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Hellenism and the Vast and Hated Assembly of Satan

Understanding 1 Nephi 13 and 14

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Our study of 1 Nephi chapters 11-15 is very powerful and specific, and there is nothing like it in the Book of Mormon. We are looking at the visions of Nephi, and he is very much like his father; however, I am sure that Lehi's visions were detailed and longer and recorded in his record, which we do not completely have. Nephi's vision is similar to his father's, but then we see that they are expounded upon from different points of view. In other words, Nephi records the same vision in 1 Nephi 13 and 14, but according to two different points of view. In chapter 13 we see a vision from Nephi's point of view as he stands on the earth seeing the temporal and historical events revealed before his eyes. In chapter 14, we see the same vision using similar terminology, but this vision is clearly revealed to Nephi from a heavenly perspective and God the Father's point of view.

Let's get started in Chapter 13. This is a long vision coming in sections, periods, or vignettes of historical time on the earth. There are different parts beginning in chapter 11, which has a lot of really sacred representations, and we will return to this chapter.

Chapter 13 starts with a new vision. Let me summarize the chapters up to 1 Nephi 13.

1 NEPHI CHAPTERS 11-12

Chapter 11 is the vision according to Nephi's desire. He wanted to know the meaning of his father's vision. And the Spirit and the angel give him the answers according to his desires in this chapter.

Chapter 12 is a new vision, which is a historical vision. It is a vision according to the point of view of Nephi with his two feet on the earth. The angel shows him a historical vision of his family for the next 1,500 years. Nephi is looking at this vision of his family's history. That is what chapter 12 is. Imagine having a vision of your posterity and what they will become. Would you do things differently today? Would you have more of a purpose for your life and legacy?

You can follow this vision throughout the whole Book of Mormon from 1 Nephi to 3 Nephi in Chapter 12, verses 1-9. 4 Nephi through Moroni covers verses 11 until verse 23, and then beyond Moroni. The vision is broken up into two sections, and each section begins with the angel telling Nephi to “Look!”

1 Nephi 12:1 And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And behold thy seed and also the seed of thy brother.

Then, in verse 11, the angel says:

1 Nephi 12:11 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.

That takes us to the end. It is kind of a mixture of, ‘Your father was seeing this in his vision, and the symbols that your father was seeing are played out in the history of your family.’ We will come back to that in a moment.

UNDERSTANDING NEPHI’S VISION IN 1 NEPHI CHAPTER 13

Then, in Chapter 13, we start a whole new vision. Instead of showing him a vision of his family, the vision begins anew with the command to “Look!”

1 Nephi 13:1 And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld many nations and kingdoms.

Every time the angel says, “Look!” that seems to be a new vision or at least the next scene of the vision. In this case, it is a new vision. Now, this vision is another earthly vision. It is Nephi standing with his two feet on the ground on the earth, seeing historical events of the world. It is another historical, earthly vision from Nephi’s point of view. We need to remember that.

There are two kinds of visions. There are the visions you see while you are standing here on the earth that have to do with temporal things. Then there are visions where you are taken elsewhere to see it, typically a higher vantage point to get a different perspective and understanding. These visions are usually before the throne of God, like with Lehi, Isaiah, John, and Ezekiel, or taken away from the earth where God shows you His perspective and how He sees things. This view is a very different view from the earth. This is an earthly vision, and it is from Nephi’s point of view, and it is about the history of the earth.

That being said, we should study these verses and listen to Nephi explain them from his earthly point of view.

1 Nephi chapters 13 and 14 begin a very different group of visions. Chapter 13 continues with a historical vision of events that will transpire here on earth from Nephi's perspective. Chapter 14, on the other hand, will be an apocalyptic vision of history from God's perspective. These are basically visions of similar topics according to two different perspectives.

Nephi goes through a number of different things.

1 Nephi 13:1-2 And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me, saying: Look! And I looked and beheld many nations and kingdoms. 2 And the angel said unto me: What beholdest thou? And I said: I behold many nations and kingdoms.

The angel asks Nephi questions because he, the angel, already has both perspectives, but he wants to ensure that Nephi understands what he is seeing because only God knows Nephi's thoughts. He asks him, 'What are you seeing from your point of view?' and Nephi says, 'I behold many nations and kingdoms' – earthly things.

WHO ARE THE GENTILES?

