

October 21–27: 3 Nephi 27–4 Nephi, “There Could Not Be a Happier People”

Gospel of Christ

The twelve united together in prayer to get further understanding from the Lord

3 Nephi 27:1-8

[1] And it came to pass that as the disciples of Jesus were journeying and were preaching the things which they had both heard and seen, and were baptizing in the name of Jesus, it came to pass that the disciples were gathered together and were united in mighty prayer and fasting.

[2] And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst of them, and said unto them: What will ye that I shall give unto you?

[3] And they said unto him: Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church; for there are disputations among the people concerning this matter.

[4] And the Lord said unto them: Verily, verily, I say unto you, why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing?

[5] Have they not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? For by this name shall ye be called at the last day;

[6] And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day.

[7] Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and ye shall call upon the Father in my name that he will bless the church for my sake.

[8] And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel.

Why is it important that Christ's church be named in His name?

(ye must take upon you the name of Christ
by this name shall ye be called at the last day
whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name
how be it my church save it be called in my name)

Russell M. Nelson

“The Lord has impressed upon my mind the importance of the name He has revealed for His Church, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have work before us to bring ourselves in harmony with His will. In recent weeks, various Church leaders and departments have initiated the necessary steps to do so. Additional information about this important matter will be made available in the coming months” (“The Name of the Church” [official statement, Aug. 16, 2018], mormonnewsroom.org)

Russell M. Nelson

"Let me explain why we care so deeply about this issue....

"It is the command of the Lord. Joseph Smith did not name the Church restored through him; neither did Mormon. It was the Savior Himself who said, 'For thus shall my church be called in the last days, even The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.' (D&C 115:4)

"Even earlier, in AD 34, our resurrected Lord gave similar instruction to members of His Church when He visited them in the Americas....

"Thus, the name of the Church is not negotiable. When the Savior clearly states what the name of His Church should be and even precedes His declaration with, 'Thus shall my church be called,' He is serious. And if we allow nicknames to be used or adopt or even sponsor those nicknames ourselves, He is offended." (CR, Oct. 2018)

Jesus taught that in addition to being called after His name, His Church must be built upon His gospel

3 Nephi 27:9-11

[9] Verily I say unto you, that ye are built upon my gospel; therefore ye shall call whatsoever things ye do call, in my name; therefore if ye call upon the Father, for the church, if it be in my name the Father will hear you;

[10] And if it so be that the church is built upon my gospel then will the Father show forth his own works in it.

[11] But if it be not built upon my gospel, and is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil, verily I say unto you they have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return.

What does Christ promise His church if it is built upon His gospel?

(then will the Father show forth his own works in it)

If an organization is not built on the gospel, what must its foundation be built upon?

(is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil)

What is the inevitable outcome of any organization that is "built upon the works of men"?

(they are hewn down and cast into the fire)

Neal A. Maxwell

"The temporal causes which we champion may fail - after all we can do. But

God's work of which we are part will finally triumph!...

“In the worthy work of the world, mortals will have 'joy in [their] works for a season' (3Ne 27:11). But everlasting and full joy comes only with God's gift of eternal life.” (Men and Women of Christ, pg. 130)

Christ goes on to define his gospel.

3 Nephi 27:13-15

[13] Behold I have given unto you my gospel, and this is the gospel which I have given unto you -- that I came into the world to do the will of my Father, because my Father sent me.

[14] And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross; and after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil --

[15] And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.

In these verses, what principles does Christ say make up His gospel?

(I came into the world to do the will of my Father)

Christ and the Father are one

(I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me)

Resurrection and atonement

(stand before me, to be judged of their works)

Judgment

Marion G. Romney

“In this short statement (3Ne 27:13-15) the Master named four eternal verities upon which all else in his gospel is founded: First, the relationship between himself and his father; second the fact of his atonement; third the universal resurrection; and fourth, the judgment... All men who believe in Jesus and want to be his followers will have to accept those four verities.” (CR, April 1955)

He tells us what we must do to make the great blessings of the gospel part our lives

3 Nephi 27:16-20

[16] And it shall come to pass, that whoso repenteth and is baptized in my name shall be filled; and if he endureth to the end, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I shall stand to judge the world.

[17] And he that endureth not unto the end, the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.

[18] And this is the word which he hath given unto the children of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words.

[19] And no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom; therefore nothing entereth into his rest save it be those who have washed their garments in my blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.

[20] Now this is the commandment: Repent, all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, that ye may be sanctified by the reception of the Holy Ghost, that ye may stand spotless before me at the last day.

What do we need to do to apply the blessings of the gospel in our lives?

