

Come Follow Me Lesson 36
3 Nephi 1-7 Sep 7-13

3 Nephi 1

The account of the Savior's visit is the climax, the apex of the entire Book of Mormon. All previous Book of Mormon writings had pointed forward to that marvelous event and all things recorded thereafter remind the reader of that event as a symbol of the Lord's climactic second coming that will yet occur. Some who are not intimately familiar with the contents of the book of 3 Nephi, upon hearing that it consists principally of an account of the Savior's ministry on the American continent, may wonder whether and if so how it is any different from the accounts contained in the four Gospels of the New Testament. Is 3 Nephi nothing more than a "fifth gospel," adding to new insights but only repetition? As we shall see, 3 Nephi contains not only an account of the ministry of the resurrected Lord among a group of the inhabitants of the New World but also many additional testimonies of the reality of the resurrection, clarifications of major points of doctrine, and a unique and touching description of the true nature of the immortal Messiah. These contributions not only are supplemental to the four canonical Gospels but also are essential to a true understanding of the total mission of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Redeemer of the world. While it contains numerous important doctrinal insights, instructions, and clarifications, the unique contributions of 3 Nephi fall into at least five major categories: (1) It testifies of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and serves as a second witness of his divinity. (2) It defines his gospel, clarifies points of doctrine, and teaches the necessity of gospel ordinances. (3) It explains the purpose of the law of Moses and teaches Jesus' divine role in the law's fulfillment. (4) It contains important clarifications concerning the "other sheep" and doctrinal teachings concerning the gathering of Israel. (5) It provides us with a unique and touching view of the emotional attributes of a glorified God – the resurrected Christ. McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4: 1-2)

N. Eldon Tanner: "I suppose that nowhere in the scriptures do we have a more beautiful or detailed record of God's dealings with man than in the account of this visit as recorded in Third Nephi. . . . [The] warnings and beautiful teachings . . . , if accepted and lived, will do more than anything else to bring peace and happiness to the world and to the individual seeking such a way of life. Here we can find explanations for many unanswered questions in the Bible. "Third Nephi gives us additional information in more detail than the four Gospels in the New Testament, and preserves the doctrines, teachings, and compassion of the Lord. For this reason there are many who refer to Third Nephi as the 'fifth Gospel.'" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 52; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 34.)

SCRIPTURES:

THIRD NEPHI
THE BOOK OF NEPHI
THE SON OF NEPHI, WHO WAS THE SON OF HELAMAN

And Helaman was the son of Helaman, who was the son of Alma, who was the son of Alma, being a descendant of Nephi who was the son of Lehi, who came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, the king of Judah.

Nephi, son of Helaman, departs out of the land, and his son Nephi keeps the records—Though signs and wonders abound, the wicked plan to slay the righteous—The night of Christ's birth arrives—The sign is given and a new star arises—Lyings and deceivings increase, and the Gadianton robbers slaughter many. [Between A.D. 1 and 4]

1 NOW it came to pass that the *ninety and first year (AD 1) had passed away and it was ^asix hundred years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem; and it was in the year that ^bLachoneus was the chief judge and the governor over the land.

2 And ^aNephi, the son of Helaman, had departed out of the land of Zarahemla, giving charge unto his son ^bNephi, who was his eldest son, concerning the ^cplates of brass, and ^dall the records which had been kept, and all those things which had been kept sacred from the departure of Lehi out of Jerusalem. (It was June, 1829 – the latter part of the month, and the Eight Witnesses saw them, I think, the next day or the day after (i.e. one or two days after). Joseph showed them the plates himself, but the angel showed us (the Three Witnesses) the plates, as I suppose to fulfill the words of the book itself. Martin Harris was not with us at this time, he obtained a view of them afterwards (the same day). Joseph, Oliver and myself were together when I saw them. We not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon but also the brass plates, the plates of the Book of Ether, the plates containing the records of the wickedness and secret combinations of the people of the world down to the time of their being engraved and many other plates. The fact is, it was just as though Joseph, Oliver and I were sitting just here on a log, when we were overshadowed by a light. It was not like the light of the sun nor like that of a fire, but more glorious and beautiful. It extended away round us, I cannot tell how far, but in the midst of this light about as far off as he sits (pointing to John C. Whitmer, sitting a few feet from him), there appeared as it were, a table with many records or plates upon it, besides the plates of the Book of Mormon, also the Sword of Laban, the Directors – i.e. the ball which Lehi had – and the Interpreters. I saw them just as plain as I see this bed (striking the bed beside him with his hand), and I heard the voice of the Lord, as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life, declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and power of God. (David Whitmer, “Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith.” *Millennial Star* 40 (9 Dec 1878: 771-74)

3 Then he ^adeparted out of the land, and ^bwhither he went, no man knoweth; (The language describing Nephi’s departure is very similar to [that of Alma’s departure]; hence we assume that the Lord chose to translate him, to receive him into a terrestrial state without tasting death. If so, then Nephi, like three others who will follow such a course in thirty-four years, was given power over death, power over the elements, power to come and go among the children of men as need arose, and power to continue his mortal work in bringing souls unto Christ either on this or some other planet or planets. McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:4 Joseph Smith: “Now the doctrine of translation is a power which belongs to this Priesthood. There are many things which belong to the powers of the Priesthood and the keys thereof, that have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world; they are hid from the wise and prudent to be revealed in the last times. Many have supposed that the doctrine of translation was a doctrine whereby men were taken immediately into the presence of God, and into an eternal fullness, but this is a mistaken idea. Their place of habitation is that of the terrestrial order, and a place prepared for such characters He held in reserve to be ministering angels unto many planets, and who as yet have not entered into so great a fullness as those who are resurrected from the dead... This distinction is made between the doctrine of the actual resurrection and translation: translation obtains deliverance from the tortures and sufferings of the body, but their existence will prolong as to the labors and toils of the ministry, before they can enter into so great a rest and glory.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 170)) and his son Nephi did keep the records in his stead, yea, the record of this people.

4 And it came to pass that in the commencement of the ninety and second year, behold, the prophecies of the prophets began to be fulfilled more fully; for there began to be ^agreater signs and greater miracles wrought among the people.

5 But there were some who began to say that the time was past for the words to be fulfilled, which were ^aspoken by Samuel, the Lamanite. (Miracles don’t bring belief or faith, but belief and faith do bring miracles.)

6 And they began to ^arejoice over their brethren, saying: Behold the time is past, and the words of

Samuel are not fulfilled; therefore, your joy and your faith concerning this thing hath been vain.

7 And it came to pass that they did make a great uproar throughout the land; and the people who believed began to be very sorrowful, lest by any means those things which had been spoken might not come to pass.

8 But behold, they did watch steadfastly for ^athat day and that night and that day which should be as one day as if there were no night, that they might know that their faith had not been vain. (Are we looking steadfastly for the signs of the Lord's Second Coming?)

9 Now it came to pass that there was a day set apart by the ^aunbelievers, that all those who believed in those traditions should be ^bput to death except the ^csign should come to pass, which had been given by Samuel the prophet. (In order for unbelievers to have been able to set apart a day as the time of the Savior's birth, they must have believed literally that Jesus would be born exactly 600 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. It's possible, therefore, that Lehi and his family left Jerusalem around the time of the Passover celebration. Leaving during that time would have made his family's departure less noticed, because there would have been thousands of other people traveling to and from the city at the same time.)

10 Now it came to pass that when Nephi, the son of Nephi, saw this wickedness of his people, his heart was exceedingly sorrowful.

11 And it came to pass that he went out and bowed himself down upon the earth, and cried mightily to his God in behalf of his people, yea, those who were about to be destroyed because of their faith in the tradition of their fathers.

12 And it came to pass that he cried mightily unto the Lord ^aall that day; and behold, the ^bvoice of the Lord came unto him, saying: (These verses cause us to reflect upon what is yet an unanswered (unrevealed) matter – the time when the individual spirit enters the body. This is the day before Jesus is to be born to Mary in Bethlehem of Judea. We would assume that by this time the spirit of Jesus is within that infant body which is housed within the womb of Mary. How, then, does the voice of Jesus come to Nephi? Does the spirit enter the body at the time of conception; at the time of quickening when the mother first feels signs of life within her; or at the time of physical birth? Can it possibly come and go before the time of birth? We do not know. Such has not been made known to us in the latter days. We do know, however, that the words of God are often spoken through his servants by divine investiture of authority. To Adam the Holy Ghost spoke for and in behalf of the Only Begotten Son (Moses 5:9). Such may have been the case here: the Spirit may have been commissioned by the Father to speak to Nephi in the first person for Christ, as though Jesus himself were speaking. Another possibility is that an angel, acting by that same investiture of authority, spoke to Nephi the words of Christ. In any event, whether the Lord's words are spoken by himself or by his authorized servants, "it is the same." (D&C 1:38) McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:5-6)

13 Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the ^asign be given, and on the ^bmorrow come I into the world, (The Book of Mormon account of Christ speaking to Nephi the grandson of Helaman and saying, "On the morrow come I into the world," is not intended to infer that the spirit does not enter the body until the moment of the actual birth. Rather this revelation to the Nephites was itself being conveyed in a miraculous and unusual way. Quite probably the one uttering the words was speaking in the first person as though he were Christ, in accordance with the law enabling others to act and speak for Deity on the principle of divine investiture of authority. Bruce R. McConkie, DNTC 1:85) to show unto the world that I will fulfil all that which I have caused to be ^cspoken by the mouth of my holy prophets.

