

3 Nephi 10:4*Gathering*

1 More than once He has said that He would gather us to Him as a hen would gather her chickens under her wings. He says that we must choose to come to Him in meekness and with enough faith in Him to repent ‘with full purpose of heart. [3 Nephi 10:6].

One way to do that is to gather with the Saints in His Church. Go to your meetings, even when it seems hard. If you are determined, He will help you find the strength to do it.

Henry B. Eyring, Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 16-17; or *Ensign*, Mat 2004, 18.

2 The Image of the hen calling after her chickens to come to the shelter and safety of her wings portrays the love of the Savior, his desire to nourish her children, to keep them safe from their common enemy, Satan, to shelter them from the storms of life, to give them the opportunity to grow and fulfill the promise of their nature.

The image suggests other ideas as well. The chickens have strayed away from the hen. They have been lured from safety by their desire for adventure or rebellion, out into the tempting world where danger lurks beside every step. The hen calls to her chickens, but they must come of their own volition. They are not forced under her wings; they are invited, even urged, but they must exercise their own agency.

And his use of the three verbs: “how oft have I gathered you; ... how oft would I have gathered you; ... how oft will I gather you” emphasizes his timeless call to repentance—past, present, and future. The Savior’s love is always there. His arms are always extended in mercy as long as there is any hope for his children to return to him. The true nature of repentance is not a test, not an indulgence, but a gift of love. It is one that we must take—it cannot be forced upon us.

Mae Blanch, *Repentance: A Gift of Love*, p. 79

3 Nephi 10: 6-7

3 *Repentance*

“Our role in sanctification is to repent.”

Mae Blanch, *Ibid.*

4 Let us not be so self-righteous that we think that we have no need for repentance, for the Savior himself preached repentance to the more righteous who were spared from the great destruction at the time of the crucifixion (3 Nephi 10:6-7).

Eldred G. Smith, Conference Report, Apr. 1954 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1954], 88

3 Nephi 10:10*Mourning turned to Joy*

5 [Apostle Marriner W.] Merrill was a man of many interests. His business of farming, merchandising, milling, stock-raising, dairying, etc., called for careful supervision and wise management. These latter tasks were largely entrusted to his older son. His oldest son, and namesake, was the one upon whom he leaned most heavily. In the prime of his life this oldest son died. This loss Elder Merrill endured with great difficulty and much sorrow. In truth, it seemed that his son's departure caused him to mourn unduly...

On one occasion soon after the death of his son, as he was returning to his home, he sat in his carriage so deeply lost in thought about his son that he was quite oblivious to things about him. He suddenly came into a state of awareness when his horse stopped in the road. As he looked up, his son stood in the road beside him. His son spoke to him and said, "Father, you are mourning my departure unduly! You are over concerned about my family (his son left a large family of small children) and their welfare. I have much work to do and your grieving gives me much concern. I am in a position to render effective service to my family. You should take comfort, for you know there is much work to be done here and it was necessary for me to be called."....

After this experience Elder Merrill was comforted, for he realized that the death of his son was in keeping with God's will.

Hinckley, *The Faith of Our Pioneer Fathers*, 182-183; as quoted in Marriner W. Merrill, *Exceptional Stories from the Lives of Our Apostles*, comp. by Leon R. Hartshorn [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973], 166

3 Nephi 10:12*They who received the Prophets*

6 On one occasion [Karl G. Maeser] was leading a party of young missionaries across the Alps. As they slowly ascended the steep slope, he looked back and saw a row of sticks thrust into the glacial snow to mark the one safe path across the otherwise treacherous mountains.

Something about those sticks impressed him, and halting the company of missionaries he gestured toward them and said, "Brethren, there stands the priesthood. They are just common sticks like the rest of us—some of them may even seem to be a little crooked, but the position they hold makes them what they are. If we step aside from the path they mark, we are lost."

I bear witness, my brethren and sisters, fellow students, that in this Church, men are as they indeed must be—called of God by prophecy. May we learn in our youth this lesson; it will see us faithful through all of the challenges of our lives. May we learn to follow the brethren.

Boyd K. Packer, *Follow the Brethren*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Provo, 23 Mar 1965], p.10.

