

FIRST VOICES

“ . . . in the land of their first inheritance . . . ”

“I speak unto you as the voice of one crying from the dust . . . ”

-prophetic words from the past-



*...assembled
yourselves
together, you
that can hear
my words
which I shall
speak unto
you...*



WHAT'S NEXT? IMMERSION!

A question for all people: Are you immersed in your ancestral culture, customs, and language? I have to admit, I am not. But don't let that confession trouble you or provide an excuse for you. I happen to be of European descent. Like so many children of immigrants, my grandparents came from Europe and my parents wanted the "American" way of life. That normally meant leaving behind some of the culture and customs of the homeland, speaking only English. For example, my uncle could not speak English when he started school even though he was born in the USA. On the flip side, none of his children spoke his native tongue. They absorbed the culture and traditions of their new homeland, the American "melting pot". As we have earnestly tried to stress in this journal, we pray that this type

of cultural assimilation does not occur to Native Americans, except in one area, which we will explain.

There are different kinds of immersion. One is being immersed in one's language, culture, hobby or other activity – knowing it, understanding it, breathing it, living it. My roommate in college was a foreign language major, but he never really acquired the true accent of the language until he traveled to Europe and spent time there, fully immersed in the culture and language of the people. I know others who have done the same thing to learn other languages; fully immersed.

A second type of immersion is spiritual. Modern translations of the New Testament of the Bible translate the name of the forerunner of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, as John the Immerser. This is because in ancient Jerusalem, when the Jewish people came to him,

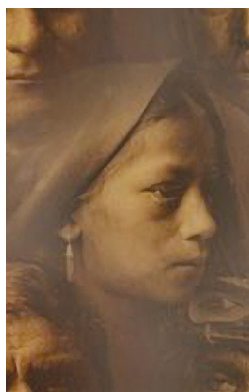
he told them to repent of their sins and signify to God their intentions to live better lives before God by going into the Jordan River and being immersed in the water by John – burial of the old person and rising of the new person. The record tells us that even Jesus Christ was immersed in the water by John the Baptist.

I could be fully dedicated to my family's original culture and customs, or I could do the same with my American culture and customs.

Both would require full immersion. It seems that many Native Americans can do the same, but there are many who cannot, as their language and culture have disappeared due to circumstances beyond their control (invasion of their lands by other nations and peoples, boarding schools, etc.). But there is hope for all Native Americans, an opportunity to be fully immersed in their most ancient culture, one that few know about, but is available today.

An ancient Native American Prophet and King named Benjamin, son of Mosiah, spoke to his people before his passing. He constructed a tall tower to speak from (picture in your mind the ancient pyramids of Central America) so as many as possible could hear his voice. Here are some of the words he spoke in 124 BC.

“My brethren, all ye that have assembled yourselves together, you that can hear my words which I shall speak unto you this day; for I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view. I have not commanded you to come up hither that ye should fear me, or that ye should think that I of myself am more than a mortal man. But I am like as yourselves, subject to all manner of



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infirmities in body and mind; yet I have been chosen by this people, and consecrated by my father, and was suffered by the hand of the Lord that I should be a ruler and a king over this people; and have been kept and preserved by his matchless power, to serve you with all the might, mind and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me. I say unto you that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time, and I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne... Yet, my brethren, I have not done these things that I might boast, neither do I tell these things that thereby I might accuse you; but I tell you these things that ye may know that I can answer a clear conscience before God this day. Behold, I say unto you that because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God. And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God. “

Wow! What humility and what wisdom! Now there is

a culture to embrace! But let's see what else he said.

“And behold also, if I, whom ye call your king, who has spent his days in your service, and yet has been in the service of God, do merit any thanks from you, O how you ought to thank your heavenly King! I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another -- I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another -- I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants. And behold, all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; and he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments ye should prosper in the land; and he never doth vary from that which he hath said; therefore, if ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you.”

How wonderful these words are! They give encouragement and hope of a better tomorrow. A tomorrow filled with God's blessing has one condition: that we keep his commandments!