14 Behold, I ^acome unto my own, to ^bfulfil all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the ^cfoundation of the world, (Jesus was and is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The plan of salvation, which is the gospel of God the Father, was taught and understood in our first estate. There it was decreed that this plan would entail a creation, a fall, and an atonement. And there it was that Jehovah, the firstborn spirit of the Father, was chosen and foreordained to be the Redeemer and

the Savior of all mankind. Joseph Smith spoke of the nature of such premortal agreements: “Everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organization of this earth, and relates to their dispensation of things to men on the earth; these personages, according to Abraham’s record, are called God the first, the Creator, God the second, the Redeemer, and God the third, the witness or Testator. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 190, “This is a most difficult passage. It sounds as though the Lord is stating that he will come into the world to fulfill two wills- the will of Jehovah, the premortal God of the ancients (perhaps referred to here as ‘me’), and the will of the mortal Messiah (the person of ‘flesh’). Of course we know that they, Jehovah and Jesus, are one and the same being. At the same time, this statement dramatizes the separate and severable roles that would be played by the Master, that of the Holy One of Israel (premortals) and that of Jesus of Nazareth (mortal).” (McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 4, p. 6-7)) and to do the ^dwill, ^eboth ^fof the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh. And behold, the time is at hand, and this night shall the sign be given.

15 And it came to pass that the words which came unto Nephi were fulfilled, according as they had been spoken; for behold, at the going down of the ^asun there was ^bno darkness; and the people began to be astonished because there was no darkness when the night came.

16 And there were many, who had not believed the words of the prophets, who ^afell to the earth and became as if they were dead, for they knew that the great ^bplan of destruction which they had laid for those who believed in the words of the prophets had been frustrated; for the sign which had been given was already at hand.

17 And they began to know that the Son of God must shortly appear; yea, in fine, all the people upon the face of the whole earth from the ^awest to the east, both in the land north and in the land south, were so exceedingly astonished that they fell to the earth.

18 For they knew that the prophets had testified of these things for many years, and that the sign which had been given was already at hand; and they began to fear because of their iniquity and their unbelief.

19 And it came to pass that there was no darkness in all that night, but it was as light as though it was mid-day. And it came to pass that the sun did rise in the morning again, according to its proper order; and they knew that it was the day that the Lord should be ^aborn, because of the ^bsign which had been given.

20 And it had come to pass, yea, all things, every whit, according to the words of the prophets.

21 And it came to pass also that a new ^astar did appear, according to the word. (According to Hugh Nibley, this event may have been caused by a supernova which would explain the light that continued after the going down of the sun and the new star arising, but which later disappeared.)

22 And it came to pass that from this time forth there began to be ^alyings sent forth among the people, by Satan, to harden their hearts, to the intent that they might not believe in those ^bsigns and wonders (Signs do not convert.) which they had seen; but notwithstanding these lyings and deceivings the ^cmore part of the people did believe, and were converted unto the Lord. (Though the conversion may have been genuine at the time, it did not last long. Terrence L. Szink, *Studies in Scripture*, 8:127)

23 And it came to pass that Nephi (Nephi is the prophet with authority to baptize for the remission of sins. When the Savior comes, he will ordain Nephi to baptize the people as members of the Kingdom of God on earth.) went forth among the people, and also many others, baptizing unto repentance, in the which there was a great ^aremission of sins. And thus the people began again to have peace in the land.

24 And there were no contentions, save it were a few that began to preach, endeavoring to prove by the ^ascriptures that it was no more expedient to observe the law of Moses. Now in this thing they did err, having not understood the scriptures. (Whenever you get red in the face, whenever you raise your voice, whenever you get “hot under the collar,” or angry, rebellious, or negative in spirit, then know that the Spirit of God is leaving you and the spirit of Satan in beginning to take over. At times we may feel justified in arguing or fighting for truth by contentious words and actions. Do not be deceived. Satan would rather have you contend for evil if he could, but he rejoices when we contend with one another

even when we think we are doing it in the cause of righteousness. He knows and recognizes the self-destructive nature of contention under any guise. Theodore M. Burton, CR, Oct 1974, 77)

25 But it came to pass that they soon became converted, and were convinced of the error which they were in, for it was made known unto them that the law was not yet ^afulfilled, and that it must be fulfilled in every whit; yea, the word came unto them that it must be fulfilled; yea, that one jot or tittle should not pass away till it should all be fulfilled; (The law of Moses will not be completely fulfilled until the death of Christ.) therefore in this same year were they brought to a knowledge of their error and did ^bconfess their faults.

26 And thus the ninety and second year did pass away, bringing ^aglad tidings unto the people because of the signs which did come to pass, according to the words of the prophecy of all the holy prophets.

27 And it came to pass that the ninety and third year did also pass away in peace, save it were for the Gadianton robbers, who dwelt upon the ^amountains, who did infest the land; (Hugh Nibley: “But a new threat arose. The criminal element took to the hills and there established retreats where they built up strength from dissenters joining them until they were able to reestablish the Gadianton organization. Terrorism was the name of the game. From their secure places they would strike and withdraw, making a special effort to kidnap ‘especially women and children,’ to assure the permanence of their society (Helaman 11:33). At the same time, Zoramite recruiters brought a host of young Nephites into the organization by the prospect of such things as romantic adventure, gaudy makeup, danger, loot, and license to kill (3 Nephi 1:28-30). Soldiers of fortune also flocked to the camps.” (*The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, p. 555) for so strong were their holds and their secret places that the people could not overpower them; therefore they did commit many murders, and did do much slaughter among the people. (The terrorists.)

28 And it came to pass that in the ninety and fourth year they began to increase in a great degree, because there were many dissenters of the Nephites who did flee unto them, which did cause much sorrow unto those Nephites who did remain in the land.

29 And there was also a cause of much sorrow among the Lamanites; for behold, they had many children who did grow up and began to wax strong in years, that they became for themselves, and were ^aled away by some who were ^bZoramites, by their lyings and their flattering words, to join those Gadianton robbers.

30 And thus were the Lamanites afflicted also, and began to decrease as to their faith and righteousness, because of the wickedness of the ^arising generation. (Neal A. Maxwell: “While we do not think of it this way very often, the rising generation has some genuine responsibilities to the older generation still living. We are not immune to influence from you. We not only regard you as the seedbearers of a celestial culture to come, but our own journey can be hastened by your pressing forward. About A. D. 3, an emerging generation of Lamanite youth ‘became for themselves,’ discounting the influence of their righteous parents, and many young adults ‘were led away.’ Then this telling observation about how we always need each other was given: ‘. . . the Lamanites . . . began to decrease as to their faith and righteousness, because of the wickedness of the rising generation.’ (3 Nephi 1:29-30.) Lowering standards in the rising generations can create an undertow that affects all ages. We have seen, in just the past decade, various youth movements wash over shaky adults who gave way under pressure. Some adults, strangely enough, replaced their old values, of all things, with youth worship! The last thing youth needs is to be envied or worshiped.” (*Wherefore, Ye Must Press Forward*, p. 84)

* Verse 1 [A.D. 1]. (“The chronological material listed on the bottom of each page in the Book of Mormon did not appear in the first edition. These chronological notes were first added in the edition of 1920 at the recommendation of a committee headed by Elder James E. Talmage. The abbreviation B.C. is used to designate the number of years before the time of Christ. The abbreviation A.D. (from the Latin Anno Domini, meaning ‘in the year of our Lord’) is used to indicate the number of years since the birth of Christ. Note that this calendar system does not go through a zero number. Thus the year before the birth of Christ is 1 B.C. and the year in which the Savior is born is A.D. 1. According to the calendar

systems previously used by the Nephites, the year A.D. 1 occurs in the ninety-second year of the reign of judges (the record says the ‘ninety and first year had passed away’) and in the six hundredth year from the time Lehi left Jerusalem. (3 Nephi 1:1.)” (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 252))

3 Nephi 2

Wickedness and abominations increase among the people—The Nephites and Lamanites unite to defend themselves against the Gadianton robbers—Converted Lamanites become white and are called Nephites. [Between A.D. 5 and 15]

1 AND it came to pass that thus passed away the *ninety and fifth year also, and the people began to forget those ^asigns and wonders (see what I mean, signs don’t convert) which they had heard, and began to be less and less astonished at a sign or a wonder from heaven, insomuch that they began to be hard in their hearts, and blind in their minds, and began to disbelieve all which they had heard and seen—

2 ^aImagining up some vain thing in their hearts, that it was wrought by men and by the power of the devil, to lead away and ^bdeceive the hearts of the people; and thus did Satan get possession of the hearts of the people again, insomuch that he did blind their eyes and lead them away to believe that the doctrine of Christ was a ^cfoolish and a vain thing.

3 And it came to pass that the people began to wax strong in wickedness and abominations; and they did not believe that there should be any more signs or wonders given; and Satan did ^ago about, leading away the hearts of the people, tempting them and causing them that they should do great wickedness in the land.

4 And thus did pass away the ninety and sixth year; and also the ninety and seventh year; and also the ninety and eighth year; and also the ninety and ninth year;

5 And also an hundred years had passed away since the days of ^aMosiah, who was king over the people of the Nephites.

6 And *six hundred and nine years had passed away since Lehi left Jerusalem.

7 And nine years had passed away from the time when the sign was given, which was spoken of by the prophets, that Christ should come into the world.

