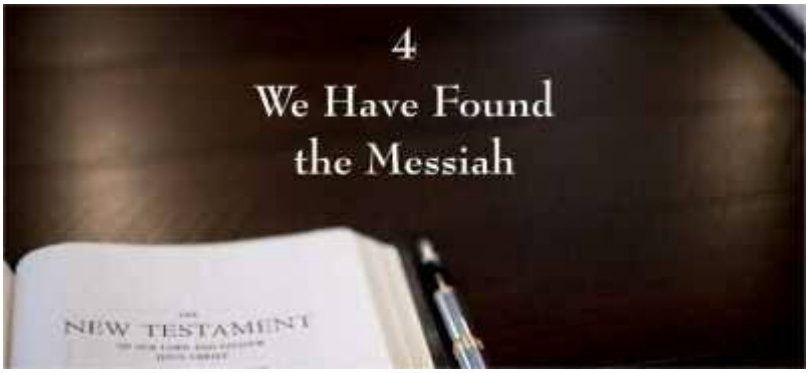

"For years, faithful Israelites, including Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael, had waited and prayed for the coming of the promised Messiah. When they met Him, how did they know that He was the One they had been seeking? The same way all of us come to know Savior - by accepting the invitation to "come and see" for ourselves (John 1:39)."

Day 1

John 1:1-5 - Jesus Christ was "in the beginning with God."

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. If you read through all of today's material before doing your journaling, the questions asked in this day's material might give you more to write about.

Much of this chapter was rewritten by Joseph Smith in the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) of the New Testament. Let's look at the doctrinal differences between the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible and the JST version. Here is what Joseph Smith said the record should say.

> 1 In the beginning was the *gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word,* and the *word* was with *the Son, and the Son was with God,* and the *Son* was *of* God.
>
> 2 The same was in the beginning with God.
>
> 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made which was made.
>
> 4 In him was *the gospel,* and *the gospel was the life,* and the life was the light of men;
>
> 5 And the light shineth *in the world,* and the *world perceiveth* it not.

The KJV says that Jesus is the Word. But here it says that the word is the gospel preached to us by Christ. You may consider that a big difference or splitting hairs, depending on your outlook. What is the gospel preached to us by Jesus? The gospel is everything having to do with the plan of salvation as laid out by our Father in Heaven. It includes all the laws, rewards, punishments, doctrines, behaviors, expectations, and methods of saving the children of God. It is the complete package. The gospel defined the laws that enabled us to keep our first estate, and is what teaches us how to keep our second estate.

Without the gospel of Christ there would be no progression, no hope, and no way for us to become like our Father in Heaven. Once Jesus was chosen to be our Savior, it became his responsibility to teach us the way back to our Father. Because of the sacrifice he would have to make to enable us to be saved, he was responsible for creating all things needed for the progression of God's children, and that includes all the kingdoms with which we will be rewarded at the time of judgment. The last step in this creation process was to create the planet on which God's children would come for their mortal testing. This is why we are taught that all things were created by him, and without him there is nothing made that was made.

John the Beloved wants us to understand that to us, Christ is everything. He is our source for progression eternally. He is our link back to our Father in Heaven. He is our judge, our advocate, our Redeemer from sin, our Exemplar - he who shows us what is expected of us through example. He came to earth to demonstrate our Father's love for us, and show us what we will need to learn to do and become in order to become like God. This is why John begins with these all important lessons.

The gospel of Christ is our door to eternal life. It is the light, the example that shows us the way home. In this world full of the darkness created by Satan and his hosts, the gospel is a shining beacon to guide us home by the right path. But to those who embrace the darkness, they cannot comprehend/perceive the light and truth the gospel teaches. This is because all eternal truth has to be understood through the Holy Ghost, and only those who seek for truth will be able to be taught eternal truth.

What is a lesson you think John the Beloved is trying to teach us by beginning his gospel or testimony of Christ by telling us about Christ's premortal glory and position?

How do you think learning more about Christ's premortal position before God will help us better appreciate Christ's mortal mission?

What did you learn about Jesus in the JST that you didn't know before from reading the KJV of the Bible?

Day 2

John 1:1-18 - Disciples of Jesus Christ bear witness of Him.

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. If you read through all of today's material before doing your journaling, the questions asked in this day's material might give you more to write about.

The book of John was written by John the Beloved, so it can be confusing that he starts talking about the Savior then suddenly changes to talk about John the Baptist. It is easy to get confused as to who is doing the talking and who is being talked about.

