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3 nephi 15 commentary

3 Nephi Chapter 15 Scripture Mastery 1 And now it has come to life that when Jesus finished these sayings he took a look at the multitude and said to them, Behold, you have heard the things that I have taught before I have risen to my Father; whereas whose words remember these sayings of mine and sedate them, I will raise him on the last day. 2 And it came to pass that when Jesus spoke these words, He felt that there were some among them who admired and wondered what would concern the law of Moses; because they didn't understand the saying that old things had passed away and that all things had become new. 3 And he told them, It is not that I have told you that old things have passed away and that all things have become new. 4 Behold, I say unhea that the law has been fulfilled which is given to Moses. 5 Behold, I am he who gave the law, and I am he who has covenanted with my people Israel; therefore the law in me is fulfilled, for I have come to fulfill the law; therefore has an end. 6 Behold, I do not destroy the prophets, for however many are not fulfilled in me, I truly tell you, all shall be fulfilled. 7 And because I have told you that old things have passed away, I do not destroy what is said of things to come. 8 To behold miracles, the covenant I have made with my people is not fulfilled; but the law given to Moses has an end in me. 9 Behold, I am law and light. Look at me, and hold on to the end, and you'll live; for him that he will endure to the end I will give him eternal life. 10 Behold, I have given you commandments; therefore keep my commandments. And that's the law and the prophets, because they really testified about me. 11 And now it has come to be that when Jesus uttered these words, He said unheats those twelve whom He had chosen: 12 You are my disciples; and you are the light for this people, who are the remnant of the house of Joseph. 13 And behold, this is the land of your inheritance; And father gave it to you. 14 And at no time did the father give me the commandment to say it to your brethren in Jerusalem. 15 At no time did the father give me the commandment to tell them concerning the other tribes of the House of Israel, which the Father had taken out of the land. 16 This was commanded to me by my father, that I should tell them: 17 Yes other sheep which I have, which are not of this fold; they must also bring, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one fold, and one shepherd. 18 And now, because of stiffness and unbelief they did not understand my word; therefore I am commanded not to speak more of the Father regarding this matter for them. 19 But, indeed, I say to you that the Father commanded me, and I say to you, that you were separated from them their lawlessness; therefore, because of their lawlessness, they do not know about you. 20 And indeed, I tell you again that other tribes have separated the Father from them, and because of their lawlessness, they don't know about them. 21 And I truly say unheed, that you are those of whom I have said. Other sheep which I have which are not of this fold, they must also bring, and they will hear my voice; and there will be one fold, and one shepherd. 22 And they did not understand me, for they assumed that they were changes, because they did not understand that the changes should be converted by their preaching. 23 And they did not understand me that I had said that they would hear my voice; and they didn't understand me that at no point should they hear my voice-- that I should not manifest myself to them to save him from the Holy Ghost. 24 But behold, you both heard my voice and saw me; and you are my sheep, and you are in number among those whom the Father has given me. To those raised in the tradition of the law of Moses, the Law was also the All-Way God of the Lord. He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was the creator of Heaven and Earth. Therefore, for the Lord to say that I am the one who gave the law defines His divine role as dramatically as anything else he could say. Jesus Christ is none other than the God of the Old Testament. Yet the irony is that the law-giver is despised and rejected by the people... lamb on slaughter (isa 53:3,7). First impressions are everything. When he came as a baby in a manatee, raised in Nazareth, as the son of a carpenter, the Jews asked, 'How well does this man write, he never learned?' (Jn 7:15) and Art. You're bigger than our father Abraham... Who would you do yourself? (Jn 8:53) and isn't that the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother Mary's name? (Matte 13.55) So when Lawgiver explained that the law would bring them all under condemnation, they didn't believe it. He said, I don't think I will accuse you of the Father: there is one who accuses you, even Moses, that you believe in. Because if you trusted Moses, you'd believe me because he wrote about me. But if you don't believe his writings, how are you going to believe my words?' (Jn 5:45-47) You don't keep the law. If you had kept the law, you would have received me, because I am the one who gave the law (JST-Matt 9:19, Italics added). Unlike his humble beginnings in the Old World, Christ's dramatic entry into the New World left little doubt about his divinity. The Nephites wondered how it was that old things passed away, but they never questioned lawgiver's identity or authority. If he