(because of their faith
repentance of all their sins
Repent... be baptized in my name... reception of the Holy Ghost
endureth to the end)

He summarizes the principles of his gospel

3 Nephi 27:33

[33] And it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings he said unto his disciples: Enter ye in at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it; but wide is the gate, and broad the way which leads to death, and many there be that travel therein, until the night cometh, wherein no man can work.

Spencer W. Kimball

“Hard to do? Of course. The Lord never promised an easy road, nor a simple gospel nor low standards, nor a low norm. The price is high, but the goods attained are worth all they cost. The Lord himself turned the other cheek; he suffered himself to be buffeted and beaten without remonstrance; he suffered every indignity and yet spoke no word of condemnation. And his question to all of us is: 'Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be' And his answer to us is: 'Even as I am.'” (CR, Oct. 1977)

Zion Society

4th Nephi contains Mormon's abridgment of about 300 years of history. The history was originally written by four men: Nephi (one of the twelve), Nephi's son Amos, Amos' sons Amos, and Ammaron who past the plates on to Mormon

4 Nephi 1:1-4

[1] And it came to pass that the thirty and fourth year passed away, and also the thirty and fifth, and behold the disciples of Jesus had formed a church of Christ in all the lands round about. And as many as did come unto them, and did truly repent of their sins, were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost.

[2] And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another.

[3] And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift.

[4] And it came to pass that the thirty and seventh year passed away also, and there still continued to be peace in the land.

What are some of the characteristics of a Zion society that we see in these verses?

(there were no contentions and disputations among them
every man did deal justly one with another
they had all things common among them
they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift)

Marion G. Romney

“Becoming a people which is collectively pure in heart is not an impossible dream or an idealistic goal.... When we reach the state of having the 'pure love of Christ,' our desire to serve one another will have grown to the point where we will be living fully the law of consecration. Living the law of consecration exalts the poor and humbles the rich.... The rich, by consecration and the imparting of their surplus for the benefit of the poor, not by constraint, but willingly as an act of free will, evidence that charity for their fellowmen characterized by Mormon as 'the pure love of Christ.'”
(CR, Oct. 1981)

4 Nephi 15-18

[15] And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

[16] And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.

[17] There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of -ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God.

[18] And how blessed were they! For the Lord did bless them in all their doings; yea, even they were blessed and prospered until an hundred and ten years had passed away; and the first generation from Christ had passed away, and there was no contention in all the land.

What are the blessings that are promised to those who are righteous enough to live in a Zion society?

(there was no contention in the land
no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms,
nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness;
surely there could not be a happier people
they were in one, the children of Christ
they were blessed and prospered)

Dallin H. Oaks

“In those brilliant generations that followed the appearance of the resurrected Christ in the New World, 'there were no contentions and disputations among [the people], and every man did deal justly one with another'. Fourth Nephi records: 'Surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God'. We should be striving to regain that condition. As modern revelation declares: 'Zion must increase in beauty, and in holiness' (D&C 82:14). One of the ways prescribed to achieve that increase is 'every man seeking the interest of his neighbor, and doing all things with an eye single to the glory of God' (D&C 82:19).” (CR, Oct. 1986)

Pride Cycle

During his visit Christ told the people what would happen in 4 generations

3 Nephi 27:32

32 But behold, it sorroweth me because of the fourth generation from this generation, for they are led away captive by him even as was the son of perdition; for they will sell me for silver and for gold, and for that which moth doth corrupt and which thieves can break through and steal...

What does Jesus state will be the downfall of His people?

(they will sell me for silver and for gold)

After four generations the pride cycle that has become so familiar in the Book of Mormon starts again

4 Nephi 1:23-24

[23] And now I, Mormon, would that ye should know that the people had multiplied, insomuch that they were spread upon all the face of the land, and that they had become exceedingly rich, because of their prosperity in Christ.

[24] And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world.

What caused the Nephites to begin to lose the unity and peace that they had enjoyed for 200 years?

(lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of... the fine things of the world)

Ezra Taft Benson

“It was essentially the sin of pride that kept us from establishing Zion in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was the same sin of pride that brought

consecration to an end among the Nephites.” (CR, April 1989)

4 Nephi 1:25-29

[25] And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them.

[26] And they began to be divided into classes; and they began to build up churches unto themselves to get gain, and began to deny the true church of Christ.

[27] And it came to pass that when two hundred and ten years had passed away there were many churches in the land; yea, there were many churches which professed to know the Christ, and yet they did deny the more parts of his gospel, insomuch that they did receive all manner of wickedness, and did administer that which was sacred unto him to whom it had been forbidden because of unworthiness.

