



The Life of Christ

Chapter 11

The Life of Christ Was Predicted Long before His Birth

Every person who comes to earth depends on Jesus Christ to fulfill the promise He made in heaven to be our Savior. Without Him, the plan of salvation would have failed. Because His mission was necessary, all of the prophets from Adam to Christ testified that He would come (see Acts 10:43). All of the prophets since Christ have testified that He did come. All of us need to study the life of the Savior and follow Him faithfully throughout our lives.

Adam learned that the Savior's name would be Jesus Christ (see Moses 6:51–52). Enoch saw that Jesus would die upon the cross and be resurrected (see Moses 7:55–56). Noah and Moses also testified of Him (see Moses 1:11; 8:23–24). About 800 years before the Savior was born on the earth, Isaiah foresaw His life. When Isaiah saw the grief and sorrow that the Savior would suffer to pay the price for our sins, he exclaimed:

“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . .

“ . . . Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . .

“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. . . .

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter” (Isaiah 53:3–5, 7).

Nephi also saw a vision of the Savior's future birth and mission. He saw a beautiful virgin, and an angel explained, “Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner

For teachers: This chapter probably has more material than you will be able to cover in class. As you study it in preparation to teach, seek the Spirit's guidance in determining which portions will be most helpful for those you teach.

of the flesh” (1 Nephi 11:18). Then Nephi saw the virgin holding a child in her arms. The angel declared, “Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father!” (1 Nephi 11:21).

About 124 years before Jesus was born, King Benjamin, another Nephite prophet, also foresaw the Savior’s life:

“For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases.

“And he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men.

“And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.

“And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary” (Mosiah 3:5–8).

- What are some ancient prophecies about Jesus Christ?

He Was the Only Begotten of the Father

- What did Jesus Christ inherit from His Father? What did He inherit from His mother?

The story of the birth and life of the Savior is found in the New Testament in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. From their accounts we learn that Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to marry Joseph when an angel of the Lord appeared to her. The angel told her that she was to be the mother of the Son of God. She asked him how this was possible (see Luke 1:34). He told her, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing

which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Thus, God the Father became the literal Father of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. That is why He is called the Only Begotten Son. He inherited divine powers from His Father. From His mother He inherited mortality and was subject to hunger, thirst, fatigue, pain, and death. No one could take the Savior’s life from Him unless He willed it. He had power to lay it down and power to take up His body again after dying. (See John 10:17–18.)

He Led a Perfect Life

- What does the Savior’s life mean for us?

From His youth, Jesus obeyed all that was required of Him by our Heavenly Father. Under the guidance of Mary and Joseph, Jesus grew much as other children grow. He loved and obeyed the truth. Luke tells us, “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40; see also D&C 93:12–14).

By the time He was 12 years old, Jesus had grown in His understanding that He had been sent to do the will of His Father. He went with His parents to Jerusalem. When His parents were returning home, they discovered that He was not with their group. They went back to Jerusalem to look for Him. “After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, and they were hearing him, and asking him questions” (Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 2:46). “And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers” (Luke 2:47).

Joseph and Mary were relieved to find Him, but “they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.” Jesus answered her, saying, “Wist ye not that I must be about my [Heavenly] Father’s business?” (Luke 2:48–49).

In order to fulfill His mission, Jesus was to do the will of His Father in Heaven. “I do nothing of myself,” He declared, “but as my Father

hath taught me, I speak these things. . . . I do always those things that please him” (John 8:28–29).

When Jesus was 30 years old, He came to John the Baptist to be baptized in the Jordan River. John was reluctant to baptize Jesus because he knew that Jesus was greater than he. Jesus asked John to baptize Him in order “to fulfil all righteousness.” John did baptize the Savior, immersing Him completely in the water. When Jesus was baptized, His Father spoke from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The Holy Ghost descended, as shown by the sign of the dove. (See Matthew 3:13–17.)

Soon after Jesus was baptized, He fasted for 40 days and 40 nights to be with God. After that, Satan came to tempt Him. Jesus firmly resisted all of Satan’s temptations and then commanded Satan to leave. (See Matthew 4:1–11; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 4:1, 5–6, 8–9, 11.) Jesus Christ remained sinless, the one perfect being to ever walk the earth (see Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21–22).

- Which accounts from the Savior’s life are especially meaningful to you?

He Taught Us How to Love and Serve One Another

- How did the Savior teach us how to love and serve one another?

After His fast and His encounter with Satan, Jesus began His public ministry. He came to earth not only to die for us but also to teach us how to live. He taught that there are two great commandments: first, to love God with all our heart, mind, and strength; and second, to love others as we love ourselves (see Matthew 22:36–39). His life is an example of how we should obey these two commandments. If we love God, we will trust and obey Him, as Jesus did. If we love others, we will help them meet their physical and spiritual needs.

