


## Introduction

Ponder the spoken witness from Heavenly Father: “Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him” (3 Nephi 11:7). Envision how you would have responded if you had been there for this announcement and the appearance of Jesus Christ—the crowning event of the Book of Mormon. Imagine how you would have felt when you heard the Son declare, “Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world” (3 Nephi 11:10). Consider the impact on the lives of those who received a spiritual and physical witness of the reality of Jesus Christ.

The voice of God was heard several times by this people. As you read 3 Nephi 8–11 look for what He taught. Consider your ability to recognize God’s voice and follow His message for you.

## Commentary

### 3 Nephi 8:1. Performing Miracles in the Name of Jesus

- Nephi noted that “there was not any man who could do a miracle in the name of Jesus save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity” (3 Nephi 8:1; see also D&C 121:36 ).

The following story told by Elder Vaughn J. Featherstone while serving in the Presiding Bishopric illustrates the need for priesthood holders to be pure at all times:

“People cannot hide sin. You cannot mock God and hold the Lord’s holy priesthood and pretend to propose that you are his servant.

“I know of a great man who held his dead son in his arms, and said, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ and by the power and authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood, I command you to live.’ And the dead boy opened up his eyes.

“This great brother could not have possibly done that had he been looking at a pornographic piece of material a few nights before or if he had been involved in any other transgression of that kind. The priesthood has to have a pure conduit to operate” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 100; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 66).

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that although not every priesthood administration will result in a miraculous event, only those who are worthy can perform miracles in the name of Christ. Priesthood holders must keep themselves pure and clean: “Now, my young friends of both the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood, not every prayer is answered so immediately, and not every priesthood declaration can command the renewal or the sustaining of life. Sometimes the will of God is otherwise. But young men, you will learn, if you have not already, that in frightening, even perilous moments, your faith and your priesthood will demand the very best of you and the best you can call down from heaven. You Aaronic Priesthood boys will not use your priesthood in exactly the same way an ordained elder uses the Melchizedek [Priesthood], but all priesthood bearers must be instruments in the hand of God, and to be so, you must, as Joshua said, ‘sanctify yourselves’ [Joshua 3:5]. You must be ready and worthy to act” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 39).

### 3 Nephi 8:6–19. Physical Upheavals Testify of Christ

- “A great and terrible tempest . . . such as never had been known in all the land” unleashed untold natural destruction (3 Nephi 8:6–7). These physical upheavals were signs in America witnessing the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem (see 1 Nephi 19:10–12; Helaman 14:20–21). Some physical upheavals in our day signal the approaching of the Second Coming.



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Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles cited the increase of major earthquakes as one of the signs of the Second Coming: “Signs of the Second Coming are all around us and seem to be increasing in frequency and intensity. For example, the list of major earthquakes in *The World Almanac and Book of Facts, 2004* shows twice as many earthquakes in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s as in the two preceding decades (see pages 189–90). It also shows further sharp increases in the first several years of this century. The list of notable floods and tidal waves and the list of hurricanes, typhoons, and blizzards worldwide show similar increases in recent years (see pages 188–89). Increases by comparison with 50 years ago can be dismissed as changes in reporting criteria, but the accelerating pattern of natural disasters in the last few decades is ominous” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 5–6; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 7–8).

### 3 Nephi 8:23. Three Days of Darkness

- The three days of darkness symbolized the death of Jesus Christ, who is “the light and the life of the world” (3 Nephi 11:11). Mormon emphasized that the three days of darkness was “a sign” given of the Savior’s death (see 1 Nephi 19:10; Helaman 14:27; 3 Nephi 8:23). After describing the damage caused by the “great storm” (3 Nephi 8:5) that lasted for three hours, Mormon documented the complete darkness as one of the signs that was now fulfilled (see 3 Nephi 10:14). The darkness was so intense that “there could not be any light at all” (3 Nephi 8:21). During this time of darkness, the body of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, lay in the tomb. On the day of His Resurrection, after Christ had overcome death, light came again to the people in America, signifying Christ’s victory over death and darkness (see 3 Nephi 10:9–11).