8 Now the Nephites began to ^areckon their time from this period when the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ; therefore, nine years had passed away. (This is the correlation of the three time keeping methods. They will now use the time of Christ to keep time.)

9 And Nephi, who was the father of Nephi, who had the charge of the records, ^adid not return to the land of Zarahemla, and could nowhere be found in all the land.

10 And it came to pass that the people did still ^aremain in wickedness, notwithstanding the much preaching and prophesying which was sent among them; and thus passed away the tenth year also; and the eleventh year also passed away in iniquity.

11 And it came to pass in the *thirteenth year there began to be wars and contentions throughout all the land; for the ^aGadianton robbers had become so ^bnumerous, and did slay so many of the people, and did lay waste so many cities, and did spread so much death and carnage throughout the land (These people hate so much that they contribute nothing of any lasting value to mankind.), that it became expedient that all the people, both the Nephites and the Lamanites, should take up arms against them.

12 Therefore, all the Lamanites who had become converted unto the Lord did unite with their brethren, the Nephites, and were compelled, for the ^asafety of their lives and their women and their children, to take up arms against those Gadianton robbers, yea, and also to maintain their rights, and the privileges of their church and of their worship, and their freedom and their ^bliberty. (There are some things worth fighting for.)

13 And it came to pass that before this thirteenth year had passed away the Nephites were threatened

with utter destruction because of this war, which had become exceedingly sore.

14 And it came to pass that those Lamanites who had united with the Nephites were numbered among the Nephites;

15 And their ^acurse was taken from them, and their skin became ^bwhite like unto the Nephites;

16 And their young men and their daughters became exceedingly fair, and they were numbered among the Nephites, and were called Nephites. And thus ended the thirteenth year. (The dark skin was a sign of the curse. The curse was the withdrawal of the Spirit of the Lord. The dark skin... is no longer considered a sign of the curse. Many of these converts are delightful and have the Spirit of the Lord. Joseph Fielding Smith, Answers to Gospel Questions, 3:123-124.)

17 And it came to pass in the commencement of the fourteenth year, the war between the robbers and the people of Nephi did continue and did become exceedingly sore; nevertheless, the people of Nephi did gain some advantage of the robbers, insomuch that they did drive them back out of their lands into the mountains and into their secret places. (Only righteousness can defeat terrorists.)

18 And thus ended the fourteenth year. And in the *fifteenth year they did come forth against the people of Nephi; and because of the wickedness of the people of Nephi, and their many contentions and dissensions, the Gadianton robbers did gain many advantages over them.

19 And thus ended the fifteenth year, and thus were the people in a state of many afflictions; and the ^asword of destruction did hang over them, insomuch that they were about to be smitten down by it, and this because of their iniquity. (Ezra Taft Benson: “We live today in a wicked world. Never in our memory have the forces of evil been arrayed in such a deadly formation. The devil is well organized and has many emissaries working for him. His satanic majesty has proclaimed his intention to destroy our young people, to weaken the home and family, and to defeat the purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ through his great church” (*God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties* [1974], 90). “All through the ages the prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it—you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time as there is of us. Never before on the face of this earth have the forces of evil and the forces of good been as well organized. Now is the great day of the devil’s power. . . . But now is also the great day of the Lord’s power, with the greatest number ever of priesthood holders on the earth” (“In His Steps,” in *1979 Devotional Speeches of the Year* [1980], 59).)* Verse 18 [A.D. 15].

3 Nephi 3

Giddianhi, the Gadianton leader, demands that Lachoneus and the Nephites surrender themselves and their lands—Lachoneus appoints Gidgiddoni as chief captain of the armies—The Nephites assemble in Zarahemla and Bountiful to defend themselves. [Between A.D. 16 and 17]

1 AND now it came to pass that in the *sixteenth year from the coming of Christ, ^aLachoneus, the governor of the land, received an epistle from the leader and the governor of this band of robbers; and these were the words which were written, saying:

2 Lachoneus, most noble and chief governor of the land (he doesn’t mean it), behold, I write this epistle unto you, and do give unto you exceedingly great praise because of your firmness, and also the firmness of your people, in ^amaintaining that which ye suppose to be your right and ^bliberty; yea, ye do stand well, as if ye were supported by the hand of a god, in the defence of your liberty, and your property, and your country, or that which ye do call so.

3 And it seemeth a pity unto me, most noble Lachoneus, that ye should be so foolish and vain as to suppose that ye can stand against so many brave men who are at my command, who do now at this time stand in their arms, and do await with great anxiety for the word—Go down upon the Nephites and ^adestroy them.

4 And I, knowing of their unconquerable spirit, having proved them in the field of battle, and knowing of their everlasting hatred (their main motivation to fight) towards you because of the many wrongs which ye have done unto them, therefore if they should come down against you they would visit you with utter destruction.

5 Therefore I have written this epistle, sealing it with mine own hand, feeling for your welfare, because of your firmness in that which ye believe to be right, and your noble spirit in the field of battle.

6 Therefore I write unto you, desiring that ye would yield up unto this my people, your cities, your lands, and your possessions, rather than that they should visit you with the sword and that destruction should come upon you.

7 Or in other words, yield yourselves up unto us, and unite with us and become acquainted with our ^asecret works, and become our brethren that ye may be like unto us—not our slaves, but our brethren and partners of all our substance. (What could he have meant by the expression “partners of all our substance” except communal ownership of property? Giddianhi also accuses the Nephites of robbing his people of “their rights and government” (v.10). This is the identical appeal which the Communists make to the laboring class today. They appeal to their selfishness and tell them they are exploited and robbed under the capitalistic system and are denied their rights of government. The Communists propose the establishment of what they call the “dictatorship of proletariat” whereunder the workers are supposed to own all the property and run the government. One can hardly imagine a greater deception than this but it is the appeal made nonetheless. Giddianhi also speaks of the “everlasting hatred” (v.4) of his people for the Nephites. V.I. Lenin, first Communist dictator in Russia and one of the chief theoreticians of Communism had this to say: “We must hate. Hatred is the basis of Communism. Children must be taught to hate their parents if they are not Communists. H. Verlan Andersen, *Many Are Called but Few are Chosen*, 61.)

8 And behold, I ^aswear unto you, if ye will do this, with an oath, ye shall not be destroyed; but if ye will not do this, I swear unto you with an oath, that on the morrow month I will command that my armies shall come down against you, and they shall not stay their hand and shall spare not, but shall slay you, and shall let fall the sword upon you even until ye shall become extinct.

9 And behold, I am ^aGiddianhi; (the name means The Lord is my life.) and I am the governor of this the ^bsecret society of Gadianton; which society and the works thereof I know to be ^cgood; (a lie) and they are of ^dancient date and they have been handed down unto us. (true)

10 And I write this epistle unto you, Lachoneus, and I hope that ye will deliver up your lands and your possessions, without the shedding of blood, that this my people may recover their rights and ^agovernment, who have dissented away from you because of your wickedness in retaining from them their rights of government, and except ye do this, I will avenge their wrongs. I am Giddianhi.

11 And now it came to pass when Lachoneus received this epistle he was exceedingly astonished, because of the boldness of Giddianhi demanding the possession of the land of the Nephites, and also of threatening the people and avenging the wrongs of those that had received no wrong, save it were they had ^awronged themselves by dissenting away unto those wicked and abominable robbers.

12 Now behold, this Lachoneus, the governor, was a just man, and could not be frightened by the demands and the threatenings of a ^arobber; therefore he did not hearken to the epistle of Giddianhi, the governor of the robbers, but he did cause that his people should cry unto the Lord for ^bstrength against the time that the robbers should come down against them. (Righteousness will defeat the robbers)

13 Yea, he sent a proclamation among all the people, that they should ^agather together their women, and their children, their flocks and their herds, and all their substance, save it were their land, unto one place. (Eventually, the Saints and those who choose righteousness will be required to gather together into Zion for defense from the wicked.)

14 And he caused that ^afortifications should be built round about them, and the strength thereof should be exceedingly great. And he caused that armies, both of the Nephites and of the Lamanites, or of all them who were numbered among the Nephites, should be placed as guards round about to watch them,

and to guard them from the robbers day and night. (We must fortify ourselves against the onslaught of evil in our day.)

15 Yea, he said unto them: As the Lord liveth, except ye repent of all your iniquities, and cry unto the Lord, ye will in nowise be ^adelivered out of the hands of those Gadianon robbers. (Righteousness can secure for us our deliverance from evil.)

16 And so great and marvelous were the words and prophecies of Lachoneus that they did cause fear to come upon all the people; and they did exert themselves in their might to do according to the words of Lachoneus.

17 And it came to pass that Lachoneus did appoint chief captains over all the armies of the Nephites, to command them at the time that the robbers should come down out of the wilderness against them. (Church leaders help us by commanding us to repent and live righteously.)

18 Now the chiefest among all the chief captains and the great commander of all the armies of the Nephites was appointed, and his name was ^aGidgiddoni.

19 Now it was the custom among all the Nephites to appoint for their chief captains, (save it were in their times of wickedness) some one that had the ^aspirit of revelation and also prophecy; therefore, this Gidgiddoni was a great prophet among them, as also was the chief judge. (Following the living prophet will be our safety.)

