

## January 22–28: 1 Nephi 11–15, “Armed with Righteousness and with the Power of God”

### Overview

Nephi's vision starts in chapter 11 where an angel shows Nephi the interpretation of Lehi's vision

In chapter 12, Nephi witness and records many of the events that we will read about when we study 3rd Nephi, 4th Nephi, and Mormon:

- Wars between the Nephites and Lamanites.
- The great destruction just prior to Christ's arrival in the Americas
- Christ's visit to the people on this continent
- Christ establishing His church and calling 12 disciples
- The four generation of peace and prosperity that followed Christ's visit
- The wars that resulted in the destruction of the Nephite nation

From our study of the Book of Mormon we know that all of these prophecies were fulfilled. We also understand Nephi's style of recording the visions he sees

In chapters 13 & 14 we learn that there are only two churches, the church of the Lamb of God and the church of the devil.

I would like to focus this lesson on the blessings the Lord has provided to the Church of Christ to win the battle against the relentless assault by the church of the devil

### The Church of the Devil

Let's start with chapter 13 where we learn about the formation of the great and abominable church and the great power it will have in the nations and kingdoms of the world

1 Nephi 13:1-4, 26

[1] And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld many nations and kingdoms.

[2] And the angel said unto me: What beholdest thou? And I said: I behold many nations and kingdoms.

[3] And he said unto me: These are the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles.

[4] And it came to pass that I saw among the nations of the Gentiles the formation of a great church.

[26] And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.

What information is given in verse 26 that gives us an idea of the timeframe of the formation of the “great church”?

(after they [the words] go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles)

D&C 86:3

After [the Apostles] have fallen asleep the great persecutor of the church, the apostate, the whore, even Babylon, that maketh all nations to drink of her cup, in whose hearts the enemy, even Satan, sitteth to reign—behold he soweth the tares; wherefore, the tares choke the wheat and drive the church into the wilderness

The angel told Nephi some of the some of the characteristics of the church of the devil and how it can be recognized

1 Nephi 13:5-9

[5] And the angel said unto me: Behold the formation of a church which is most abominable above all other churches, which slayeth the saints of God, yea, and tortureth them and bindeth them down, and yoketh them with a yoke of iron, and bringeth them down into captivity.

[6] And it came to pass that I beheld this great and abominable church; and I saw the devil that he was the founder of it.

[7] And I also saw gold, and silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing; and I saw many harlots.

[8] And the angel spake unto me, saying: Behold the gold, and the silver, and the silks, and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing, and the harlots, are the desires of this great and abominable church.

[9] And also for the praise of the world do they destroy the saints of God, and bring them down into captivity.

What characteristics of the great and abominable church are given in these verses that can help us to identify it?

The devil was the founder of it  
Persecutes, tortures, enslaves, and kills the Saints of God  
Desires wealth and luxury above all else  
Promotes sexual immorality  
Seeks the praise of the world

1 Nephi 14:10-11,15-16

[10] And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only; the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.

[11] And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the whore of all the earth, and she sat upon many waters; and she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations,

kindreds, tongues, and people.

[15] And it came to pass that I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon that great and abominable church, insomuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth.

[16] And as there began to be wars and rumors of wars among all the nations which belonged to the mother of abominations, the angel spake unto me, saying: Behold, the wrath of God is upon the mother of harlots; and behold, thou seest all these things --

What information about the great and abominable church is given in these verses that can help us to identify it?

(she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations  
wars among all the nations which belonged to the mother of abominations)

Bruce R. McConkie

“The titles church of the devil and great and abominable church are used to identify all churches or organizations of whatever name or nature—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], pg. 137–38)

Stephen E. Robinson

“The term great and abominable church means an immense assembly or association of people bound together by their loyalty to that which God hates....

“The symbol... represents false religion, false beliefs and ideologies that often capture and motivate governments....

"No single denomination or system of beliefs fits the entire description. Rather, the role of Babylon has been played by many different agencies, ideologies, and churches in many different times." ("Warring Against the Saints of God", Ensign, January 1988)

I suggest you read "Warring Against the Saints of God", Ensign, January 1988. It makes the argument that the Great and Abdominal Church manifests itself as an institution, organization, ideology, belief systems, etc. that is accepted by, and corrupts different governments, kingdoms, or other worldly powers for a period of time. Characteristics of the corruption are the same as those discussed in 1 Nephi 13 and 14

The Church of the Lamb of God

We read in verse 10 that there will be two churches, “the one is the church of the

Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil”. We’ve read about the church of the devil now lets read about the church of the Lamb of God. Specifically how the Lord will bless His Church to overcome and defeat the church of the devil.

