

Lesson Highlights

- Jesus teaches the Beatitudes to the Nephites.
- Jesus declares that His followers are to be the salt of the earth and a light to other people.
- Jesus declares that He has fulfilled the law of Moses. He teaches the people a higher law.
- Jesus teaches the Nephites how they must live to be his true disciples.

A study of this lesson will encourage us to be true disciples of Jesus Christ by following His example and by living the higher law that He taught to the Nephites.

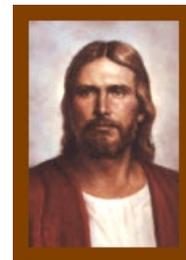
Next Week

Lesson 39:

*"Behold, My Joy Is Full",
3 Nephi 17-19*

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Introduction



Think of paintings and pictures of Jesus Christ you've seen in the past. In providing representations of Jesus' character, different artists have portrayed Jesus in many different ways. Ponder this question: **"If someone asked you to describe Jesus' character, what would you say?"**

President Harold B. Lee spoke of one accurate description of Jesus' character: *"In His Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of His own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be 'an autobiography, every syllable of which He had written down in deeds,' and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives"* (Stand Ye in Holy Places [1974], 342).

When Jesus visited the Nephites, He gave a discourse similar to the Sermon on the Mount. As we study and apply the teachings in this discourse, we will learn more about the Savior's character. We will also be able to develop a blueprint, or plan, to pattern our lives after the life of the Master. Be true disciples of Jesus Christ by following His example and by living the higher law that He taught to the Nephites.

Jesus taught the Beatitudes to the Nephites.

Note: You may want to compare 3 Nephi 12:3-12 with the similar teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5:3-12.

3 Nephi 12:3; also refer to **3 Nephi 9:13-14, 20-22 and Ether 12:27.** In these scriptures, we find that to "come unto Christ" means that we seek out the Savior and apply for his grace by being humble, offering a sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and having faith in Christ as our Savior.

While we're on this subject, ponder how being "poor in spirit," or humble, helps you to "come unto Christ".

3 Nephi 12:4; also see **John 14:26-27; Mosiah 18:8-9** Some ways in which the Lord provides for us to be comforted include giving us the gift of the Holy Ghost to comfort us, and by giving us a church family of brothers and sisters who will comfort us as fulfillment of their baptismal covenants.

3 Nephi 12:5. What does it mean to be meek? **President Gordon B. Hinckley** taught, *"Meekness implies a spirit of gratitude as opposed to an attitude of self-sufficiency, an acknowledgment of a greater power beyond oneself, a recognition of God, and an acceptance of his commandments"* ("With All Thy Getting Get Understanding," Ensign, Aug. 1988, 3-4).

3 Nephi 12:6 To *"hunger and thirst after righteousness"* means to seek to follow the Savior's commandments and his example with a deep longing and sincere burning desire, not just a passive interest. We will be filled with the influence of the Holy Ghost as we *"hunger and thirst after righteousness"*.

3 Nephi 12:7. It is important that we be merciful because we seek to emulate the Savior's attitudes and actions--doing as He did when He gave himself for us in the Atonement.

2 Nephi 2:8-9 We need the Lord's mercy because He is the only one who can save us.

3 Nephi 12:8; See also 1 Nephi 10:21. We must be pure in heart to be able to see God because no unclean thing can dwell in His presence.

D&C 93:1 We can purify our hearts by repenting and forsaking our sins, seeking Christ, praying for forgiveness and guidance, being obedient to inspiration and answers to prayers, keeping the commandments, and honoring the covenants we've made.

3 Nephi 12:9. We can be peacemakers in our homes and communities by setting an example of patience, understanding, moderation, courtesy, respect for others and their perspectives, and showing love to all and forgiveness as needed.

President Harold B. Lee: "Christ came not only into the world to make an atonement for the sins of mankind but to set an example before the world of the standard of perfection of God's law and of obedience to the Father. In his Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of his own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be an 'autobiography, every syllable of which he had written down in deeds,' and in so doing has given us a blue-print for our own lives." (Stand Ye In Holy Places, pp341-342)

3 Nephi 12:10-12. The righteous are sometimes persecuted because others must be allowed to exercise their free agency, because they need to be tested and proven faithful, or because their example and suffering may be a testimony to others who will be converted or strengthened by their example in trials and tribulation.

