

The IRON ROD

OUR CHARGE AS MISSIONARIES IS TO -- TESTIFY OF CHRIST AND THE RESTORATION AND, INVITE ALL TO COME AND BE BAPTIZED UNTO REPENTANCE THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE PARTAKERS OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF LIFE. - ALMA 5:62

December 1990

President's Message

Each Christmas Eve it is the custom in our family to read aloud the Christmas Story from Luke Chapter 2. Each year we thrill at this timeless story. This historical event is beautifully described in the New Testament, yet what is of transcendent value and worth is to know and understand the doctrine of the Divine Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. As we ponder of the Christmas story, we must not only realize what happened but why it happened. This is one reason why the Book of Mormon is so important. The Bible tells us what happened at the birth of the Savior. The Book of Mormon tells us why it happened and why it is so important.

In the New Testament account, we read about "certain shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for I bring you glad tidings of great joy." The Bible as we have it today, does not elaborate on what constitutes the "...glad tidings of great joy." From the Book of Mormon, we learn that the "...glad tidings of great joy..." is the Great Plan of the Eternal God. The Book of Mormon also uses interchangeably the terms plan of salvation, plan of redemption, plan of happiness, and plan of mercy among others. The Bible makes no mention of a plan of any kind. It is the concept of a plan established by God that gives purpose and meaning to the birth of the Savior and to our individual lives.

We learn from the Book of Mormon that the joyful news of the coming of the Savior would be made known unto just and holy men by the mouth of angels at the time of his coming (Alma 13:25-26). The shepherds were not the first nor will they be the last to receive the glad tidings of great joy from angels (See Moroni 7:31).

In the Book of Mormon there is a whole chapter, Mosiah 3, that details the glad tidings of great joy as given by an angel to King Benjamin (See Mosiah 3:2-3). From this angelic message, we learn that the glad tidings of Christmas did not start or end in Bethlehem. The angel informed Benjamin that it was the Lord Omnipotent who would come down from heaven among the children of men and dwell in a tabernacle of clay. (Mosiah 3:5) Abinadi also taught truth that God himself shall come down among the children of men and

redeem his people. (Mosiah 15:1) This great truth, not understood by any other people, is that in the pre-existence it was the great Jehovah known in mortality as the Lord Jesus Christ who was like unto God. he had the might, the power, the dominion and the omnipotence of the Father and under the direction of the Father he created all things.

God the Redeemer, Jehovah was born in the flesh as the only Begotten of the Father. Through his Father he inherited immortality. Through his mother Mary, he inherited mortality. Therefore, through his unique parentage and because of his dual nature as both man and God, he was not subject to physical death but could live or die as he chose. Because of his sinless, perfect life he was not subject to Spiritual death.

As God, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was and is from all eternity to all eternity, left his pre-existent glory, was born in a stable, cradled in a manger, and suffered in life more than any man can suffer, and bled at every pore and willingly gave his life on the cross to redeem us. Only because he is God born into mortality as he was, can he atone for our sins. The central message of the fullness of the gospel as taught in the Book of Mormon is that Christ is God and because he is God he can save us based on the conditions of our faith and repentance.

In our day, the missionaries are primarily the messengers that are to declare the glad tidings of great joy to all people (D&C 31:3; 1 Nep. 13:37). Therefore, the way we best celebrate Christmas as missionaries is to do as the shepherds and as King Benjamin did which is to testify to all who will hear us about the glad tidings of great joy and to tell the marvelous story of the Restoration of the Gospel in our day which has been heralded to us by angels who have restored the keys, power, and authority of salvation once again to the earth. May the Lord bless each of us with his spirit as we testify of him and the glorious message of the restoration at this marvelous season of the year.

With Love,
Larry Hunt
Susan Hunt
President and Sister Hunt