1 Nephi 13:3 And he said unto me: These are the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles.

The angel knows what Nephi is seeing, so let me explain some things to you. Yes, these are nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles. What are these nations that Nephi is seeing? And what are the kingdoms that he sees? The angel says they are of "the Gentiles." Remember that "Gentiles" comes from a Hebrew word that Nephi has heard and knows (Goyyim גויים) because Nephi speaks Hebrew as his first language. Goyyim גויים is a standard Hebrew word that means "nations." It is in reference to the nations other than the nation of Israel. These are non-Israelite nations and kingdoms.

In the Book of Mormon, the word "Gentiles" has a dual meaning. Whenever we see this word in the Book of Mormon, we must understand how the word is being used before identifying who the author is writing. In brief, a Gentile can be 1) someone who is not of lineal descent from the House of Israel or any of the Tribes of Israel and does not live in the land of Israel. 2) A Gentile can also be someone who does not yet know if they are from the House of Israel; in other words, they have not been revealed (as in a Patriarchal Blessing) that they descend from the House of Israel.

Remember, we can't forget 1 Nephi 13 is an earthly vision coming from Nephi's point of view of the earth's history.

THE MEANING OF THE GREAT AND ABOMINABLE CHURCH

1 Nephi 13:4 And it came to pass that I saw among the nations of the Gentiles the formation of a great church.

Nephi sees the formation of a “church ” among the Gentiles (non-Israelite people and nations). In Hebrew, the passage doesn’t say “great church, ” but this is the English translation, so we need to figure out what words Nephi would use in Hebrew. In general, if you were to explain what “great church” might mean, what words would come to mind? A gathering or assembly of people who believe in the same thing is a good start. We are not talking about an institution or denomination here. And we surely are not talking about the Catholic church in any of these chapters.

Nephi doesn’t give us any further information other than a large gathering or assembly is developing. In verse 5, we are going to see what this assembly of people is doing, and that is what is most important in the vision.

1 Nephi 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.

In this verse, we get a new word – “abominable.” This is an English word and is not the word that Nephi would use because we must remember that Nephi is not speaking English nor does he know the English language. These English words are the Prophet Joseph Smith’s translation of the words or signs that Nephi wrote down.

The word “abominable” describes what the people are doing, again, not who it is. They are slaying the Saints of God and torturing, binding, and yoking them with a yoke of iron and bringing them into captivity. What this gathering, assembly, or movement is doing is most important and is Nephi’s focus, and way more important than who they are. We can get an idea about when this is happening here because it is happening very early on, and it is happening by the first century A.D. and probably developing much earlier and greatly impacting Israel.

These people are not doing these abominable things underground or in secret. They are doing them out in the open. This is in-your-face stuff, a forceful impact on society or nations and kingdoms, including Israel, just before or around the time of Christ and into the time of the Apostolic early Church of Jesus Christ. This great church that is abominable is above ground.

1 Nephi 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.

Now, we are introduced to the phrase “great and abominable church, ” which is the phrase we want to work on. The devil is the founder of this church. The verses then go into more detail about what they do.

1 Nephi 13:7 and I also saw gold, and silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen, and all manner of precious clothing; and I saw many harlots. 8 And the angel spake unto me, saying: Behold the gold, and the silver, and the silks, and the scarlets, and the fine-twined linen, and the precious clothing and the harlots are the desires of this great and abominable church.

The focus is on what their desires are and what their goals are. The angel is not interested at all in who it is. He is mostly interested in what they are doing. Otherwise, the angel would probably have named it like he does in other places (see 1 Nephi 14:27).

Let’s understand the term “the great and abominable church.” Let’s look to see what this means from Nephi’s point of view.

What is the great and abominable church? We must be careful to analyze accurately what Nephi is describing. What exactly is Nephi describing then? We can speculate all we want as to who or what Nephi is describing. Nephi is not concerned with telling us Who the great and abominable church is, but he concentrates on What they do! This is what Nephi wants us to understand.

What is Nephi thinking? We will need to break down our phrase here to define and understand this great and abominable church fully.

Nephi is thinking and speaking in Hebrew. We must never forget that and remember this throughout our study of the Book of Mormon. In Hebrew, the word “great” is an adjective of size in Nephi’s thinking. In Hebrew, “great” is a very standard adjective – *gadol* גדול. In Greek, the word would be *meGas*. The word “great” informs us of the great size and extent of the abominable church. It also may refer to the entity's wealth and power because it keeps talking about the gold and silver and the things they have.

