

Introduction

Near the end of His ministry to the Nephites, the Savior explained what constituted His gospel. This block of scripture in 3 Nephi 27–30 also contains more information on translated beings (the three Nephite disciples) than anywhere else in the scriptures. Through studying chapter 28, you will better understand why the Lord chooses to translate some of His mortal servants. Finally, 3 Nephi ends with Mormon describing the Book of Mormon’s role in the latter-day gathering of Israel and the Lord (through Mormon) warning the Gentiles in the latter days to repent and turn unto Him. This is a good opportunity to recommit to using the Book of Mormon in your life and in inviting others to come unto the Savior.

Commentary

3 Nephi 27:3–8. “Tell Us the Name Whereby We Shall Call This Church”

- When we become members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we take His name upon us because it is His Church. In President Gordon B. Hinckley’s (1910–2008) first conference address as President of the Church, he spoke of the sacred association of the Church, its name, and its accompanying responsibilities:

“This church does not belong to its President. Its head is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose name each of us has taken upon ourselves. We are all in this great endeavor together. We are here to assist our Father in His work and His glory, ‘to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man’ (Moses 1:39). Your obligation is as serious in your sphere of responsibility as is my obligation in my sphere.

No calling in this church is small or of little consequence. All of us in the pursuit of our duty touch the lives of others. To each of us in our respective responsibilities the Lord has said:

“Wherefore, be faithful; stand in the office which I have appointed unto you; succor the weak, lift up the

hands which hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees’ (see D&C 81:5).

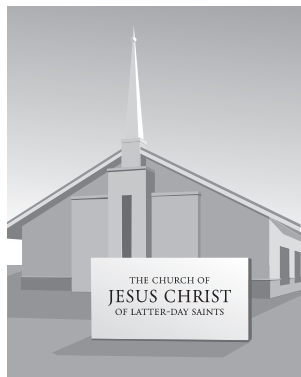
“‘And in doing these things thou wilt do the greatest good unto thy fellow beings, and wilt promote the glory of him who is your Lord’ (D&C 81:4)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 94; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 71).

- Elder James E. Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the logic the Lord used in answering the question by what name His Church should be called: “You will remember that after Christ had established his Church among the aboriginal peoples of this continent, when he appeared as a resurrected Being amongst them, after he had chosen and ordained twelve men to direct the affairs of the Church, there was some little disputation as to the name the Church should bear, and the Twelve, remembering the Lord’s gracious promise that when they would call upon him, united in heart and purpose, they would be sure of a hearing, fasted and prayed, and He appeared again amongst them there in their council meeting in bodily presence and asked them what they would. They said, ‘Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this Church.’ His answer, as we may render it in modern style of speech, was to this effect: Why should there be any question on so simple a matter as that? Whose church is it? Is it the church of Moses? If so, call it, of course, by the name of Moses; or if it be the church of any other man, then call it by his name, but if it be my Church, as ye say, and it is, then call it by my name” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1922, 70).

3 Nephi 27:5–6. “Take upon You the Name of Christ”

- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the relationship between taking upon us the name of Christ and the law of obedience and receiving the blessing of the companionship of the Holy Ghost:

“When we are baptized, we take upon ourselves the sacred name of Jesus Christ. Taking upon us His name is one of the most significant experiences we have in life. Yet sometimes we pass through that experience without having a full understanding.





“How many of our children—how many of us—really understand that when we were baptized, we took upon us not only the name of Christ but also the law of obedience?”

“Each week in sacrament meeting we promise to remember the atoning

sacrifice of our Savior as we renew our baptismal covenant. We promise to do as the Savior did—to be obedient to the Father and always keep His commandments. The blessing we receive in return is to always have His Spirit to be with us” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 8).

3 NEPHI 27:13–21

What does the Lord say are the essentials of His gospel?

3 Nephi 27:13–22. “This Is the Gospel Which I Have Given unto You”

• Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that the simplicity of the gospel is the very reason some people find the gospel so difficult to accept:

“There is in the Book of Mormon a statement in which the Lord says, ‘Behold this is the gospel, which I have given unto you,’ and then he describes his gospel. (See 3 Nephi 27:13–18.) It is a simple story of a world to which a Savior has been sent whom men may accept or reject, but who is, nevertheless, the Messiah.

“That simple story is the very thing, of course, the world cannot accept, and it is so simple that some may even be offended inwardly at times by the so-called simplicity of the gospel. . . .