20 Now the people said unto Gidgiddoni: ^aPray unto the Lord, and let us go up upon the mountains and into the wilderness, that we may fall upon the robbers and destroy them in their own lands.

21 But Gidgiddoni saith unto them: The Lord ^aforbid; for if we should go up against them the Lord would ^bdeliver us into their hands; therefore we will prepare ourselves in the center of our lands, and we will gather all our armies together, and we will not go against them, but we will wait till they shall come against us; therefore as the Lord liveth, if we do this he will deliver them into our hands. (Christians enter war; they do not begin it. Even when it came to taking the initiative in what would appear to be a noble cause – to go into the mountains and root out the secret combinations – the sensitive Gidgiddoni declined the suggestion and explained that if they did that his people would not enjoy the approbation and thus the strength of the Lord. McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:16 President George Q. Cannon: We must proclaim peace; do all in our power to appease the wrath of our enemies; make any sacrifice that honorable people can to avert war, with all its horrors, entailing as it does dreadful consequences so numerous that they cannot be mentioned. It is our duty, I say, as a nation. The influence of the Latter-day Saints should be used in this direction. We should seek to quell these feelings of anxiety to fight and to shed blood. Our influence should go forth like oil poured upon the troubled waters, quieting the waves of discontent and wrath that are aroused by this fearful spirit. ...Not only ought we to extend the offering of peace the first time to a nation that proclaims war against us, but again the second time; and if that should be rejected, again the third time; and if it be rejected the third time, then: They should bring these testimonies before the Lord. Go to the Lord and say, ‘Here are our testimonies. We have offered peace the first time; we have offered it twice; we have offered it three times; but our offerings are rejected, and this nation is determined to have war with us. Now we bring these testimonies before thee, Lord.’ ... I do not look for our nation to do this. It is scarcely to be expected, in the nature of things, that they would do it. But it is the true principle, and we as a people should use our influence for this purpose. Our prayers should ascend to God; our petitions should ascend to the government of our nation to do everything that honorable people can to avert war. We have no fear of the effect of the combinations against us. ... But the promise of God is that if we will do right as a nation, if we will serve Him, they shall not have power over us, or be able to bring us into bondage; and in the end we shall prevail. This is a glorious promise which is made to the inhabitants of the land. ... To us as Latter-day Saints these principles are of the utmost importance. I do not want to see our young men get filled with the spirit of war and be eager for the conflict. God forbid that such a spirit should prevail in our land, or that we should contribute in any manner to the propagation of a spirit of that kind! But one may say, ‘Is it not our duty to defend our country and our

flag? Is it not our duty to maintain the institutions which the Lord has given to us?' Certainly it is. And it is no part of cowardice to take the plan that the Lord has pointed out. No man need be afraid that the Lord or any just man will look upon him as a coward.' (*Conference Report*, April 1898, pp. 86-87.) "The principle behind this counsel apparently is related to the principle of repentance, as is indicated in this statement by President Joseph Fielding Smith: 'The law of forgiveness and retribution ... applies to individuals and to families, as well as to the Church at large. We are under commandment to forgive our enemies and suffer their abuses and smiting the first time and second time, also the third time. This is to be done in patience, and in humility and prayer, hoping that the enemy might repent. If the enemy come upon us for the fourth time we are justified in meting out retribution, but even then there is to come a reward if we patiently endure, and the Lord will reward us abundantly. For all these abuses we will be rewarded if we endure them in patience. Perchance the enemy may repent, and that we should most sincerely desire. This may to the most ordinary human being be a hard law to follow; but nevertheless it is the word of the Lord. One of the best illustrations of this spirit of enduring wrong rather than retaliating is found in the story of the people of Ammon in the Book of Mormon. Because they refused to take up arms to defend themselves, but would rather lay down their lives than shed blood even in their own defense, they brought many of their enemies to repentance and to the kingdom of God. [Alma 24:17-25; 27:3.] This is the doctrine of Jesus Christ as taught in the Sermon on the Mount. [Matt. 5:21-22, 43-44.] If all peoples would accept this doctrine there could be no war, and all difficulties could be adjusted in righteousness. This doctrine was taught, so the Lord declared, to his people anciently. There are many things in the Old Testament in relation to the wars and battles of the Israelites in the meager record which has come down to us, which are made to appear to us that these people were cruel and vengeful, but the Lord says they went out to battle when they were guided by prophets and the spirit of revelation when the Lord commanded them. (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* [Salt Lake City: The Council of the Twelve Apostles, 1953], 1:434-35.)" (Daniel Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 254-6)

22 And it came to pass in the *seventeenth year, in the latter end of the year, the proclamation of Lachoneus had gone forth throughout all the face of the land, and they had taken their ^ahorses, and their chariots, and their cattle, and all their flocks, and their herds, and their grain, and all their substance, and did march forth by thousands and by tens of thousands, until they had all gone forth to the ^bplace which ^chad been appointed that they should gather themselves together, to defend themselves against their enemies.

23 And the ^aland which was appointed was the land of Zarahemla, and the land which was between the land Zarahemla and the land ^bBountiful, yea, to the line which was between the ^cland Bountiful and the land Desolation.

24 And there were a great many thousand people who were called Nephites, who did gather themselves together in this land. Now Lachoneus did cause that they should gather themselves together in the land ^asouthward, because of the great curse which was upon the ^bland northward. (We will gather to Zion.)

25 And they did fortify themselves against their enemies; and they did dwell in one land, and in one body, (Like Zion) and they did fear the words which had been spoken by Lachoneus, insomuch that they did repent of all their sins; and they did put up their ^aprayers unto the Lord their God, that he would deliver them in the time that their enemies should come down against them to battle.

26 And they were exceedingly sorrowful because of their enemies. And Gidgiddoni did cause that they should make ^aweapons of war of every kind, and they should be strong with armor, and with shields, and with bucklers, after the manner of his instruction.

* Verse 22 [A.D. 17].

3 Nephi 4

The Nephite armies defeat the Gadianton robbers—Giddianhi is slain, and his successor, Zemnarihah, is hanged—The Nephites praise the Lord for their victories. [Between A.D. 18 and 22]

1 AND it came to pass that in the latter *end of the eighteenth year those armies of ^arobbers had prepared for battle, and began to come down and to sally forth from the hills, and out of the mountains, and the wilderness, and their strongholds, and their ^bsecret places, and began to take possession of the lands, both which were in the land south and which were in the land north, and began to take possession of all the lands which had been ^cdeserted by the Nephites, and the cities which had been left desolate.

2 But behold, there were no wild beasts nor ^agame in those lands which had been deserted by the Nephites, and there was no game for the robbers save it were in the wilderness.

3 And the robbers could not exist save it were in the wilderness, for the want of food; for the Nephites had left their lands desolate, and had gathered their flocks and their herds and all their substance, and they were in one body.

4 Therefore, there was no chance for the robbers to plunder and to obtain food, save it were to come up in open battle against the Nephites; and the Nephites being in one body, and having so great a number, and having reserved for themselves provisions, and ^ahorses and cattle, and flocks of every kind, that they might subsist for the space of ^bseven years, in the which time they did hope to destroy the robbers from off the face of the land; and thus the eighteenth year did pass away.

5 And it came to pass that in the *nineteenth year Giddianhi found that it was expedient that he should go up to battle against the Nephites, for there was ^ano way that they could subsist save it were to plunder and rob and murder. (Quite the economy the robbers have, right?)

6 And they durst not spread themselves upon the face of the land insomuch that they could raise grain, lest the Nephites should come upon them and slay them; therefore Giddianhi gave commandment unto his armies that in this year they should go up to battle against the Nephites. (They couldn't produce for themselves, so they had to steal from others.)

7 And it came to pass that they did come up to battle; and it was in the sixth month (If the first month is spring, this is probably around October or harvest time.); and behold, great and terrible was the day that they did come up to battle; and they were girded about after the manner of robbers; and they had a lamb-skin (Since there probably were not sheep in the land, this might actually have been leopard skins) about their loins, and they were dyed in blood, and their heads were shorn, and they had head-plates upon them; and great and terrible was the appearance of the armies of Giddianhi, because of their armor, and because of their being dyed in blood.

8 And it came to pass that the armies of the Nephites, when they saw the appearance of the army of Giddianhi, had all fallen to the earth, and did lift their cries to the Lord their God, that he would spare them and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies. (The Nephites knew the only sure source to deliver them.)

9 And it came to pass that when the armies of Giddianhi saw this they began to shout with a loud voice, because of their joy, for they had supposed that the Nephites had fallen with fear because of the terror of their armies.

10 But in this thing they were disappointed, for the Nephites did not ^afear them; but they did fear their God and did supplicate him for ^bprotection; therefore, when the armies of Giddianhi did rush upon them they were prepared to meet them; yea, in the strength of the Lord they did receive them.

11 And the battle commenced in this the sixth month; and great and terrible was the battle thereof, yea, great and terrible was the ^aslaughter thereof, insomuch that there never was known so great a slaughter among all the people of Lehi since he left Jerusalem.

12 And notwithstanding the ^athreatenings and the oaths which Giddianhi had made, behold, the Nephites did beat them, insomuch that they did fall back from before them.

13 And it came to pass that ^aGidgiddoni commanded that his armies should pursue them as far as the borders of the wilderness, and that they should not spare any that should fall into their hands by the way; and thus they did pursue them and did slay them, to the borders of the wilderness, even until they had fulfilled the commandment of Gidgiddoni.