Where does the word “abominable” come from? The word “abominable” means idolatrous worship or gross sexual immorality, which typically goes along with idolatrous worship. In Hebrew, there are several words that describe this. One word is *sheqets* שֶׁקֶטֶס, meaning abominable, unclean, detested, filth, or idolatry. This Hebrew word appears eleven times in the Old Testament (see Leviticus 11 and Isaiah 66:17). Another possible Hebrew word is *to'evah* תוֹעֵבָה, meaning abominable, disgusting, wickedness, abhorrence. This Hebrew word appears over 110 times in the Old Testament (see Deuteronomy 7:25; 12:31; 1 Kings 14:24; Jeremiah 32:35). So, different words describe these abhorrent, idolatrous worshippers or their immorality

of some sort. In the Old Testament, idolatrous worship happens all the time. This word in the Old Testament is used many times to describe that which God hates and provokes his wrath. That is the definition of abominable (see Deuteronomy 12:31; Dan 11:31; 12:11; Matt 24:14, JS-Matthew 1:12-20). When we see the word abominable, we should be thinking these are the rebellious actions of Satan and his followers which God hates!

A “church” is an assembly, congregation, society, or association bonded by loyalty to something. In Hebrew, we have the word *qahel* קָהֵל or ‘edah עֵדָה. This is the word used every time in the Old Testament to talk about the gathering of Israel or the assembly of Israel (see Exodus 12:6; Numbers 14:5). Nephi knows that every time Israel is assembled, especially around the temple of God or the Tabernacle of the assembly, he knows that it is *qahel*. In Greek, which will lead us to English, is the word *Ekklesia*, which is the same as *qahel* קָהֵל, but it gets translated as church.

So, that being said, here is our definition of the “great and abominable church.” Therefore, the great and abominable church describes “an immense assembly or association of people or movement bound together by their loyalty to that which God hates.”

This is a rather long definition, but it helps us understand the Hebrew words and Hebrew thinking of Nephi, under this definition and description. This thing is bigger than one church building or denomination. This is a force that Satan uses to spread evil plan and continue his rebellion against God the Father and His Son.

We must be careful not to get caught up in speculation on who or what denomination this might be. I would also propose a clarifying understanding of what the great and abominable church is. I might propose that it can be understood as a vast and hated assembly of satan and his loyal followers.

Can you think of any historical time when there has been an assembly of people or widespread ideological compulsion amongst those loyal to the things that God hates? The era of Alexander the Great takes the lead. The great Greek emperor Alexander formed an immense assembly of loyalists to the power of Greek culture and was conquering the world to do just what? Spread Hellenism—the doctrines, devotion, and principles of the body of humanistic and classical ideals associated with ancient Greece, including reason, the pursuit of knowledge and philosophy, polytheistic idolatry, progressivism, and bodily development.

Remember, one of the targets of Hellenism and Hellenistic kings was the temple in Jerusalem. This is the whole Hanukkah experience in 164 B.C. The Greek king Antiochus Epiphanes IV marched into Jerusalem and took it over. The Persians did not do that. The Persians said we will pay the Jews to rebuild their temple so you can worship your God. You will still be one of our vassal states, but we will not take over your temple.

On the other hand, the Greeks came in and broke open the temple doors and said you will now worship our gods in your temple. You will sacrifice to our gods. You will now worship what you find important, such as philosophy, other gods, immorality, and the things you think are important. Then, they reminded the Jews that the whole Greek world was behind them.

Hellenism is the great and abominable church, what comes from that in the centuries before and just after Christ's ministry as revealed in 1 Nephi 13. It bleeds into the Romans and the rest of the world until it transforms the world completely into its legacy today, all according to 1 Nephi 13. If I had to give the great and abominable church a definition based on our definition and the historical clues that Nephi is giving me, I would say he is describing Hellenism because it was early before the many Christian churches came around.

That being said, we need to look at this in a different way. Not who it is but what they are doing. This bleeds into Judaism and into Jesus' ministry and culminates with the Romans adopting it and enforcing it with an iron fist, and it just bleeds into the rest of the world. This is what Nephi sees happening in 1 Nephi 13.

The Book of Mormon isn't meant to sustain any of our modern definitions; it is meant to help us understand Nephi and the other writers' understanding according to their revelations. I highly recommend a great exposition by Stephen E. Robinson, "Early Christianity and 1 Nephi 13-14." It goes into detail on how this all works.

