

I WITNESS Kids

Annie Learns About Thanksgiving

by Alicia Sindt

Annie smelled the pumpkin pie

before her eyes opened. Grandma's house was filled with good smells. Spicy pumpkin pie, steamy homemade rolls, tart cranberry; and best of all was the smell of the turkey baking.

Annie swung her feet over the side of the bed and grabbed her robe. She had spent the night with Grandma and Grandpa Netter to help with the Thanksgiving meal. It smelled like Grandma had cooked everything without her.

Annie sped down the steps and into the kitchen. There was Grandma and Grandpa sitting at the table with their bowls of oatmeal. Next to Grandma was Annie's bowl and glass of milk. Grandma looked at her and smiled. "Don't worry Annie. There's still plenty of baking to do for our Thanksgiving. You haven't missed much."

Annie wasn't sure. "I smell the pumpkin pie and the turkey."

"Don't fret," Grandma reassured her. "We still have mashed potatoes, stuffing, sweet potatoes, corn, . . . goodness; we have so much left to do. I'd never get it all done by noon if my big helper wasn't here. Now sit here at your place while Grandpa says the blessing."

Annie looked at Grandpa. He was grinning at her and Grandma. Something was pleasing him today. Annie sat at her place and bowed her head.

Grandpa prayed, and Annie thought about Thanksgiving. When Grandpa said, "Amen," she took

a sip of milk and a deep breath of turkey and said, "I'm sure glad the Pilgrims decided to thank God for their harvest. I like all the foods of Thanksgiving."

"Yes, after their first hard winter they felt blessed indeed. Grandpa said, "What have they taught you about Thanksgiving in school?"

"Well, my teacher read us stories about how the Pilgrims wanted to worship God in their own way. They couldn't do that in England so they came to America." Annie spooned brown sugar over her oatmeal and stirred it in.

"You know, Annie, in The Book of Mormon, we can read about a vision God gave to Nephi which showed that the Pilgrims would come to this land," Grandpa said.

"Now Grandpa, I don't think The Book of Mormon says Pilgrim anywhere in it." Annie retorted. She took a big bite of oatmeal.

"No, it doesn't say Pilgrim or Plymouth Rock." Grandpa swallowed some milk. "But it does talk about Christopher Columbus and the Pilgrims, if you know what to look for."

"I think you'll have to show me that," Annie answered as she scraped up the last of the oatmeal.

Grandpa was smiling from ear to ear, "It will be my pleasure, just as soon as we clear these dishes for Grandma."

Grandma was smiling too. "You two run along, and I'll get these. Show her those verses."

Annie and Grandpa went into the living room to Grandpa's big chair. She snuggled onto his lap, and he opened his scriptures to 1 Nephi. Grandpa read, "And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land. And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord, and the power of the Lord was with them;" (1 Nephi 3:147-148 and 3:152 RLDS) [1 Nephi 13:12-13 and 13:16 LDS]

Annie's forehead wrinkled. "Who is that talking about?"

"Well, it is Nephi speaking. Nephi is seeing a vision of the Lord, and in that vision, he sees a Gentile man who comes across the waters to this land, the land where Nephi's grandchildren will be. From the description, it sounds like it is Christopher Columbus." Grandpa answered.

"But it doesn't say it was Christopher Columbus," Annie was still puzzled.

"No, very often in prophecy it doesn't say exact names. The Lord will give us descriptions to figure out."

"How are we supposed to figure them out?" Annie asked.

"The Lord wants us to pray and ask. But sometimes the Spirit of the Lord will quicken our minds to understand," Grandpa explained.

"What do you mean by 'quicken our minds'?" Annie asked again.

"The Lord has placed a spirit in all of us. That spirit can listen to the Holy Spirit for understanding. Praying certainly helps the understanding. But sometimes the understanding comes even before you pray about it. When you are baptized and confirmed, you receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is an even better help to the understanding of these things," Grandpa continued.

Annie thought a little while longer.

"So because Columbus was a Gentile and he came on the water to this land and found the grandchildren of Nephi, it makes him sound a lot like the man in the prophecy right?"

"Yes, that's right." Grandpa answered.

"So how do you know about the Pilgrims?" Annie questioned.

"Because the scriptures say the Spirit of God wrought upon many Gentiles, and they came to this land. It also says that they humbled themselves when they were here and the power of the Lord was with them. History tells us the Pilgrims did escape from religious tyranny when they came to this land, and we know the Lord was with them, or they could not have survived. They certainly humbled themselves before the Lord. Thanksgiving is about humility. It is recognizing that all that you have came because the Lord blessed you, not because you were strong and worked hard." Grandpa was looking at Annie to see if she understood.

"I think I understand how The Book of Mormon is telling Nephi about Christopher Columbus and the Pilgrims. I sure didn't think it could have told about them, but I think you are right." Annie spoke slowly.

"Annie, the Lord wants you to understand his words. Right now, you think it might be right, but there is a way to know that it is right." Grandpa was

still watching her closely.

"I can know if it is right if I pray." Annie said.

"Yes you can," Grandpa answered. "And there is no time like right now when we are talking about it, to pray."

Grandma came into the room, and they all knelt together and asked the Lord for his understanding of the verses. When they finished, Annie's face cleared. "I do think you are right, Grandpa! The Pilgrims and Christopher Columbus do fit all the verses.

Grandpa gave her a hug. Grandma said, "If we are going to get this feast ready we better get started baking now." Annie and Grandma turned and walked into the kitchen.

Grandpa was still on his knees. He continued to pray, "Lord, thank you for little Annie. Help us to teach her of you and your ways. Help your scriptures to come alive in her heart and soul. Please keep her in your paths. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