14 And it came to pass that Giddianhi, who had stood and fought with boldness, was pursued as he fled; and being weary because of his much fighting he was overtaken and slain. And thus was the end of Giddianhi the robber.

15 And it came to pass that the armies of the Nephites did return again to their place of security. And it came to pass that this nineteenth year did pass away, and the robbers did not come again to battle; neither did they come again in the twentieth year.

16 And in the *twenty and first year they did not come up to battle, but they came up on all sides to lay siege round about the people of Nephi; for they did suppose that if they should cut off the people of Nephi from their ^alands, and should hem them in on every side, and if they should cut them off from all their outward privileges, that they could cause them to yield themselves up according to their wishes.

(Five more years worth of stores left of the Nephites.)

17 Now they had appointed unto themselves another leader, whose name was Zemnariyah; therefore it was Zemnariyah that did cause that this siege should take place.

18 But behold, this was an advantage to the Nephites; for it was impossible for the robbers to lay siege sufficiently long to have any effect upon the Nephites, because of their ^amuch ^bprovision which they had laid up in store,

19 And because of the scantiness of provisions among the robbers; for behold, they had nothing save it were meat for their subsistence, which meat they did obtain in the wilderness;

20 And it came to pass that the ^awild game became scarce in the wilderness insomuch that the robbers were about to perish with hunger.

21 And the Nephites were continually marching out by day and by night, and falling upon their armies, and cutting them off by thousands and by tens of thousands.

22 And thus it became the desire of the people of Zemnariyah to withdraw from their design, because of the great destruction which came upon them by night and by day.

23 And it came to pass that Zemnariyah did give command unto his people that they should withdraw themselves from the siege, and march into the furthestmost parts of the land northward.

24 And now, Gidgiddoni being aware of their design, and knowing of their weakness because of the want of food, and the great slaughter which had been made among them, therefore he did send out his armies in the night-time, and did cut off the way of their retreat, and did place his armies in the way of their retreat.

25 And this did they do in the night-time, and got on their march beyond the robbers, so that on the morrow, when the robbers began their march, they were met by the armies of the Nephites both in their front and in their rear.

26 And the robbers who were on the south were also cut off in their places of retreat. And all these things were done by command of Gidgiddoni.

27 And there were many thousands who did yield themselves up prisoners unto the Nephites, and the remainder of them were slain. (This is the destruction of the Gadianton robbers)

28 And their leader, Zemnariyah, was taken and hanged upon a tree, yea, even upon the top thereof until he was dead. And when they had hanged him until he was dead they did fell the tree to the earth, and did cry with a loud voice, saying: (This is an ancient ceremony)

29 May the Lord preserve his people in righteousness and in holiness of heart, that they may cause to be felled to the earth all who shall seek to slay them because of power and secret combinations, even as this man hath been felled to the earth.

30 And they did rejoice and cry again with one voice, saying: May the ^aGod of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, protect this people in righteousness, so long as they shall ^bcall on the name

of their God for protection.

31 And it came to pass that they did break forth, all as one, in singing, and ^apraising their God for the great thing which he had done for them, in preserving them from falling into the hands of their enemies.

32 Yea, they did cry: Hosanna (Save us now, save, we pray!) to the Most High God. And they did cry: Blessed be the name of the Lord God ^aAlmighty, the Most High God.

33 And their hearts were swollen with joy, unto the gushing out of many tears, Neal A. Maxwell: “Thus the things of which we can be most certain are also those things which matter most... We can have a bad day but still have a good life. We can have tribulation but see it paled by the resurrection. We can exhibit calm commitment as did hope-filled Job amid tribulation and avoid charging ‘God foolishly.’ (Job 1:22.) Thus, nothing that really matters has changed since long ago when, with full justification, we shouted for joy. All that matters is gloriously intact. The promises are in place. It is up to us to perform. Someday when we kneel again in those corridors where that special shout once echoed, having been delivered from our last enemy, death, we will have hearts ‘swollen with joy, unto the gushing out of many tears.’ (3 Nephi 4:33.) It is a moment we must not miss! It is worth cheerfully enduring a few disappointments and pains now and letting a few mortal appetites go unsatiated.” (*Notwithstanding My Weakness*, p. 58)) because of the great goodness of God in delivering them out of the hands of their enemies; and they knew it was because of their repentance and their humility that they had been delivered from an everlasting destruction. (The only way to combat the kind of wickedness the Gadianton robbers represented is with the strength obtained through personal and collective righteousness. To overcome the evil power of secret oaths we must make sacred covenants with God and abide by them. Terrence L. Szink, *Studies in Scripture*, 8:133 Third Nephi 4:28-33 recounts in considerable detail the execution of Zemnariyah, the captured leader of the defeated Gadianton robbers. It has recently been suggested that this public execution followed ancient ceremony and law... After the Nephites had chopped down the tree on which Zemnariyah had been hanged, they all cried out ‘with one voice’ for God to protect them. Then they sang out ‘all as one’ in praise of God (3 Nephi 4:30-33). Is there some kind of ritual involved here? Several evidences point to an ancient background for this execution. Consider these few items. First, notice that the tree on which Zemnariyah was hung was felled. Was this ever done in antiquity? Apparently it was. For one thing, Israelite practice required that the tree upon which the culprit was hung be buried with the body. Hence the tree had to have been chopped down... Second, consider why the tree was chopped down and buried. As Maimonides explains: ‘In order that it should not serve as a sad reminder [with] people saying: This is the tree on which so-and-so was hanged.’ In this way, the tree became associated with the person being executed; it came to symbolize the culprit and the desire to forget him or her. By way of comparison, the Nephites identified the tree with Zemnariyah and all those like him, that his infamy might not be forgotten, when they cried out: ‘May [the Lord] cause to be felled to the earth all who shall seek to slay them, . . . even as this man hath been felled to the earth.’ ... Finally, the people all chanted loudly, proclaiming the wickedness of Zemnariyah, which may be reminiscent of the ancient practice of heralding a notorious execution. Deuteronomy 19:20 says that ‘those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.’ How was this to be accomplished? Rabbi Jehudah explained: ‘I say that he is executed immediately and messengers are sent out to notify the people.’ Indeed, public matters, such as the execution of a rebelling judge (see 3 Nephi 6:22-28), had to be heralded. An even clearer example of heralding in the Book of Mormon is found in Alma 30:57, where the results in Korihor's case were heralded abroad. In both these cases, the apparent requirement of publishing the wickedness of the culprit was satisfied, so that all who remained would ‘hear and fear,’ and the evil would be removed from among God's people.” (*Reexploring The Book of Mormon*, p. 250-2))

* Verse 16 [A.D. 21].

3 Nephi 5

The Nephites repent and forsake their sins—Mormon writes the history of his people and declares the everlasting word to them—Israel shall be gathered in from her long dispersion. [Between A.D. 21 and 26]

1 AND now behold, there was not a living soul among all the people of the Nephites who did ^adoubt in the least the words of all the holy prophets who had spoken; for they knew that it must needs be that they must be fulfilled.

2 And they knew that it must be expedient that Christ had come, because of the many signs which had been given, according to the words of the prophets; and because of the things which had come to pass already they knew that it must needs be that all things should come to pass according to that which had been spoken.

3 Therefore they did forsake all their sins, and their abominations, and their whoredoms, and did serve God with all diligence day and night.

4 And now it came to pass that when they had taken all the robbers prisoners, insomuch that none did escape who were not slain, they did cast their prisoners into prison, and did cause the word of God to be preached unto them; and as many as would repent of their sins and ^aenter into a ^bcovenant that they would murder no more were set at ^cliberty. (John Taylor: “God expects you to be true to your vows, to be true to yourselves, and to be true to your wives and children. If you become covenant breakers, you will be dealt with according to the laws of God. And the men presiding over you have no other alternative than to bring the covenant breaker to judgment. If they fail to do their duty, we shall be under the necessity of looking after them, for righteousness and purity must be maintained in our midst.” (*The Gospel Kingdom*, p. 285))

5 But as many as there were who did not enter into a covenant, and who did still continue to have those ^asecret murders in their hearts, yea, as many as were found breathing out threatenings against their brethren were condemned and punished according to the law.

6 And thus they did put an end to all those wicked, and secret, and abominable combinations, in the which there was so much wickedness, and so many murders committed. (This is in the book to show us how to get rid of terrorists and those who would destroy freedom.)

7 And thus had the ^atwenty and second year passed away, and the twenty and third year also, and the twenty and fourth, and the twenty and fifth; and thus had ^{*}twenty and five years passed away. (Now it's time to get back to their normal lives.)

