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## The Designations Jesus Gives Himself in 3 Nephi

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Monte S. Nyman

**I**n the October 1987 General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, President Ezra Taft Benson stated:

Over one-half of all the verses in the Book of Mormon refer to our Lord. Some form of Christ's name is mentioned more frequently per verse in the Book of Mormon than even in the New Testament. He is given over one hundred different names in the Book of Mormon. Those names have a particular significance in describing His divine nature. (56)

In the topical guide of the Bible published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there are 18.5 pages of references to Jesus Christ in 57 different subcategories. The indexes in the Triple Combination (Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price) have 11 pages of references and 24 categories of subtitles. The quantity of scriptural references to Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon justifies its new subtitle, "Another Testament of Jesus Christ," added in 1982. Furthermore, the variety of subtitles given to Jesus Christ in all the above references illustrates the breadth of the testimony that is borne of him in the LDS scriptures.

To examine all of the references associated with Jesus Christ is too large a task for the purpose of this paper, which is to explore only those titles that he gives himself in the book of

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3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon. As it contains the account of the resurrected Jesus Christ's ministry among the people in the Americas, the record is basically an account of his own words as he ministered to his "other sheep" of the house of Israel (see John 10:16; compare 3 Nephi 15:17). Consequently, the designations Jesus gives of himself are authentic declarations of his role in ministering among the children of men upon the earth. While there are many other important titles given him in other parts of the Book of Mormon and in other scriptures, the names within 3 Nephi form a nucleus that validates the claim that the Book of Mormon is indeed another testimony of Jesus Christ to the world.

An analysis of Jesus' self-designations shows 11 different titles with a twelfth one implied. Three of these 12 titles are supported by the references of others also in the 3 Nephi record. These three references by others will be noted to support the 12 designations. I will discuss the 12 names Jesus gave himself in the order of their initial appearance in the text of 3 Nephi.

### "I Am Jesus Christ the Son of God"

Following the great three-hour destructive storm on the American Continent at the time of Christ's crucifixion in Jerusalem (3 Nephi 8:5–19), a voice was heard among the surviving inhabitants announcing that the person speaking had caused the terrible changes to come upon the whole face of the land because of the wickedness and the abominations of the people (9:1–12). Those who were spared were "the more righteous" and were invited to return unto the speaker "and repent of [their] sins, and be converted, that [he] may heal [them]" (v 13). The speaker further promised them eternal life and the arm of mercy as a blessing for their coming unto him (v 14). He then identified himself for the first time declaring "Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God" (v 15).

*Jesus* is the English translation of the earthly name of the Son of God (1 Nephi 11:18–21; Luke 2:1–7, 21). The name *Jesus* had been selected for him hundreds of years prior to his

birth and was announced to prophets by an angel (2 Nephi 25:19; Luke 2:21).<sup>1</sup>

Jesus' designation of himself as the "Christ" verifies his being the Messiah or "holy anointed one" with the power to grant eternal life and redemption as he had just promised the Nephites (vv 13–14). *Christ* is the Greek equivalent of *Messiah*.<sup>2</sup> The identification of the person speaking to the Nephites as Jesus Christ is thus a declaration of his Messiahship. He further identified himself as "the Son of God," an acknowledgment of where he had obtained the power to become the Christ, the Messiah. From his Father, God, he obtained the divine ability to make the Atonement, to provide for the redemption of humanity, and to bring about the Resurrection by breaking the power of death and the grave. He identified himself to the Nephites as the mortal Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, who had received his divinity from his Father in Heaven, the father of his earthly body.

At the beginning of his personal ministry on the American continents, the Nephites were given a second witness by the Father that Jesus was indeed his Son. As they were gathered around the temple in the land of Bountiful, they heard a voice speak to them from heaven three times. The third time that they heard the voice, they were able to understand that it declared: "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him" (3 Nephi 11:7).

The Father was pleased with his Son's having done his will and wrought out the Atonement for all humankind (see 3 Nephi 27:13–14), thus glorifying the Father's name in bringing the

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<sup>1</sup> Although the references for an angel announcing the birth and name of Jesus are from the Book of Mormon, the New Testament Luke account notes that an angel had foretold the name to be Jesus "before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21). That the Nephite prophets knew of his birth and name is a part of the restoration of plain and precious parts lost from the Bible as shown to Nephi in vision nearly 600 years before the birth of Christ (1 Nephi 13:39–40).