7 It is no small thing, my brothers and sisters, to have a prophet of God in our midst. Great and wonderful are the blessings that come into our lives as we listen to the word of the Lord given to us through him... When we hear the counsel of the Lord expressed through the words of the

President of the Church, our response should be positive and prompt. History shows that there is safety, peace, prosperity, and happiness in responding to prophetic counsel.

Elder M. Russell Ballard, Conference Report, Apr. 2001, 84; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 65.

8 I was talking to a priesthood leader just last weekend. We had finished our Saturday night leadership meeting, which was on missionary work, and he said to me, “You know, you are really a missionary General Authority.” And I said, “No, I don’t consider myself a missionary General Authority. If I can be remembered for anything (and I hope that somehow, somewhere I can), I would settle for that which my father taught me and for which I feel he was known, and that us *one who is willing to give allegiance to and follow a prophet of God. And if that can be my lot, then I feel I will have accomplished the thing the Lord has sent me to do.*”

Loren C. Dunn, “Receiving a Prophet,” *Ensign*, May 1983, p. 30; emphasis added.

3 Nephi 10:18

9 *He did manifest Himself*

Some readers of the Book of Mormon disagree as to the exact time of the appearance of the resurrected Jesus Christ to the Nephites in the land Bountiful. One view is that he came to the American continent immediately after his resurrection; a second opinion is that he came about forth days after his resurrection at the time of his “ascension into heaven” on the eastern continent; a third view is that he came almost a year after his resurrection.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 260.

10 In verse 18 of Chapter 10, Mormon anticipated the appearance of the resurrected Christ to his people, by pointing to the fact that he came apparently at the “ending of the thirty-fourth year.” A comparison of this verse with 8:5 would seem to show that nearly a year passed by after the great three days of darkness and destruction before our Lord appeared to the Nephites. This conclusion would also seem to be borne out by a careful study of other facts in the record as written by Mormon. Notice, for example, that at the end of the first day’s ministry (19:1-3) of the Savior to the Nephites, the people go casually to their homes and even know where to find their friends. This settled condition could scarcely have existed immediately following the great destruction at the time of the Savior’s death (Cf. Ether 12:7, 12). However, a consensus of Book of Mormon students would probably show that they feel it difficult to believe that the Savior would put off his appearance to the Nephites for a whole year after his resurrection.

Sidney B. Sperry, *Book of Mormon Compendium* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968], 401.

11 The Book of Mormon record says “that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto” the Nephites. (3 Ne. 10:18; 11:12.) It would appear that from the manner in which Book of Mormon prophets speak of the ascension (Mosiah 18:2; Alma 40:20), that they have reference to his ascension immediately following his resurrection and not to that formal occasion 40 days after which *later* became known among Christian peoples as the

ascension. Viewing the time differences between the old and new worlds, there would be no reason why he should not have ministered as a resurrected Being among the Nephites during the same time interval in which he was continuing his resurrected walk with his followers in Jerusalem. (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 54-55).

The comment about it being the ending of the thirty-fourth year when the record was made may at first lead one to believe that a long period of time had passed between the destruction and the visit of Christ. President Joseph Fielding Smith explained:

“It is true that there has been a misconception in the minds of many members of the Church, but a careful reading of the account will clear up these misconceptions. It is true that a hasty examination will leave the impression that there was a delay of about a year after the resurrection of the Lord before he visited the Nephites and Lamanites who were spared; but more attention to what is written shows that it was but a very short time after his resurrection that the Lord appeared to the people who were assembled near the temple in Bountiful....

“In III Nephi 8:5 we discovered that in the ‘thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.’ The succeeding verses give much of the detail of the destruction which followed. This, evidently was at the time when Jesus was on the cross. Chapter 9 continues this story of destruction, and during this storm the voice of Jesus was heard in which he gave reasons for the great destruction, and he said: [Third Nephi 9:13, 15 is then quoted.]

“All of this was while the great darkness covered the earth, and Mormon then through the ninth and tenth chapters commented upon the terrible destruction which had taken place. He closes the tenth chapter in these words: [Third Nephi 10:18, 19 is then quoted.]