8 And there had many things transpired which, in the eyes of some, would be great and marvelous; nevertheless, they cannot all be written in this book; yea, this book cannot contain even a ^ahundredth part of what was done among so many people in the space of twenty and five years; (Of the vision of the degrees of glory, Joseph Smith said, “I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have of the glories of the kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive them. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 305. The same is true of much that is contained within the covers of holy writ. McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4: 22)

9 But behold there are ^arecords which do contain ^ball the proceedings of this people; and a ^cshorter but true account was given by Nephi. (Brigham Young tells the story: “Oliver Cowdery went with the Prophet Joseph when he deposited these plates... When Joseph got the plates, the angel instructed him to carry them back to the hill Cumorah, which he did. Oliver says that when Joseph and Oliver went there, the hill opened, and they walked into a cave, in which there was a large and spacious room. He says he did not think, at the time, whether they had the light of the sun or artificial light; but that it was just as light as day. They laid the plates on a table; it was a large table that stood in the room. Under this table there was a pile of plates as much as two feet high, and there were altogether in this room more

plates than probably many wagon loads; they were piled up in the corners and along the walls. The first time they went there the sword of Laban hung upon the wall; but when they went again it had been taken down and laid upon the table across the gold plates; it was unsheathed, and on it was written these words: ‘This sword will never be sheathed again until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our God and his Christ.’” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 19, p. 40))

10 Therefore I have made my ^arecord of these things according to the record of Nephi, which was engraven on the plates which were called the ^bplates of Nephi. (At this point Mormon interrupted the narrative and inserted an explanation about the sources he was working with and a testimony of his work. These few verses are fascinating because in them Mormon stepped back from his role as editor and discussed that role with the reader. Evidently the three years following the defeat of the Gadianton robbers was a period of great literary activity. With no wars to fight and a large supply of food, the people had time to write about the experiences through which they had just passed. Perhaps these experiences, which Mormon described as “great and marvelous” included the many signs which had been given both preceding the birth of Christ and since that time. At any rate, Mormon wrote that his book does not contain “even a hundredth part” of all that happened. He did indicate that “there are records which do contain all the proceedings of this people.” He also mentioned a “shorter but true account” written by Nephi. Mormon was here referring to Nephi the son of Nephi, since at this point his remarks seem to be confined to the twenty five years following the manifestation of the sign of the birth of Christ. This “shorter but true account” given by Nephi the son of Nephi was recorded on the large plates of Nephi and served as the basis for the Book of Mormon’s version of what happened during the twenty-five years. Terrence L. Szink, *Studies in Scripture*, 8:134)

11 And behold, I do make the record on plates which I have made with mine own hands.

12 And behold, I am called ^aMormon, (This is the first time in the abridgement of the large plates that Mormon identifies himself by name. His name appears in the Words of Mormon, but that book is at the end of the small plates of Nephi. The name of Mormon’s father was Mormon. The Prophet Joseph Smith linked the word Mormon with the meaning “more good.” *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 300. McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:22) being called after the ^bland of Mormon, the land in which Alma did establish the church among the people, yea, the first church which was established among them after their transgression.

13 Behold, I am a disciple (in his case this also means an Apostle) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been ^acalled of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life.

PREACH MY GOSPEL: THE BOOK OF MORMON TESTIFIES OF CHRIST: WHAT REASONS DID THE BOOK OF MORMON PROPHETS GIVE FOR WRITING THEIR RECORDS? 1 Nephi 6:4-6; 1 Nephi 9:3-5; 2 Nephi 4:15-16; 2 Nephi 25:23-29; 2 Nephi 26:15-16; 2 Nephi 29:11-14; 2 Nephi 33:13-15; Jacob 1:4-7; Jacob 4:1-6, 12; Enos 1:13; Jarom 1:2; Omni 1:25-26; Words of Mormon 1:3-8; Alma 37:2, 14; 3 Nephi 5:14-15; Mormon 8:35; D&C 3:16-20; D&C 10:46-48.

14 And it hath become expedient that I, according to the will of God, that the prayers of those who have gone hence, who were the holy ones, should be fulfilled according to their faith, should make a ^arecord of these things which have been done—

15 Yea, a ^asmall record of that which hath taken place from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem, even down until the present time.

16 Therefore I do make my record from the accounts which have been given by those who were before me, until the commencement of my day;

17 And then I do make a ^arecord of the things which I have seen with mine own eyes.

18 And I know the record which I make to be a just (To say that his record is “just” is to say that it is right and lawful; for him to say that it is true is to attest that it is correct, reliable, or trustworthy.

McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:23) and a true record; nevertheless there are many things which, according to our ^alanguage, we are not able to ^bwrite.

19 And now I make an end of my saying, which is of myself, and proceed to give my account of the

things which have been before me.

20 I am Mormon, and a pure ^adescendant of Lehi. I have reason to bless my God and my Savior Jesus Christ, that he brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem, (and ^bno one knew it save it were himself and those whom he brought out of that land) and that he hath given me and my people so much knowledge unto the salvation of our souls.

21 Surely he hath ^ablessed the house of ^bJacob, and hath been ^cmerciful unto the seed of Joseph.

22 And ^ainsomuch as the children of Lehi have kept his commandments he hath blessed them and prospered them according to his word.

23 Yea, and surely shall he again bring a ^aremnant of the seed of Joseph to the ^bknowledge of the Lord their God.

24 And as surely as the Lord liveth, will he ^agather in from the four quarters of the earth all the remnant of the ^bseed of Jacob, who are scattered abroad upon all the face of the earth. (What was the object of gathering the Jews, or the people of God in any age of the world? The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the ways of salvation; for there are certain ordinances and principles that, when they are taught and practiced, must be done in a place or house built for that purpose. It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days, to build unto the Lord a house to prepare them for the ordinances and endowments, washings and anointings, etc. If a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God, he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord. Joseph Smith, History of the Church, 5:423-424)

25 And as he hath ^acovenanted with all the house of Jacob, even so shall the covenant wherewith he hath covenanted with the house of Jacob be fulfilled in his own due time, unto the ^brestoring all the house of Jacob unto the knowledge of the covenant that he hath covenanted with them.

26 And then shall they ^aknow their Redeemer, who is Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and then shall they be gathered in from the four quarters of the earth unto their own lands, from whence they have been dispersed; yea, as the Lord liveth so shall it be. Amen.

* Verse 7 [A.D. 21—26].

3 Nephi 6

The Nephites prosper—Pride, wealth, and class distinctions arise—The Church is rent with dissensions—Satan leads the people in open rebellion—Many prophets cry repentance and are slain—Their murderers conspire to take over the government. [Between A.D. 26 and 30]

1 AND now it came to pass that the people of the Nephites did all return to their own lands in the ^atwenty and sixth year, every man, with his family, his flocks and his herds, his ^ahorses and his cattle, and all things whatsoever did belong unto them.

2 And it came to pass that they had ^anot eaten up all their provisions; therefore they did take with them all that they had not devoured, of all their grain of every kind, and their gold, and their silver, and all their precious things, and they did return to their own lands and their possessions, both on the north and on the south, both on the land northward and on the land southward.

3 And they granted unto those robbers who had ^aentered into a covenant (They show mercy to their former enemies.) to keep the peace of the land, who were desirous to remain Lamanites, lands, according to their numbers, that they might have, with their labors, wherewith to subsist upon; and thus they did establish peace in all the land.

4 And they began again to prosper and to wax great; and the twenty and sixth and seventh years passed away, and there was great ^aorder in the land; and they had formed their laws according to equity and justice. (Among the Lord's people, equity and justice must always prevail. All who are or who can be

called Saints must learn to live in a state of equality one with another. Describing such a state, the Lord spoke to our generation, saying: “In your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld.” (D&C 70:14) “For if ye are not equal in earthly things ye cannot be equal in obtaining heavenly things. (D&C 78:6) McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:26)

5 And now there was nothing in all the land to hinder the people from prospering continually, except they should fall into transgression. (Joseph Smith: “No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done” (*History of the Church*, 4:540).)

6 And now it was ^aGidgiddoni, and the judge, ^bLachoneus, and those who had been appointed leaders, who had established this great peace in the land.

7 And it came to pass that there were many cities built anew, and there were many old cities repaired.

8 And there were many ^ahighways cast up, and many roads made, which led from city to city, and from land to land, and from place to place.

9 And thus passed away the twenty and eighth year, and the people had continual peace.

10 But it came to pass in the *twenty and ninth year **there began to be some disputings among the people** (Oops, here we go again. This is only three years after they had established peace.); **and some were lifted up unto pride and ^aboastings because of their exceedingly great riches, yea, even unto great persecutions;** (It is difficult to read this chapter without a strong feeling that this part of Nephite history is being recounted as a warning to us of the last days. McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:27)

11 For there were many ^amerchants in the land, and also many ^blawyers, and many officers. (This verse, a brief characterization of the economic system of the day, may also be a warning for our own. Perhaps Mormon sought to warn us of the perils of a society which does not strike the needed balance between production and supervision. McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:27)

