:” “yesterday, today, and forever” (Moroni 10.⁷ and Mormon 9.⁹).

- ? Why, do you think, is this truth of such importance to Moroni that he would include it in both of his farewell?
 - ? Why is it important for us to know that God is the same “yesterday, today, and forever”?
 - ? What is the relationship between this truth concerning God never changing nature and the first two admonitions?
 - ? How does an understanding and acceptance of this truth influence the way we approach God in Prayer?
2. In both of the aforementioned conclusions (and again in Ether 12, which could also be seen as a kind of conclusion) Moroni reiterates the truth that God “worketh by power,” or that he is “a God of Miracles” (Mormon 9.^{11, 15}). In today’s exhortation, Moroni exhorts us to not “deny” this truth. Further, he exhorts us not to deny God’s power and miracles in our own lives.
 - ? While we might confidently confess that God is powerful and miraculous, are there ways that we, at the same time, deny God’s power and miracles in our own lives?
 - ? Just as you pondered the many instances of “mercy” that are found in the Book of Mormon, take some time to ponder the many instances found in the Book of Mormon when God “worked by power,” or showed Himself to be a “God of miracles.”
 - ? What lessons can you draw in your own life from these examples?

Moroni 10.⁸⁻¹⁷

⁸And again, I exhort you, my brethren, that ye deny not the gifts of God, for they are many; and they come from the same God. And there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them.

⁹For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom;

¹⁰And to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

¹¹And to another, exceedingly great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

¹²And again, to another, that he may work mighty miracles;

¹³And again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things;

¹⁴And again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits;

¹⁵And again, to another, all kinds of tongues;

¹⁶And again, to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues.

¹⁷And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will.

Questionary

In Moroni's first three admonitions found in Moroni 10.³⁻⁷, we were admonished to remember and ponder the mercy of God. We were admonished to take the knowledge of God's mercy and put it into practice by approaching God in faithful, expectant prayer, in order to receive personal revelation. Finally, we were admonished to believe and act upon the reality that God is a God of power and miracles: a God who participates in our lives with power and miracles.

1. In today's reading, Moroni offers his fourth admonition.
 - ? What does Moroni admonish you to do in today's reading?
2. In admonishing us to "deny not the gifts of God," manifestations of God's power and miracles, Moroni lists a few of those gifts.
 - ? Consider the eight gifts that are listed. Compare this list with those found in D&C 46:13-26 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. Have you experienced one of more of these gifts?
 - ? Review the circumstances of your having experienced these gifts, and how the gifts profited another.
 - ? In what ways can we deny "the gifts of God"?
 - ? Is there someone in your life right now who would be profited by your possession and use of one of these gifts?

Moroni 10.¹⁸

¹⁸And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ.

Questionary

In our four previous readings from Moroni 10, we were exhorted to remember and ponder the mercy of God. We were exhorted to take the knowledge of God's mercy and put it into practice by approaching God in faithful, expectant prayer, in order to receive personal revelation. We were exhorted to believe and act upon the reality that God is a God of power and miracles: a God who participates in our lives with power and miracles. Finally, we were exhorted to accept the gifts that were part of and evidences of His power and mercy.

1. In today's reading, we receive our fifth exhortation.
? Restate this exhortation in your own words.
2. We are to remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is the agent and source of Heavenly Father's gifts. This truth seems important to Moroni. It was found in the words of his father, which Moroni added to his own book.

“For behold, God knowing all things, being from everlasting to everlasting, behold, he sent angels to minister unto the children of men, to make manifest concerning the coming of Christ; and *in Christ there should come every good thing*” (Moroni 7.²²).

It is hard to read Mormon and Moroni's statements, without thinking of something Ammon taught.

“And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance...” (Alma 22.¹⁴)

- ? Why do you think this truth is so important?
- ? Why is it important for you to acknowledge and act upon this truth? How do you feel about it?
3. Have a look at Ephesians 1.³⁻¹⁴. This will be the subject of other Read, Ponder, and Pray series. Here, we are told of several blessings that come to us “in,” “through,” and “by” Christ.
? Identify the blessings mentioned by Paul in these verses.

Moroni 10.¹⁹⁻²⁶

¹⁹And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men. ²⁰Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith there must also be hope; and if there must be hope there must also be charity. ²¹And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God; neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope. ²²And if ye have no hope ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity. ²³And Christ truly said unto our fathers:

‘If ye have faith ye can do all things which are expedient unto me.’

²⁴And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth—that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you, it shall be because of unbelief. ²⁵And wo be unto the children of men if this be the case; for there shall be none that doeth good among you, no not one. For if there be one among you that doeth good, he shall work by the power and gifts of God. ²⁶And wo unto them who shall do these things away and die, for they die in their sins, and they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God; and I speak it according to the words of Christ; and I lie not.

Q

uestionary

In our five previous readings from Moroni 10, we were exhorted to

- Remember and ponder the mercy of God.
 - Take the knowledge of God’s mercy and put it into practice by approaching God in faithful, expectant prayer, in order to receive personal revelation.
 - Believe and act upon the reality that God is a God of power and miracles: a God who participates in our lives with power and miracles.
 - Accept the gifts that were part of and evidences of His power and mercy.
 - Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is the agent and source of Heavenly Father’s gifts.
1. In today’s reading, we find our sixth admonition.
? What are you being admonished in today’s reading?
 2. Our sixth exhortation feels a little more ominous. He uses the dreaded “wo” word a time or two. Those who do not respond faithfully, hopefully, and charitably to his exhortations are at risk of dying “in their sins” and not seeing the “kingdom of God.”

