

# ***THE SAVIOR'S THREE COVENANT SERMONS IN 3 NEPHI***

Victor L. Ludlow

BYU Emeritus Professor, Ancient Scripture & Near Eastern Studies

## **3 COVENANT THEMES (Foundation, Sequence, Fulfillment)**

- ◆ **'Sermon on the Mount' at Bountiful** for baptized followers (3 Ne 12-14; compare Matt 5-7, Luke 6) 1<sup>st</sup> day
- ◆ **Law & Covenant Discourse** – Jesus fulfills the Law, then the Covenant (3 Ne 15:1 - 17:4; see John 10) 1<sup>st</sup> day
- ◆ **Father's Covenant People Sermon** with latter-day signs & promises (3 Ne 20:10 - 23:5; see Isa 52,54) 2<sup>nd</sup> day

## **2 KEY COVENANT SIGNS**

- The Book of Mormon is to come forth from the Gentiles to the Lamanites who would "begin to know these things" found in the Savior's teachings recorded in the Book of Mormon [esp. 3 Nephi]. (3 Ne 21:1-7, esp. v. 7; 29:1)
- As a part of the gathering of the covenant righteous to Zion, powerful remnants of Israel will be gathered to the various lands of their inheritance. (3 Ne 16:5,15-16; 20:14-16,19,22,29; 21:1,11-12,22-28; see Jer 16:14-15)

## **1 COVENANT PROMISE**

- **THE FATHER WILL FULFILL ALL COVENANT PROMISES which He gave to Abraham!**  
(3 Ne 16:5,17; 20:12, 25, 46; 21:4, 7, 26-29; 22:1; 23:1-5)

## **Sermon at Bountiful <The 'Sermon on the Mount' in America**

### *The Constitution of Christianity & A Guide to Celestial Living*

- A. Audience** = **baptized, covenant followers** & esp. the 12 apostles/disciples (3 Ne 12:1-2; ✓JST Matt 5:2-3)
  - B. Beatitudes** = "blessings" for those who believe and follow Christ (12:3-12; Luke 6:20-26)
    - Pre-condition: *Blessed* are these Saints --** (LDS) **Divine Promise: they shall --**
    - 1. the repentant & baptized (D&C 35:4-6) be visited with fire & the H.G.
    - 2. the poor in spirit [who come unto Him] (D&C 56:17-20) receive the kingdom of heaven
    - 3. they that mourn (D&C 95:7; 39:6) be comforted
    - 4. the meek (D&C 19:23, 30, 38) inherit the earth
    - 5. they who hunger & thirst after righteousness (D&C 11:12-14) be filled [with the Holy Ghost]
    - 6. the merciful (D&C 54:10, 3, 6; 61:2) obtain mercy
    - 7. the pure in heart (D&C 97:21; 100:16-17; 101:16-18) see God
    - 8. the peacemakers (D&C 98:14-18) be called the children of God
    - 9. they who are persecuted for my name's sake (D&C 101:1-5; 35-38) receive the kingdom of heaven
  - C. Covenant symbols** = **salt** of the earth & **light** of the world (3 Ne 12:13-16; cf D&C 101:39-40; 103:9-10)
  - D. Discipleship obligations** = rising above worldly & Mosaic laws to **God's celestial law** (12:17-47; Luke 6:27-36)
    - ➡ destroying ▶ *knowing* ▶ **living & teaching the law of God** (cf Matt 5:19-20! ✓JST Matt 5:21!) (17-20)
    - ➡ murdering ▶ *tolerating* ▶ **reconciling with one's adversaries** (21-26)
    - ➡ adultery ▶ *lusting* ▶ **cleansing one's physical & sexual appetites** (✓JST Matt 5:34) (27-30)
    - ➡ casting out ▶ *divorcing* ▶ **keeping** (if possible) **one's spouse** (31-32)
    - ➡ swearing & threats ▶ *oaths & bonds* ▶ **simple words & covenant promises** (33-37)
    - ➡ vengeance ▶ *justice* ▶ **mercy** (✓JST Luke 6:29-30) (38-42)
    - ➡ hating others ▶ *hating enemies & loving neighbors* ▶ **loving others (even enemies)** (43-47)

(Note the telestial-worldly ▶ *terrestrial-Mosaic* ▶ **celestial-heavenly** levels in the examples listed above.)
  - E. Excellence rewarded** = becoming **perfect** (complete, whole) as the Father & Christ (12:48; ✓KJV footnote)
  - F. Facets of saintly life** = which audience to serve -- God or mortals? (3 Ne 13:1-24)
    - almsgiving, prayer, forgiving others, fasting, treasures, mammon
    - (Prayer elements: address God, *praise*, thank, *confess/repent*, petition, *commit/promise*, close in name of Christ)
  - G. General instructions for the Twelve** = put yourself completely into God's hands (13:25-34)
    - they are sent forth to teach & build God's kingdom and He will go before them (✓JST Matt 6:25-27)
  - H. Human and godly relationships** (3 Ne 14:1-27)
    - ➡ Judge righteous judgment = beams & slivers in the eyes (vv 1-5; ✓JST Matt 7:4-8; Luke 6:37-42)
    - ➡ Keep God's mysteries sacred = avoid pearls before swine (v 6; ✓JST Matt 7:9-11)
    - ➡ God grants gifts = ask and you will receive (vv 7-11; ✓JST Matt 7:12-17)
    - ➡ **Golden rule** = doing good unto others (v 12; Luke 6:31)
    - ➡ Two gates & two ways = it's not going to be easy to return to the Father (vv 13-14)
    - ➡ Testing one's character = judging good & bad fruit trees and good & bad people (vv 15-23; Luke 6:43-45)
    - ➡ Building upon the Rock = doing God's word prepares us for the storms of life (vv 24-27; Luke 6:46-49)
- Postscripts -- 3 Ne 15:1 & Matt. 7:28-29 (cf ✓JST 7:28): Remember and do these things and Christ will raise us up.