Jesus declared that His followers were to be the salt of the earth and a light to other people.

Jesus said, "I give unto you to be the salt of the earth" (3 Nephi 12:13). To help us understand what it means to be "the salt of the earth", **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** explained: "Among the ancient Hebrews salt...was used as a preservative, in seasoning food, and in all animal sacrifices. (Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24; Mark 9:49-50. [Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:24]) So essential was it to the sacrificial ordinance that it was the symbol of the covenant made between God and His people in connection with that sacred performance. (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5. [Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5]). Accordingly, our Lord's statement, made first to the Jews and then to that other great body of Hebrews, the Nephites, that they had power 'to be the salt of the earth,' takes on great significance. ... They had power, in other words, to be the seasoning, savoring, preserving influence in the world, the influence which would bring peace and blessings to all others" (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 667-68).

Ponder how your influence can help others receive peace and other blessings.

Jesus declared that He had fulfilled the law of Moses. He taught the people a higher law.

The law mentioned in the following verses is the law of Moses. The law of Moses was a strict system of performances and ordinances, including animal sacrifice (Mosiah 13:29-30). It had been given to help the Israelites look forward to the Atonement of Jesus Christ (2 Nephi 25:24; Mosiah 13:31-33; Alma 34:13-14).

3 Nephi 15:4-5 Christ gave the law of Moses to the Israelites.

3 Nephi 12:17-19; 3 Nephi 15:2-5 Jesus declared to the Nephites that He had fulfilled the law of Moses.

Alma 34:13-16 explains how Jesus fulfilled this law. The Savior fulfilled the law of Moses when He atoned for our sins.

After His Atonement, the people were no longer commanded to make animal sacrifices, which had been required as part of the law of Moses to point toward the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Instead, the people were commanded to "offer for a sacrifice...a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (3 Nephi 9:20; see also verse 3 Nephi 9:19).

After Jesus declared that He had fulfilled the law of Moses, He gave the Nephites a higher

3 Nephi 12:44; Luke 6:35 We are required to respond to persecution with love for our enemies, blessing them as they curse us, doing good to those who hate us, and praying for the welfare of those who persecute us.

Elder Carlos E. Asay: "A world-renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. Savor is lost through mixture and contamination" (Ensign, May 1980, 42).

Ponder how you can avoid being "contaminated" by the things of the world. Keep your savor by avoiding evil and the people and places that may exercise evil influence over you.

D&C 101:39-40; D&C 103:9-10 These passages teach about being "the salt of the earth" and "the light of [the] people" by making and honoring sacred covenants and by being saviors of men (through missionary work and sharing the gospel, temple worship and performing vicarious ordinances, and service as home and visiting teachers.)

3 Nephi 12:16; 3 Nephi 18:24 We can let our light "shine before [the] people" by doing good works and setting an example of faithfulness and righteousness.

3 Nephi 12:16 The result of our letting our light shine should be that others may glorify our Heavenly Father and seek to do his works.

law. Read each passage listed under "**The Law of Moses**" and then read the corresponding passage listed under "**The Higher Law.**" Consider the differences between these laws. Ponder ways that the higher law can help you draw closer to the Lord.

THE LAW OF MOSES	THE HIGHER LAW
3 Nephi 12:21	3 Nephi 12:22-24
3 Nephi 12:27	3 Nephi 12:28-30
3 Nephi 12:31	3 Nephi 12:32
3 Nephi 12:33	3 Nephi 12:34-37
3 Nephi 12:38	3 Nephi 12:39-42
3 Nephi 12:43	3 Nephi 12:44-45

3 Nephi 12:48 After teaching the Nephites that they should love their enemies, Jesus said, "Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect".

2 Nephi 2:7-9; 3 Nephi 19:28-29 ; Moroni 10:32-33. these scriptures teach us why we need the Atonement of Jesus Christ in order to be perfected.

Jesus taught the Nephites how they must live to be His true disciples.

These chapters contain teachings on how we can be true disciples of Jesus Christ.

3 Nephi 13:1-8, 16-18. Jesus condemned some people who did good things such as doing alms (giving to the poor), praying, and fasting because of the motives behind their actions. From His examples of service as well as the precepts he taught, we know that our motives should be pure when we give service and do other good works.