“In 1 Nephi 13 the great and abominable church is one specific church among many....Moreover, it has a specific historical description: it is formed among the Gentiles after the Bible has been transmitted in its purity to the Gentiles by the Jews, and it is the specific historical agent responsible for excising plain and precious truths from the scriptural record....In Doctrine and Covenants 86:1-4, which states that the great and abominable church did its work after the Apostles had fallen asleep, that is, around the end of the first century A.D.”

Now, let's go back to 1 Nephi 13. Nephi is describing all these things we just went through verses 5, 6, 7, and 8 should make sense now. Why are they doing this? For the praise of the world. This needs to be our foundation for Chapter 13.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

1 Nephi 13:10-19 show the spread of the Gentiles. This is where we get a historical perspective.

1 Nephi 13:10 And it came to pass that I beheld many waters; and they divided the Gentiles from the seed of my brethren. 11 And it came to pass that the angel said unto

me: Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren. 12 And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land.

We are now fast-forwarding in time. These are the results and effects of Hellenism, which is spreading differently.

1 Nephi 13:14-15 And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise; and I beheld the wrath of God, that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles and were smitten. 15 And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceedingly fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain.

The land is not being given to the Gentiles by God because it is promised to Joseph's people. The land of promise is different than the land of inheritance. You obtain the land of inheritance by purchasing it or acquiring it somehow. The Gentiles are acquiring it by taking it and spreading upon it. But the land is also promised to Joseph, the Lehi people, and other remnants. Laman's desires dwell on the land of inheritance in Jerusalem, while Lehi and Nephi dwell on the land of promise given by God. The land of promise is given to you by God, and the land of inheritance is acquired by someone and passed from generation to generation. Lehi is living in the land of Jerusalem, but he is not from there.

Lehi's family is originally from the lands of the Tribe of Manasseh in the north. Their Jerusalem home is the land of their later inheritance. It wasn't given to him; his family acquired it somehow, and it was passed through generations as an inheritance. That is why he doesn't necessarily need it; he can readily leave it for a land promised to his ancestor, Joseph, by God (see Genesis 49; 2 Nephi 3:5; 1 Nephi 5:5). When Lehi read the Brass Plates and realized that Joseph was promised the land far away so he understands why they are going there (see 1 Nephi 5:14).

At the end of chapter 13, we are moving places throughout history from the land of promise back to Israel, and we see the coming forth of the Bible – the record of the Jews, which will go into the hands of the Gentiles and come forth.

1 Nephi 13:34 Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall ever remain in that awful state of blindness, which thou beholdest they are in, because of the plain and most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, whose formation thou hast seen.

Returning to our definition, how are the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb funneling through the legacy of this abominable church? How are they disappearing? Hellenism tries to get people to think differently. To mingle the philosophies of men with scriptural truths. If you had to describe the main force of Hellenism, what would that be? Who was Alexander the Great's teacher? Aristotle. Aristotle was an influential Greek philosopher. Who was his teacher? Plato. These Greek philosophies were the teachings of humans, divine truths mingled with the reason of men. When you mingle the philosophies of men with scripture, what do you get? You get the most precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb gone!

Then the Lord says He will be merciful unto the Gentiles, unto the visiting of the remnant of the house of Israel in great judgment.

1 Nephi 13:34 And it came to pass that the angel of the Lord spake unto me, saying: Behold, saith the Lamb of God, after I have visited the remnant of the house of Israel-and this remnant of whom I speak is the seed of thy father-wherefore, after I have visited them in judgment, and smitten them by the hand of the Gentiles, and after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by the abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb-I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious saith the Lamb.

He is talking about the Book of Mormon here.

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

This takes us up to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

The revelation ends here.

1 Nephi 13:42. And the time cometh that he shall manifest himself unto all nations, both unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles; and after he has manifested himself unto the Jews and also unto the Gentiles, then he shall manifest himself unto the Gentiles and also unto the Jews, and the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.

A final thought on understanding the great and abominable church. Stephen E. Robinson stated:

"It seems to me that Latter-day Saints have made one of two errors in trying to identify the great and abominable church. The first is to believe that some specific denomination or other, to the exclusion of all others, has been the great and abominable church since the beginning of time."

"More often it has been suggested that the Roman Catholic Church might be the great and abominable church of 1 Nephi 13, but this is also untenable, primarily because Roman Catholicism as we know it did not yet exist when the crimes described by Nephi were being committed."

