

# Gospel Doctrine Lesson 4: The Things Which I Saw While I Was Carried Away in the Spirit (1 Nephi 11-15)

**LESSON GOAL:** To help us understand Nephi's vision of the future and how the warnings and promises in it apply to us today.

**Henry B. Eyring:** "Before writing this, I set aside a short period of time to read the Book of Mormon. It changed my life. Suddenly, I saw it as a movie, in full color and on a wide screen. People became more real to me. I pictured the Savior and His visit almost as if I had been there. And I had a feeling for Nephi, who somehow knew about the change you and I want so much to make in our lives. If I was going to teach what the change is, I would use this scripture:

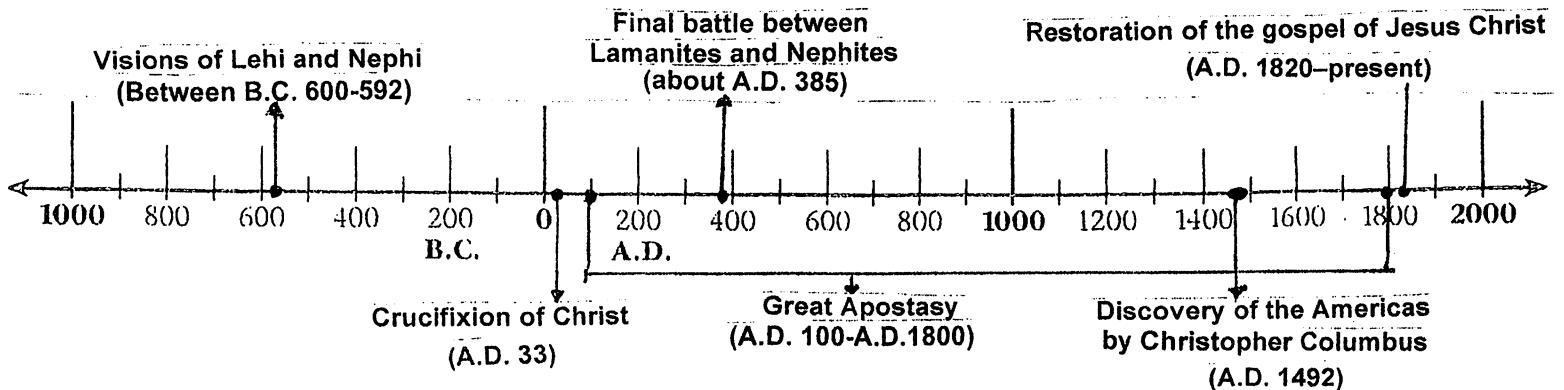
**Mosiah 27:25–26:** And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that **all mankind**, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, **must be born again**; yea, born of God, **changed** from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; **And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.**"

"Now, that is the change. It is not to be a little better. It is not to know a little more. It is to be born again, to be changed by the power of the Atonement.

"I will make you this promise about reading the Book of Mormon: You will be drawn to it as you understand that the Lord has embedded in it His message to you. Nephi, Mormon, and Moroni knew that, and those who put it together put in messages for you. . . There are simple, direct messages that will tell us how to change. That is what the book is about. **It is a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Atonement and how it may work in our lives.** You will have an experience this year feeling the change that comes **by the power of the Atonement** because of studying this book" ("The Book of Mormon Will Change Your Life," CES Address at BYU, 17 August 1990, 1).

**President Ezra Taft Benson:** "I bless you with increased understanding of the Book of Mormon. I promise you that from this moment forward, **if [you] will daily sup from its pages and abide by its precepts, God will pour out upon each child of Zion and the Church a blessing hitherto unknown.** (*Ensign*, May 1986, 78).

## TIME LINE OF NEPHI'S VISION



### 1. Nephi sees the future of his descendants and his brothers' descendants.

To see, Nephi had to desire:

**1 Ne. 10:17:** I, Nephi, having heard all the words of my father, . . . **was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost**, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men.

Conditions on earth preceding the Savior's visit to America:

**1 Ne. 12:1-2:** And it came to pass that the angel said unto me: Look, and behold thy seed, and also the seed of thy brethren. And I looked and beheld the land of promise; and I beheld multitudes of people, yea, even as it were in number as many as the sand of the sea.

**2** And it came to pass that I beheld multitudes gathered together to battle, one against the other; and I beheld wars, and rumors of wars, and great slaughters with the sword among my people.

