

A Hope In Christ

Among the most often quoted verses of scripture are the teachings on faith in the 32nd Chapter of Alma.

Having faith is to hope for things that are not seen that are true.

The hope upon which our faith centers, the seed that Alma spoke of, is Jesus Christ the Son of God and His infinite atonement that overcame temporal and spiritual death.

It is about this hope that I base my remarks using words from the scriptures.

1 IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

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14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us**John Chapter 1**

The prophet Isaiah foretold his birth saying

(Isaiah 9:6)

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

In ancient America

(Heleman 14)

Samuel, the Lamanite spoke of his coming:

2 Behold, I give unto you a sign; for five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God to redeem all those who shall believe on his name.

5 And behold, there shall a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this ... shall be a sign unto you.

For the young girl Mary, espoused to Joseph, the angel's visit was a first a frightening experience

(Luke 1)

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: ...and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

It was while Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem to be taxed that:

(Luke 2)

6 ...the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

In the nearby fields an angel announced the good news to the shepherds saying:

10 Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. ...

42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem (for the Feast of the Passover).

On the way home Mary and Joseph missed him.

45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Though sinless, Jesus went

(Matthew 3)

13 ¶ ... from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. ...

(2 Nephi 31)

5 And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water, to fulfill all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water!

Multitudes of people followed after him, and great was his wisdom and challenging his doctrine.

(Matthew 5)

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

39 whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

44 Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

(John 8)

7 Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.

To those of all generations who stumble under burdens too heavy to bare he said:

(Matthew 11)

28 ¶ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

To those who would be his followers he entreated:

(John 14)

6 I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

(John 13)

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

(John 14: 15; John 21: 15-16)

15 ¶ If ye love me, keep my commandments. Feed my lambs ... feed my sheep

(John 14)

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

(John 17:3)

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Jesus taught the Pharisee and all of us about godly sorrow, faith and repentance.

(Luke 7)

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,
38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

50 ...Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

His was an eternal sacrifice breaking the bands of both spiritual and temporal death. Perhaps this is why Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

(1 Cor. 1)

15 If in this life only we have a hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable.

After celebrating the Passover with his apostles he was betrayed by one of them. He was taken before Pilate. He was mocked and crucified for us, each one of us. And Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross, King of the Jews. And thus he died, our Savior, our Redeemer, our Lord. While dieing he cried out,

(Luke 23)

34 Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. ...

His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

He gave his life freely to pay for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious sacrifice in behalf of all who would ever live on the earth.

He rose from the grave to "become the firstfruits of them that slept" (**1 Corinthians 15:20**). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His "other sheep" (**John 10:16**) in ancient America

And in the new world a great multitude were gathered around the temple in the land Bountiful and they did hear a voice that did pierce them to the very soul, and did cause their hearts to burn. And they did hear the voice a second time and the third time they did understand the voice which they heard; and it said unto them:

(3 Nephi 11)

7 Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him.

(3 Nephi 17)

11 And it came to pass that he commanded that their little children should be brought.

12 So they brought their little children and set them down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst; and the multitude gave way till they had all been brought unto him. ...and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

21 And when he had said these words, he wept, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

22 And when he had done this he wept again;

23 And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

(Isaiah 53)

4 ¶ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

And so at this time of hope and faith our hearts are turned to Him whose life we reverence. We sing hymns that tell of his great sacrifice for us.. In quiet moments we reflect on his matchless life and unconditional love for us. As unworthy recipients of his love we thank him for his redeeming sacrifice. For behold said he: I God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; **(D&C 19:16)** ... Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me. **(D&C 19: 23-24)**

And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! **(D&C 76: 22)**

He lives that we may live again. For this I pray in His name, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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