One of the important lessons we learn from John here is that Members of the Godhead never testify of themselves first. There is always someone else sent to be a witness of them before they say anything about themselves. This holds true of Christ all through the scriptures. When Jesus is first being introduced to a people, either there is a prophet there to personally introduce the Savior, or the Father, himself introduces the Son. Only after someone else has witnessed who he is will He witness of himself. John's mission in life was to prepare the way for the Savior's ministry. He prophesied of the Savior's coming, and witnessed who the Savior was when he came in person. This fulfills the law of witnesses that has existed as part of the gospel since our premortal life.

> 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.
>
> 7 The same came *into the world* for a witness, to bear witness of the *light, to bear record of the gospel through the Son, unto all,*that through him *men* might believe.
>
> 8 He was not that *light,* but *came* to bear witness of that *light,*
>
> 9 Which was the true *light,* which lighteth every man *who* cometh into the world;
>
> 10 *Even the Son of God.* He *who* was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

What truths do the following two verses teach us?

> 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

> 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God; *only* to them who believe on his name.

Sometimes people think that the gospel Christ preaches is mysterious and difficult, but what is the promise he makes in verse twelve to those who are simply willing to believe on his name?

Verse 13 reveals the source of Christ's birth.

> 13 *He was* born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In other words, a couple didn't decide they wanted a baby and deliberately had a child and named him Jesus. Instead, Jesus was born because God chose to clothe his Son in flesh. Christ's birth was the will and plan of God. There was nothing mortal about that decision.

> 14 And the *same word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

This man, Jesus was the possessor of the gospel given us by God in our premortal life. He is the administrator of the whole plan of salvation. While in the flesh he revealed his power and glory as the Only Begotten Son of the Father.

> 15 John *bear* witness of him, and cried, saying, This *is* he of whom I spake; He who cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me.
>
> 16 *For in the beginning was the Word, even the Son, who is made flesh, and sent unto us by the will of the Father. And as many as believe on his name shall receive of his fullness.* And of his fullness have all we received, *even immortality and eternal life, through his* grace.
>
> 17 For the law was given *through* Moses, but *life* and truth came *through* Jesus Christ.
>
> 18 *For the law was after a carnal commandment, to the administration of death; but the gospel was after the power of an endless life, through Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.*

John the Baptist bore his witness of Christ's divinity to all who would listen to him. He even taught that it is possible to receive the fullness of Christ, through his grace. All we need to do is believe on his name. Or, in other words, believe what he teaches and live how he tells us to live, and he will bless us with both immortality AND eternal life. Eternal life is God's life, the kind of life God lives.

Try making a list, as the manual suggests, of all the promises John the Beloved lists in these verses as he describes the mission of John the Baptist.

Can you think of something else you might have included if you were making your own list for your personal testimony to the world?

Day 3

John 1:12 - What does it mean to "become the sons of God"?

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. If you read through all of today's material before doing your journaling, the questions asked in this day's material might give you more to write about.

It is important to understand the relationship between the Fall of Adam and Eve and the Atonement made by Christ. They are two sides to the same coin. The Fall caused us to become estranged from God. We lost our place as His children the first time we sinned. Nothing we could do or say could repair the breach between us and our Father in Heaven. Someone more powerful than we are would have to pay for the sins we commit in mortality. But the price Jesus paid for us doesn't provide us a free pass back into the good graces of our Father in Heaven, the great law maker.

We broke God's laws. Jesus paid the penalties for the laws we broke, but we cannot be forgiven of those sins unless we accept his payment in our behalf. He cannot force us to accept his payment, we have to be willing to believe in him as our Savior and Redeemer, and obey his commandments. Only then will our lives begin to conform with the kind of life God lives, and in that conformity Christ forgives our sins. In learning to live according to the laws of God we become justified - meaning God's laws cannot punish us because we are living in harmony with those laws. By forgiving us of our sins because we have believed in Him and lived according to his commandments we become sanctified or holy. This is how the atonement works.

The atoning sacrifice Jesus made in Gethsemane and on the cross, followed by his resurrection, is what fixes what was broken by the Fall of Adam and Eve. Without the Fall there is no need for an atonement. With the Fall there is no salvation without the atonement.

Sinners live in a state outside the grace and salvation of Christ. In such a state we are no longer the children of God, because we are no longer able to become like him and receive all that he has. In other words, we have cut ourselves off from His presence and denied ourselves of our eternal inheritance. When we accept Christ's role as Redeemer, and receive the covenants of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, we put ourselves on the path back to becoming once again the sons or children of God. When we are forgiven of our sins the promise Jesus made to all of us is that he spiritually begets us, or adopts us back into the family of God. Jesus becomes our spiritual Father. And when our Father in Heaven gives the Savior all that He has, Jesus has promised those who believe in Him that He will, in turn, share all that He has been given with us. So, by believing in Christ we become the literal heirs to all that God, our Father has to offer his Only Begotten Son.