#### **3 NEPHI 8:24–25**

*What were the reasons the survivors gave for the terrible destruction? How might this apply in our day?*

### 3 Nephi 8:24–25. Rejecting the Prophets Brings Suffering

- Just as in ancient times, rejection of the prophets today leads to suffering. President N. Eldon Tanner (1898–1982) of the First Presidency compared the suffering of the Saints in America during the destruction following the Savior’s death with the destruction in our day of those who choose not to follow modern prophets:

“Today the world is rejecting the messages of the prophets of God. Is it not true that there is weeping and wailing over the face of the land because men are at war one with another? Do we not have among us many who lament the waywardness of their youth and the tragedies that befall them as they turn away from righteousness and suffer the consequences of tampering with alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, and other forbidden things? How many mourners do we have as a result of the lawlessness that is extant in our communities? We need to heed the lessons from the history of the past lest *we* be consumed as were some of those earlier civilizations.

“This was the message Christ brought to those early Nephite people” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 53; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 35–36).

### 3 Nephi 9:14. “Come unto Me”

- Jesus Christ promised: “Blessed are those who come unto me” (3 Nephi 9:14).

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland explained the meaning of this invitation and how it applies in our lives: “‘Come,’ [Christ] says lovingly. ‘Come, follow me.’ Wherever you are going, first come and see what I do, see where and how I spend my time. Learn of me, walk with me, talk with me, believe. Listen to me pray. In turn you will find answers to your own prayers. God will bring rest to your souls. Come, follow me” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 88; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 65).

### 3 Nephi 9:19–20. A Change in the Commandment to Sacrifice

- The command to offer animal sacrifice was first given to Adam. The purpose of animal sacrifice was to point one’s mind to the Savior’s ultimate sacrifice.

The faithful were taught that animal sacrifice would cease after the Son of God had offered His blood as the “great and last sacrifice” (Alma 34:10). Amulek explained that following the Atonement of Jesus Christ, animal sacrifice would no longer be required: “There should be, a stop to the shedding of blood; then shall the law of Moses be fulfilled; . . . and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal” (Alma 34:13–14). Once the offering of Jesus Christ was complete, the voice of God proclaimed to the Book of Mormon people, “I will accept none of your sacrifices and burnt offerings” (3 Nephi 9:19).

- Even though animal sacrifice and burnt offerings were to be “done away” (3 Nephi 9:19), the Lord did not end the law of sacrifice. Using 3 Nephi 9:20, Elder D. Todd Christofferson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained that today the Lord requires sacrifices of a different nature:

“The Savior said He would no longer accept burnt offerings of animals. The gift or sacrifice He will accept now is ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit’ [3 Nephi 9:20]. . . . You can offer the Lord the gift of your broken, or repentant, heart and your contrite, or obedient, spirit. In reality, it is the gift of yourself—what you are and what you are becoming.

“Is there something in you or in your life that is impure or unworthy? When you get rid of it, that is a gift to the Savior. Is there a good habit or quality that is lacking in your life? When you adopt it and make it part of your character, you are giving a gift to the Lord” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 10; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 12).

### 3 Nephi 9:20. “They Knew It Not”

- President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) explained that there are many who are developing spiritually but are unable to perceive their own subtle growth: “Day by day [Latter-day Saints] move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life. They live quiet lives of goodness, service, and commitment. They are like the Lamanites, who the Lord said ‘were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, *and they knew it not.*’ (3 Ne. 9:20; italics added)” (“A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 5).

- President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, used this same scripture to express concern that the gift of the Holy Ghost is not recognized as it should be. He encouraged Latter-day Saints to cultivate the gift of the Holy Ghost and gave counsel on how to recognize the Spirit:

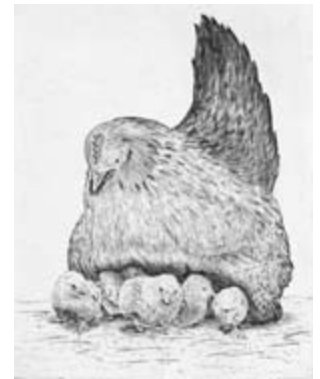
“Too many of us are like those whom the Lord said [‘came] with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, . . . [and] at the time of their conversion, were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, *and they knew it not*” [3 Nephi 9:20; italics added].

“Imagine that: ‘And they knew it not.’ It is not unusual for one to have received the gift and not really know it.

