

Lesson Highlights

- Nephi sees the future of his descendants and his brothers' descendants.
- Nephi sees the formation of the great and abominable church, the colonization of the Americas, the Apostasy, and the Restoration of the gospel.
- Nephi sees the blessings promised to the faithful; he also sees the destruction of the great and abominable church.

A study of this lesson will help us understand Nephi's vision of the future and how the warnings and promises in it apply to us today.

Next Week:

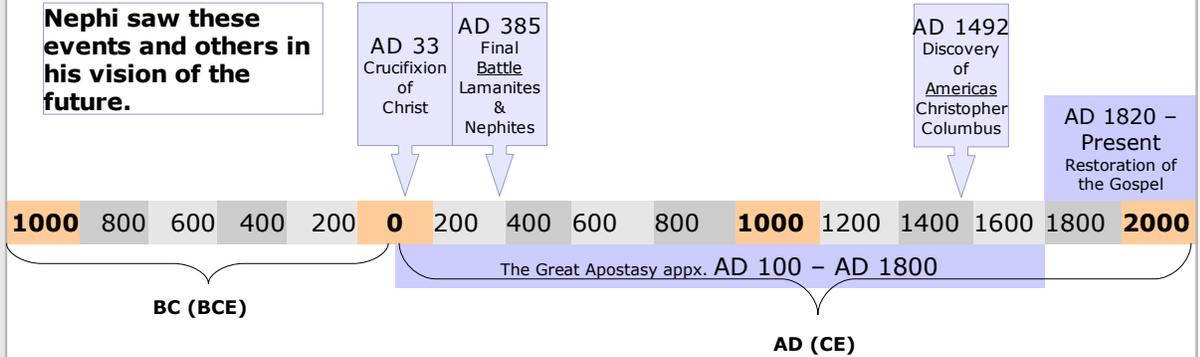
Lesson 5:

"Harken to the Truth, and Give Heed Unto It",
1 Nephi 16-22

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Introduction

Nephi saw these events and others in his vision of the future.



Nephi saw the future of his descendants and his brothers' descendants.

In 1 Nephi 12, Nephi describes his vision of the future of his seed (his descendants) and the seed of his brothers. Note how some symbols in the vision of the tree of life (the mist of darkness, the great and spacious building, and the river of filthy water) foreshadowed the downfall of Nephi's seed.

1 Nephi 12:1-6 Nephi described the conditions on the earth that would precede the Savior's visit to America including a large population in many cities, great loss of life in wars, and darkness, thunder and lightnings, and earthquakes accompanied by fire and destruction.

Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:27-37 The conditions Nephi beheld were similar to the conditions that will precede the Savior's Second Coming.

Nephi saw the formation of the great and abominable church, the colonization of the Americas, the Apostasy, and the Restoration of the gospel.

1 Nephi 13 is a record of Nephi's vision of the following:

- The formation of the great and abominable church.
- The discovery and colonization of the Americas.
- The Apostasy and the loss of many plain and precious parts of the Bible.
- The coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel.

THE FORMATION OF THE GREAT AND ABOMINABLE CHURCH

1 Nephi 13:4-5 Nephi saw the formation of a great church that "slayeth the saints of God" "among the nations of the Gentiles".

1 Nephi 13:6 The devil is the founder of the great and abominable church.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, "The titles church of the devil and great and abominable church are used to identify all churches or organizations of whatever name or nature;

1 Nephi 12:11-12; and note the fulfillment of this prophecy in 4 Nephi 1:2-4 Nephi saw generations pass away in righteousness following the Savior's visit.

4 Nephi 1:15 The love of God among the people brought about this righteousness and peace.

1 Nephi 12:12-15 Nephi saw that after nearly four generations of righteousness, his seed and the seed of his brethren would again begin battling each other.

1 Nephi 12:19-20 Nephi saw that his descendants would be overcome by the Lamanites in these battles.

1 Nephi 12:19 Nephi's descendants were overpowered and destroyed because of their pride and desire for the temptations of the devil. Pride and the temptations of the devil lead to destruction by drawing us away from the strait and narrow path to eternal life.

whether political, philosophical, educational, economic, social, fraternal, civic, or religious; which are designed to take men on a course that leads away from God and his laws and thus from salvation in the kingdom of God" (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 137-38).

The great and abominable church is a symbol of apostasy in all its forms. It is a representation of all false doctrine, false worship, and irreligious attitudes. It does **not** represent any specific church in the world today.

1 Nephi 13:5-9 Some of the characteristics of the "great and abominable church" are that it weakens faith, desires worldly riches and sins, and seeks the praise of the world.