We must be careful not to get caught up in speculation on who or what denomination this might be. I would also propose a clarifying understanding of what the great and abominable church is. I might propose that it can be understood as a vast and hated assembly of satan and his loyal followers, even though there is a starting point, according to Nephi, around the first centuries before and just after the ministry of Christ and the apostasy of the early Church of Jesus Christ.

Also, to clarify, we must remember that satan willfully rebelled against the Father, made war against His Son Yehovah, and still does (see Moses 4). That is why the Father hates, despises, or abhors everything satan does. Remember that Satan vowed to destroy the children of Mother Eve with his abominable temptations. In His great mercy and power, the Father gave Mother Eve a gift of enmity or hatred for all evil and satan himself (see Genesis 3:15). This is the only time when hatred is justified and righteous when practiced as a defense against satan. This hatred for rebellion against God protects the children of God if they so choose the Father and hate any rebellion against Him.

UNDERSTANDING NEPHI'S VISION IN 1 NEPHI 14

Let's go into Chapter 14, and to do so, we will need to shift gears.

Now the angel tells Nephi to buckle his seat belt because we are leaving the earth. This is a new vision. The angel summarizes the vision they just went through from Nephi's perspective. This review is from verses 1-7.

1 Nephi 14:7 For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men; a work which shall be everlasting, either on the one hand or on the other—either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down in the captivity, and also into destruction, both temporally and spiritually, according to the captivity of the devil, of which I have spoken.

The angel tells Nephi it is time for him to see how God sees things. Or, as a modern Prophet would put it, it is time for him to See and Think Celestial.

1 Nephi 14:8 And it came to pass that when the angel had spoken these words, he said unto me: Rememberest thou the covenants of the Father unto the house of Israel: I said unto him, Yea.

Notice how the angel begins here. He begins with the Father and His covenants. He says, ‘Nephi, we are going to move from the earth into the presence of the Father, like we did with your father Lehi, and do you remember the covenants that you made with Him?’ The angel doesn’t even mention the Son at this point—he is talking about the Father and the covenants he made with the house of Israel. ‘I want you to see how the Father sees these things and why He made the covenants with the house of Israel.’

1 Nephi 14:9 And it came to pass that he said unto me: Look!

Every time the angel says, “Look!” this is a new vision. But this time, we are not talking about historical or Hellenistic things. We are talking about the way God sees things. God only sees things in black and white. It is only truth, righteousness, eternity, and spirit. This is when Nephi talks about this in verse 10, how God sees it. According to God the Father, there are two Churches or, better, only two Choices. Not denominations or history, all those things are irrelevant to God’s perspective in this context.

1 Nephi 14:9 And it came to pass that he said unto me: Look and behold that great and abominable church, which is the mother of abominations, whose founder is the devil.

This time, the church of the devil reflects Satan and all his followers from the beginning. The great and abominable church whose founder is the devil goes back to pre-mortal existence in this vision and perspective. This is Lucifer and his followers according to God.

1 Nephi 14:10 And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only, the one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil; wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations; and she is the whore of all the earth.

You are either in or out according to the view of eternity. There are no grey areas. There are only two choices called churches here—again, our definition also applies here: the vast and hated assembly of those loyal to Satan. In eternity, there are those who either followed Satan in the premortal existence and those who followed the Father, and there was no one in the middle. There wasn’t a group that said, ‘I kind of like what you say, Satan, and I kind of like what you say, Father.’ Everyone had to make a choice—exercise their agency. There is no good thing outside of God the Father. You choose the Father; if you do not, you follow Satan’s minions. In eternity, you either choose the Father or not. This played out in the premortal existence, and it is still playing out in eternity today.

1 Nephi 14:11 And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the whore of all the earth, and she sat upon many waters; and she had dominion over all the earth, among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. 12 And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw.

Notice that the angel and Nephi are talking about the extent of the church of the devil and the church of the Lamb (also called the Church of the Firstborn on the earth (see D&C 93:21-22)). Their numbers are few, but they were on all the face of the earth, but it is still very small.

We need to read and re-read these verses so that we can see things with the eye single to the glory of God (see D&C 88:67). In other words of the Father, 'See it the way I see it because it is not how you see it.' The prophet today is trying to get us to think and see and listen the way God our Heavenly Father would have us see it from his point of view. It is much more plain and you don't get caught up in all the irrelevant earthly details.