“. . . There are so many places to go, so many things to do in this noisy world. We can be too busy to pay attention to the promptings of the Spirit” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2000, 8; or *Ensign*, May 2000, 8).

### 3 Nephi 10:5–6. “As a Hen Gathereth Her Chickens”

- The comparison between a hen gathering her chicks and the Lord gathering His people offers some interesting insights. A hen cares for her chicks and would sacrifice her life to protect them. When danger threatens, she gathers the chicks under her wings for protection. In a similar way, the Lord loves His people, the house of Israel. He gave His life for His people and has sought to gather them together so he could protect and nourish them. On many occasions, however, Israel has chosen to forsake the Lord.



Commenting on 3 Nephi 10:5–6, President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency testified that the Savior will help those who are trying to come to Him:

“More than once He has said that He would gather us to Him as a hen would gather her chickens under her wings. He says that we must choose to come to Him in meekness and with enough faith in Him to repent ‘with full purpose of heart’ [3 Nephi 10:6].

“One way to do that is to gather with the Saints in His Church. Go to your meetings, even when it seems hard. If you are determined, He will help you find the strength to do it” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 16–17; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 18).

### 3 Nephi 10:12. “They Who Received the Prophets”

- Safety often comes when we follow the prophets. The Nephites who “received the prophets” were spared from the great destructions (3 Nephi 10:12). Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that we, like the Nephites, must follow our prophet if we hope to find safety, peace, prosperity, and happiness: “It is no small thing, my brothers and sisters, to have a prophet of God in our midst. Great and wonderful are the blessings that come into our lives as we listen to the word of the Lord given to us through him. . . . When we hear the counsel of the Lord expressed through the words of the President of the Church, our response should be positive and prompt. History shows that there is safety, peace, prosperity, and happiness in responding to prophetic counsel” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2001, 84; *Ensign*, May 2001, 65).

- President Boyd K. Packer testified that blessings come to those who follow the prophets and warned of the consequences for rejecting them:

“On one occasion, Karl G. Maeser was leading a party of young missionaries across the Alps. As they reached the summit, he looked back and saw a row of sticks thrust in the snow to mark the one safe path across the otherwise treacherous glacier.

“Halting the company of missionaries, he gestured toward the sticks and said, ‘Brethren, there stands the priesthood [of God]. They are just common sticks like the rest of us, . . . but the position they hold makes them what they are to us. If we step aside from the path they mark, we are lost’ (in Alma P. Burton, *Karl G. Maeser, Mormon Educator* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1953], p. 22).

“Although no one of us is perfect, the Church moves forward, led by ordinary people.

“The Lord promised:

“If my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the voice of my servants whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

“But if they will not hearken to my voice, nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed, they shall not be blest’ (D&C 124:45–46).

“I bear witness, brethren and sisters, that the leaders of the Church were called of God by proper authority, and it is known to the Church that they have that authority and have been properly ordained by the regularly ordained heads of the Church. If we follow them we will be saved. If we stray from them we will surely be lost” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 45; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 35).

### 3 Nephi 11:3. “They Heard a Voice”

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught that the “small voice” that caused “their hearts to *burn*” (3 Nephi 11:3; italics added) was more of a *feeling* than a sound: “The word ‘burning’ in this scripture signifies a feeling of comfort and serenity” (“Teaching and Learning by the Spirit,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, 13). *Serenity* means warmth, gentleness, and calmness.

- Just as the Nephites had to “open their ears” (3 Nephi 11:5) to hear the voice of God, President Boyd K. Packer explained our need to pay attention so we might feel the gentle promptings of the Spirit:

“The voice of the Spirit is described in the scripture as being neither ‘loud’ nor ‘harsh.’ It is ‘not a voice of thunder, neither . . . voice of a great tumultuous noise.’ But rather, ‘a still voice of perfect mildness, as if it had been a whisper,’ and it can ‘pierce even to the very soul’ and ‘cause [the heart] to burn.’ (3 Ne. 11:3; Hel. 5:30; D&C 85:6–7.) Remember, Elijah found the voice of the Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but was a ‘still small voice.’ (1 Kgs. 19:12.)

“The Spirit does not get our attention by shouting or shaking us with a heavy hand. Rather it whispers. It caresses so gently that if we are preoccupied we may not feel it at all. (No wonder that the Word of Wisdom was revealed to us, for how could the drunkard or the addict feel such a voice?)