3 Nephi 13:9-13; 3 Nephi 14:7-11. Jesus' words in these verses teach about how we should pray--reverently and humbly address the Father, pray simply and sincerely to accept and do His will, give thanks and communicate needs such as the need for forgiveness, pray for the welfare of others, and then be willing to accept His will as to the answer you will receive. Specific counsel is given against reciting "vain" repetitions. Note: While much of our prayers may seem repetitious, such as asking daily for the protection or blessing of family members, that does not qualify as a "vain" repetition.

3 Nephi 13:14-15. Jesus emphasized that we need to forgive others. Ponder how you can become more forgiving.

3 Nephi 13:19-24; also see D&C 88:67-69. To have an eye that is "*single*" means that we are focused on the goals of heaven. It is impossible for us to serve both God and mammon (worldliness) because those are competing and controlling influences that cannot coexist, so we must choose between the two.

3 Nephi 13:25-34. The Savior directed the words recorded in these verses to his Nephite Apostles.

3 Nephi 13:33 We can apply these words of those verses in our lives, even though we have **not** received the command to "*take no thought*" for food, drink, or clothing by putting the things of God first in our lives.

Conclusion

3 Nephi 15:1, *And now it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and said unto them: Behold, ye have heard the things which I taught before I ascended to my Father; therefore, whoso remembereth these sayings of mine and doeth them, him will I raise up at the last day.*

As we live according to the Savior's teachings, we will have a sure foundation and be strengthened to withstand whatever trials or temptations we may experience. We will become "*the salt of the earth*" and "*the light of [the] people,*" and we will be able to help others draw nearer to the Savior (3 Nephi 12:13-16).

Gospel Doctrine

Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings of the Savior to the Nephites.

- What specific teachings might you more fully implement in your life?

3 Nephi 14:1-5. We avoid improperly judging or criticizing others by realizing that we are not yet perfect.

3 Nephi 14:6. This same teaching is found in Matthew 7:6. In the Joseph Smith Translation of that verse, Jesus commands His disciples to preach repentance rather than teach the mysteries of the kingdom (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:9-11). It is important to focus our gospel teaching on basic doctrines because those are the foundation of all Church teachings and they are the hardest ones to master.

3 Nephi 14:12. Following this principle makes us better disciples of Christ because it encourages us to follow the Savior's example.

3 Nephi 14:13-14. It is significant that the way to eternal life is narrow, while the way to destruction is broad because it encourages us to develop discipline and obedience to stay in the narrow path, both of which are necessary qualities to follow the Savior.

3 Nephi 14:15-20. This teaching is particularly important today because there are so many false teachers who can only be known by the results of their actions and not their teachings. (See Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:22, which describes the last days.)

3 Nephi 14:21-23. We must do the will of Heavenly Father to be able to enter the kingdom of heaven because we obtain blessings only through obedience to the law upon which the blessing is predicated. (See D&C 130:20-21.)

3 Nephi 14:24-27. Jesus' parable about building a house on rock or sand applies in our lives as we choose the foundation upon which we will build our mortal and eternal lives. (See Helaman 5:12.)

The Beatitudes: A Comparison

Daniel Ludlow: *"This more complete version of the sermon changes the entire emphasis of the Beatitudes. Here the Savior is not saying 'you are more blessed if you mourn than if you do not mourn,' but he is saying 'If you are called upon to mourn, then you are blessed if you come unto me, and are baptized, receive the Holy Ghost, etc.' Thus, if you do truly hunger and thirst after righteousness, you shall be filled 'with the Holy Ghost.'*

"It is also of interest to note that each of the Beatitudes in the Book of Mormon begins with the coordinating conjunction 'and,' which helps to relate them back to the introductory statement." (A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon, p263)

<Differences in Blue Italics>

3 Nephi 12	Matthew 5
3 <i>Yea</i> , blessed are the poor in spirit <i>who come unto me</i> , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 <i>And again</i> , blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.	4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
5 <i>And</i> blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.	5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
6 <i>And</i> blessed are <u>all</u> they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled <i>with the Holy Ghost</i> .	6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
7 <i>And</i> blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.	7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
8 <i>And</i> blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God.	8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
9 <i>And</i> blessed are all the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.	9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
10 <i>And</i> blessed are <i>all</i> they <i>who</i> are persecuted for <i>my name's sake</i> , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 <i>And</i> blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake;	11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
12 <i>For ye shall have great joy</i> and be exceedingly glad, for great <i>shall be</i> your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.	12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.