

# Gospel Doctrine Lesson 16: "Ye Shall Be Called the Children of Christ"

(Mosiah 4-6)

**LESSON GOAL:** To seek and maintain the "mighty change" of heart through exercising faith in Jesus Christ.

**The heart cannot love what the mind does not know.**

--Jen Wilkin

## Overview of Benjamin's Speech in the Book of Mosiah

Preparations (1:1-2:8) People gathered; tower constructed

**1. All are indebted to God (2:9-28)**

First break (2:29-30) Coronation announcement

**2. Consequences of obedience and disobedience (2:31-41)**

Second break (2:41-3:1) Benjamin calls again for attention

**3. The angel's testimony of Christ's deeds (3:2-10)**

**4. Sanctification by the atonement of Christ (3:11-27)**

Third break (3:27-4:4) The people fall to the ground; Benjamin begins to speak again

**5. Benjamin's testimony of God's goodness (4:4-12)**

**6. Righteous behavior of the redeemed (4:13-30)**

Fourth break (4:30)-5:6) Remember and perish not; Benjamin accepts their covenant

**7. The sons and daughters of God (5:6-15)**

Final acts (6:1-3) Names recorded of all who accepted the name; people dismissed.

**John W. Welch:** Benjamin's speech is great oratory not only because it **addresses great themes**, but because it does so while **remaining completely in touch with real life**. Benjamin was a very practical man whose wisdom reflected a kind of **good sense** and **keen judgment**, and his comments rise to the level of **proverbial wisdom** on varied topics:

**Service:** "When ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God." (Mosiah 2:17)

**Leadership:** "I, even I whom ye call your king, am no better than ye yourselves." (Mosiah 2:26)

**Consecration:** "Ye are eternally indebted to heavenly Father; render to him all that you have and are." (Mosiah 2:34)  
"King Benjamin, by laboring with all the might of his body and the faculty of his whole soul, and also the prophets, did once more establish peace in the land" (Words of Mormon 1:18)

**Clear conscience:** "I can answer a clear conscience before God this day. (Mosiah 2:15) "I had served you, walking with a clear conscience before God . . . that I might be found blameless (Mosiah 4:27)

**Human nature:** "The natural man is an enemy to God." (Mosiah 3:19)

**Responsibility:** "But men drink damnation to their own souls." (Mosiah 3:18)

**Humility:** "Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created out of the dust." (Mosiah 2:25)

**Indebtedness:** "And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be forever." (Mosiah 2:24)

**Grace:** "Ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures." (Mosiah 4:11)

**Sense of Balance:** "All these things are done in wisdom and order . . . (Mosiah 4:27)

**Obedience:** "Watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe the commandments of God." (Mosiah 4:30)

**Gratitude:** "If you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess . . . yet ye would be unprofitable servants." (Mosiah 2:20-21)

**The importance of children:** "Little children . . . they are blessed." (Mosiah 3:16)

**Peace:** "Ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due." (Mosiah 4:13)

**Contention:** "Beware lest there shall arise contentions among you." (Mosiah 2:32)

**Wealth:** "For behold are we not all beggars?" (Mosiah 4:19)

**Charity:** "Ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor." (Mosiah 4:16)

(John W. Welch, "Benjamin's Speech: A Masterful Oration," *King Benjamin's Speech*, FARMS, 1997, 74-75).

# 1. King Benjamin's people seek and receive a remission of their sins.

**Mosiah 4-5 suggests three ways we might know when we have received a remission of our sins:**

1. We are **FILLED WITH JOY**.
  - We delight in fellowship with those of the household of faith
  - Our confidence begins to wax strong in the presence of the Lord
  - The word of the Lord becomes sweet to the taste
  - The strength of the Lord enables us to bear life's burdens with perspective
2. We are **FILLED WITH PEACE**.
  - The Spirit of the Lord produces certitude, order, comfort, clarity of thought, light, happiness.
  - The spirit of the adversary brings confusion, uncertainty, disorder, misery, stupor, darkness, unhappiness.
3. We have **THE FAVORS AND BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY GHOST**.
  - The gifts of the Spirit are manifest in our lives.
  - No unclean thing can dwell in the Lord's divine presence.
  - Companionship with the Holy Ghost assures us that our sins have been remitted.

