

### **3 Nephi 28:6-11 – Christ to the Three Nephites**

In the first few verses of this chapter Christ asks the disciples their desire, and nine of them ask that they may speedily go to live with Christ at the completion of their earthly ministries. That request and Christ's response probably merit their own analysis. However, for right now I will limit myself to the other three disciples.

The other three, who have become universally known as “The Three Nephites,” were unsure about expressing their desire. And yet they all three desired the same thing, and they matched what John the Beloved had requested of the Savior. That is not easily dismissed as coincidence, but reflects the depth of the desire to serve which is awakened in human hearts once we embark on the Lord's path. They wished to live – effectively forever – and bring souls unto Christ. Were they young men, who as yet had no concept of how long life is? Were they advanced in years, and yet requested this extension anyway? We don't know – Mormon went out of his way to conceal their identities from us<sup>1</sup>. It is quite probable that they couldn't envision everything their request entailed, but they desired it anyway, trusting that the Lord would turn it to their benefit.

In verses 7 through 10 Jesus lays out some of the implications of their choice, and in doing so, suggests some interesting things to us.

First, the period of their extended mortality goes only to the Second Coming of Christ. Many scriptures allude to changes that will occur when Christ comes again, but in particular 1 Corinthians 15:52 along with several passages from the Doctrine and Covenants state that immortalized beings will coexist with mortals during the millennium. So there is no need for the Three Nephites to continue in their extended mortality, because they can then be immortal and work among the children of men in harmony with the new order which will be established when Christ comes. For those of us who may linger in mortality to see that blessed day it will be a wondrous thing to be able to mingle with the holy angels even as we continue our second estate.

Verse 8 mentions the disciples not having to “endure the pains of death.” This intrigues me, because I usually do associate death with pain, and the Lord seems to make it the norm here. However, it is not necessary – the disciples will be able to enter immortality without it. Perhaps Christ is not referring to physical pain at all, but the pain

---

<sup>1</sup> 3 Nephi 28:25 – Went out of his way, but at the Lord's command.

associated with the separation of the spirit from the body. If that is the case then we can see that such pain is common, but not necessary to eternal progression. The blessing to the disciples is that they will escape the bondage of that separation<sup>2</sup>.

In Verse 9 the Lord revisits the multiple natures of pain. He promises the disciples that they not have pain (in this case, physical pain) nor sorrow (for sin)<sup>3</sup> while they are in the flesh. The only pain and sorrow they will experience is because of the sins of the world. I have often tried to picture the Three Nephites during the long years after the collapse of the Nephite nation, doing what they could to bless their fellows, yet largely being frustrated by the wickedness of men. What a long, lonely vigil that must have been.

The end of Verse 9 ties into the beginning of 10, and in fact holds the key to understanding Verse 10. The disciples “for this cause” shall have joy. What is the cause? That they have desired to bring souls unto Christ. They shall be as Christ and the Father. How? They will enter into the union which Christ and the Father enjoy. There is no implication here that we will be denied those same blessings if we undertake that same work.

With the doctrine of the unity of the Father and the Son, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost to that effect, Christ toward the end of his ministry among the Nephites returns to the theme he emphasized at the beginning<sup>4</sup>. There is a weight and importance in the doctrine of the Godhead that I only dimly perceive. Nevertheless, it is clear that binding together and union are essential issues for our God, and should be for us as well.

The story of the Three Nephites, then, besides telling us of their lives, becomes a parable for us. We should seek that union which allows us to desire what God desires, and work as he would have us work. By so doing we do not lose anything, but gain instead a fullness of joy.

---

2 D&C 138:50

3 3 Nephi 28:37-40 Mormon learned that the disciples' immunity to sin came because of a change in their bodies.

4 3 Nephi 11:31-36