The Book of Mormon speaks two other times of the possibility of dying “in our sins.”

“And, in fine, wo unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and behold his face, and remain in their sins” (2 Nephi 9.³⁸).

“But behold, and fear, and tremble before God, for ye ought to tremble; for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection” (Mosiah 15.²⁶).

- ? What does it mean to you to speak of “dying in sin”?
- ? What is demanded of us if we would avoid “dying in our sins”?
- ? Does it mean that at the time of death we have finally arrived at the point that we are no longer sinning?
- ? Are you likely to be “perfect,” without sin, based solely on your personal “righteousness,” “obedience,” “performance,” or “life management skills”?
- ? What role do faith, hope, and charity play in assuring that we live and die “out of sin,” rather than “in sin”?

- ? How do you feel about Moroni's warning that the absence of miracles indicates a lack of faith, hope, and charity?

Moroni 10.²⁷⁻²⁹

²⁷And I exhort you to remember these things; for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you:

“Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust?”

²⁸I declare these things unto the fulfilling of the prophecies. And behold, they shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the everlasting God; and his word shall hiss forth from generation to generation.

²⁹And God shall show unto you, that that which I have written is true.

Questionary

In our six previous readings from Moroni 10, we were exhorted to

- Remember and ponder the mercy of God.
- Take the knowledge of God’s mercy and put it into practice by approaching God in faithful, expectant prayer, in order to receive personal revelation.
- Believe and act upon the reality that God is a God of power and miracles: a God who participates in our lives with power and miracles.
- Accept the gifts that were part of and evidences of His power and mercy.
- Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is the agent and source of Heavenly Father’s gifts.
- Remember that the power and miracles and gifts of God continue as long as there is a single man or woman who has faith in Christ.

1. Today’s reading contains the seventh exhortation.

? What is the nature of the exhortation in today’s reading?

2. Moroni asks us to remember all that he has said, and to accept it as if it came from the very mouth of God. He invites us to imagine ourselves standing “at the bar of God,” where we hear God speak these words to us:

“Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man?”

Take a moment to imagine that you are standing “at the bar of God.”

? What do you imagine God might say to you?

? Do you imagine yourself seeing “his face with pleasure” (see Enos 1.²⁷), or shrinking “with awful fear” (2 Nephi 9.⁴⁶)?

? Think about your testimony of the Book of Mormon. Remember how and when your testimony came. Consider how it has grown over time. Take a few minutes today to write your testimony.

? Over the following days and weeks, watch for the opportunity to share your testimony of the Book of Mormon with someone you think may need it.

Moroni 10.³⁰⁻³⁴

³⁰And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing. ³¹And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled. ³²Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. ³³And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

³⁴And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen.

Q

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Today's reading contains the last of Moroni's eight exhortations. Recall what we have been exhorted to do in the previous seven.

- Remember and ponder the mercy of God.
 - Take the knowledge of God's mercy and put it into practice by approaching God in faithful, expectant prayer, in order to receive personal revelation.
 - Believe and act upon the reality that God is a God of power and miracles: a God who participates in our lives with power and miracles.
 - Accept the gifts that were part of and evidences of His power and mercy.
 - Remember that the Lord Jesus Christ is the agent and source of Heavenly Father's gifts.
 - Remember that the power and miracles and gifts of God continue as long as there is a single man or woman who has faith in Christ.
 - Remember that what we are hearing in Moroni's exhortations are the words of God so that it is as if it were God exhorting us.
1. There is a logic behind this order. Here we only mention the logic of the first and the last. We were first exhorted to remember and ponder the mercy of God. This is a necessary preface to all the rest.
 - ? How likely are we to pray and ask for things that we lack if we do not believe that God is a merciful Being?

Consider the passage that inspired Joseph Smith to pray, James 1.⁵.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

- ? In looking at this important passage, we often focus on God's willingness to answer prays. That is appropriate. But what role might the following words have played in Joseph's decision to pray, and how do they relate to Moroni's exhortation that we remember how merciful God is?

“And upbraideth not.”

It seems that knowing that God does not upbraid those who come to him with a “lack,” is prerequisite to actually coming to him with a specific “lack.” Hence, Moroni's admonition to remember, ponder, and act upon God's being a merciful Being.

2. The final exhortation is a logical conclusion to the first. Having remembered, pondered, and

believed that God is a merciful Being, we are equipped to work and labor with Him until we are perfect and sanctified in Christ.

- ? What does it mean to you to be perfect?
- ? What does it mean to you to be sanctified?
- ? How do they relate to each other?

If you need to, look up sanctify or sanctification in the dictionary, bible dictionary, or in other scriptures.

- ? What needs to happen in your life so that you can be perfect “in Christ”?
- ? What needs to happen in your life to be sanctified “in Christ”?
- ? What difference does it make to speak of being perfect and sanctified “**in Christ**,” rather than simply speaking of being perfect and sanctified—without the mention of Christ?

3. Moroni expresses his hope, his real expectation, his real anticipation that he will be “brought forth **triumphant** through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah.”
 - ? To what extent do you share Moroni’s expectation?
 - ? After reviewing and considering Moroni’s eight exhortations, which one seems a priority in your life for present application?
 - ? What will you do to apply the application?

Moroni 10.³⁴

I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen.

Questionary

- ? On what grounds does Moroni base such confident hope?
- ? Would you say that Moroni's confident hope is representative of believers or unrepresentative? Why do you answer as you do?
- ? How closely does your hope match that of Moroni?
- ? How can you utilize the Easter Season to strengthen your hope in the future, not only in this world but in the world to come?