**President Marion G. Romney:** "Somebody recently asked **how one could know when he is converted**. The answer is simple. **He may be assured of it when by the power of the Holy Spirit his soul is healed**. When this occurs, he will recognize it by the way he feels, for **he will feel as the people of Benjamin felt** when they received remission of sins. The record says, 'the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a **remission** of their sins, and having **peace** of conscience' (Mosiah 4:3)" (CR, Oct 1963).

**Spencer W. Kimball:** "**Peace is the fruit of righteousness**. It cannot be bought with money, and cannot be traded nor bartered. **It must be earned**. The wealthy often spend much of their gains in a bid for peace, only to find that it is not for sale. But the poorest as well as the richest may have it in abundance if the total price is paid. **Those who abide the laws and live the Christ-like life may have peace and other kindred blessings**, principal among which are **exaltation and eternal life**. They include also blessings for this life" (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, 363-4).

**Neal A. Maxwell:** "Much emphasis was given by King Benjamin to retaining a remission of our sins (Mosiah 4:26). We do not ponder that concept very much in the church. We ought to think of it a lot more. **Retention clearly depends on the regularity of our repentance**. In the church we worry, and should, over the retention of new members but the **retention of our remissions is cause for even deeper concern**" (Welch, *King Benjamin's Speech*, 16).

# 2. King Benjamin teaches his people how to live Christ-like lives.

**WE OBTAIN SALVATION BY SIMPLY BELIEVING IN CHRIST.**

**We must be doers (Mosiah 4).**

- We must come to a knowledge of:
  - The goodness of God (v6).
  - His patience (v6)
  - His matchless power (v6).
  - His long-suffering towards the children of men (v6)
  - His wisdom (v6).
  - The atonement (v6)
- Trust in the Lord (v6).
- Be diligent in keeping His commandments (v6).
- Continue in faith unto the end mortal life (v6).
- Believe in God (v9).
- Believe that God created all things (v9).
- Believe that God has all wisdom and power (v9)
- Believe that we do not comprehend all things (v9). (A sign of humility and dependence on the Lord.)
- Repent of our sins and forsake them (v10).
- Humble ourselves before God and ask in sincerity for His forgiveness (v10).
- If you believe these things, see that you do them (v10)

**Benjamin continues to give the prescription of additional requirements for admission into the family of Christ:**

- "Ye will not have a mind to injure one another" (4:13)
- "You will "live peaceably" (4:13)
- You will "render to every man according to that which is his due" (4:13)
- "Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked" (4:14)
- "Neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil" (4:14)
- "Ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness" (4:15)
- "Ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another" (4:15)
- "Ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor" (4:16)

The steps involved in claiming the benefits of the atonement are not left as a vague concept. We access the atoning blood of Christ by acquiring **seven primary virtues** specifically listed as steps in becoming a saint in **Mosiah 3:19**:

- 1) Being childlike
- 2) Submissive
- 3) Meek
- 4) Humble
- 5) Patient
- 6) Full of love
- 7) Willing to submit to whatever God might inflict on us.

(John W. Welch, "Benjamin's Speech: A Masterful Oration," *King Benjamin's Speech*, FARMS, 1997, 75).

**Brigham Young:** "Suppose that there are ten beggars who beg from door to door for something to eat, and nine of them are impostors who beg to escape work, and with an evil heart practice imposition upon the generous and sympathetic, and that only one of the ten who visit your doors is worthy of your bounty; which is best, to give food to the ten, to make sure of helping the truly needy one, or to repulse the ten because you do not know which is the worthy one? You will all say, Administer charitable gifts to the ten, rather than turn away the only truly worthy and truly needy person among them. If you do this, it will make no difference in your blessings, whether you administer to worthy or unworthy persons, **inasmuch as you give alms with a single eye to assist the truly needy**" (Journal of Discourses, Vol.8, p.12, March 5, 1860).