said the law was fulfilled, that was enough for them. Jeffrey R. Holland Clearly the unprofitable congregation took this more readily than the Jewish world, partly because Nephite prophets were so careful to teach transitional nature Law. Abinadi said: 'It is fit for purpose that you still keep the law of Moses; but I tell you, there will come a time when it will no longer be fit for purpose to keep the law of Moses.' (Mosiah 13:27, added in toaly) In that same spirit, Nephi stressed: 'We are talking about the law that our children may know the deadness of the law; and they, knowing the deadness of the law, can look forward to that life that is in Christ and know with which end the law is given. And after the law is fulfilled in Christ, that they should not harden their hearts against him when the law should be done far away.' (2 No 25:27, they added from Italic) This kind of teaching-caution against fortifying the heart against Christ in the uninformed defense of the law of Moses- could have served (and saved) so many who then lived in the Old World and now lived all over the world. Or if, as is likely, this clear doctrine has been learned emphatically in the Old World, then it is more a pity that such 'ordinary and precious things' have been lost or taken from the unspoiled teachings of the Old Testament. (Christ and the New Covenant, p. 156-157.) Neal A. Maxwell It is ironic that many in Jesus' day refused to obey him because they were so fixated on Moses. To those who persecuted him for healing the disabled on the Sabbath, he said: 'If you had trusted Moses, he would have believed me: because he wrote about me. But if you don't believe his writings, how are you going to believe my words?' (John 5:46-47. See also Mormon 7:9.) Nevertheless, Jesus personally called, directed, and taught Moses! (Meek And Lowly, p. 76) 3 Ne. 15:7 I do not destroy what is said about things to come because the law of Moses has been fulfilled, can we just reject the Old Testament? The scriptures would certainly be easier to bear without him. The answer is obvious, but there are many Saints who effectively rejected their Old Testament because they never read it. I remember when I was a teenager, I attended a stake meeting. The speaker asked for his hands to be raised as he asked the congregation, How many of you have read the Book of Mormon? How many of you have read the New Testament? How many of you have read the Doctrine and alliances? And finally, he asked, How many of you have read the Old Testament? I'll never forget how few hands were raised to that last question. It's as if almost all members felt that the doctrines of the Old Testament simply didn't matter. There are many great Old Testament prophecies that are still awaiting fulfillment. Isaiah spoke more about Millenia than any other prophet. Ezekiel saw the last battle of Armageddon and detailed the beautiful millenial temple yet to be built. Daniel saw god's latter-day kingdom that was to stand forever. Zechariah recorded the siege of Jerusalem that would directly precede the Second Coming. Malachi teaches us about and the return of priesthood keys at the hands of Ilia. Obadiah spoke of rescuers on Mount Zion. Of course, these are the things we should be interested in. If we ignore the Old Testament, we will ignore some of the greatest prophecies ever made. The Savior said, I do not destroy prophets, because as many as are not fulfilled in me, I really tell you, they will all be fulfilled. Yet there is little difference between Old Testament prophecies that have been destroyed and Old Testament prophecies that have never been read. 3 Ne. 15:9 Behold, I am law and light. Look at me Bruce C. Hafen... once the teacher of the lower law brings us to Christ, he himself becomes the source of a higher law that applies to our personal needs. 'From where... the feast of Christ's words; for behold the miracles, the words of Christ will tell you all that you must do.' (2 Nephi 32.3.) As he taught Nephites: 'The law... given to Moses to end up in me. Look, I'm law and light. Look at me and hold on to the end and you'll live...' (See 3 Nephi 15:8-9.) This saintly context can illuminate our attempts to live the gospel in its full sense, for without understanding what is expected of us after being prepared by a lower law, we could float on a plateau of complacency throughout much of our adult lives. Without some progress in an attitude that elevates us to the level of higher law, we can think of living the gospel as little more than superficial adherence to external commandments. On this limited level, we may not even recognize the Savior when he enters our lives, hoping to lead us away from the teacher who led us to Him. As a practical matter, how does a higher law differ? Is that just more of an order? On the contrary, it is probably fewer commandments, but commandments of a different quality than the Ten Commandments broad enough to include a smaller law, deep enough to transcend it. (Broken heart, page 161) 3 Ne. 15:17 other sheep I have that are not of this fold No comment is better than the comments of the Lord. This is the best example of the Savior explaining the meaning of a particular scripture. Therefore, no further interpretive comments are required. Instead, we should emphasize the importance of John 10:16 to the Book of Mormon. There are only three Bible letters directly dealing with the Book of Mormon, and this is one of them. The other two are in Ezeko 37:16, which speaks of Judas' cane and Joseph's cane, and in Isaiah 29, which tells the story of Charles Anthon and explains how the Book of Mormon speaks like a familiar spirit from dust. All three passages are incredibly important missionary scriptures. 