

## Lesson Highlights

- The Savior commands His Nephite disciples to call the Church after His name. He expounds His gospel.
- The Savior grants the desires of His twelve disciples. Three of the disciples choose to remain on the earth until His Second Coming.
- After many years of peace, the majority of the people dwindle in unbelief and reject the gospel.

*A study of this lesson will help us understand the fundamental doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to teach us that living the gospel is the only way to true and eternal happiness.*

## Next Week

Lesson 42:  
"This Is My Gospel",  
3 Nephi 27-30;  
4 Nephi

Green Mountain 1<sup>st</sup> Ward  
Lakewood, Colorado  
Doug Simpson

## Introduction



Consider your feelings about this nickname. **President Boyd K. Packer** said: *"Others refer to us as Mormons. I do not mind if they use that title. However, sometimes we are prone ourselves to say 'Mormon Church.' I do not think it best for us to do so"* ("The Peaceable Followers of Christ," Ensign, Apr. 1998, 64).

Why is it best not to refer to ourselves as the "Mormon Church"? **The First Presidency** stated: *"Keep in mind that this is the Church of Jesus Christ; please emphasize that fact in making contacts with others. ... We feel that some may be misled by the too frequent use of the term 'Mormon Church' "* ("Policies and Announcements," Ensign, Mar. 1983, 79).

**3 Nephi 27** includes Jesus' instructions to His Nephite disciples concerning the name of His Church. Today's lesson is designed to help us understand the fundamental doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to teach that living the gospel is the only way to true and eternal happiness.

This lesson illustrates how the Savior used the scriptures to teach valuable truths. As we search, ponder, and pray about the scriptures, we will have a greater understanding of these truths.

*The Savior commanded His Nephite disciples to call the Church after His name. He expounded His gospel.*

Jesus' Nephite disciples were "united in mighty prayer and fasting" when Jesus came to them and asked, "What will ye that I shall give unto you?" (3 Nephi 27:1-2).

**3 Nephi 27:3** The disciples asked Him to settle the disputations that had arisen over what the name of the church should be.

**3 Nephi 27:4-9** His answer was that the church should be named for Him, as taught in the scriptures.

**D&C 115:4** The Lord has commanded that His restored Church, like His Church among the Nephites, be called after His name.

It is important for us to remember that the Church is called after the name of Jesus Christ because He leads it and it must proclaim His doctrines and teachings to be His.

**3 Nephi 27:7** Jesus said, "Whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name".

What are some things we do in the name of Christ? **President Boyd K. Packer** said: *"Every prayer we offer is in His name. Every ordinance performed is in His name. Every baptism, confirmation, blessing, ordination, every sermon, every testimony is concluded with the invocation of His sacred name. It is in His name that we heal the sick and perform other miracles of which we do not, cannot, speak. ...In the sacrament we take upon ourselves the name of Christ. We covenant to remember Him and keep His commandments. He is present in all that we believe"* ("The Peaceable Followers of Christ," Ensign, Apr. 1998, 64).

Jesus taught that in addition to being called after His name, His Church must be "built upon [His] gospel." He said, "If it so be that the church is built upon my gospel then will the Father show forth his own works in it" (3 Nephi 27:10).

**3 Nephi 21:1-9; 3 Nephi 21:24-29; Moses 1:39** The works of the Father include making and fulfilling covenants with His children, revealing knowledge of the plan of Happiness, establishing His people in lands where they can worship Him, gathering His people when they repent and turn to Him, and making the gospel available to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

You have seen these works in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When Latter-day Saints bear their testimonies, they often say that they know the gospel is true. Consider how you would respond if, after saying "I know the gospel is true," you were asked, "What is the gospel?"

**"This is my gospel"**. After Jesus said that His Church must be built on His gospel, He gave His disciples a concise, complete definition of His gospel.

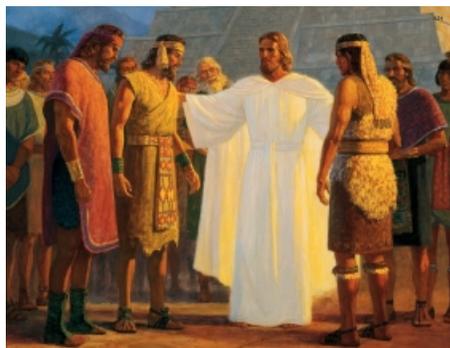
Elder Richard L. Evans: *"It is how we live, how we serve, how we teach our children, what we do from day to day that both indicate what we are and determine what we are; and all the theory and all the speculation, all the quoting of scripture, all the searching of the mysteries, and all the splitting of hairs, and all the know-ledge of the letter of the law don't in the final and saving sense amount to very much unless we live the gospel, unless we keep the command-ments, unless we prove the principles, unless we live lives of effectiveness, sincerity, and service."* (CR, Apr 1966)

**3 Nephi 27:13-22** lists different aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ:

- a) Jesus' submission to the will of the Father (3 Nephi 27:13)
- b) The Atonement (3 Nephi 27:14)
- c) Resurrection (3 Nephi 27:14-15)
- d) Judgment (3 Nephi 27:14-15)
- e) Repentance (3 Nephi 27:16, 19-20)
- f) Baptism (3 Nephi 27:16, 20)
- g) Faith in Jesus Christ (3 Nephi 27:19)
- h) The gift of the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 27:20)
- i) Enduring to the end (3 Nephi 27:16-17, 19)

*The Savior granted the desires of His twelve disciples. Three of the disciples chose to remain on the earth until His Second Coming.*

**3 Nephi 28:1-5** Before the Savior returned to His Father, He spoke to His disciples one by one and asked what each desired of Him. Nine asked that their ministries might end when they reached a certain age and that they might then go speedily to Him in His kingdom. The other three were hesitant to express their desire, but the Savior knew their thoughts.