**Mosiah 4:26:** And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, **for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day**, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants.

**Jeffrey R. Holland:** "Are we not all beggars?" Don't we all cry out for help and hope and answers to prayers? Don't we all beg for forgiveness for mistakes we have made and troubles we have caused? Don't we all implore that grace will compensate for our weaknesses, that mercy will triumph over justice at least in our case? Little wonder that King Benjamin says we **obtain a remission of our sins by pleading to God**, who compassionately responds, but we **retain a remission of our sins by compassionately responding to the poor who plead to us**" (*Ensign*, Nov. 2014, 41).

### 3. King Benjamin's people experience a "mighty change" and covenant to do God's will in all things.

**Elder Dallin H. Oaks:** "Our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ affirms our commitment to do all that we can to be counted among those whom he will choose to stand at his right hand and be called by his name at the last day. In this sacred sense, **our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ constitutes our declaration of candidacy for exaltation in the celestial kingdom**. Exaltation is eternal life, 'the greatest of all the gifts of God' (D&C 14:7)" (Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 105)

**Elder Bruce R. McConkie:** "Sins are remitted not in the waters of baptism, as we say in speaking figuratively, but when we receive the Holy Ghost. It is the Holy Spirit of God that erases carnality and brings us into a state of righteousness. **We become clean when we actually receive the fellowship and companionship of the Holy Ghost**" (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 290).

**Neal A. Maxwell:** "Revered as Benjamin was, what an engaging experience it must have been to hear him preach personally—especially while sitting in one's family circle in a tent facing the temple. But we can hear him now. If we read him reverently, the intervening centuries soon melt away. **His earnestness emerges, and his personableness almost caresses us, giving King Benjamin such immediacy and high relevancy as his example combines with such powerful words about discipleship**. I wonder if, like meek President Spencer W. Kimball, meek Benjamin also did not realize how unique he was in the eyes of the Lord. How blessed we are to have such models" (John W. Welch, and Stephen D. Ricks, *King Benjamin's Speech: Made Simple*, 19-20).

**Ed J. Pinegar and Richard J. Allen:** "King Benjamin has given us a magnificent training course not only in coming unto Christ, but in becoming like Christ. He, through the direction of an instructing angel, has given us a sure path upon which, through obedience, we might achieve a mighty change of heart. **A change of heart brings a change of attitude and behavior, aligning our desires with God's, and because of our love we will obey**. We may become like King Benjamin's people, who could truthfully say, following a mighty change in heart:

**Mosiah 5:3-5:** "And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come; and were it expedient, we could prophesy of all things. And it is the faith which we have had on the things which our king has spoken unto us that has brought us to this great knowledge, whereby we do rejoice with such exceedingly great joy. **And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days**, that we may not bring upon ourselves a never-ending torment, as has been spoken by the angel, that we may not drink out of the cup of the wrath of God."

**"The doctrines, principles, and covenants that King Benjamin presented, when personally applied, will fill our hearts with gratitude as we make the mighty change and keep our covenants faithfully, enduring to the end."** (*Teachings and Commentaries on the Book of Mormon*, Ch. 16, Ed J. Pinegar and Richard J. Allen, Covenant

**Mosiah 4:29:** And finally, I cannot tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin; for there are divers ways and means, even so many that I cannot number them.

**Stephen Robinson:** Great spiritual damage can be done by teaching the Saints that "the mighty change" means once truly converted, we are never again tempted to sin. For if the Saints believe that the *truly* converted are never subsequently tempted, then when they are tempted—and they will be—they will conclude they are not really converted. However, being truly converted does not end the tests of mortality, for **we will continue to be tested and tempted as long as we are in the flesh.** Even as covenant members of the church of Jesus Christ, we will continue to be subject to the carnal impulses and other weaknesses that are a consequence of the Fall (*Following Christ*, 41-43).