“Occasionally it will press just firmly enough for us to pay heed. But most of the time, if we do not heed the gentle feeling, the Spirit will withdraw” (“The Candle of the Lord,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 53).

### 3 Nephi 11:5–7. “Behold My Beloved Son”

- President Ezra Taft Benson spoke of the rare experience of hearing the voice of Heavenly Father:

“How few people in all the history of the world have heard the actual voice of God the Father speaking to them. As the people looked heavenward, ‘they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe; and he came down and stood in the midst of them’ [3 Nephi 11:8].

“A glorious, resurrected being, a member of the Godhead, the Creator of innumerable worlds, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, stood before their very eyes!” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 4; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 5).

### 3 Nephi 11:11. The Bitter Cup

- President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency taught that following the Savior’s example during hardships helps us endure our personal “bitter cups”: “Many members, in drinking of the bitter cup that has come to them, wrongfully think that this cup passes by others. In His first words to the people of the Western continent, Jesus of Nazareth poignantly spoke of the bitter cup the Father had given Him (see 3 Ne. 11:11). Every soul has some bitterness to swallow. Parents having a child who loses his way come to know a sorrow that defies description. A woman whose husband is cruel or insensitive can have her heart broken every day. Members who do not marry may suffer sorrow and disappointment. Having drunk the bitter cup, however, there comes a time when one must accept the situation as it is and reach upward and outward. President Harold B. Lee said, ‘Do not let self-pity or despair beckon you from the course you know is right.’ The Savior set the compass: we must be born again in spirit and heart” (“A Second Birth,” *Ensign*, June 1998, 2).

### 3 Nephi 11:14–17. The Wounds in His Hands and Feet and Side

- When the resurrected Lord appeared to the Nephites, He invited them to feel the wounds in His hands and feet and side so that they could witness His Resurrection (see 3 Nephi 11:14). Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that Jesus Christ’s mortal wounds are tokens of His sacrifice:



“However dim our days may seem, they have been a lot darker for the Savior of the world. As a reminder of those days, Jesus has chosen, even in a resurrected, otherwise perfected body, to retain for the benefit of His disciples the wounds in His hands and in His feet and in His side—signs, if you will, that painful things happen even to the pure and the perfect; signs, if you will, that pain in this world is *not* evidence that God doesn’t love you; signs, if you will, that problems pass and happiness can be ours. Remind others that it is the wounded Christ who is the Captain of our souls, He who yet bears the scars of our forgiveness, the lesions of His love and humility, the torn flesh of obedience and sacrifice.

“These wounds are the principal way we are to recognize Him when He comes. He may invite us forward, as He has invited others, to see and to feel those marks. If not before, then surely at that time, we will remember with Isaiah that it was for us that a God was ‘despised and rejected . . . ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,’ that ‘he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed’ (Isa. 53:3, 5)” (“Teaching, Preaching, Healing,” *Ensign*, Jan 2003, 42).

### 3 Nephi 11:16–21. Hosanna

- “The word *Hosanna* is a transliteration of a Hebrew word of supplication which means in essence ‘Oh, grant salvation.’ Evidently the people were asking the Savior to teach them the way to salvation; thus it is not surprising that he immediately teaches them the basic principles and ordinances of the gospel” (Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [1976], 261–62).


### 3 Nephi 11:21–27. The Importance of Baptism

- There appears to have been some contention among the Nephites concerning the manner of baptism. The Lord clarified how the ordinance should be performed. President Boyd K. Packer explained the significance of baptism and cautioned that we should not alter this sacred ordinance:

“Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins is the first ordinance. Baptism must be by immersion, for it is symbolic of both the coming forth from temporal death, from the grave, and the cleansing required for redemption from spiritual death.

“. . . Under the plan, baptism is not just for entrance into the Church of Jesus Christ. It begins a spiritual rebirth that may eventually lead back into the presence of God.


“If we really understood what baptism signifies, we could never consider it trivial nor alter the form of this sacred ordinance. . . . Through the sacrament we renew the covenant” (*Our Father’s Plan* [1984], 39–40).