## b. The discovery and colonization of the Americas.

**Christopher Columbus:** From my first youth onward I was a seaman and have so continued until this day . . . . The **Lord was well disposed to my desire**, and **He bestowed upon me courage and understanding**; knowledge of seafaring He gave me in abundance, of astrology as much as was needed, and of geometry and astronomy likewise. Further, he gave me joy and cunning in drawing maps and thereon cities, mountains, rivers, islands, and harbours, each one in its place. I have seen and truly I have studied all books—cosmographies, histories, chronicles, and philosophies, and other arts, for which our Lord unlocked my mind, sent me upon the sea, and gave me fire for the deed. Those who heard of my emprise called it foolish, mocked me, and laughed. **But who can doubt but that the Holy Ghost inspired me** (Jacob Wasserman, Columbus, *Don Quixote of the Seas*, 19-20, 46).

**Ardie E. Parshall:** “In the last 50 or so years, though, an awareness of another side of Columbus has been growing among historians. It seems that Columbus was not only a man of worldly achievement, but also a man of God. He was illiterate until the age of 25, and when he did learn to read and write he applied himself to studying the scriptures and recording his reflections in a notebook that was finally translated into English a few years ago. **His notebook, called now the *Book of Prophecies*, records many Biblical passages foretelling the world’s future.** Some of these prophecies are annotated by Columbus, indicating that **he saw himself as led by God to fulfill the words of the prophets. For example, he copied out this scripture:**

**Jeremiah 1:5:** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; **I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.**

His comment added to that verse was: “This is what you ordained beforehand according to your good pleasure, such [prophecies] as were written in your book **about me** in conformity with your secret purpose.”

He suggested that God had shown him exactly where to find the New World:

**“Our Lord made me the messenger** of the new heaven and the new earth, of which he spoke in the Book of Revelation by St. John, after having spoken of it by the mouth of Isaiah; and **he showed me the place where to find it.”**

Usually when we hear people interpret prophecies as referring specifically to them, we suspect a form of mental illness – and almost always we’re right. In light of Nephi’s vision, though, I’m inclined to consider that Columbus truly was led by the Spirit of God, and that his mission was to fulfill prophecies made centuries before he was born – especially when we read elsewhere in his notebook that he recognized his voyages as fulfilling another specific verse of scripture:

**John 10:16:** And **other sheep I have**, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and **they shall hear my voice**; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

(LDS Gospel Doctrine.com, Lesson 4)

## c. The Apostasy and the loss of many plain and precious parts of the Bible.

### “PLAIN AND PRECIOUS” TRUTHS CLARIFIED IN THE BOOK OF MORMON:

#### The Atonement and resurrection

**Alma 11: 42:** Now, there is a death which is called a temporal death; and **the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death**, that all shall be raised from this temporal death.

43 **The spirit and the body shall be reunited again** in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time; and we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing even as we know now, and have a bright recollection of all our guilt.

44 Now, **this restoration shall come to all**, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every thing shall be restored to its perfect frame, as it is now, or in the body, and shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, to be judged according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.

45 Now, behold, I have spoken unto you concerning the death of the mortal body, and also concerning the resurrection of the mortal body. I say unto you **that this mortal body is raised to an immortal body**, that is from death, even from the first death unto life, that **they can die no more; their spirits uniting with their bodies**, never to be divided; thus the whole becoming spiritual and immortal, that they can no more see corruption.

#### Infant Baptism

**Moroni 8:11:** And **their little children need no repentance, neither baptism.** Behold, baptism is unto repentance to the fulfilling the commandments unto the remission of sins.

12 But **little children are alive in Christ**, even from the foundation of the world; if not so, God is a partial God, and also a changeable God, and a respecter to persons; for how many little children have died without baptism!

### Conditions after the Savior's visit:

**1 Ne. 12:11:** And the angel said unto me: **Look!** And I looked, and beheld three generations pass away in righteousness; and **their garments were white** even like unto the Lamb of God. And the angel said unto me: These are made white in the blood of the Lamb, **because of their faith in him.**

### After four generations of righteousness, Nephi's seed and his brothers' seed begin battling:

**1 Ne. 12:14-15:** And the angel said unto me: Behold thy seed, and also the seed of thy brethren. And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the people of my seed gathered together in multitudes against the seed of my brethren; and **they were gathered together to battle.**

### Nephi's descendants overpowered and destroyed:

**1 Ne. 12:19-25:** . . . I beheld and saw that **the seed of my brethren did contend against my seed,** . . . because of the pride of my seed, and the temptations of the devil, I beheld that the seed of my brethren did overpower the people of my seed. And it came to pass that I beheld, and saw the people of the seed of my brethren that they had overcome my seed; and they went forth in multitudes upon the face of the land. And I saw them gathered together in multitudes; and **I saw wars and rumors of wars among them;** and in wars and rumors of wars **I saw many generations pass away.** And the angel said unto me: **Behold these shall dwindle in unbelief.** And it came to pass that I beheld, after they had dwindled in unbelief **they became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.**

## 2. Nephi sees the formation of the great and abominable church, the colonization of the Americas, the Apostasy, and the Restoration of the gospel.