<sup>2</sup> An angel announced to Jacob, brother of the prophet Nephi, that Christ would be the name of the Redeemer and the God who would come among the Jews and be crucified (2 Nephi 10:2–3). Earlier an angel had identified Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God (1 Nephi 12:18 1st Edition). Later editions changed the words *Jesus Christ* to the *Messiah*.

opportunity for salvation to his children (see D&C 132:31). The Nephites were invited by the Father to hear his Son so that they might obtain the blessings of that atonement.

The prophet Mormon, who abridged the Nephite records, prophesied that in the latter days all of the house of Jacob will be restored to a knowledge of their covenant with the Lord their God and will come to “know 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” (3 Nephi 5:24–26). As a remnant of the house of Jacob, we Latter-day Saints are part of the fulfillment of that promise made possible through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Before the crucifixion of Christ, Nephi<sub>3</sub>, son of Nephi<sub>2</sub>, had boldly testified to the Nephite people of the ministry of Christ and the remission of their sins through faith on the Lord Jesus Christ (3 Nephi 7:15–16). The prophets among the Nephites had known of the Savior’s mission, and they knew his future appearance to their descendants was a verification that he was indeed Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

### “I Created the Heavens and the Earth”

Having told the Nephites who he was, Jesus then informed them of what he had done: “I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are” (3 Nephi 9:15).<sup>3</sup> His creating the heavens probably has a dual meaning. The heavens are occupied by the sun, and the moon, and the stars. The placing of these heavenly objects in their various positions was done to govern the earth and other planets in the same order. This verse seems to be telling us that the organization of the sun, moon, and stars was thus carried out by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

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<sup>3</sup> The prophet patriarch Abraham was shown, through the Urim and Thummim, the organization of the stars in this order of the universe. This paper will not discuss the organization of these stars, but those interested should carefully study the third chapter and facsimile no. 2 of the book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price.

The second possible meaning of Jesus' creating of the heavens is that of his being the actual creator. It has reference to Jesus' being the creator of the other planets that are in the order of the heavens that govern this earth and possibly other orders as well, since the word *heavens* is plural. When Moses stood in the presence of God and talked with him face to face, he was informed that worlds without number had been created by the Son, "but only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof" were given to him (Moses 1:31–35).<sup>4</sup> For our purpose here, suffice it to say that Jesus Christ was the creator of many other worlds, as he testified to the Nephites.

The creation of this earth (and other worlds) by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is a doctrine clearly taught in the New Testament but often overlooked (see John 1:10; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2). The Book of Mormon calls the Son of God "the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth" (Mosiah 15:4; Alma 11:39). A father is a creator of life. As the Eternal Father of the earth, Jesus gave it life. The Prophet Joseph Smith explained:

The word create came from the [Hebrew] word *baurau* which does not mean to create out of nothing; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize materials and build a ship. Hence, we infer that God had materials to organize the world out of chaos—chaotic matter, which is element, and in which dwells all the glory. Element had an existence from the time he had. The pure principles of element are principles which can never be destroyed; they may be organized and re-organized, but not destroyed. They had no beginning, and can have no end. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* 350–52)

The Nephites knew that Jesus Christ was the God who supervised the organization of the earth upon which we live.

The creation of "all things that in them are" (3 Nephi 9:15) would include reference to the inhabitants of the earth. Moroni, in finishing his father Mormon's record, recorded:

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<sup>4</sup> The concept that "the Lord God" who spoke to Moses and "the Lord" who showed Abraham the creation of the heavens was Jesus Christ speaking by divine investiture of authority will be discussed below under "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me."

But behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. Behold, he created Adam, and by Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man. (Mormon 9:11–12)

The Book of Mormon testifies that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is Jesus Christ (1 Nephi 19:10). As shown above by Moroni, he is “that same God who created the heavens and the earth.” Moroni’s statement that “[Jesus] created Adam” needs an explanation. One explanation could be that Jesus Christ is the executor of the plan of salvation to prove humankind “to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abr 3:24–25). It seems to be in this context that Moroni calls Jesus Christ the creator of Adam. The following verses recorded by Moroni explain the redemption of humanity through the mission of Jesus Christ (Mormon 9:12–13). The declaration to the Nephites by Jesus that he created all things that are in the heavens and the earth is consistent with the concept that the earth is a proving ground and the program for that proving ground is administered by Jesus Christ. The concept that Jesus established a similar program on the other earths he created is verified by latter-day revelation:

For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father. That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God. (D&C 76:23–24)

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was indeed the creator of the heavens through organizing the various planets to govern this order of the universe. He has organized those planets from the eternal elements that existed just as he did this earth. The inhabitants of this earth and other inhabited planets were given opportunity for salvation through his administration.

