

**Lesson Highlights**

- *The signs of the Savior's birth vindicate those who have endured in faith.*
- *The Gadianton robbers come to battle against the Nephites.*
- *The Nephites live righteously and prosper, but pride and dissensions arise.*

A study of this lesson will help us understand the need to endure faithfully in times of trial and temptation.

**Next Week:**

Lesson 37:

*"Whosoever Will Come, Him Will I Receive",*

3 Nephi 8-11

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**Introduction**

The following fable was related by **Elder George A. Smith**, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

*"A man, traveling through the country, came to a large city, very rich and splendid; he looked at it and said to his guide, 'This must be a very righteous people, for I can only see but one little devil in this great city.' The guide replied, 'You do not understand, sir; this city is so perfectly given up to wickedness, corruption, degradation and abomination of every kind that it only requires one devil to keep them all in subjection.' Traveling on a little further he came to a rugged path and saw an old man trying to get up the hill side, surrounded by seven great, big, coarse looking devils. 'Why,' says the traveler, 'this must be a tremendously wicked old man, only see how many devils there are around him!' 'This,' replied the guide, 'is the only righteous man in the country and there are seven of the biggest devils trying to turn him out of his path and they all cannot do it'" (in Deseret News, 11 Nov. 1857, 7:287).*

As we strive to faithfully keep the commandments, we will face opposition. Today's lesson discusses the opposition faced by the believers among the Nephites. Some people endured in spite of all opposition, while others received great blessings yet quickly *"turned from their righteousness"* (3 Nephi 7:8). From these chapters we can learn the importance of remaining faithful in spite of trials and temptation.

***The signs of the Savior's birth vindicated those who had endured in faith.***

The events in this first chapter occurred five years after Samuel prophesied of Jesus' birth. Samuel had said, *"Five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God"* (Helaman 14:2).

**3 Nephi 1:7** While waiting for Samuel's prophecies to be fulfilled, *"the people who believed began to be very sorrowful"*.

**3 Nephi 1:5-9** Some of the reasons for the sorrow of the believers included:

- 3 Nephi 1:5-6.** Some unbelievers said that the time was past for the prophecies to be fulfilled and that the believers' faith was in vain.
- 3 Nephi 1:7** Unbelievers made *"a great uproar throughout the land"*.
- 3 Nephi 1:9** A day was selected to put to death all believers.

**3 Nephi 1:8** In spite of these challenges to their faith, the believers remained steadfast. Keeping that in mind, what can you do to remain steadfast when your faith is challenged?

**3 Nephi 1:10-14** When Nephi saw the wickedness of the unbelievers, he prayed to the Lord for his people. After Nephi had prayed all day for his people, the Lord revealed to him that it was actually a time for joy because the promised sign would be given that night; the Savior would come into mortality the next day; the prophecies concerning the mission of Christ spoken by the holy prophets would be fulfilled; the Savior would come unto his own and fulfill the plan of salvation.

**3 Nephi 1:15-21** Here we read how Samuel's prophecies were fulfilled. Consider how this account helps to strengthen your faith in Christ.

***The Gadianton robbers came to battle against the Nephites.***

**3 Nephi 1:22; 3 Nephi 2:1-3** Satan tried to turn people away from their belief in the Savior and His birth by sending forth lies among the people to harden their hearts. Satan gradually gained possession of the hearts of the people, and soon the people *"began to forget those signs and wonders."* Have you seen the adversary use those kinds of tactics today? Think about the counsel we have received concerning what we can do to remember and preserve our spiritual experiences by keeping daily journals.

**3 Nephi 2:11-13, 17-19** As the people began to increase in wickedness, dangers they faced included wars and contentions as the Gadianton robbers slew many people, laid waste to cities, and spread death throughout the land. Consider the kinds of behavior and attitudes that threaten our safety today.

**3 Nephi 3:1** In the 16th year from the time of Christ's birth, Lachoneus, the governor and chief judge of the Nephites, received a letter from Giddianhi, the leader of the Gadianton robbers.

**3 Nephi 3:6-8** Giddianhi desired a complete surrender of Lachoneus' people, lands, and possessions to effect a unification of all his people in the oaths and secret covenants of the Gadianton society.

When the Gadianton robbers announced their intention to destroy the Nephites, the people began at once to prepare to protect themselves, under the direction of Lachoneus and Gidgiddoni.

We can learn from their actions what we might do that will help protect us in times of temptation and fear. **3 Nephi 3:12-26** gives us some insight as listed below:

We also wait for the coming of the Savior. While we wait, Satan will try to turn us toward wickedness as he did the Nephites. If we prepare ourselves as did the people in the time of Lachoneus, and if we endure in righteousness, we will be worthy to receive all that the Lord desires to bestow upon us.

## Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the events recorded in 3 Nephi 1-7.

- How can an understanding of these chapters motivate you to be more diligent in obeying the commandments?
- What are the consequences for disobedience? Personally? As a community? As a nation?

- a) **3 Nephi 3:12** "Lachoneus, the governor, was a just man, and could not be frightened". Fear may cause someone to give in to temptation. However, we know that personal righteousness can help us remain courageous when we face temptation or affliction because we know the Spirit will inspire and protect us as we do what is right.
- b) **3 Nephi 3:12** Lachoneus told the people to "cry unto the Lord for strength". It is important to pray for strength to face temptations or challenges because we need the Lord's assistance to overcome many of the challenges that will beset us.
- c) **3 Nephi 3:13, 3 Nephi 3:22** Lachoneus caused the people to "gather themselves together".
- d) According to **3 Nephi 4:3-4**, it was important for the Nephites to gather into one place to defend themselves by pooling their resources and sharing their defenses while they worked to rid the land of the Gadiantons.  
**Moroni 6:4-6** Here we read that our association with other members of the Church can increase our ability to withstand the forces of evil. We are numbered among the people of God, nourished by the good word of God, kept in the right way, continually reminded of our need to pray, continually reminded of the Savior's blessing of salvation to us, encouraged by others' concern for our welfare, and offered the opportunity to renew our baptismal covenants through the sacrament.
- e) **3 Nephi 3:14** "He caused that fortifications should be built" and placed "guards round about". We fortify ourselves and guard against temptation by keeping the commandments, praying, hearkening to the prophet, honoring our covenants, and practicing self-reliance and wise preparation as we have been counseled to do.
- f) **3 Nephi 3:16** The Nephites did "exert themselves...to do according to the words of Lachoneus". We are blessed when we follow inspired leaders because following them is the same as responding positively to the Lord himself.
- g) **3 Nephi 3:25** "They did repent of all their sins". Repentance helps us receive greater strength from the Lord.
- h) **3 Nephi 3:26** They were "strong with armor". We have been counseled in D&C 27:15-18 to put on the whole armor of God. We wear this armor each day when we keep our covenants and obey our inspired leaders.
- 3 Nephi 4:11-13, 16-29** The result of these preparations when the Gadianton robbers came against the Nephites was victory in the initial confrontation, and then, when the Gadiantons laid siege to the Nephites, the Nephites' preparation and following their inspired leaders' direction gave them even greater advantage over their enemies.
- 3 Nephi 4:30-33** The Nephites rejoiced after their victory, shedding tears of joy and singing the praises of the Lord.

### *The Nephites lived righteously and prospered, but pride and dissensions arose.*

The Nephites defeated the Gadianton robbers in the 21st year after the birth of Christ. In 13 more years, the Savior would visit the Nephites and minister to them.

**3 Nephi 5:1-26; 3 Nephi 6:1-9** For several years after the defeat of the Gadianton robbers, the Nephites enjoyed great peace and prosperity.

**3 Nephi 6:10-15** Satan gained great power as people puffed up with pride; did all manner of iniquity; sought power, authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. Their peace was disrupted. Remember the pride cycle discussed in lesson 34?

**3 Nephi 6:17-23** As the people continued in their wickedness, prophets called them to repentance, but the people rejected and killed them.

**3 Nephi 6:27-30; 3 Nephi 7:1-5** Secret combinations increased, and the people were soon divided into tribes.

**3 Nephi 7:15-19** Nephi ministered to the people in response to their wickedness.

**3 Nephi 7:21-26** As a result of his work, many were converted and baptized.

As each passage is read, note the spiritual condition of the people:

- A.D. 21-26 **3 Nephi 5:1-3**. The people served God "with all diligence."
- A.D. 26-27 **3 Nephi 6:4-5**. There was great order and prosperity.
- A.D. 28 **3 Nephi 6:9**. There was continual peace.
- A.D. 29 **3 Nephi 6:10-16**. There were disputings, pride, and boasting.
- A.D. 30 **3 Nephi 6:17-18**. "They were in a state of awful wickedness."
- A.D. 31 **3 Nephi 7:21**. A few people were converted to the Lord.
- A.D. 32-33 **3 Nephi 7:23**. Nephi continued to cry repentance.

**3 Nephi 10:18-19** Mormon prepares the reader for the glorious blessing among the people of having Jesus Christ show himself to them.