

January 12, 2003

Next Weeks Lesson: "My Soul doth Magnify the Lord" (Luke 1; Matthew 1)

Today's Lesson: "That Ye Might Believe That Jesus Is the Christ"

(Isaiah 61:1-3; Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 3:4-11; John 1:1-14; 20:31)

1. Four different writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

- A. As we examine the first two chapters of each writer, we gain an insight into the personality and writing style of each author:
- (1) Matthew chose to take the genealogical approach to begin his book.
 - (2) Mark ignored Christ's birth and got right with preaching.
 - (3) Luke chose the passion of Christ's birth that we read each Christmas.
 - (4) John turned to a scholarly study of who Christ really was. Today we would compare his approach to that of Neil A. Maxwell style of speaking or writing. The authors of our lesson manual chose John's approach to begin our study of Christ. **Why?**

2. Who was this "Jesus Christ"? To answer this question we can go to any of the standard works as they all testify of Christ. The one that has always intrigued me the most is in John Chapter 1. Lets examine them together.

^aIN^c the ^bbeginning^c was the Word, and the ^cWord was with God, and the ^dWord was ^eGod. The same was in the ^abeginning^c with God. All things were ^amade by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was ^alife; and the life was the ^blight of men. And the ^alight^c shineth in ^bdarkness; and the darkness ^ccomprehended^c it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was ^aJohn^c. The same came for a ^awitness^c, to bear ^bwitness^c of the Light, that all ^{men} through him might ^cbelieve^c. He was not that Light, but was ^{sent} to bear witness of that Light. *That* was the true ^aLight^c, which ^blighteth^c ^cevery^c man that cometh into the world. He was in the ^aworld, and the ^bworld was ^cmade by him, and the world ^dknew^c him not. He came unto his own, and his own ^areceived^c him not. But as many as ^areceived^c him, to them gave he ^bpower^c to become the ^csons^c of God, *even* to them that believe on his ^dname: Which were ^aborn, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made ^aflesh, and ^bdwelt among us, (and we ^cbeheld^c his ^dglory^c, the glory as of the ^eonly ^fbegotten^c of the Father,) full of ^ggrace^c and truth.

- A. There are two searching and intriguing words in these verses: first "**Word**" and second "**light**". Any serious study of Christ will constantly bump up against these two words. For our purposes today we will only have time for the first. (The subject of light will come up several times later in the year)
- B. Of all the titles of Christ that were available to John, why did he choose the "Word"?
- (1) Perhaps an examination of [Moses 7:13-17](#) will help answer our question:

And so great was the ^afaith of Enoch that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them; and he ^bspake^c the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the ^cmountains^c fled, even according to his command; and the ^drivers^c of water were turned out of their course; and the roar of the lions was heard out of the wilderness; and all nations feared greatly, so ^epowerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him. There also came ^aup^c a land out of the depth of the sea, and so great was the fear of the enemies of the people of God, that they fled and stood afar off and went upon the land which came up out of the depth of the sea. And the ^agiants^c of the

land, also, stood afar off; and there went forth a ^bcurse upon all people that fought against God; And from that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them; but the Lord came and ^adwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness. The ^afear of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the ^bglory of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the ^cland, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish.

- (2) In these verses the power of the **“Word”** is transferred from immortal hands to the mortal hands of Enoch. It becomes clear that through immortal powers when the proper “Words” are spoken the elements obey. First, the “earth trembled”. Second, the “mountains fled”. Third, “the rivers of water were turned out of their course”. Fourth, “the roar of the lions was heard”.
- (3) Verse 17 suggests that the fear of the world came because Enoch fought with “Heavenly powers” that no man could contend against. The elements obeyed the **“Word”**.

3. Isaiah prophecies of Christ.

A. **Isaiah 61:1-3** outlines the mission of the Savior:

- (1) “Preach good tidings unto the meek” (verse 1)
- (2) “Bind up the brokenhearted” (verse 1)
- (3) “Proclaim liberty to the captives” (verse 1)
- (4) “Comfort all that mourn” (verse 2)

4. John the Baptist prophecies of Christ.

A. **Luke 3:4-9** further describes the Savior’s mission:

- (1) “Take away the sins of the world” (verse 5)
- (2) “Bring salvation unto the heathen nations” (verse 5)
- (3) “Gather together those who are lost” (verse 5)
- (4) “Make possible the preaching of the gospel unto the Gentiles” (verse 6)
- (5) “Be a light unto all who sit in darkness” (verse 7)
- (6) “Bring to pass the resurrection from the dead” (verse 7)
- (7) “Administer justice unto all” (verse 9)
- (8) “Convince all the ungodly of their ungodly deeds” (verse 9)

5. **Elder Thomas S. Monson taught:** “We need not visit the Holy Land to feel him close to us. We need not walk by the shores of Galilee or among the Judean hills to walk where Jesus walked. In a very real sense, all can walk where Jesus walked when, with his words on our lips, his spirit in our hearts, and his teachings in our lives.” ([Ensign May 1974, 48](#))