**3 NEPHI 11:29**   
*Why does the Savior counsel  
 us to avoid contention?*

### 3 Nephi 11:28–30. Avoid Contention

- President Henry B. Eyring helps us understand that the Spirit of God will not lead people into contention: “Where people have that Spirit with them, we may expect harmony. The Spirit puts the testimony of truth in our hearts, which unifies those who share

that testimony. The Spirit of God never generates contention (see 3 Nephi 11:29). It never generates the feelings of distinctions between people which lead to strife (see Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 131). It leads to personal peace and a feeling of union with others. It unifies souls. A unified family, a unified Church, and a world at peace depend on unified souls” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 86; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 67).

- President Thomas S. Monson shared a story illustrating the blessings that come from avoiding contention. After reading 3 Nephi 11:28–30 , he said:

“Let me conclude with an account of two men who are heroes to me. Their acts of courage were not performed on a national scale, but rather in a peaceful valley known as Midway, Utah.

“Long years ago, Roy Kohler and Grant Remund served together in Church capacities. They were the best of friends. They were tillers of the soil and dairymen. Then a misunderstanding arose which became somewhat of a rift between them.

“Later, when Roy Kohler became grievously ill with cancer and had but a limited time to live, my wife, Frances, and I visited Roy and his wife, and I gave him a blessing. As we talked afterward, Brother Kohler said, ‘Let me tell you about one of the sweetest experiences I have had during my life.’ He then recounted to me his misunderstanding with Grant Remund and the ensuing estrangement. His comment was, ‘We were sort of on the outs with each other.’

“‘Then,’ continued Roy, ‘I had just put up our hay for the winter to come, when one night, as a result of spontaneous combustion, the hay caught fire, burning the hay, the barn, and everything in it right to the ground. I was devastated,’ said Roy. ‘I didn’t know what in the world I would do. The night was dark, except for the dying embers of the fire. Then I saw coming toward me from the road, in the direction of Grant Remund’s place, the lights of tractors and heavy equipment. As the “rescue party” turned in our drive and met me amidst my tears, Grant said, “Roy, you’ve got quite a mess to clean up. My boys and I are here. Let’s get to it.”’ Together they plunged to the task at hand. Gone forever was the hidden wedge which

had separated them for a short time. They worked throughout the night and into the next day, with many others in the community joining in.

“Roy Kohler has passed away, and Grant Remund is getting older. Their sons have served together in the same ward bishopric. I truly treasure the friendship of these two wonderful families” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 22; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 20–21).

### 3 Nephi 11:28–40. Jesus Spoke of His Doctrine

- The phrase “my doctrine” can be found eight times in verses 28–40 of 3 Nephi 11. The Lord described His doctrine as repentance and baptism. In similar language in 2 Nephi 31, Nephi spent considerable time describing what he called “the doctrine of Christ.” Nephi included faith, repentance, baptism, the Holy Ghost, scripture study, and enduring to the end in his list of the doctrines of Christ. Later in His visit to the Book of Mormon people, the Lord repeated these same principles (see 3 Nephi 27) and labeled them “my gospel.” These principles remind us of Articles of Faith 1:4: “We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.”



## Points to Ponder

- Why is complete darkness an appropriate sign and symbol of the death of the Savior?
- How has the Lord tried to gather you into His fold?
- How does a person gain “a broken heart” and “a contrite spirit”? (3 Nephi 9:20).
- What is the difference between the “spirit of contention” (3 Nephi 11:29) and a discussion to resolve a disagreement? How can people disagree without becoming contentious?

## Suggested Assignments

- Only those who had received the prophets were spared the destructions of the Lord’s coming. Make a list of instructions spoken in recent general conference sessions by the prophet and members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Plan how you will implement them in your life.
- Both Nephi and Samuel the Lamanite prophesied specifically about the devastation that would take place in America shortly after Jesus Christ died in Jerusalem. Compare the prophecies in 2 Nephi 26:3–9 and Helaman 14:20–27 with their fulfillment in 3 Nephi 8:5–23.
- Very few people in the history of the world have ever heard the actual voice of God the Father speak to them. Make a chart to compare the words of Heavenly Father when He spoke at the baptism of Jesus Christ (see Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22); on the Mount of Transfiguration (see Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35); to the Nephites (3 Nephi 11:7); and to the Prophet Joseph Smith (Joseph Smith—History 1:17). Describe the significance of each of these statements.