## “I Was with the Father from the Beginning”

The Book of Mormon does not give us very much information about the premortal life. One of the few statements concerning this phase of life is Christ’s declaration that he “was with the Father from the beginning” (3 Nephi 9:15). The word *beginning* is used in other scriptures to designate the premortal life (Gen 1:1; John 1:1). In the Book of Mormon, that stage of existence is also referred to as “the first place” (Alma 13:3). Although Christ did not expand on what his work was with the Father in “the beginning,” there are two places in the Book of Mormon that indirectly shed more light on the Savior’s declaration.

King Limhi testified to his subjects that a prophet of the Lord (Abinadi) was slain

because he said unto them that Christ was the God, the Father of all things, and said that he should take upon him the image of man, and it should be the image after which man was created in the beginning; or in other words, he said that man was created after the image of God, and that God should come down among the children of men, and take upon him flesh and blood, and go forth upon the face of the earth. (Mosiah 7:27)

Limhi’s interpretation of Abinadi’s words that man was created in the image of Christ, the God who was to “come down among the children of men,” shows us that Christ was a God in the premortal state and that man was created in his image. This interpretation also clarifies the Genesis account of “let us make man in our image” (1:26). The plural pronouns *us* and *our* in Genesis must refer to Christ being with his Father from the beginning and being involved in the plan to people the earth with humankind. The designation of his being with the Father from the beginning is significant in understanding the overall role of Christ in the plan of salvation.

The second reference from the Book of Mormon to indirectly confirm Christ’s role with the Father “in the beginning” is Alma’s great discourse on the foreordination of priesthood



holders. The high priesthood which Alma declares the faithful in “the first place” were foreordained to receive in this life was “after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world” (Alma 13:7). This eternal priesthood, “without beginning or end,” being called after Christ’s holy order is another witness that Christ “was with the Father from the beginning” (3 Nephi 9:15). The priesthood, the right to officiate in the name of God, was a right granted to the faithful in the premortal life. The order of the priesthood granted to them was called after the Son of God who was with the Father in the beginning.

The Joseph Smith Translation (hereafter JST) of the Bible gives us a third function of Christ with his Father in the beginning.

In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son. And the gospel was the word, and the word was with the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was of God. The same was in the beginning with God. (JST John 1:1–2)

In summary then, Christ’s role with the Father in the beginning had at least three dimensions: (1) humans were created in his image and a plan instituted for their salvation; (2) he foreordained men to bear the eternal priesthood; and (3) he directed the preaching of the gospel to others in his premortal state. All three of these assignments illustrate a co-rule with his Father.

### “I Am in the Father, and the Father in Me”

Jesus declared, “I am in the Father, and the Father in me” (3 Nephi 9:15). This seems to be an expression of the unity that exists between them in carrying out the mission of the Son upon the earth. Furthermore, it is an expression of the divine investiture of authority that the Father has bestowed upon the Son. Both of these concepts are illustrated repeatedly in 3 Nephi.

At the time of the prophesied birth of Christ, great persecution was heaped upon the Nephites, and “a day was set apart

by the unbelievers, that all those who believed in those traditions [prophesied signs] should be put to death except the sign should come to pass” (3 Nephi 1:9). In response to mighty prayer by Nephi<sub>3</sub>, the son of Nephi<sub>2</sub>, the voice of the Lord declared that on the morrow he would come into the world “to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh” (3 Nephi 1:14). It seems that Christ is stating that he would fulfill the will of the Father through the divine nature he had obtained from having been sired by Eloheim. Having that nature would enable him to pay the demands of justice and thus atone for humanity. On the other hand, he was willing to lay down his life of flesh and take it up again that he might break the bands of death and bring about the Resurrection. Thus he was in the Father, in doing the will of the Father, and the divine nature of the Father that was in him enabled him to carry out this dual assignment.

When he appeared to the Nephites, after having completed his mission, he testified that he had taken upon him “the sins of the world, in the which [he] . . . suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning” (3 Nephi 11:11). He then invited those privileged Nephites to feel the wound in his side and the nail prints in his hands and feet as a witness that he had “been slain for the sins of the world” (v 14) or had laid down his life to break the bands of death. He had done the Father’s will as well as his own.

The unity of the Father and Son was illustrated to the Nephites in Jesus’ prayer to his Father: “And now Father, I pray unto thee for them, and also for all those who believe on their [the Twelve’s] words, that they may believe in [me], that [I] may be [unified] in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one” (3 Nephi 19:23). He then prayed again for a similar oneness for those who would believe in the words of the Twelve.