3 Ne. 3:18 due to stiffneckedness and infidelity... I am commanded not to say any more that the Lord is willing to give us so much. as we have faith to deserve. But sometimes we're happy with what we know. Sometimes we'd rather reclaim our favorite doctrinal clichés than perform the mental stretching and intellectual exercise needed to understand the new concept. Like the ancient Jews, if we struggle with unbelief we shouldn't expect to get much more than we already have. Later, nephi explains, if that's the way it's going to be that they're going to believe these things, then bigger things are going to manifest to them. And if so that they will not believe these things, then greater things will be withheld from them, at their condemnation. Behold, I told them, all that was snatched on the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying, I will test the faith of my people (3 Ne. 26:9-11). By contrast, Jared's brother showed such faith that the Lord could not deny him anything (Ether 3:26). Now we will give Butterworth's definition of unbelief: He says it is 'the desire for merit and the desire to believe in the Word and the truth of God, which arises, not from the desire for evidence of divine truth, but from the ingrained hostility of the heart against it, and is criminal disobediance.' Unbelief is the only reason that can be given, why we will not now have revelation, and teaching by law, line by line, here little and there little, as in the days of ancient prophets. (Messenger and advocate.) Vol. 3, the No. 8, p. 501) 3 Ne. 15:19 You are separated among them because of your lawless need for the Lord to separate this branch of Joseph from the rest of the House of Israel is expressed in the allegory of the olive tree. When the tree began to decay at first, most of the main branches were decaying and the roots no longer provided the necessary food. The Lord has fed a few gentle branches that must have been transplanted because the mother's tree has begun to recede, and behold the wonders, the Sith Lord of vineyards, I take away many of these young and tender branches, and I will vaccinate them whitherso whatever I want; and it does not matter that if it is so that the root of this tree will perish, I can keep the fruit of it to myself; because of ake I will take these young and gentle branches, and I will transplant them whitherso whatever I want (James 5:8). There are other examples when the Lord had to separate a group of people to keep their religious traditions clean. One of the reasons the Israelites have been so raucous since marrying Gentiles is that the Lord did not want them to succumb to gentiles of idolatry (Deut 7:2-4, Josh 23:12-13). Unfortunately, mixing with the wicked tends to bring down the right ones than there is to reform the wicked. Other examples include the people of Enoka, Jaredites, early Nephites, and other scattered tribes of Israel. Hugh Nibley The migration of God's people to another is no accident, according to the Book of Mormon. In every age when the wicked reach the point of no return, they are stopped from the frustrating way of God, leading to a strong separation between the two. Someone might call it a form of quarantine. (Access to the Book of Mormon, page 137) 3 Ne. 15:23 At no time should the house hear my voice during the Savior's ministry, he made it clear that his purpose is to be a minister in the house of Israel. He told the canaanic woman that I was not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 15:24). When he sent the Twelve as missionaries, he counseled them, do not go on the path to the incessance, and do not enter any Samaritan city: But rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt 10:5-6). Before the Resurrection, the message of the gospel should have been sent exclusively to the house of Israel. They were to be the first to hear the gospel to fulfill the Word of the Lord when He said, the first would be the last, and the last would be the first (Matt 19:30). After being resurrected, the Savior would not appear to any who is unbeliever and unworthy of witnessing the resurrected Lord. Therefore, the Iners never received his personal services or heard his voice. But the day will come when the last will be the first. James E. Talmage Even the Jewish Apostles mistakenly assumed that these 'other sheep' were pagan nations, not realizing that carrying the gospel to the Gentiles was part of their special mission, and oblivious to the fact that Christ would never personally manifest himself to those who were not from the house of Israel. Through the promptings of the Holy Ghost and under the ministries of the people commissioned and sent, the erments would hear the word of God; but to the personal manifestation of the Ethys they were unacceptable. Great, however, will be the Lord's mercy and blessing to the helpers who accept the truth, for for them the Holy Spirit will testify of the Father and the Son; and all those who abide by the laws and ordinances of the gospel will be absent in the house of Israel. Their conversion and obeying the Lord's own will be as individuals, not as nations, tribes, or nations. (Jesus Christ, 728-9) Page 2 2