12 And the people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their ^ariches and their chances for learning; yea, some were ^bignorant because of their poverty, and others did receive great ^clearning because of their riches. (The spirit and warning of this verse is distinctly relevant to our day. Education, like the priesthood, is a blessing of God given to his servants that they might reach out and lift and exalt others. It is no less congruent for the educated to despise the unlearned than it is for those who hold the priesthood or spurn and disdain those who do not hold that sacred authority. The priesthood can be magnified only as it is used to lift and bless others. To attempt to hoard the blessings of the priesthood or to revel in an office or calling is to lose the authority and power of the priesthood. So it is with education. To fail to use it properly and providently, to the edification and blessing of others, is to become narrow and ignorant. McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:27. Robert Heilbrunner said: No other civilization has permitted the calculus of self-interest so to dominate its culture. It has transmogrified greed and philistinism into social virtues and subordinated all values to commercial values. Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 3:308. Joseph Smith had been careful to avoid emphasis on rank among the members of the Church. Although he was the greatest prophet of this dispensation and arguably the greatest prophet ever, excepting Jesus Christ, he was known simply as “Brother Joseph.” “Some of us may mock our brother because he has a ‘lesser’ occupational, civic, or ecclesiastical standing. King Benjamin got to the core of the matter when he observed: ‘And I, even I, whom ye call your king, am no better than ye yourselves are; for I am also of the dust.’ (Mosiah 2:26.) If King Benjamin were clear with respect to the occupational and civic areas, Joseph Smith was crystal clear about ecclesiastical condescension: ‘If a high priest comes along, and goes to snub either of them in their presidency, because they are Seventies, let them knock the

man's teeth down his throat—I mean spiritually.' (*History of the Church* 5:368.) He even applied the same standard to himself: 'Many persons think a prophet must be a great deal better than anybody else. Suppose I would condescend—yes, I will call it condescend, to be a great deal better than any of you, I would be raised up to the highest heaven; and who should I have to accompany me? ... I do not want you to think that I am very righteous, for I am not. God judges men according to the use they make of the light which He gives them.' (*History of the Church* 5:401.) ... Men are not chosen for privilege but for their capacity to bless others. The Spirit moved President John Taylor to write: "Our Heavenly Father is desirous to promote the happiness and welfare of the whole of the human family; and if we, any of us, hold any Priesthood, it is simply for that same purpose, and not for our personal aggrandizement, or for our own honor, or pomp, or position; but we hold it in the interest of God and for the salvation of the people, that through it we may promote their happiness, blessing and prosperity, temporal and spiritual, both here and in the world to come." (*Journal of Discourses* 22:230.)" (Gary L. Bunker, "Mocking Our Brother," *Ensign*, Apr. 1975, 36))

13 **Some were lifted up in pride** ("Pride gets no pleasure out of possessing something but, possessing more of it than the next man... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition has gone, pride has gone." (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, pp. 109-110 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 400. Ezra Taft Benson: "Pride is a very misunderstood sin, and many a work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540). sinning in ignorance (see Mosiah 3:11; 3 Nephi 6:18). In the scriptures there is no such thing as righteous pride—it is always considered a sin. Therefore, no matter how the world uses the term, we must understand how God uses the term so we can understand the language of holy writ and profit thereby (see 2 Nephi 4:15; Mosiah 1:3–7; Alma 5:61). "Most of us think of pride as self-centeredness, conceit, boastfulness, arrogance, or haughtiness. All of these are elements of the sin, but the heart, or core, is still missing. "The central feature of pride is enmity—enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen. *Enmity* means 'hatred toward, hostility to, or a state of opposition.' It is the power by which Satan wishes to reign over us" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 3; or *Ensign*, May 1989, 4).), and others were exceedingly humble; some did return railing for railing, ("Although most of us don't have to deal with persecution, we are often 'provoked' by small things. Rudeness, nagging, disobedience, waiting, disagreements, disappointment, and unfulfilled expectations can irritate us, particularly when we are tired, sick, or in a hurry. At such times, our first impulse may be to react with irritation, anger, or contention. But we can choose to react instead with charity and not be 'easily provoked.' (Moro. 7:45.) We can turn the other cheek (see Matt. 5:38-39) and respond with patience and kindness. How do we develop a spirit of charity that keeps us from being provoked? One approach is to concentrate on ways to control our anger or impatience. Taking a deep breath and stopping to think for a moment before speaking sometimes helps. Getting in the habit of...returning good for evil drains the heart of anger. By learning to avoid contention and to control our anger, we stop evil from being passed along and become more like the Savior, whose sacrifice of self made eternal life possible for all who come unto him and emulate his example." (*Ensign*, July 1988, p. 47)) while others would receive railing and ^apersecution and all manner of ^bafflictions, and would not turn and ^crevile again, but were humble and penitent before God. (**True Saints.**)

14 And thus there became a great inequality in all the land, insomuch that the church began to be broken up; yea, insomuch that in the *thirtieth year the church was broken up in all the land save it were among a few of the Lamanites who were converted unto the true faith; and ^athey would not depart from it, for they were firm, and steadfast, and immovable, willing with all ^bdiligence to keep the commandments of the Lord.

15 Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—^aSatan had great ^bpower, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and ^criches, and the vain things of the world. (This seems to describe our society very well. We seek riches, power and the vain things of the world.)

16 And thus Satan did lead away the hearts of the people to do all manner of iniquity; therefore they had enjoyed peace but a few years.

17 And thus, in the commencement of the thirtieth year—the people having been ^adelivered up for the space of a long time to be carried about by the ^btemptations of the devil (Neal A. Maxwell: “This people actually lost both personal and social control, as these words vividly portray: ‘And thus, in the commencement of the thirtieth year—the people having been delivered up for the space of a long time to be carried about by the temptations of the devil whithersoever he desired to carry them, and to do whatsoever iniquity he desired they should—and thus they were in a state of awful wickedness.’ Surely it should give us more pause than it does to think of how casually we sometimes give to him who could not control his own ego in the premortal world such awful control over our egos here. We often let the adversary do indirectly now what we refused to let him do directly then. Thus we can expect no immunity from either trial or temptation, because these are the common lot of mankind. Mortality without the dimension of temptation or trial would not be full proving, it would be a school with soft credits and no hard courses. These features of mortality were among the very conditions we agreed to before we undertook this mortal experience. We cannot renege on that commitment now.” (*We Will Prove Them Herewith*, p. 45)) whithersoever he desired to carry them, and to do whatsoever iniquity he desired they should—and thus in the commencement of this, the thirtieth year, they were in a state of awful wickedness.

18 Now they did not sin ^aignorantly, for they knew the ^bwill of God concerning them, for it had been taught unto them; therefore they did wilfully ^crebel against God.

19 And now it was in the days of Lachoneus, the son of ^aLachoneus, for Lachoneus did fill the seat of his father and did govern the people that year.

20 And there began to be men ^ainspired from heaven and sent forth, standing among the people in all the land, preaching and testifying boldly of the sins and iniquities of the people, and testifying unto them concerning the redemption which the Lord would make for his people, or in other words, the resurrection of Christ; and they did testify boldly of his ^bdeath and sufferings. (Whenever people begin to go astray from God, there will always be prophets to warn them. God would rather have his children repent than to be destroyed.)

21 Now there were many of the people who were exceedingly angry because of those who testified of these things (Even though they knew the prophets spoke the truth.); and those who were angry were chiefly the chief judges, and they who ^ahad been high priests and lawyers; yea, all those who were lawyers were angry with those who testified of these things. (Sounds like our day. The ACLU)

22 Now there was no lawyer nor judge nor high priest that could have power to condemn any one to death save their condemnation was signed by the governor of the land.

23 Now there were many of those ^awho testified of the things pertaining to Christ who testified boldly, who were taken and put to death ^bsecretly by the judges, that the knowledge of their death came not unto the governor of the land until after their death.

24 Now behold, this was contrary to the laws of the land, that any man should be put to death except they had power from the governor of the land—

25 Therefore a complaint came up unto the land of Zarahemla, to the governor of the land, against these judges who had condemned the prophets of the Lord unto ^adeath, not according to the law.

26 Now it came to pass that they were taken and brought up before the judge, to be judged of the crime which they had done, according to the ^alaw which had been given by the people.

27 Now it came to pass that those judges had many friends and kindreds; and the remainder, yea, even almost all the lawyers and the high priests, did gather themselves together, and unite with the kindreds of those judges who were to be tried according to the law.

28 And they did enter into a ^acovenant one with another, yea, even into that covenant which was given by them of old, which covenant was given and administered by the ^bdevil, to combine against all righteousness. (Maybe these are those that had been Gadianton robbers who were breaking their

covenant of peace and starting up again where they left off. We need to combine against all wickedness.)

29 Therefore they did combine against the people of the Lord, and enter into a covenant to destroy them, and to deliver those who were guilty of murder from the grasp of justice, which was about to be administered according to the law.

30 And they did set at defiance the law and the rights of their country; and they did covenant one with another to destroy the governor, and to establish a ^aking over the land, that the land should no more be at ^bliberty but should be subject unto kings.

* Verse 1 [A.D. 26].

3 Nephi 7

The chief judge is murdered, the government is overthrown, and the people divide into tribes—Jacob, an antichrist, becomes king of a league of tribes—Nephi preaches repentance and faith in Christ—Angels minister to him daily, and he raises his brother from the dead—Many repent and are baptized. [Between A.D. 30 and 33]

1 NOW behold, I will show unto you that they did not establish a king over the land; but in this same year, yea, the thirtieth year, they did destroy upon the judgment-seat, yea, did murder the chief judge of the land.