Christ again declared the unity of the Father and the Son as he spoke to the Nephites about the redemption of those in Jerusalem: “All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of

the Father; and the Father and I are one” (3 Nephi 20:35). Another testament of this unity was given to the Three Nephites who were allowed to remain on the earth and bring souls to Christ. These three were promised, “Your joy shall be full, even as the Father hath given me fulness of joy; and ye shall be even as I am, and I am even as the Father; and the Father and I are one” (28:10). Thus, a complete unity does exist between the Father and the Son and all those who attain a fulness of joy in the kingdom of the Father.

### “In Me Hath the Father Glorified His Name”

We read in the Pearl of Great Price that the Lord God told Moses that there was no end to his works: “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Although it appears that this is Christ who is speaking to Moses, the work is the unified effort of both the Father and the Son. The Father brings glory to his own name by having the Son come to earth and provide a plan of salvation for the earth’s inhabitants. The Savior’s voice declared this to the Nephites: “And in me hath the Father glorified his name” (3 Nephi 9:15). Later he confirmed that he had “glorified the Father in taking upon [himself] the sins of the world” (11:11). That Christ would share in this glory is exemplified in his prayer for the believers: “Father, I pray . . . that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them” (19:29). This doctrine of the work of the Father and the Son being one, of glorifying themselves by bringing similar glory to others, is also taught in the Old Testament (Isa 53:12), the New Testament (Luke 22:29), and the Doctrine and Covenants (132:31). Thus all four of the LDS standard works teach this eternal principle.

## “[I Am] Their Redeemer”

Although Jesus speaks to the Nephites many times about redemption, he calls himself the Redeemer only once, occurring in the context that the record of the Nephites would bring the scattered remnant of Israel “to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer” (3 Nephi 16:4).<sup>5</sup> Other references speak of the results of his redemption mission.

When Jesus spoke to the Nephites, he acknowledged that his own received him not, but said, “As many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God; and even so will I to as many as shall believe on my name, for behold, by me redemption cometh” (3 Nephi 9:17). He does not enlarge upon this doctrine here, but the rest of the Book of Mormon and other standard works teach it often.<sup>6</sup> The same voice declared to the Nephites that Christ came “unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin” (v 21). Earlier in the book of 3 Nephi, Mormon had inserted an editorial comment, prophesying that all the house of Jacob would come to know the Redeemer, the Son of God “and [be] gathered . . . unto their own lands” (5:24–26). Other testimonies that Christ is the Redeemer in other parts of the Book of Mormon will not be discussed here.

## “I Am the Light and Life of the World”

Both when Jesus spoke to the Nephites following the destructive storm in America and when he initially appeared to them as a glorified, resurrected being, he identified himself as

<sup>5</sup> In quoting Isaiah 54 to the Nephites (3 Nephi 22), reference is made to “thy Redeemer” (v 5). However, he does not comment on the passage, and thus I do not count it as a self-designation.

<sup>6</sup> King Benjamin taught his subjects that those who enter into a righteous covenant (baptism) become spiritually begotten sons and daughters of Christ, taking upon themselves his name (Mosiah 5:7–8). Emma Smith was told that all “who receive my gospel are sons and daughters in my kingdom” (D&C 25:1). Adam was told by the Lord—for having been baptized and born of the Spirit—“Behold, thou art one in me, a son of God; and thus may all become my sons” (Moses 6:65–68). Paul taught the Romans that those who received the “Spirit of adoption” were “the children of God” (Rom 8:15–17). Thus, all the standard works teach of the doctrine of spiritual redemption bringing adoption as sons and daughters of God.

“the light and the life of the world” (3 Nephi 9:18; 11:11). On another occasion he referred to himself as “the law, and the light” (15:9). During his three-day ministry among the Nephites, he expanded on his being the light for the Nephites (18:16, 24), but he did not expand on his being their life. In his mortal ministry in the land of Jerusalem he had referred to himself as the light of the world (John 8:12), but he used the combination title of “light and life” among the Nephites.