“Here he declares that it was soon after the Savior’s ascension into heaven that he appeared to the Nephites and Lamanites on this continent. And his ascension was the day of his resurrection after his appearance to Mary at the tomb, and before his appearance to the disciples that same day.

“The reason why Mormon discontinued his account at this point is not stated. Evidently he was writing during the days of great struggle with the Lamanites for the Nephite existence, and it is very possible that some sudden emergency had arisen so that he had temporarily to close his record. However, he continued his story where he broke off and states that there was a great multitude gathered together round about the temple in Bountiful. It seems perfectly clear that this great gathering was immediately after the close of the dreadful period of darkness. We read that the people were ‘marveling and wondering one with another,’ and ‘were showing one to another the great and marvelous change which had taken place.’ (3 Nephi 11:1)...

The fact that the multitude had gathered at the temple and were pointing out to each other the great changes that had occurred is evidence that this was an event immediately following the resurrection of our Lord. If this event had occurred one year later, the multitude would have been perfectly familiar with these great changes, and they would not have been so awed by them. It was in great astonishment and wonder that they had gathered and were pointing out to each other what had occurred.

Moreover it is contrary to reason that Jesus would make Nephites and Lamanites, who had been faithful, wait for one whole year before he would make his appearance and give them instruction in relation to the closing of the period in which the law of Moses was in force, and the period when the fullness of the gospel was ushered in.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:25-29.

3 Nephi 10 –

Conclusion

12 **Favor of the Lord.** As far as I can recall, the only time my father displayed anger with me as a child was on one occasion where, through an insensitive oversight, I showed ingratitude following a day-long family outing. As I look back on it, my father’s disciplinary response at that time was but a reflection of the essence of the famous passage from the 59th section of the Doctrine & Covenants: “And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments” (v. 21). When the remnants of Israel in America experienced the wrath of a just God through the foretold geophysical upheavals at the time of the Savior’s death, they understood, though in many cases too late, the grave consequences of disobedience and ingratitude. In the Savior’s pronouncements to the fallen people, He emphasized not once, but three times, His fatherly desire to gather the favored people and nourish them “as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings” (3 Ne. 10:4-6). Clearly, He yearns to favor His children through divine charity and grace.

The Lord’s favor toward His children is a theme that runs through the Book of Mormon, beginning with Nephi’s opening words about “having been highly favored of the Lord” (1 Ne. 1:1). The word “favor,” including in derivatives, is used in 37 verses in the standard works, fully 30 of them in the Book of Mormon. We learn from the Book of Mormon the simple steps for gaining the favor of the Lord: by not murmuring (1 Ne. 3:6), by being righteous (1 Ne. 17:35) and obedient (2 Ne. 1:19; Mosiah 1:13), through prayer (Mosiah 10:13), through faith (Alma 9:20), by being “zealous” in the spiritual sense (Alma 27:30), and through humility (Alma 48:20).

Mormon sounds the theme of favor once more in reference to the Savior’s visit to America following His resurrection: “And it came to pass that in the ending of the thirty and fourth year, behold, I will show unto you that the people of Nephi who were spared, and also those who had been called Lamanites, who had been spared, did have great favor shown unto them, and great blessings poured out upon their heads, insomuch that soon after the ascension of Christ into heaven he did truly manifest himself unto them” (3 Ne. 10:18). The reason for such favor is made clear: “And it was the more righteous part of the people who were saved, and it was they who received the prophets and stoned them not; and it was they who had not shed the blood of the saints, who were spared” (3 Ne. 10:12). From this we can derive one of the principal lessons of the Book of Mormon concerning the favor of the Lord: *receive His prophets*. Just as Samuel of old warned the people in frank terms to repent and become a righteous people, we today have the extraordinary benefit of hearing the voice of God’s prophets directly. Because of this

opportunity, we can gain the favor of God through obedience and righteousness and thereby prepare ourselves for “the tribulation of those days” (Matt. 24:29) in the not too distant future when the Lord will return again “in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30). (Allen)

Ed Pinegar and Richard Allen, *Teachings and Commentaries of the Book of Mormon*, p. 423-424.