How does it make you feel to know that Jesus has made it possible to return to God's presence and that He will share all that God gives him with all those who believe in his atoning sacrifice for all mankind?

Day 4

John 1:18 - Has anyone seen God?

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. If you read through all of today's material before doing your journaling, the questions asked in this day's material might give you more to write about.

This section is supposed to include verse 19 as well as verse 18. I think it was a mistake in the printing of the manual. John the Baptist is teaching the Jews that the law of Moses didn't bring salvation. And anything but eternal life, the kind of life God lives, is damnation or death in comparison. Eternal life only comes through the gospel taught by the Savior who comes from God. To illustrate this he tells us (in the JST) that no prophets have ever seen God without testifying of Jesus Christ. This is for the simple reason that salvation can come by no other way than through the gospel taught by Christ.

> 18 *For the law was after a carnal commandment, to the administration of death; but the gospel was after the power of an endless life, through Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father.*

> 19 *And* no man hath seen God at any time, *except he hath borne record of the Son; for except it is through him no man can be saved.*

In the KVJ of the Bible the second part of that sentence got left out in the copying process, rendering it a clear falsehood that no one had ever seen God before. As mentioned in the manual, there are numerous places where people state that they saw God. See Genesis 32:30; Exodus 33:11; Isaiah 6:5, as well as Acts 7:55-56, Revelation 4:2, and Matthew 3:17; 17:3-5. In verse 3 of Matthew 17 Moses and Elijah appeared to Jesus, Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. And in verse 5 the Father bears personal witness to them of his Son.

Why is it important to understand and believe that God shows himself to his servants?

What becomes the responsibility of those who see the Savior? (John 1:19)

Day 5

John 1:19-23 - Who is Elias, and who is "that prophet"?

Record your impressions in your journal or notebook. If you read through all of today's material before doing your journaling, the questions asked in this day's material might give you more to write about.

We need to remember that the New Testament was originally written in Greek, so it follows that some of the names used were the Greek versions of Hebrew or Aramaic words. Elias, is one example of this substitution. Elias is Greek for Elijah. But there is a lot more to the name Elias than meets the eye. For Elias is a word that represents not only a man's name, but a calling to restore something or to prepare the way for something greater that is to follow. With that last definition in mind, that is what makes John the Baptist an Elias. His calling was to prepare the way for the ministry of the Savior. But John the Baptist was also the holder of priesthood keys that had to be restored in the last days. Hence, John was an Elias in two of the three senses of the word.

When it comes to references to Elias, or to an Elias, things can quickly get confusing. Following are two paragraphs from the Doctrines of Salvation, Vol. I, by Joseph Fielding Smith, page 174.

> ELIAS OF ABRAHAM'S DAY. We have not been informed as to the identity of the man Elias who lived in the days of Abraham. Some think him to be Melchizedek. But we do know that this man Elias held the keys of the dispensation in which Abraham lived. *He too, came and restored his authority, which is the restoration of the gospel with all its covenants as given in the days of Abraham.*
>
> ELIAS OF THE RESTORATION. *The Elias who was to restore all things is a composite Elias.* In other words, *the restoration was not made by one personage, but many*, and in speaking of Elias coming to restore all things, *the Lord was using that title in a plural meaning, having in mind all the prophets who came to restore the fulness of the gospel.* This would include John the Baptist, Peter, James and John, and every ancient prophet who restored keys from the days of Adam down.

I was considering how mind boggling this was when I read the following in The Mortal Messiah, Book 3, by Bruce R. McConkie, page 54. The Jews in the days of Christ knew something of the principle or doctrine of Elias, so they wanted to know if John the Baptist was one of these Eliases their scriptures talked about. Later in the New Testament we will find out that John the Baptist also appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration along with Elijah (Elias) and Moses, who was, himself an Elias. All three of these men were forerunners and restorers.

> In the providences of the Lord the saints know some things that the world does not know about the spiritual outpouring of divine grace that fell on the Mount of Transfiguration. But even latter-day revelation does not set forth the full account, and until men attain a higher state of spiritual understanding than they now enjoy, they will continue to see through a glass darkly and to know only in part the visionary experiences of the presiding officers of the meridian Church.

The meridian Church is the Church of Christ's time. Christ came in the meridian or middle of time. Hence the Church of his day is called the meridian Church.

The saints of the latter-day are all Eliases, in that we are all forerunners or those who are preparing for that which is to come.

How are we all participating in the spirit of Elias? (Hint: think of our preparatory work for the Savior's second coming.)

How do our ministering efforts help us prepare ourselves, our family, friends, and neighbors, for the second coming?

Here is a PDF of this week's study material.
Print it out for greater convenience in your studies.

New Testament Lesson 03