**Definition of the Great and Abominable Church:** The Church has not officially identified any specific organization as the great and abominable church. Therefore, any conclusions about specific organizations remain our private views and cannot be taught as Church doctrine. **"The great and abominable church is a symbol of apostasy** in all its forms. It is a representation of **all false doctrine, false worship, and irreligious attitudes.** It does not represent any specific church in the world today" (*Gospel Doctrine Lesson Manual*, 17).

**Bruce R. McConkie:** "The titles church of the devil and great and abominable church are used to identify all churches or organizations of whatever name or nature -- whether political, philosophical, educational, economic, social, fraternal, civic, or religious -- **which are designed to take men on a course that leads away from God** and his laws and thus from salvation in the kingdom of God.... Any church or organization of any kind whatever which satisfies the innate religious longings of man and **keeps him from coming to the saving truths of Christ and his gospel is therefore not of God.**" (*Mormon Doctrine*, 137-38).

### a. The formation of the great and abominable church.

#### How this church treats the Saints:

**1 Ne. 13:5:** And the angel said unto me: Behold the formation of a church which is most abominable above all other churches, which **slayeth the saints of God,** yea, and **tortureth** them and **bindeth them down,** and **yoketh them** with a yoke of iron, and **bringeth them down into captivity.**

#### The founder of this organization:

**1 Ne. 13:6:** And it came to pass that I beheld this great and abominable church; and **I saw the devil that he was the founder of it.**

#### The desires of this organization:

**1 Ne. 13:8:** And the angel spake unto me, saying: Behold the **gold,** and the **silver,** and the **silks,** and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing, and the harlots, **are the desires** of this great and abominable church.

#### The reason the abominable church destroys the Saints:

**1 Ne. 13:9:** And also for the **praise of the world** do they destroy the saints of God, and bring them down into captivity.

#### This abominable church altered the scriptures:

**1 Ne. 13:26:** And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, **they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.**

#### The motivation for the abominable church to change the scriptures

**1 Ne. 13:27:** And all this have they done **that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men.**

## Baptism and Baptismal Prayer

**3 Nephi 11: 21** And the Lord said unto him: I give unto you power that ye shall baptize this people when I am again ascended into heaven.

22 And again the Lord called others, and said unto them likewise; and he gave unto them power to baptize. And he said unto them: On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you.

23 Verily I say unto you, that whoso repenteth of his sins through your words, and desireth to be baptized in my name, on this wise shall ye baptize them—**Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them.**

24 And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying:

25 **Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.**

26 **And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water.**

### d. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel.

The Lord preserved His word to come forth in latter-days in the Book of Mormon:

**1 Ne. 13:35-36:** For, behold, saith the Lamb: I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, **which shall be plain and precious**; and after thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren, behold, **these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles**, by the gift and power of the Lamb. And **in them shall be written my gospel**, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation.

The purposes of the Book of Mormon:

**1 Ne. 13:40-41:** And the angel spake unto me, saying: These last records, which thou hast seen among the Gentiles, shall **establish the truth of the first**, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them; and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that **the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father**, and the Savior of the world; and that **all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved.**

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

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

#### Destiny Of The Gentiles

1 Nephi 14:1-7

Blessings	Cursings
The Lord will be manifest to them in power, in word, and in deed (v1).	They shall be cast into the pit which they have helped dig, to their utter destruction (v3).
The Lord will remove their stumbling blocks (v1).	Those who repent not shall perish (v5).
They shall be numbered among the house of Israel (v2).	They shall be brought into captivity and destruction, spiritually and temporally (v7).
They shall be a blessed people upon the promised land forever (v2).	
They shall not be brought down into captivity (v2).	

Members of the Church in the last days will overcome persecution because they are armed:

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

### 4. Conclusion

To summarize, Nephi sees the vision of the tree of life, is given the interpretation of the dream, and is shown a vision of the history of the world including the Savior's ministry, the early church, the history of the Nephites and Lamanites, the Apostasy, the Restoration, the last days, the destructions which attend the Second Coming and the Millennium.

**1 Ne. 14:29-30:** And I bear record that I saw the things which my father saw, and the angel of the Lord did make them known unto me. And now I make an end of speaking concerning the things which I saw while I was carried away in the Spirit; and if all the things which I saw are not written, **the things which I have written are true.** And thus it is. Amen.