The Gospel of John testifies that “in him was life; and the life was the light of men” (1:4). The JST expands John’s testimony to explain that “in him was *the gospel*, and *the gospel was the life*, and the life was the light of men” (JST John 1:4; italics designate additions). Jesus’ explanation to the Nephites supports the JST concept. He testified to them that the law of Moses had an end in him: “Behold, I am the law, and the light” (3 Nephi 15:9). Thus, the law is equated with the higher law of the gospel that he had just finished teaching them and compared to the law of Moses (3 Nephi 12–13). In speaking further on that great sermon that he had also given in Jerusalem (15:1) he admonished the Nephites to follow the example of prayer he had taught them (13:5–15) and later added, “Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you” (18:16). After expounding more concerning prayer, he admonished them further: “Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do” (v 24). Thus, Jesus was the light of men through his teachings and his example that he had given to the Nephites.

The Book of Mormon further explains what he meant by his being the *life* of men. In the same statement he made of his being the law and the light, he counseled, “Look unto me, and endure to the end, and ye shall live; for unto him that endureth to the end will I give eternal life” (3 Nephi 15:9). His being the life of men declares him to be the source of eternal life. If humankind will follow the gospel, which is the light of men, we can obtain eternal life. Jesus Christ is the light and the life of us all.

## “I Am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End”

Christ’s use of the Greek *Alpha* and *Omega* to identify himself to the Nephites was probably intended as a confirmation of the New Testament designation for the latter-day reader (see Rev 1:8, 11; 21:6; 22:13). *Alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and *Omega* is the last letter, thus verifying that Christ was the member of the Godhead who began the work of bringing “to pass the immortality and eternal life” of humankind upon this mortal earth (Moses 1:39) and will be the member of the Godhead who will conclude the events of this earth’s plan of salvation (see 3 Nephi 9:18). The Lord used the same Greek word designations in modern revelation (D&C 19:1; 38:1; 45:7).

## “I Am the God of Israel”

Jesus used all of the above designations of himself during the period of darkness that followed the destruction among the Nephites at the time of his crucifixion. He used the designation of his being “the God of Israel” after he descended from the heavens and spoke among the Israelites in the Americas (3 Nephi 11:14). At the time of Jesus’ crucifixion, Israel was divided into three major branches: the Nephites, the Jews, and the lost tribes. Others of Israel were, at that time, scattered among the nations of the earth. Those scattered Israelites are not considered in this designation but will be considered under the next heading.

Before Christ’s appearance to the Nephites, he spoke to them twice following the period of darkness. During his first speech, he spoke to the inhabitants upon the face of the land (America) and, referring to the terrible destruction that they had just experienced, repeatedly stated that he had caused those calamities to come upon the various cities because of their iniquities (3 Nephi 9:2–12). This clearly illustrates that Christ

had the power of a god and that the Nephites were subject to this power.

In his second speech to all the people of the land following a period of silence “for the space of many hours” (3 Nephi 10:1–3), Christ spoke of his previous gatherings of these “descendants of Jacob, yea, who are of the house of Israel,” and of how oft he would have gathered them if they had responded to his invitation. He further spoke of how often he would yet gather them if they would repent (vv 4–7). As their God, he had directed their activities, offered them other opportunities which they had rejected, and would yet give them other opportunities to gather. He was indeed the God of the Nephites.

Jesus was born a Jew, thus enabling him to declare, “I came unto my own, and my own received me not” (3 Nephi 9:16). Earlier, just prior to his birth, he had declared to Nephi<sub>3</sub>, son of Nephi<sub>2</sub>, “I come unto my own, to fulfil all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world” (1:14). During his speeches to the Nephites following the period of darkness at the time of his crucifixion, he referred to how oft he would have gathered those at Jerusalem but they would not heed him (10:5).

During the second day of Christ’s three-day ministry among the Nephites, he spoke of the covenant to gather his people to Jerusalem, the land of their inheritance, the land promised to them forever (3 Nephi 20:29). After enlarging upon the sequence of this gathering, he spoke of the covenant of the Father to *his* people (Israel) and of Jerusalem’s being “inhabited again with [*his*] people, and it shall be the land of their inheritance” (v 46; emphasis added). The message of the Book of Mormon is that Christ was indeed the God of his own people, the Jews. He also administered the plan of salvation for the Father’s people, the rest of the house of Israel, and was thus the God of all Israel by divine investiture of authority. A careful reading of 3 Nephi chapters 20 and 21 illustrates a consistent distinction between the whole house of Israel as the Father’s people and the people of Judah as Christ’s people, and it must

be ascertained in this careful reading when the Savior is speaking and when he is quoting the Father.

In ministering to the Nephites, Jesus spoke of other sheep of the house of Israel to whom he would minister following the Nephite ministry (3 Nephi 16:1–3; 17:4). He ministered to each branch of Israel separately so that they would know that he was their God, and someday we will have the record of his other ministries (2 Nephi 29:12–14).