Jesus spent His life serving others. He cured them of diseases. He made the blind see, the deaf hear, and the lame walk. Once when He was healing the sick, it became late and the people were hungry. Instead of sending them away, He blessed five loaves of bread and two fishes and miraculously was able to feed a multitude of 5,000 people. (See Matthew 14:14–21.) He taught that whenever

we find people hungry, cold, naked, or lonely, we should help them all we can. When we help others, we are serving the Lord. (See Matthew 25:35–46.)

Jesus loved others with all His heart. Often His heart was so full of compassion that He wept. He loved little children, the elderly, and the humble, simple people who had faith in Him. He loved those who had sinned, and with great compassion He taught them to repent and be baptized. He taught, “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

Jesus even loved those who sinned against him and were unrepentant. At the end of His life, as He hung on the cross, He prayed to the Father for the soldiers who had crucified Him, pleading, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He taught, “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

- In what ways can we show the Lord that we love Him?

He Organized the Only True Church

- Why did the Savior organize His Church and ordain Apostles?

Jesus wanted His gospel taught to people all over the earth, so He chose twelve Apostles to testify of Him. They were the original leaders of His Church. They received the authority to act in His name and do the works they had seen Him do. Those who received authority from them were also able to teach, baptize, and perform other ordinances in His name. After His death, they continued to do His work until the people became so wicked that they killed the Apostles.

He Redeemed Us from Our Sins and Saved Us from Death

- As you study this section, take time to ponder the events of the Atonement.

Near the end of His mortal ministry, Jesus prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for all the sins of mankind. He had been

For teachers: Pondering invites the Spirit. Consider asking class members or family members to quietly read the final two sections of the chapter, thinking about their feelings for the Savior. Then invite those who feel comfortable doing so to share their thoughts with the class.

condemned to die because He had testified to the people that He was the Son of God.

The night before His Crucifixion, Jesus went to a garden called Gethsemane. Soon He was weighed down by deep sorrow and wept as He prayed. Latter-day Apostle Orson F. Whitney was permitted to see the Savior's suffering in a vision. Seeing the Savior weep, he said: "I was so moved at the sight that I also wept, out of pure sympathy. My whole heart went out to Him; I loved Him with all my soul, and longed to be with Him as I longed for nothing else" ("The Divinity of Jesus Christ," *Improvement Era*, Jan. 1926, 224–25; see also *Ensign*, Dec. 2003, 10). Jesus "went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

In a modern revelation the Savior described how great His suffering was, saying it caused Him "to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit" (D&C 19:18). He suffered "according to the flesh," taking upon himself our pains, sicknesses, infirmities, and sins (see Alma 7:10–13). No mortal person can comprehend just how great this burden was. No other person could have endured such agony of body and spirit. "He descended below all things . . . that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth" (D&C 88:6).

But His suffering was not yet complete. The following day, Jesus was beaten, humiliated, and spit upon. He was required to carry His own cross; then He was lifted up and nailed to it. He was tortured in one of the cruelest ways men have ever devised. After suffering on the cross, He cried out in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). In Jesus's bitterest hour, the Father had withdrawn from Him so Jesus could finish suffering the penalty for the sins of all mankind that Jesus might have complete victory over the forces of sin and death (see James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [1916], 660–61).

When the Savior knew that His sacrifice had been accepted by the Father, He exclaimed in a loud voice, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). He bowed His head and voluntarily gave up His spirit. The Savior was dead. A violent earthquake shook the earth.

Some friends took the Savior’s body to a tomb, where it lay until the third day. During this time His spirit went and organized the missionary work to other spirits who needed to receive His gospel (see 1 Peter 3:18–20; D&C 138). On the third day, a Sunday, He returned to His body and took it up again. He was the first to overcome death. The prophecy had been fulfilled “that he must rise again from the dead” (John 20:9).

Shortly after His Resurrection, the Savior appeared to the Nephites and established His Church in the Americas. He taught the people and blessed them. This moving account is found in 3 Nephi 11 through 28.

His Sacrifice Showed His Love for His Father and for Us

Jesus taught: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:13–14). He willingly and humbly went through the sorrow in Gethsemane and the suffering on the cross so we could receive all the blessings of the plan of salvation. To receive these blessings, we must come unto Him, repent of our sins, and love Him with all our hearts. He said:

“And this is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

“And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me . . . that they may be judged according to their works. . . .

“For the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do. . . .

“Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, *even as I am*” (3 Nephi 27:13–15, 21, 27; italics added).

- What are your feelings as you ponder the Savior’s sacrifice for you?

Additional Scriptures and Other Sources

- 2 Nephi 25:12 (the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh)
- Moses 6:57 (Jesus Christ named as the Only Begotten)
- Matthew, Mark, Luke, John (life and teachings of Jesus Christ)
- Matthew 10:1–8; Luke 9:1–2 (Apostles ordained with power and authority)
- Matthew 26–28; Mark 14–16; Luke 22–24; John 18–20 (Jesus in the garden; betrayed, crucified, and resurrected)
- “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign*, Apr. 2000, 2–3