



15. Nephi's Final Teachings (2 Nephi 31–33)

“Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.”
(2 Nephi 31:20)

Hymn 81, “Press Forward Saints”

Press forward, saints, with steadfast faith in Christ,
With hope's bright flame alight in heart and mind,
With love of God and love of all mankind.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Press forward, feasting on the words of Christ.
Receive his name, rejoicing in his might.
Come unto God; find everlasting light.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Press on, enduring in the ways of Christ.
His love proclaim through days of mortal strife.
Thus saith our God: “Ye have eternal life!”
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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15. Nephi's final Teachings (2 Nephi 31–33)

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Nephi's Final Teachings

- **The Doctrine of Christ (31:1–21)**
 - Nephi Delights in “Plain Prophesying,” (31:1-3, contrast this with Isaiah’s prophesying!)
 - *Following Christ through Baptism (31:4–14)*
 - *Pressing Forward in Christ (31:15–21)*
- **Guidance of the Spirit (32:1–9)**
 - **Feast on the Words of Christ (32:1–6)**
 - *Angels Speak the Words of Christ (32:2–3)*
 - Unbelief and Wickedness Restrain the Spirit (32:7)
 - **The Spirit Teaches to Pray (32:8–9)**
- **Nephi’s Concluding Testimony (33:1–15)**
 - Nephi Affirms the Truth of His Record (33:1–9)
 - *The Words of Christ (33:10–11)*
 - **Nephi’s farewell (33:12–15)**

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The Doctrine of Christ

- What is doctrine?
 - Teaching, something that is taught
 - An established principle, authoritative teaching
 - *In the Church today, the official doctrine of the Church are the teachings of the current apostles and prophets that we are directed to teach each other and take to the world*
 - **Gospel doctrines are the truths of salvation—the principles and teachings that make the Atonement effective in our lives**
- What is **the Doctrine of Christ**?
 - Christ’s doctrine or teaching (possessive)
 - The doctrine(s) Christ taught
 - Teaching about Christ (objective)
 - Teachings about Christ: we needed a Savior, Christ is the Son of God who came to save us from sin and death
 - **How we apply Christ’s Atonement in our lives**
 - Elder McConkie, “Doctrine,” MD, 205: “The true doctrine of Christ is that *all men must come unto him, gain faith, repent, be baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, and endure in faith to the end in order to gain salvation* (2 Ne. 31:17-21; 3 Ne. 11:29-41; D. & C. 10:67; 68:25).”

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Following Christ through Baptism (31:4-14)

■ Symbolism and Meaning of Baptism

- Cleansing, repentance > remission of sins
- Death and resurrection symbolism (per Romans 6:4)
 - Newness of life
 - Resurrection proper, Christ's overcoming death as well as sin
- A sign or ratifying act accompanying the making of a covenant (compare to a handshake or signing a contract when making a deal – see Jorge A. Rojas, "Covenants and Ordinances," *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, 44)
 - Take Christ's name, always remember him
 - Be obedient—even Christ made this covenant with his Father

■ Why was Christ baptized?

- No need for remission of sins
- "To fulfill all righteousness" (31:5; cf. Matthew 3:15), i.e., fulfill the terms of the law
- Humble himself before the Father (part of the condescension, submitting to all requirements imposed upon mortals)
- **Covenant his obedience**
- Serve as our Exemplar

■ Water baptism not the only baptism!

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Gift of the Holy Ghost

- "After he was baptized with water *the Holy Ghost descended upon him* in the form of a dove." (31:8)
- "And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son. And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: *He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost*, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do." (31:11-12)
- **The Gift of the Holy Ghost**
 - Promised in confirmation (rather, we are *commanded* to receive the Holy Ghost)
 - Standard answer: the right to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost and the enjoyment of the gifts of the spirit
- **Gifts of the Holy Ghost**
 - Prompting, direction, guidance
 - Confirmation of truth, gift of testimony
 - Comfort
 - **Sanctification**