**3 Nephi 28:7-9** The desire of the last three Nephite disciples was to remain on earth and bring souls to Christ until the end of the world. Jesus said that these disciples were *"more blessed"* because of their desire. From this statement, we learn the principle taught in **D&C 15:6**; **D&C 16:6**; and **D&C 18:10-16**, that our joy will be increased as we bring repentant souls to Christ.

**3 Nephi 28:13-15** In response to their request, the three disciples were transfigured, meaning that their bodies were changed so they *"could behold the things of God"*. Then they were translated.

*After many years of peace, the majority of the people dwindled in unbelief and rejected the gospel.*

The short book of 4 Nephi contains Mormon's abridgment of about 300 years of history. The history was originally written by four men: Nephi, who was named after his father, one of the Savior's twelve Nephite disciples; Nephi's son Amos; and Amos's sons Amos and Ammaron. The first part of the book describes a period of great righteousness and happiness, and the second part of the book tells of the

**3 Nephi 27:21-22** The Savior promised those who live according to His gospel that they will be exalted for following in His footsteps. Jesus asked His disciples, *"What manner of men ought ye to be?"* The answer was that they should be even as the Savior is. (See **3 Nephi 27:27**).

Consider what you can do to be more like the Savior.

**3 Nephi 28:7-40** The account in these verses teaches about characteristics of translated beings:

- a) Translated beings never taste of death or endure the pains of death (3 Nephi 28:7-8, 38).
- b) When the Savior comes in His glory, they will be "changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality" (3 Nephi 28:8).
- c) Except for the sorrow they feel for the sins of the world, they do not experience pain or sorrow (3 Nephi 28:9, 38).
- d) They help people become converted to the Lord (3 Nephi 28:9, 18, 23, 29-30).
- e) They cannot be killed or harmed in any way (3 Nephi 28:19-22).
- f) Satan cannot tempt them or have any power over them (3 Nephi 28:39).
- g) They remain in a translated state until the Judgment Day, when they will be resurrected and received into the kingdom of God (3 Nephi 28:40).

*Note: Stories often circulate about the three Nephites who were translated. Members of the Church are cautioned about accepting or retelling these stories and such stories should not be discussed in the Sunday School class.*

people's decline into wickedness.

**4 Nephi 1:1-18.** Characteristics of the people described in these verses include: peace-loving, just, free, righteous, Christian, prosperous, industrious, numerous, strong, fair, delightful, family-centered, blessed, obedient, humble, prayerful, faithful, loving, agreeable, moral, modest, truthful, honest, happy, united, and godly.

## Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- How can you better take upon yourself the name of Christ and live in such a manner as to assist the Lord in bringing about such a society as discussed in 4th Nephi?

**4 Nephi 1:2, 4, 13, 15-18** For many years after Jesus' visit, there was no contention among the people. There was no contention because the love of God dwelt in each individual's heart. (See 4 Nephi 1:15.)

How can we become like the righteous people described in 4 Nephi? What can we do so that the love of God will dwell in our hearts?

**President Gordon B. Hinckley** said: *"If the world is to be improved, the process of love must make a change in [our] hearts. ...It can do so when we look beyond self to give our love to God and others, and do so with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind"* ("And the Greatest of These Is Love," Ensign, Mar. 1984, 5).

**4 Nephi 1:17** During this period of peace, there was not "any manner of -ites".

**4 Nephi 1:2-3, 15-17** This means that they were united and treated each other with love, not being divided or competitive with each other, not seeking distinction from each other, but only seeking the welfare of their brothers and sisters. Consider the problems that exist today because of distinctions between groups of people and think of ways the gospel helps us become united, despite our differences.

### Conclusion

**3 Nephi 27:10, 22, 28-29** Review the Lord's promises in these verses. When the people remained faithful to the gospel, *"there could not [have been] a happier people"* (4 Nephi 1:16). Brother **Ted Gibbons**: *"The tragic ending of 4th Nephi sends a solemn warning across the centuries to those of us who long to establish Zion in our own communities. After decades of undiluted righteousness, the decline began. And where did it begin? In the same spot where the ascension began—in the hearts of the people. We know that even the in the Millennium men will ultimately begin to deny their God. (see D&C 29:22.) Since we know that Lucifer is the Emperor of erosion, let this be our determination: the departure from Zion will not begin with me. I will become pure in heart and I will remain pure in heart. I will give all of my heart to Christ and I will walk in the commandments of the Lord and I will be filled with the love of God and I will live in unity with those around me."* (Ted L. Gibbons, BM Lesson #42 "This is My Gospel", <http://www.ldsgospeldoctrine.net/tg/tg-2004-bofm-42.pdf>)

**4 Nephi 1:20-46** These verses teach us the actions and attitudes that contributed to the end of this long era of peace.

- Division and the creation of classes (**4 Nephi 1:20, 26, 35**)
- Pride and greed because of riches (**4 Nephi 1:23-25, 41, 43**; see also **3 Nephi 27:32**)
- Churches that professed to know Christ but denied most of His gospel (**4 Nephi 1:26-29, 34**)
- Churches built up to help people get gain (**4 Nephi 1:26-29, 41**)
- Hard-heartedness (**4 Nephi 1:31**)
- Persecution of Christ's followers (**4 Nephi 1:29-34**)
- Parents teaching children not to believe in Christ (**4 Nephi 1:38**)
- Parents teaching children to hate (**4 Nephi 1:39**)
- Secret combinations (**4 Nephi 1:42, 46**)

The attitudes and actions described in 4 Nephi 1:40-46 led to the Nephites' destruction. It is important for us to examine this account to learn from and avoid those errors and sins.