Institute 3-9-21 ***Comparing Doctrines—Atonement part 2—Early Church Fathers and Small Plates***

Last week we did not finish looking at the beautiful passages in the Book of Mormon. Please find a favorite verse in the Book of Mormon on the atonement and share it with the class. We will look at just a few from “the small plates” in 2 Nephi and Jacob. I look forward to hearing yours too.

**At-one-ment as the Embrace**

Last week we discussed this is the imagery of the Atonement, the embrace from Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion*, 559. There are many scriptures that tie into that message

* "The Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love" (2 Nephi 1:15).
* "O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies!" (2 Nephi 4:33).

In conjunction with the “Psalm of Nephi” in **2 Nephi 4:16-35,** How many things does he say God has done or will do in imparting the benefits of the Atonement?

**Adam and the At-one-ment of Christ**

The roles of Adam and Jesus’ are interdependent. “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1Cor 15:22). In the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve fell, God promised to send “mine Only Begotten” to bruise the serpents heel (Moses 4:21,28). Early Christianity regarded the atonement of Jesus as fulfillment of the work begun by Adam. The apostle Paul refers to Jesus as a second, or “last”, Adam; “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit” (1 Cor 15:45). “While Adam was the prototype of the old, mortal man, Christ became the prototype of the new man.” In the next chapter, Luke turns to Adam again in his genealogy list and traces the lineage of Jesus to “a son of Adam” (3:38). Also in Luke’s Gospel, an angel is sent to comfort Jesus while suffering for the sins of the world in Gethsemane. I wonder if it were Adam, acting in his divine name, Michael the arch angel.

**Book of Mormon’s Small Plate Verses on the At-one-ment**

1. **2 Nephi 2:3** Jacob is redeemed *not* because of *his goodness,* but the “righteousness of his Redeemer.” We can not be redeemed through anything we do by ourselves—only through Christ. Likewise children are innocent through the atonement, not because there is no sin in their nature (*Mosiah: Salvation only through Christ,* 153).
2. **2 Nephi 2:10** We read that punishment is affixed in opposition to happiness. “Atonement” is mentioned in the BoM=27 times (with 5 more for “atone”), OT=78, NT=1, D&C=3, PoGP=1. These figures suggest the BoM text fits more into an OT setting than any other. (When size of book is considered, the BoM has a higher word ratio of “atonement” than the OT.) See last week’s handout for the chart on how each book of scripture uses atonement.
3. **Jacob 4:11-12** “Be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ . . . For why not speak of the atonement of Christ?” To have a perfect knowledge of Christ should be our goal. Jacob poses two questions in his introduction to the allegory, Vs. 12 and vs. 17. Joseph Smith explained the way to understand parables and allegories is to enquire what questions drew out the answer. These two questions alert us that the allegory will deal with grace, atonement, and their relationship to Israel. “At-one-ment bringing things at one. The body and the Spirit are brought to one in the resurrection. The Father and Son are one, as Jesus asked his apostles to be one (John 15-17). The Temple brings things to one. It brings the heaven and earth together as one” (C. Thomas, *Allegory of the Olive Tree,* 11).
4. **Jacob 5** The “Allegory of the Olive Tree” demonstrates God’s concern no matter where his people are scattered. It symbolically describes the main features of the atonement. “The allegory dramatizes God’s steadfastness, love, and active concern. Zenos's allegory ought to take its place beside the parable of the prodigal son. Both stories make the Lord's mercy so movingly memorable” (Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5*, 293).
5. **Jacob 5:**5 Jacob pleads with modern Israel to accept the atonement—or to “cleave unto God.” The arm of mercy is extended toward you. The image of the “hand of God” averages every 3.4 pages in both the BoM and OT. The BoM branches into unique uses of God’s hand that explain the at-one-ment. The arm of mercy is shown eight times in the BoM. Jacob’s explanation here is the first. There is also the embrace of Christ (2 Ne 1:15; Mormon 6:17, 5:11). (John W. Welch, *Rediscovering the BoM,* 140.)
6. **Jacob 5:15** “Come let us go down” comes from the creation theme (also vs. 29). “The Lord Jesus is the agent of the Atonement, but the medium of the at-one-ment is the Holy Ghost (D&C 45:56-57) – that sap or moisture that flows from the trunk through the branches.” (*Allegory*, 16).