2 And the people were divided one against another; and they did ^aseparate one from another into tribes, every man according to his family and his kindred and friends; and thus they did destroy the government of the land. (Joseph Fielding Smith: “Now I tell you it is time the people of the United States were waking up with the understanding that if they don’t save the Constitution from the dangers that threaten it, we will have a change of government.” (Conference Report, Apr. 1950, p. 159 as taken from Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 402) Joseph Smith: “Even this nation will be on the very verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground, and when the Constitution is upon the brink of ruin, this people will be the staff upon which the nation shall lean, and they shall bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction.” (quoted in *Journal of Discourses* 7:15 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 403) But whatever may be our fate, be assured that this [Constitution] will stand. We ... face difficult days in this beloved land... It may cost us blood before we are through. It is my conviction, however, that when the Lord comes, the Stars and Stripes will be floating on the breeze over this people. Ezra Taft Benson, *The Constitution, a Heavenly Banner*, 32-33. Will the Constitution be destroyed? No: it will be held inviolate by this people; and, as Joseph Smith said, “The time will come when the destiny of the nation will hang upon a single thread. At that critical juncture, this people will step forth and save it from the threatened destruction.” It will be so. Brigham Young, JD 7:15. The Lord told the Prophet Joseph Smith there would be an attempt to overthrow the country by destroying the Constitution. Joseph Smith predicted that the time would come when the Constitution would hang, as it were, by a thread, and at that time “this people will step forth and save it from the threatened destruction.” (Journal History, Brigham Young’s speech, 4 July 1854) It is my conviction that the elders of Israel, widely spread over the nation, will at that crucial time successfully rally the righteous of our country and provide the necessary balance of strength to save the institution of constitutional government. Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Oct 1961, 70. Men may fail in this country, earthquakes may come, seas may heave beyond their bounds, there may be great drought, disaster, and hardship, but this nation, founded on principles laid down by men whom God raised up, will never fail... Yes, I repeat, men may fail, but this nation won’t fail... I plead with you not to preach pessimism... It is the nation that will stand despite whatever trials or crises it may yet have to pass through. Harold B. Lee, *Ye Are the Light of the World*, 350-351. Yes, it was here under a free government and a strong nation that protection was provided for

his restored Church. Now God will not permit his base of operations – America – to be destroyed. He has promised protection to this land if we will but serve the God of the land. He has also promised protection to the righteous even, if necessary, to send fire from heaven to destroy their enemies. No, God’s base of operations will not be destroyed. But it may be weakened and made less effective. Ezra Taft Benson, CR, Apr. 1962, 104.)

3 And every tribe did appoint a chief or a leader over them; and thus they became tribes and leaders of tribes. (The D&C says that prior to the Second Coming, all nations will be destroyed. Will the American government be destroyed so that we will need to live in families like the Nephites?)

4 Now behold, there was no man among them save he had much family and many kindreds and friends; therefore their tribes became exceedingly great.

5 Now all this was done, and there were no wars as yet among them; and all this iniquity had come upon the people ^abecause they did ^byield themselves unto the power of Satan. (We need to yield ourselves to God.)

6 And the regulations of the government were destroyed, because of the ^asecret combination of the friends and kindreds of those who murdered the prophets.

7 And they did cause a great contention in the land, insomuch that the more righteous part of the people had nearly all become wicked; yea, there were but few righteous men among them.

8 And thus six years had not passed away since the more part of the people had turned from their righteousness, like the dog to his ^avomit, or like the sow to her wallowing in the mire.

9 Now this secret combination, which had brought so great iniquity upon the people, did gather themselves together, and did place at their head a man whom they did call Jacob; (Jacob is a Hebrew name meaning “supplant” or “deceive.” McConkie, Millet, and Top, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol., 4:31)

10 And they did call him their king; therefore he became a king over this wicked band; and he was one of the chiefest who had given his voice against the prophets who testified of Jesus.

11 And it came to pass that they were not so strong in number as the tribes of the people, who were united together save it were their leaders did establish their laws, every one according to his tribe; nevertheless they were enemies; notwithstanding they were not a righteous people, yet they were united in the hatred of those who had entered into a covenant to ^adestroy the government.

12 Therefore, Jacob seeing that their enemies were more numerous than they, he being the king of the band, therefore he commanded his people that they should take their flight into the northernmost part of the land, and there build up unto themselves a ^akingdom, until they were joined by dissenters, (for he flattered them that there would be many dissenters) and they become sufficiently strong to contend with the tribes of the people; and they did so.

13 And so speedy was their march that it could not be impeded until they had gone forth out of the reach of the people. And thus ended the thirtieth year; and thus were the affairs of the people of Nephi.

14 And it came to pass in the ^athirty and first year that they were divided into tribes, every man according to his family, kindred and friends; nevertheless they had come to an agreement that they would not go to war one with another; but they were not united as to their laws, and their manner of government, for they were established according to the minds of those who were their chiefs and their leaders. But they did establish very strict laws that one tribe should not trespass against another, insomuch that in some degree they had peace in the land; nevertheless, their hearts were turned from the Lord their God, and they did stone the ^aprophets and did cast them out from among them.

15 And it came to pass that ^aNephi—having been visited by angels and also the voice of the Lord, therefore having seen angels, and being eye-witness, and having had power given unto him that he might know concerning the ministry of Christ, and also being eye-witness to their quick return from righteousness unto their wickedness and abominations;

16 Therefore, being ^agrieved for the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds—went forth among them in that same year, and began to testify, boldly, repentance and remission of sins

through faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.

17 And he did minister many things unto them; and all of them cannot be written, and a part of them would not suffice, therefore they are not written in this book. And Nephi did minister with ^apower (through righteousness) and with great authority. (through ordination) (Power and authority are also mentioned in D&C 107 as the power of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve in our day. 22 Of the ^aMelchizedek Priesthood, three ^bPresiding High Priests, chosen by the body, appointed and ordained to that office, and ^cupheld by the confidence, faith, and prayer of the church, form a quorum of the Presidency of the Church. 23 The ^atwelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve ^bApostles, or special ^cwitnesses of the name of Christ in all the world—thus differing from other officers in the church in the duties of their calling. 24 And they form a quorum, ^aequal in authority and power to the three presidents previously mentioned.)

18 And it came to pass that they were angry with him, even because he had greater power than they, for it were ^anot possible that they could disbelieve his words, for so great was his faith on the Lord Jesus Christ that angels did minister unto him daily. (As wickedness increases, so will righteousness. With the world becoming increasingly wicked, the members of the Church must be more righteous and worthy to exercise the priesthood and receive the ministering of angels, as needed. Brigham Young said: The Lord is here with us, not in person, but his angels are around us, and he takes cognizance of every act of the children of men, as individuals and as nations. He is here ready by his agents, the angels, ... to bring most perfect and absolute deliverance unto all who put their trust in him, when they are ready to receive it... What is the difference between Saints of God and an angel of God? One is clothed upon with mortality, the other has passed through mortality and has received the celestial glory of our Heavenly Father, and is free from the contaminating influences of sin that we have to contend with... When the Lord commands those invisible beings, shall I say, those who have had their resurrection? yes, millions and millions more than the inhabitants of this earth, they can fight your battles. Discourses of Brigham Young, John A. Widtsoe. Unlocking the Book of Mormon, 421.)

19 And in the name of Jesus did he cast out devils and ^aunclean spirits; and even his ^bbrother did he ^craise from the dead, after he had been stoned and suffered death by the people.

20 And the people saw it, and did witness of it, and were angry with him because of his power; and he did also do ^amany more miracles, in the sight of the people, in the name of Jesus. (What was the mortal offense of Jesus? When the elders of the Jews, the high priests, and the Levites came together, they decided there was only one solution to the problem, and that was to put Jesus to death, get him out of the way. That was when he raised Lazarus. That was the thing that decided it. You go back and look there. They put up with everything, but when he raised Lazarus from the dead, that was too much. They decided that he would have to be put to death. The doctors came together then. And it's the same thing here. When the people saw it they "were angry with him because of his power." Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 3:315)

21 And it came to pass that the thirty and first year did pass away, and there were but few (These are the true Saints. Much like today, the faithful members of the Church are few in comparison to the rest of the world.) who were converted unto the Lord; but as many as were converted did truly signify unto the people (The members of the Church do their missionary work. Sometimes it is difficult to tell people the doctrine and beliefs of the Church, but when we bear our testimonies, they cannot disagree with that.) that they had been ^avisited by the power and ^bSpirit of God, which was in Jesus Christ, in whom they believed.

22 And as many as had devils cast out from them, and were ^ahealed of their sicknesses and their infirmities, did truly manifest unto the people that they had been wrought upon by the Spirit of God, and had been healed; and they did show forth signs also and did do some miracles among the people.

23 Thus passed away the *thirty and second year also. And Nephi did cry unto the people in the commencement of the thirty and third year; and he did preach unto them repentance and remission of sins.

24 Now I would have you to remember also, that there were none who were brought unto ^arepentance who were not baptized with water.

25 Therefore, there were ordained of Nephi, (Nephi held priesthood keys to organize the Church.) men unto this ministry, that all such as should come unto them should be ^abaptized with water, and this as a witness and a testimony before God, and unto the people, that they had repented and received a ^bremission of their sins.

26 And there were many in the commencement of this year that were baptized unto repentance; and thus the more part of the year did pass away. (We can still be righteous in a wicked world. Rulon G. Craven: “It is a frightening realization that the powers of evil will increase in the world. This brings us to the questions, What can we do? Is there a way to escape from the powers of evil? Yes, there is. “Members of the Church can overcome temptation by (1) obedience to the guiding principles and doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ, (2) following the counsel of our prophets and leaders, and (3) living in such a way that our lives are constantly influenced by the power of the Holy Ghost. “Train your mind to obey gospel principles and covenants. Stay on the highway of daily personal and family prayer, the avenue of studying the scriptures and the teachings of the prophets, the road of serving in the Church, and be willing to get off the wrong road daily and on the right road leading to eternal life. Your greatest protection against temptation is an active and vibrant testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which binds us to our Heavenly Father” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 107; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 77).)