**Errol R. Fish:** "Sin is anything that offends the Spirit, and there are many ways to commit sin. However, we have no need to feel overwhelmed; there is no subject the Spirit would rather discuss with us than our sins. If we want a near guarantee that a prayer will be answered, all we need to do is--**with real intent**--ask: '**Father, tell me the ways and means my thoughts, my words, or my deeds have offended thee. I would like to change any and everything in my life that would keep me from having thy Spirit to be with me.**' That is a prayer we can be sure will be answered. If we then correct our sins, we place ourselves in a position to receive more blessings from heaven" (*Promptings of the Spirit*, 132).

**Mosiah 5:1:** And now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had thus spoken to his people, he sent among them, **desiring to know of his people if they believed the words which he had spoken unto them.**

**Neal A. Maxwell:** "So concerned was Benjamin with his major sermon that he sent among the people to see if they really believed in his words (Mosiah 5:1). **He was continually concerned about communicating.** For example, Benjamin did not want his people to forget the name by which they were called (Mosiah 5:14). Illustratively, too, he was anxious to complete the covenant with them, yet **he concluded it only when he was sure that their hearts had been touched** and that they understood clearly what he had taught (Mosiah 5:6-7). **Such is the great teaching style of this remarkable man whose sermon we celebrate.**" (Welch, and Ricks, *King Benjamin's Speech: Made Simple*, 3).

**Mosiah 5:2:** And they all cried with one voice, saying: Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of **the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts,** that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.

**Henry B. Eyring:** "A choice to be good—even with trials—will allow the Atonement to change your heart. In time, after persistence, your wants and even your needs will change. Remember that the people who believed King Benjamin's talk found such a change had come to them" (Mosiah 5:2). **If we stay at it long enough,** perhaps for a lifetime, we will have for so long felt what the Savior feels, wanted what he wants, and done what he would have us do that we will have, through the Atonement, a new heart filled with charity, and **we will have become like him**" (*To Draw Close to God*, 70).

**Mark E. Petersen:** "That birth of the spirit means something more than most of us normally realize. **Through proper teaching, a conviction is born in our soul.** Faith develops. Through it, we see how important it is to become like Christ. We see ourselves as we are in contrast to a Christ-like soul. A desire for a change-over is born within us. The change-over begins. We call it repentance. Through our faith and as part of our conversion or change from one state to another, **we begin to see sin in its true light.** ... We strive with all our souls to become like the Savior. (Address to Seminary and institute of Religion personnel, BYU, July 11, 1956)" (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, 117).

**Mosiah 5:8:** And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, **I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ,** all you that have entered into the covenant with God that **ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.**

**Charles W. Penrose:** "Do not be afraid to use reverently the name of Christ. He uses it continually. We can read about it in the Book of Mormon. The Church was the Church of Christ, and in the last days the Church is to be called by that name. You may think perhaps that is a matter of little importance. Perhaps it is so to you; but I have found in my experience, from the beginning of my membership in this Church, that **there is power in that name.** . . . Demons tremble at that name. They recognize it. But when we, in a slipshod way, use the name of Jesus, and say nothing about Christ, I don't know that it has so much power and influence." (*Conference Reports*, Apr. 1920, 29).

**Mosiah 5:12:** I say unto you, I would that **ye should remember to retain the name written always in your hearts,** that ye are not found on the left hand of God, but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be called, and also, **the name by which he shall call you.**

**M. Russell Ballard:** "When my ministry is over, it won't be any talk that I've given in the Tabernacle that will make much difference or will be very important in the sight of the Lord. **What will be important, I think, is that I hear the voice and respond to the prompting, that the Spirit might direct me that I might be an instrument in the hands of the Lord to do His will and His bidding**" (*Church News*, Jan. 16, 1988).