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The Baptism by Fire

- “. . . then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, **then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost** . . . the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.” (31:13, 17)
 - Elder McConkie, “Baptism by Fire,” *MD*, 73: “**By the power of the Holy Ghost—who is the Sanctifier (3 Ne. 27:19-21)—dross iniquity, carnality, sensuality, and every evil thing is burned out of the repentant soul as if by fire; the cleansed person becomes literally a new creature of the Holy Ghost . . . The baptism of fire is not something in addition to the receipt of the Holy Ghost; rather, it is the actual enjoyment of the gift which is offered by the laying on of hands at the time of baptism.** (Mosiah 27:24-26).”
 - **Not always a one-time, theatrical experience:** “. . . whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost, even as the Lamanites, because of their faith in me at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, **and they knew it not.**” (3 Nephi 9:20)

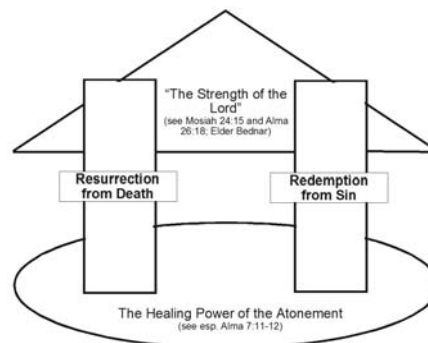
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Pressing Forward in Christ (31:15-21)

- **Why “pressing” forward?**
 - Implies resistance, need for effort
- **What does “in Christ” suggest?**
 - Union with Christ, under his name
 - With Christ as our model (Exemplar again)
 - Along the path he has set forth
 - With his strength and power enabling us . . . **That is, though his grace or “divine means of help or strength”**
- We **press forward in Christ** when we received from his “**strength and assistance to do good works that they otherwise would not be able to maintain if left to their own means**”



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“With a Perfect Brightness of Hope . . .”

- What must we do as we move forward?
 - Have a **perfect brightness of hope**
 - “perfect brightness” suggests a complete, assured hope rather than a wishful hope
 - See Moroni 7:40-48, esp. 41 “And what is it that ye shall hope for? Behold I say unto you that **ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal**, and this because of your faith in him according to the promise.”
 - Have **love of God and all mankind**
 - Cf. charity, “the pure love of Christ” (Moroni 7:47)
 - **Feast** on the word of Christ
 - **Endure to the end**
- **The object: Eternal Life**

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Guidance by the Spirit

- Feast on the Words of Christ (32:1-6)
 - “. . . ye ponder somewhat in your hearts concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way . . .” (32:1)
 - **Speak with the tongues of angels = speaking the words of Christ** (32:2; cf. 31:13)
 - Paul refers to “the tongue of angels” when talking about the gift of tongues . . . But then he talks about the importance of **prophecy**, i.e., **bearing testimony of Christ** (1 Cor 12-14)
 - “. . . if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.” (32:5)
- Unbelief and Wickedness Restrain the Spirit (32:7)
- The Spirit Teaches to Pray (32:8-9)
 - “. . . **the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.**” (32:8)
 - “. . . **ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ**, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.” (32:9)