Another ancient Native American prophet, who lived from about 615 BC to about 545 BC spoke to his people. His name was Nephi. And seeing into the future, as all prophets do, he wrote the following words.

“And now I, Nephi, make an end of my prophesying unto you, my beloved brethren. And I cannot write but a few things, which I know must surely come to pass... Wherefore, the things which I have written suffices me, save it be a few words which I must speak concerning the doctrine of Christ; wherefore, I shall speak unto you plainly, according to the plainness of my prophesying. For my soul delights in plainness; for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God gives light unto the understanding; for he speaks unto men according to their language, unto their understanding. Wherefore, I would that ye should remember that I have spoken unto you concerning that prophet which the Lord

showed unto me, that should baptize the Lamb of God [Jesus Christ], which should take away the sins of the world. And now, if the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized [immersed] by water, to fulfil all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water! And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfil all righteousness in being baptized by water? Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he shows unto the children of men that, according to the flesh he humbles himself before the Father, and witnesses unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments. Wherefore, after he was baptized with water the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove.

And again, it shows unto the children of men the straightness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them. And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father? And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye,

and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism -- yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water [to be immersed], according to his word, behold, then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.

Wherefore, do the things which I have told you I have seen that your Lord and your Redeemer should do; for, for this cause have they been shown unto me, that ye might know the gate by which ye should enter. For the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.

Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men.

Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

So you see, our desire, hope and prayer is that Native Americans remain Native Americans and that they hold fast to their languages, but take-up **their ancient religious culture**, their earliest belief in Jesus Christ that supersedes all other historical legends and customs (and even supersedes the European acceptance of Jesus). **This is your true, sacred, and everlasting culture given to you by God long, long ago.** The Prophet Nephi said, **"And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which was had among their fathers."**

MOSES – FLASH FORWARD

I don't think I could find anyone in America who has not heard of Moses the Israelite Deliverer. They would have heard about him in their Sunday School Class, or possibly from the movie The Ten

Commandments. Moses (born around 1400 BC) was a descendant of Abraham's grandson Jacob; more specifically he was a descendant of Jacob's son Levi.

Moses' story covers a portion of the first part of the Old Testament of the Bible. The Lord God, Creator of the heavens and the earth spoke to him and gave him specific instructions. Remember in the movie, the Red Sea separating and people crossing over on dry ground. What great things the Lord did with Moses as he led the Israelite people.

Consider this for a moment: God said to Moses' brother Aaron, and his sister, Miriam, "Who is faithful in all mine house. When I speak to him [Moses] I speak mouth to mouth." There are not too many people recorded in history that spoke with Great Spirit face to face like Moses did.

He certainly was a special person with a special calling. The task he was given was to bring the children of Israel, who were being held in captivity in Egypt, out to a land where they could worship the God of their Fathers. That land was promised to them through a covenant made with

Abraham hundreds of years earlier.

Now we will flash forward to our day and time. In the near future the Creator will direct another man similar to Moses to do a great work. He will also be of the House of Israel, but this time he will be a descendant of Jacob's son Joseph. This Joseph of old, as you remember, ended up in Egypt because of the jealousy of his brothers. Yet he was used of God to save his father's household and all his brothers. Joseph was promised by God that there would be a Moses (which happened) and that Joseph would have a descendant, who will bare his name, and be a holy man of God. He will be given specific instructions and actions to perform for God, just like Moses. He will reaffirm God's message of joy, hope and salvation to all the Indigenous People of the Americas. He will be an Indian Moses.

You see the lands of North, Central, and South America are the Promised Lands of the descendants of Joseph, son of Jacob (see Genesis 49:22-26 and Deuteronomy 33:13-17). They will one day possess it as they did before the Europeans arrived, just like the ancient Israelites took possession of

the land of Canaan, which had been given to Abraham. The Americas will also be the location of a great holy city called the New Jerusalem. It will be built by Native Americans – and others – who yield to God's calling and follow the teachings of his son, Jesus the Messiah.

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*...in preparing the
way for the fulfilling
of his covenants,
which he hath made
to his people who are
of the house of Israel.*