[28] And this church did multiply exceedingly because of iniquity, and because of the power of Satan who did get hold upon their hearts.

[29] And again, there was another church which denied the Christ; and they did persecute the true church of Christ, because of their humility and their belief in Christ; and they did despise them because of the many miracles which were wrought among them.

As pride begins to take hold, what characteristics of a Zion society are rejected by the people?

(they did have their goods and their substance no more common
they began to be divided into classes)
Priestcrafts

The disunity among the people gets worse

4 Nephi 1:35-38

[35] And now it came to pass in this year, yea, in the two hundred and thirty and first year, there was a great division among the people.

[36] And it came to pass that in this year there arose a people who were called the Nephites, and they were true believers in Christ; and among them there were those who were called by the Lamanites -- Jacobites, and Josephites, and Zoramites;

[37] Therefore the true believers in Christ, and the true worshipers of Christ, (among whom were the three disciples of Jesus who should tarry) were called Nephites, and Jacobites, and Josephites, and Zoramites.

[38] And it came to pass that they who rejected the gospel were called Lamanites, and Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites; and they did not dwindle in unbelief, but they did wilfully rebel against the gospel of Christ; and they did teach their children that they should not believe, even as their fathers, from the beginning, did dwindle.

What was unique about this instance of the rejection of the gospel that we didn't see in earlier instances in the Book of Mormon?

(they did not dwindle in unbelief, but they did wilfully rebel against the gospel of Christ)

Service

Jesus grants to his 12 the desire of their hearts

3 Nephi 28:1-3

[1] And it came to pass when Jesus had said these words, he spake unto his disciples, one by one, saying unto them: What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?

[2] And they all spake, save it were three, saying: We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom.

[3] And he said unto them: Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me; therefore, after that ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom; and with me ye shall find rest.

Let's read what the three holdouts wanted from the Lord

3 Nephi 28:4-9

[4] And when he had spoken unto them, he turned himself unto the three, and said unto them: What will ye that I should do unto you, when I am gone unto the Father?

[5] And they sorrowed in their hearts, for they durst not speak unto him the things which they desired.

[6] And he said unto them: Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me.

[7] Therefore, more blessed are ye, for ye shall never taste of death; but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father unto the children of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory with the powers of heaven.

[8] And ye shall never endure the pains of death; but when I shall come in my glory ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality; and then shall ye be blessed in the kingdom of my Father.

[9] And again, ye shall not have pain while ye shall dwell in the flesh, neither sorrow save it be for the sins of the world; and all this will I do because of the thing which ye have desired of me, for ye have desired that ye might bring the souls of men unto me, while the world shall stand.

Why did the Three want to stay on the earth until Christ's second coming?

(that ye might bring the souls of men unto me, while the world shall stand)

D. Todd Christofferson

The Three Nephites were promised a fulness of joy because they desired to bring souls unto Christ 'while the world shall stand.'" (CR, Oct. 2019)

And it seems that they have been successful and that they will continue to be.

3 Nephi 28:25-29

[25] Behold, I was about to write the names of those who were never to taste of death, but the Lord forbade; therefore I write them not, for they are hid from the world.

[26] But behold, I have seen them, and they have ministered unto me.

[27] And behold they will be among the Gentiles, and the Gentiles shall know them not.

[28] They will also be among the Jews, and the Jews shall know them not.

[29] And it shall come to pass, when the Lord seeth fit in his wisdom that they shall minister unto all the scattered tribes of Israel, and unto all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, and shall bring out of them unto Jesus many souls, that their desire may be fulfilled, and also because of the convincing power of God which is in them.

John W. Taylor

“My testimony is that these men are going abroad in the nations of the earth before the face of your sons, and they are preparing the hearts of the children of men to receive the Gospel. They are administering to those who are heirs of salvation, and preparing their hearts to receive the truth, just as the farmer prepares the soil to receive the seed. The Lord has promised that He would send his angels before the face of His servants, and His does so.”
(CR, Oct. 1902)

They were still with the Nephies during the time when they did willfully rebel.

4 Nephi 1:30-33

[30] Therefore they did exercise power and authority over the disciples of Jesus who did tarry with them, and they did cast them into prison; but by the power of the word of God, which was in them, the prisons were rent in twain, and they went forth doing mighty miracles among them.

[31] Nevertheless, and notwithstanding all these miracles, the people did harden their hearts, and did seek to kill them, even as the Jews at Jerusalem sought to kill Jesus, according to his word.

[32] And they did cast them into furnaces of fire, and they came forth receiving no harm.

[33] And they also cast them into dens of wild beasts, and they did play with the wild beasts even as a child with a lamb; and they did come forth from among them, receiving no harm.