Compare **1 Nephi 13:5-9** with **1 Nephi 11:35-36** The symbol of the great and spacious building from the vision of the tree of life corresponds to the great and abominable church.

Nephi's vision provides an overview of much that has occurred and will yet occur in the history of the earth. It also shows us that we must choose between only two options: following Jesus Christ or working against Him and thus following Satan. The blessings promised in 1 Nephi 14 are available to all of us if we choose to follow Jesus Christ.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

- Record your thoughts on the things which Nephi beheld while he was carried away in the spirit.
- What does the restoration of truth through Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon mean to your life?

Around us, we can see evidence of the great and abominable church working to destroy the Saints today. We can ensure that we are not deceived by people or organizations that lead people away from God and His laws by following the prophet and the Spirit and keeping the commandments.

THE DISCOVERY AND COLONIZATION OF THE AMERICAS

1 Nephi 13:12-13 The Gentiles who "*went forth...upon the many waters*" are understood to be Christopher Columbus and other early explorers and settlers of the Americas.

1 Nephi 13:14-19 The Spirit and power of God enabled these explorers and settlers to be successful in their endeavors.

D&C 101:77-80 These early explorers and settlers played a role in the Restoration of the gospel by preparing the way for the founding of the United States of America. The Constitution of the United States established freedoms regarding religion that were necessary for the Book of Mormon to be brought forth and the gospel to be restored.

THE APOSTASY AND THE LOSS OF MANY PLAIN AND PRECIOUS PARTS OF THE BIBLE

1 Nephi 13:20-23 The book Nephi saw the Gentiles carrying was the Bible.

1 Nephi 13:24-26 The great and abominable church took away many plain and precious parts of this book including covenants of the Lord.

1 Nephi 13:27 The Bible was altered to pervert the right, blind men, and harden the hearts of the children of men.

1 Nephi 13:29 Consequences resulting from the loss of "*many plain and precious things*" from the Bible are that many are confused about the truth and they stumble and fall under the power of Satan.

Nephi saw the blessings promised to the faithful; he also saw the destruction of the great and abominable church.

1 Nephi 14:1-7 Blessings promised to the Gentiles (non-Israelites) if they remain faithful to the Lord include: 1) Christ shall manifest himself in word, power, and deed and take away their stumbling blocks, 2) they shall be accepted into the House of Israel, 3) they will be blessed in the promised land, 4) they shall remain free, 5) they will know of the covenants of the Lord unto the House of Israel, and 6) they will receive peace and eternal life.

Read the same verses The cursings promised to the Gentiles if they harden their hearts and turn away from the Lord include: 1) they will be destroyed and led away to hell, 2) they will be taken captive by the devil, 3) they will suffer the justice of God, 4) they will perish, 5) they will be delivered into captivity and both spiritual and temporal destruction by the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds. Obviously, we must soften our hearts so that we can receive the blessings and avoid the cursings.

THE COMING FORTH OF THE BOOK OF MORMON AND THE RESTORATION OF THE GOSPEL

1 Nephi 13:35-36 The Lord knew that the great and abominable church would try to destroy the word of God in the Bible. These verses show that He ensured that His words would be preserved to come forth in the latter days. The record that was kept by Nephi's seed is The Book of Mormon.

1 Nephi 13:40-41; Mormon 7:8-9; D&C 20:8-12 Purposes of the Book of Mormon include being a second witness to truths in the Bible, testifying of Christ and his mission as the Savior of men, to teach the commandments that lead men to Christ, and to teach the gospel of Christ.

Many of us have seen these purposes fulfilled as we have studied and shared the gospel. Some doctrines that are difficult to understand in the Bible but plain and precious in the Book of Mormon include the Atonement, resurrection, and baptism.

Examples of how these doctrines are taught clearly in the Book of Mormon include **Alma 11:42-45**, which teaches plain and precious truths about the Atonement and resurrection, and **3 Nephi 11:21-26** and **Moroni 8:11-12**, which teach plain and precious truths about baptism.

Think about how the Book of Mormon has helped make the Bible more understandable to you or increased your testimony of the Bible.

1 Nephi 14:10; 2 Nephi 10:16 There only two forces in the world today--the forces loyal to Christ and those that oppose Him.

1 Nephi 14:3-4, 15-17; 1 Nephi 22:23 Eventually, the wrath of God will be poured out on the great and abominable church and it will be consumed as stubble.

Nephi saw that even though the members of the Lord's Church in the last days would be comparatively few, they would be able to overcome the persecution of the great and abominable church.

1 Nephi 14:14 Nephi saw the Saints of God armed with righteousness and the power of God. Think about how you can be "*armed with righteousness and with the power of God*".