1 Nephi 14:7

[7] For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other -- either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken.

What will the Lord do that will provide a way for His followers to be delivered from the captivity of the devil?

(I will work a great and a marvelous work)

Ronald A. Rasband

“By divine design, ancient prophets of God, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, prophesied of the Restoration and what was to come in our day, the last dispensation and the fulness of times. The very work fired the souls of the early seers. Through generations of time, they foretold, dreamed, envisioned, and prophesied of the future of God’s kingdom on earth, what Isaiah called ‘a marvellous work and a wonder.’” (CR, April 2020)

Lets discuss some of the blessing that the Lord promises to His church that will allow the saints to fight and overcome the church of the devil

Opportunity for Freedom

One of the blessing is that they will have the opportunity for freedom. The Gentiles were able to settle in this land and establish freedom. Freedom is hated by the church of the devil and seeks to destroy it.

1 Nephi 13:16-19

[16] 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.

[17] And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them.

[18] And I beheld that the power of God was with them, and also that the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle.

[19] And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations.

In what way did God intervene to assure that there would be a place where His people would have the freedom necessary to grow in the gospel?

(verses 18 and 19)

Ezra Taft Benson

"Before the gospel could again shine forth its resplendent light, religious and political freedom first had to be restored. This land had been preserved as a continent apart from the religious oppression, tyranny, and intolerance of Europe.... A war was fought for their independence, and by God's intervention, victory was achieved. By that same omnipotent power the Constitution was born, which guaranteed religious and political liberty. Only then was the time propitious for the kingdom of God-that 'stone cut out without hands' to be restored." (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, pg.109)

## The Holy Bible

Nephi sees that the church of Christ will have the “record of the Jews” which is of “great worth” in building the church of Christ and fighting the church of the devil

1 Nephi 13:20-25

[20] And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; and I beheld a book, and it was carried forth among them.

[21] And the angel said unto me: Knowest thou the meaning of the book?

[22] And I said unto him: I know not.

[23] And he said: Behold it proceedeth out of the mouth of a Jew. And I, Nephi, beheld it; and he said unto me: The book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel; and it also containeth many of the prophecies of the holy prophets; and it is a record like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass, save there are not so many; nevertheless, they contain the covenants of the Lord, which he hath made unto the house of Israel; wherefore, they are of great worth unto the Gentiles.

[24] And the angel of the Lord said unto me: Thou hast beheld that the book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; and they bear record according to the truth which is in the Lamb of God.

[25] Wherefore, these things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God.

What do we learn about the Bible from these verses?

(record of the Jews  
contains the covenants of the Lord  
prophecies of the holy prophets  
they are of great worth unto the Gentiles  
contained the fulness of the gospel)

M. Russell Ballard

“The Holy Bible is well named. It is holy because it teaches truth, holy because it warms us with its spirit, holy because it teaches us to know God and understand His dealings with men, and holy because it testifies throughout its pages of the Lord Jesus Christ...”

“Without the Bible, we would not know of His Church then, nor would we have the fulness of His gospel now.” (CR, April 2007)

The Bible is one of the great blessing that the Lord has given His church

“These things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles”

But let’s what the church of the devil has done to the Bible

1 Nephi 13:26-29

[26] And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.

[27] And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men.

[28] Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church, that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God.

[29] And after these plain and precious things were taken away it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles; and after it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles, yea, even across the many waters which thou hast seen with the Gentiles which have gone forth out of captivity, thou seest -- because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God -- because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.

What did the church of the devil do to the recorded words of the apostles?

(taken away... parts which are plain and most precious  
pervert the right ways of the Lord)

What was the result of changing many plain and precious truths of the Bible?

(blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men  
an exceedingly great many do stumble,)

Orson Pratt

“By reason of this great stumblingblock, the Scriptures being in such a state,

there should be many among the nations of the Gentiles in the latter times that should exceedingly stumble and build up numerous churches after the forms of different doctrines, and they should deny miracles and the power of God." (JD, 7:176)

Joseph Smith

"it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of men, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled." (TPJS, pg.10)

"I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors." (TPJS, pg. 327)

### Book of Mormon

Another blessing the Lord will give his church to appose the church of the devil and bring His work forward is the Book of Mormon. It will reestablish His plain gospel and fortify the Bible

1 Nephi 13:34-35

[34] And it came to pass that the angel of the Lord spake unto me, saying: Behold, saith the Lamb of God, after I have visited the remnant of the house of Israel -- and this remnant of whom I speak is the seed of thy father -- wherefore, after I have visited them in judgment, and smitten them by the hand of the Gentiles, and after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb -- I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb.

[35] For, behold, saith the Lamb: I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious; and after thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren, behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb.

We just read that Joseph Smith said that the Bible, as we now have it, was filtered through men, some corrupt, some ignorant, some careless.

What was the process of bringing forth the Book of Mormon?

(I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power these things shall be hid up, to come forth by the gift and power of the Lamb)

D&C 20:8-11

[8] And gave him power from on high, by the means which were before

prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon;  
[9] Which contains a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also;  
[10] Which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them--  
[11] Proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old;

Another blessing stated here that helps His church in the fight against the church of the devil is modern prophets - “inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old”

Nephi is told why the Book of Mormon is so important

1 Nephi 13:36,40-41

[36] And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation.

[40] And the angel spake unto me, saying: These last records, which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved.

[41] And they must come according to the words which shall be established by the mouth of the Lamb; and the words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed, as well as in the records of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; wherefore they both shall be established in one; for there is one God and one Shepherd over all the earth.

What essential works have been accomplished by the Book of Mormon?

(in them shall be written my gospel  
shall establish the truth of the [bible]  
make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away  
They testify of Christ  
words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed)

George Q. Cannon

"All those who know anything about the effect of the Book of Mormon... know that these words have been fulfilled to the very letter. False doctrines have been put down. Contentions have ceased. Peace has been established, and the people have been brought to the knowledge of the covenants which God made with His ancient servants. Those who have read this Book know how precious are the words of God, contained in it—how plain the doctrine



of Jesus Christ is set forth in it. There are no mistranslations; there is no mysticism infused into it by men who have had their own peculiar views of the doctrine of Christ." (JD, 25:119)

## The Holy Ghost

1 Nephi 13:37

[37] And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the Lamb; and whoso shall publish peace, yea, tidings of great joy, how beautiful upon the mountains shall they be.

What gift is promised to those strive to build up the church of Christ?

(they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost)

Henry B. Eyring

“Even the smallest act to build faith in another person or in a family qualifies us for the gift and power of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost testifies of truth. Therefore, in our service, our faith increases that Jesus is the Christ, that our Heavenly Father lives and loves us, and that Joseph was Their prophet. You can expect that every time you [help] to build faith.” (CR, Oct. 2003)

## Covenants

Nephi refers to members of Christ’s church as “the covenant people”. By making and keeping covenants to Christ we are better armed for the fight against the church of the devil

1 Nephi 14:12-14

[12] And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominions upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw.

[13] And it came to pass that I beheld that the great mother of abominations did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God.

[14] And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; and they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.

How does keeping the covenants made with God bless those who wish to serve

Him?

(the covenant people... were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory)

Boyd K. Packer

“To counterbalance these monstrous forces of evil the Lord did not arm his people with weapons or military forces. But arm them he did, as Nephi said, 'they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.'

“No work is more of a protection to this Church than temple work and the genealogical research which supports it. No work is more spiritually refining. No work we do gives us more power. No work requires a higher standard of righteousness. Our labors in the temple cover us with a shield and a protection, both individually and as a people.” (“The Holy Temple”, Ensign, Oct 2010)

Is there any wonder why we've seen such an increase in temple building in the last few decades

## Summary

From our discussion today, what are some of the ways the Lord has armed His covenant people to accomplish His work and fight against the church of the devil?

(Restored gospel  
Opportunity for freedom  
Book of Mormon  
Clarification of the Bible  
Living prophets  
Holy Ghost  
Make and keep God's covenants)