

Sunday School Lesson #6: Differences in the Sermon on the Mount

Submitted by Michael Kelley 2006-07

Lesson #6: Money and Other Differences: There are other remarkable differences between the two Sermons on the Mount as recorded in the Bible and Book of Mormon that I would like to cover with the differences highlighted in ***Bold Italics***:

Matthew 5:25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time ***the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer***, and thou be cast into prison. 26 Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost ***farthing***.

3 Nephi 5:73 Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him, lest at any time ***he shall get thee***, and thou shalt be cast into prison. 74 Verily, ***verily***, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, until thou hast paid the uttermost ***senine***.

In this section of the Sermon on the Mount the Book of Mormon omits “judges” and “officers”, possibly because at this time in Nephite history their society had degraded into total anarchy with the people grouped into tribes and all civil authority was destroyed.

3 Nephi 3:37 And the people were divided one against another; and they did separate one from another, into tribes, every man according to his family, and his kindred and friends; and thus they did destroy the government of the land.

The other differences are their use different names for currency. It would have been quite an anachronism for the Nephites to use the English “farthing” or “penny” for their money when such coins did not yet exist until centuries later. One interesting note is that critics against the Book of Mormon say that no coins of the Nephite money has ever been found in the Americas while the Book of Mormon mentions all of these different denominations of money such as senines, ontis etc. However the critics failed to notice that the word coin is never mentioned in either the Book of Mormon or the Bible. Also archaeologists have uncovered many gold rings of various sizes. These rings were very thick and were not ornate in any way and would have been unsuitable for jewelry. However if these rings were Nephite currency, running a rope through the center of these rings and securing it to one’s body would have secured them like a chain on a wallet. The Jews used weight as their method of determining value of their money and termed their money as “pieces” which the Nephites also refer to their money as:

Jeremiah 32:10 And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed ***it***, and took witnesses, and weighed ***him*** the money in the balances.

Matthew 17:27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Alma 8:53-54 Now these are the names of the different pieces of their gold, and of their silver, according to their value. 54 And the names are given by the Nephites, for they did not reckon after the manner of the Jews which were at Jerusalem; neither did they measure after the manner of the Jews.

Other interesting differences in the Sermons on the Mount include:

Matthew 5:3 Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3 Nephi 5:50 *Yea*, blessed are the poor in spirit *which come unto me*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Here we see the Book of Mormon is clearer in that it is not enough that a person just be of a humble spirit in order to be saved, they must also be willing to come unto Christ.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

3 Nephi 5:53 *And* blessed are all they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled *with the Holy Ghost*.

The difference found here is that the Book of Mormon explains what those who seek after righteousness will be filled with, and that is the Holy Ghost. The Bible does not explain this and the reader is left guessing what the Christian would be filled with.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed [are] they which are persecuted for *righteousness'* sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3 Nephi 5:57 *And* blessed are *all* they which are persecuted for *my name's* sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Here we see what God considers to be righteousness... and that is bearing the name of Christ and the crosses and persecutions we will inevitably face by doing so.

Matthew 5:14-16 *Ye are* the light of *the world*. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 *Neither* do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before *men*, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

3 Nephi 5:61-63 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be* the light of *this people*. A city that is set on a hill can not be hid. 62 *Behold*, do men light a candle and put it under a bushel? *Nay*, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house; 63 *Therefore* let your light so shine before *this people*, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

As is recorded in the Bible, the Apostles and other Disciples were called to reach out unto not only the Jews, but also to all of the Gentile nations. The Bible also fulfills this mission, however the Nephite Disciples were only called to minister unto the Nephite peoples. The words of the Nephites did not reach out unto the Gentiles until after the Restoration in 1830 and this is why Jesus used the words "this people" instead of "the world" when speaking to the Disciples in the Book of Mormon. Again these subtle differences show how difficult it would have been for Joseph Smith to plagiarize the Bible without introducing many obvious mistakes, when in reality corrections and clarifications were introduced and reveal God's hand in the entire work.