

## **Sunday School Lesson #8: Differences in the Sermon on the Mount**

Submitted by Michael Kelley 2006-07

**Lesson #8: Timeline Differences:** This lesson will cover some additional differences between the two Sermons on the Mount as recorded in the Bible and Book of Mormon with the differences highlighted in ***Bold Italics***.

**Matthew 5:18-19** For verily I say unto you, *Till heaven and earth pass*, one jot or one tittle *shall in no wise* pass from the law, *till* all be fulfilled. 19 *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach [them], the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

**3 Nephi 5:65-67** For verily I say unto you, One jot nor one tittle hath not passed *away* from the law, *but in me it hath* all been fulfilled. 66 *And behold I have given unto you the law and the commandments of my Father, that ye shall believe in me, and that ye shall repent of your sins, and come unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.* 67 *Behold, ye have the commandments before you, and the law is fulfilled; therefore come unto me and be ye saved;*

**Matthew 5:44-45** But I say unto you, 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; 45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, *and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.*

**3 Nephi 5:90-91** But *behold* I say unto you, 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, 91 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; *therefore those things which were of old time, which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled.*

These two sections definitely show a difference in timeline wherein when Jesus preached to the Jews all things had not yet been fulfilled... Jesus had not yet been crucified and the Law of Moses had not yet been all fulfilled. When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount to the Nephites He had already fulfilled all things and had been resurrected, and this explains why the significant differences between these passages of the Sermon on the Mount in the Bible and Book of Mormon. Also the words in the Bible “least in the kingdom of heaven” are better translated as “least likely to enter heaven” which the Book of Mormon explains more clearly on how to be saved.

**Matthew 5:48** Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

**3 Nephi 5:92** *Old things are done away, and all things have become new;* therefore *I would that ye should* be perfect even as *I, or* your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

**Luke 13:32** And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third *day* I shall be perfected.

The difference in these passages is perfection. Even though Jesus was sinless, who was utterly without spot or blemish, He was not yet perfected. How so? Because He had one

thing yet to fulfill that we must all fulfill as well, that is enduring unto the end. When Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount to the Jews, He had not yet fulfilled all things... He had not yet endured unto the end and been crucified. At this time only His Father in Heaven was perfect. When Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount to the Nephites it was after His resurrection, after all things were fulfilled, He was then perfected, explaining why the differences in these passages. Webster's Dictionary describes Perfected as:

**PER'FECTED**, *participle passive* Finished; completed.

This definition is the proper Biblical context for the words "perfect" or "perfected". Some denominations misunderstand these words as meaning something like being utterly sinless or spotless as Christ was... and thus choke on it stating that we humans cannot possibly be perfect... and it is by grace only we are saved. However this is a misinterpretation where perfection is actually meaning wholeness... that we should rely on the grace of God and fulfill all of God's requirements for salvation which include repentance, keeping God's commandments (including baptism), and as Jesus was required to do... enduring unto the end. Another timeline difference is found in:

**Matthew 6:9-13** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 *Thy kingdom come*. Thy will be done in earth, as [it is] in heaven. 11 *Give us this day our daily bread*. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

**3Nephi 5:101-106** After this manner therefore pray ye, 102 Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. 103 Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. 104 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 105 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 106 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Two differences between these passages are the omission of "Thy kingdom come" and "Give us this day our daily bread" from the Book of Mormon. Since the Nephites dwelt in a land of plenty, a choice land above all then they probably were not faced with a daily struggle for food as they might have been in other lands. After the crucifixion all things were fulfilled... the kingdom of God had arrived and the full establishment of the Church of Christ with the gift of the Holy Ghost had come.

**John 16:7-8** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

Again these subtle differences show evidence of a higher intelligence and Divine authorship of the Book of Mormon and discredit the accusations against Joseph Smith of plagiarism. Really I find it totally unbelievable that Joseph Smith would have the intelligence of authoring a work that so seamlessly takes into account these different cultures and timelines without introducing glaring errors and mistakes that the critics would surely have pointed out. There are many other parallel doctrines other than Paul's Weakness and the Sermon on the Mount that will be covered in the next several lessons.