



The IRON ROD



OUR CHARGE AS MISSIONARIES IS TO TEACH AND 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.

President's Message

February, 1992

GRACE - THE ENABLING POWER OF GOD

The purpose of the *Book of Mormon* is stated on the title page. It is "to the convincing of the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ the Eternal God." As President Benson explained the *Book of Mormon* brings us to Christ.

"It testifies of His divinity and of the necessity for a redeemer and the need for putting our trust in him. It bears witness of the fall and the atonement and the first principles of the gospel including our need of a broken heart and a contrite spirit and a spiritual rebirth."

As you study the *Book of Mormon* you will notice that the major doctrinal discourses found there on the atonement of Christ also teach the doctrine of the fall of Adam. It is impossible to understand the atonement of Christ without also understanding the fall of Adam and its effect upon all mankind. President Benson said:

"The *Book of Mormon* Saints knew that the plan of redemption must start with the account of the fall of Adam. Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ. No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind. And no other book in the world explains this vital doctrine nearly as well as the *Book of Mormon*."

Under the power of the fall mortality is a lost and carnal state from which man by himself cannot be redeemed (see 1 Nephi 10:6; 2 Nephi 2:21; Jacob 7:12; Alma 42:6). By the power of the atonement of Jesus Christ all people in this fallen world are given the agency to choose good or evil (see 2 Nephi 2:26-29).

Without the atonement there would be no resurrection and the spirits of all people having been tabernacle in a physical body on the fallen earth and having themselves broken some of God's laws would be cut off from God and would deteriorate in truth, light and goodness until they all finally became devils like Satan himself (See 2 Nephi 9:7-9; Alma 42:6-15).

The plan of redemption established by the Father gave power to his Only Begotten Son, through the atonement, to resurrect all people and to redeem them from their sins on the condition of repentance (see Alma 12:33; Helaman 5:11).

The fall brought physical and spiritual death, the trials and the afflictions and the burdens of mortality, and also a probationary estate where we are given the

opportunity to repent. If we repent and turn to the Savior we will be granted an understanding of our fallen condition (see Jacob 4:7). Only then will we know of our surpassing need for a Redeemer.

The scriptures use the word weakness to refer to our fallen nature (see Ether 3:2). The weakness of mortality in the form of physical or emotional difficulty or personal limitations or afflictions, trials, and burdens come to us to try our patience and our faith so that we may be humble (see Mosiah 23:21). If we humble ourselves before the Lord he compensates for our weakness by giving us his grace. Grace is defined in the Bible Dictionary (pg. 697) as the enabling power of God. It explains that through the grace of the Lord we are able through faith in the atonement and repentance of our sins to receive strength and assistance to accomplish things which would otherwise be impossible.

In missionary work regardless of our limitations and weaknesses if we are able to have the grace of the Lord or his enabling power it will compensate for whatever we lack ourselves. Therefore, it is not important what our talents, experience, age, shape or size may be. If we will repent and be humble and have faith in Christ we will be given grace or the enabling power of God which will allow us to perform miracles in his name in the mission field. (Ether 12:26-27; Jacob 4:7; 2 Corinthians 12:9).

When the Son of God developed the attributes and received the powers of his Father he received grace for grace. That is he received the divine endowments of power and glory from his Father as he gave of himself and served others. As he did the will of the Father he grew from grace to grace until he received a fullness of the glory of the Father. He is our example and prototype. He teaches us that we are to worship and come to the Father by emulating the Son and thereby we also receive grace for grace (see D&C 93:11-23).

As we are spiritually begotten through Christ the carnal man dies and we are redeemed and born again as sons and daughters of Christ. We take upon us his name and receive his grace which enables us to do the things he would do. In this way he allows us to gather the elect into his Kingdom.

With Love,

President Lunt