In 1 Nephi chapter 14, the great and abominable church is satan and his many followers and those who willfully choose to follow him. In verse 13, again, let's see what they are doing.

1 Nephi 14:13 And it came to pass that I beheld that the great mother of the abominations did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God.

The gospel of the church of Satan is to always fight against the Lamb of God. That is all they do and have done since the beginning. And that war between satan and the Father and His Son is still raging. Notice there is no mention of this happening in the house of Israel, but among all the nations of the Gentiles.

How are the people of God, the Church of the Lamb, or the Church of the Firstborn, defending themselves?

1 Nephi 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.

Verse 14 talks about the power of Zion. The Lord calls his people Zion because they are of one heart and one mind, and they dwelled in righteousness, and there were no poor among them (Moses 7:18).

In D&C 45:69, the Lord says that Zion is never at war and the Lord will fight their battles for them. This verse shows us how we survive according to God in this world. If you have made the righteous choice and are on the right team, verse 15 tells us what happens.

1 Nephi 14:15 And it came to pass that I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon the great and abominable church, insomuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth.

According to God, the wrath of God is poured out upon satan's movement and followers. The Lord is fighting our battles. Notice the Lord doesn't say, 'I gathered the Saints, and they armed themselves with weapons of war, and they went to fight against the evil enemy!' Instead, it says God is fighting the battles for the righteous against satan's vast and hated followers. The defense of those who choose the Father is righteousness, and He will do their fighting against satan and his army of followers. The saints sing a holy hymn about this: "We'll sing and we will shout, with the Armies of Heaven, Hoshanah, Hoshanah (Hebrew meaning, "Save us!"), to God and the Lamb. Let glory to them in the highest be given, henceforth and forever, Amen and Amen."

1 Nephi 14:16-17 And as there began to be wars and rumors of wars among all the nations which belonged to the mother of abominations, the angel spake unto me, saying; behold, the wrath of God is upon the mother of harlots; and behold, thou seest all these thing – 17 And when the day cometh that the wrath of God is poured out upon the mother of harlots, which is the great and abominable church of all the earth, whose founder is the devil, then, at that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel.

Notice, he doesn't say, "If the day comes," he says, "When the day comes," when the armies of heaven will go to war against the devil's assembly and army who are fighting against the Lamb, at that day, the work of the Father shall commence in preparing the way for the fulfilling of His covenants He has made with the house of Israel. This is the Sign of the Covenant for which we are looking. It is the Sign of the coming forth of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the Millennium peace, the dominion of Christ, and the commencement of the Father's work. Right now, we are in the work of the Savior, but the Father's work is to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

The angel keeps talking, and this is what he says:

1 Nephi 14:18 And it came to pass that the angel spake unto me, saying: Look!

1 Nephi 14:19 And I looked and I beheld a man, and he was dressed in a white robe. 20 And the angel said to me: Behold one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Nephi sees a man in a white robe, meaning he is from God's presence and one of the future twelve apostles of the Lamb. He says he will see and experience the same thing as Nephi, but it won't be for another 600-700 years. He will be the one who is going to write down all the details. The angel to Nephi, 'We need to show you so that you are aware of your part as you are a witness to what he will do in his writing of The Revelation.'

Then it tells us that the apostle will write it from the Jewish point of view (vs. 22), and he shall see and write the remainder of the things and many more details from God's point of view.

1 Nephi 14:24- 25 And behold, the things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write are many things which thou hast seen; and behold, the remainder shalt thou see. 25 But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them.

We are talking about John the Revelator (John the Beloved Apostle of Jesus) and he is talking about his Revelation.

1 Nephi 14:27-30 And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel. 28 And behold, I, Nephi, am forbidden that I should write the remainder of the things which I saw and heard: wherefore the things which I have written sufficeth me; and I have written but a small part of the things which I saw. 29 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. 30 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.

Nephi ends this sacred vision with his testimony. These things are true!

CONCLUSION

What we have here in 1 Nephi 11-15 is a series of visions culminating in chapters 13-14. Thirteen is a historical revelation and a vision given to Nephi from his perspective on the earth. Chapter 14 is the same revelation given to Nephi from the Father's perspective in eternity. Let me conclude with this statement: We must listen to the Spirit and ponder these things, then open our hearts to know their true meaning and that they are very true.

—AnthonyR אר