Before Israel was broken into separate branches, Christ had ministered to them collectively. To the Nephites, he announced that he had fulfilled the law that was given unto Moses. He then proclaimed, “I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel” (3 Nephi 15:4–8; see also 9:17). It verily was Jesus as Jehovah who led the children of Israel in Old Testament times (see 1 Cor 10:1–4; 1 Nephi 19:7–10). He is indeed the God of all of the house of Israel.

### “I Am the God of the Whole Earth”

The designation “God of the whole earth” (3 Nephi 11:14) makes Jesus the God of all of the people of the earth. In the words of Nephi son of Lehi, Christ “inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God [Christ], both Jew and Gentile” (2 Nephi 26:33). Latter-day revelation says he holds the destinies of all the armies of the earth (D&C 117:6).

As the God of the whole world, Christ is a God of law. Thus, he cannot bless people unless they keep the commandments (see Hel 12:3; D&C 82:10; 130:20–21). In warning the Nephites of their need to repent, he extended that warning to all “the inhabitants of the whole earth except they repent” (3 Nephi 9:2). One of the purposes of scattering the house of Israel among all the nations of the earth was to fulfill the covenant made to Abraham to bless all the kindreds of the earth (1 Nephi 22:9;



Gen 12:3). In fulfilling the covenant to gather Israel from among the nations, Gentile and other, those nations are given the opportunity to gather with Israel and receive the blessings of the gospel (see 3 Nephi 16:6–7, 13). Those Gentiles who reject the gospel will have the covenant people of the Lord gathered from among them and the gospel will be taken out of their midst (vv 8–12).<sup>7</sup>

Christ reigns over all the earth: “The heaven is [his] throne, and the earth is [his] footstool” (Isa 66:1). All of the prophets had prophesied of Jesus (see Jacob 4:4–5; 7:11; Luke 24:27, 44). Just prior to his birth, Christ told Nephi<sub>3</sub>, son of Nephi<sub>2</sub>, “On the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfil all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets” (3 Nephi 1:13).

### “I Am [He] Whom the Prophets Testified Shall Come into the World”

When speaking to the Nephites following the destruction and darkness of the crucifixion, Christ said, “The scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled” (3 Nephi 9:16). In appearing to the Nephites as a resurrected being, Jesus announced: “I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world” (11:10). After teaching his higher law to the Nephites (chapters 12–14), he admonished: “Behold, I have given unto you the commandments; therefore keep my commandments. And this is the law and the prophets, for they truly testified of me” (3 Nephi 15:10). On the second day of his ministry among the Nephites, Jesus testified:

Behold, I am he of whom Moses spake, saying: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be cut off from among the people. Verily I say unto you, yea, and all

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<sup>7</sup> For a fuller treatise of this principle see Monte S. Nyman, *An Ensign to All People*, chapter 5, “An Ensign to the Gentiles,” Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1987.

the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have testified of me. (3 Nephi 20:23–24)

Five recorded statements by Jesus in the Book of Mormon verify that he was fulfilling or had fulfilled all that the prophets had foretold. It was Christ to come to whom they looked, and it is Christ come to whom we look.

### “I Am the Good Shepherd”

The last of the twelve designations Jesus made to himself to the Nephites is an indirect one. To the Jews he had proclaimed, “I am the good shepherd . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:14–15). He then announced that he had other sheep that were not of that fold that were to hear his voice (v 16; compare 3 Nephi 15:17). He testified to the Nephites that they were those other sheep that he must bring and they would hear his voice (3 Nephi 15:21–24). Then he declared that there were still other sheep (the lost tribes) that he was commanded to visit after he left the Nephites (16:1–3). Referring to the house of Israel as a sheep fold, Christ is designating himself as their shepherd. The Nephites heard his voice as he called them to be one fold under one shepherd.

### Conclusion

The twelve designations of Jesus given by himself in 3 Nephi certainly are significant in describing his divine nature as President Benson said the Book of Mormon names of Christ would do. They should convince us that the Book of Mormon is “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” and authenticate his role as the God of the Nephites, of the tribes of Israel, and of the whole world. Our continual study of 3 Nephi will deepen our understanding of him as the Son of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth who was with the Father from the beginning and who was one with the Father in ministering upon earth to bring glory to the Father’s name. He is “the Redeemer,” “the

light and life of the world,” and “the beginning and the end.” May we become one fold when the Good Shepherd soon comes again to reign on earth.

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