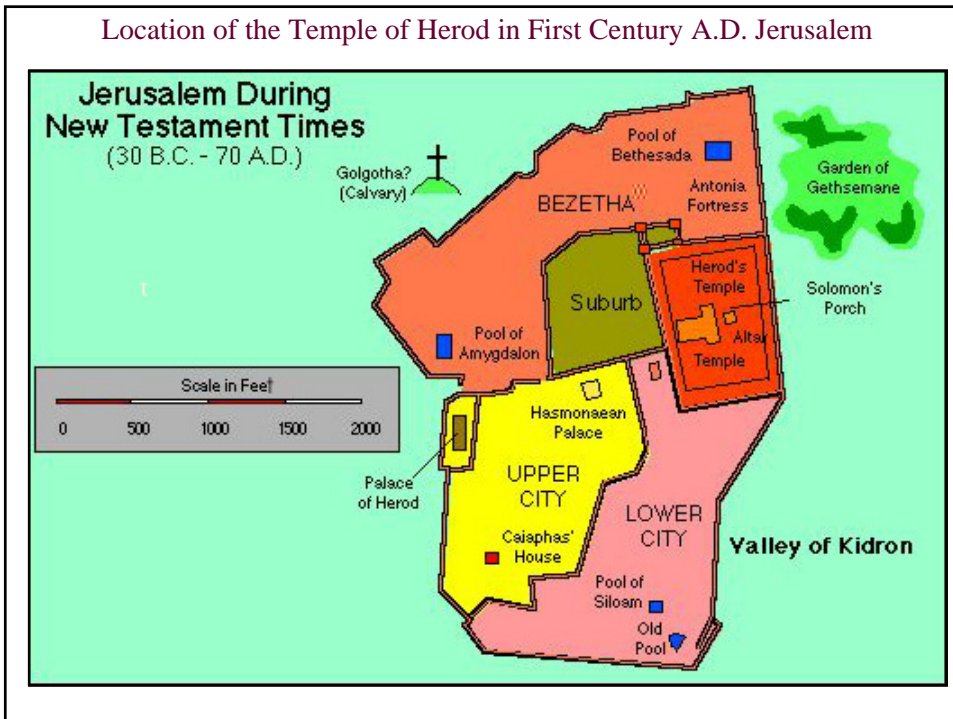
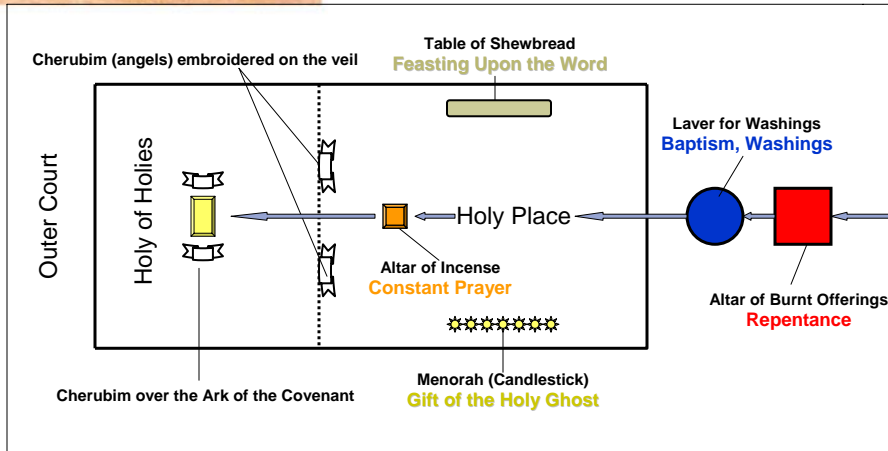
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Pressing Forward in Christ: Using Tabernacle/Temple Imagery to Illustrate the Doctrine of Christ



Nephi Affirms the Truth of His Record (33:1–9)

- His written work is the result and the object of his prayers for his people
 - “And I know that the Lord God will **consecrate** my prayers for the gain of my people. And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them . . .” (33:4; cf. 32:9 for prayers before performing anything, thereby **consecrating** it for our good)
- Purpose of his record
 - Persuade to do good
 - Make known their fathers
 - Persuade to believe in Christ and endure to the end = eternal life
- Recapitulation of the Doctrine of Christ (33:9)
 - “. . . Be reconciled unto Christ, and enter into the narrow gate [baptism], and walk in the strait path which leads to life . . .”

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13

Gospel and Doctrine of Christ

- **Gospel of Jesus Christ**
 - The “good news” of who Jesus is and what he did for us
 - “Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and **this is the gospel which I have given unto you**—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me. **And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works . . .**” (3 Nephi 27:13–14)
- **Doctrine of Christ**
 - Jesus Christ's teachings of how to apply the gospel
 - First principles and ordinances of the gospel!
 - Faith in Jesus Christ
 - repentance
 - Baptism by water
 - Baptism by fire (the gift of the Holy Ghost)
 - “pressing forward in Christ” (enduring to the end in righteousness)

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15. Nephi's final Teachings (2 Nephi 31–33)

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Nephi's Farewell (33:10-15)

■ The Words of Christ (33:10–11)

- “. . . hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. **And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ**, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good.” (33:10)
- “And if they are not the words of Christ, judge ye—**for Christ will show unto you, with power and great glory, that they are his words, at the last day; and you and I shall stand face to face before his bar**; and ye shall know that I have been commanded of him to write these things, notwithstanding my weakness.” (33:11)

■ Nephi's Farewell (33:13–15)

- **The truth will be made known at the judgment bar** (33:15)