“. . . There are those who may share some of our beliefs and values, but for whom the restoration of the gospel is a stumblingblock they cannot get over the

top of. But to most of mankind, what we proclaim is ‘foolishness’” (*For the Power Is in Them* [1970], 47–48).

The Savior Himself defined His gospel as faith, repentance, baptism, and the Holy Ghost (see 3 Nephi 27:19–20) and enduring to the end (see v. 16). He also stated that the gospel was Him coming into the world to do the Father’s will and to “be lifted up upon the cross” (vv. 13–14).

3 Nephi 27:24–26. The Lord Will Judge the World out of the Books

• “Out of the books which have been written, and which shall be written, shall this people be judged, for by them shall their works be known unto men.

“And behold, all things are written by the Father” (3 Nephi 27:25–26).

President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) defined the role that written records will play in the Judgment:

“The Lord will make a record also and out of that shall the whole world be judged. And you men bearing the holy Priesthood—you apostles, presidents, bishops, and high priests in Zion—will be called upon to be the judges of the people. Therefore, it is expected that you shall set the standard for them to attain to, and see that they shall live according to the spirit of the gospel, do their duty, and keep the commandments of the Lord. You shall make a record of their acts. You shall record when they are baptized, when they are confirmed, and when they receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. You shall record when they come to Zion, their membership in the Church. You shall record whether they attend to their duties as priests, teachers or deacons, as elders, seventies or high priests. You shall write their works, as the Lord says here. You shall record their tithings . . . ; but we shall judge the people, first requiring them to do their duty. In order to do that, those who stand at the head must set the example” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 157).

3 Nephi 27:27. 📖 “What Manner of Men Ought Ye to Be?”

• Elder John M. Madsen of the Seventy focused particularly on the word *ought* in the Lord’s teachings

to become as He is. Elder Madsen described the Lord's words as more than an invitation, but a requirement of our covenants:

“To receive Him and know Him, we and all mankind must, as Moroni exhorts, ‘*come unto Christ, and be perfected in him*’ (Moroni 10:32; italics added). In other words, we must come unto Christ and strive to ‘become’ like Him (see Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 40–44; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32–34).

“Said the risen Lord: ‘What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am’ (3 Nephi 27:27). The meaning of the word *ought*, as used in His question ‘What manner of men ought

ye to be?’ is crucial to understanding His answer, ‘Even as I am.’ The word *ought* means ‘to be necessary’ or ‘to be held or bound in duty or moral obligation’ (*Noah Webster’s First Edition of an American Dictionary of the English Language*, 7th ed. [1993], ‘ought’; see also Luke

24:26), suggesting—and the holy scriptures, ancient and modern, confirm—that it is ‘necessary,’ and that we are ‘bound,’ as by covenant, ‘to be,’ as He declared, ‘even as I am’ (3 Nephi 27:27; see also 3 Nephi 12:48; Matthew 5:48; 1 John 3:2; Moroni 7:48)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2002, 93; or *Ensign*, May 2002, 79).



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3 Nephi 28:1–6. Desires and Ministry of John the Beloved

- The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) and Oliver Cowdery received specific revelation through the Urim and Thummim regarding the circumstances and subsequent blessings of John's request to tarry in the flesh. This information was from a “parchment” written and hidden by John himself, but apparently lost. In April 1829, Joseph's and Oliver's specific questions on this passage of the Book of Mormon resulted in the revelation recorded in Doctrine and Covenants section 7.

3 Nephi 28:9–10, 36–40. The Doctrine of Translation

- The following definitions help clarify the doctrines of translation, transfiguration, and resurrection. Notice the difference between translated beings and the more temporary state of transfiguration:

Translated beings. “Persons who are changed so that they do not experience pain or death until their resurrection to immortality” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Translated Beings”).

“Many have supposed that the doctrine of translation was a doctrine whereby men were taken immediately into the presence of God, and into an eternal fullness, but this is a mistaken idea. Their place of habitation is that of the terrestrial order, and a place prepared for such characters He held in reserve to be ministering angels unto many planets, and who as yet have not entered into so great a fullness as those who are resurrected from the dead” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:210).

Transfiguration. “The condition of persons who are temporarily changed in appearance and nature—that is, lifted to a higher spiritual level—so that they can endure the presence and glory of heavenly beings” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Transfiguration”).

Resurrection. “The reuniting of the spirit body with the physical body of flesh and bones after death. After resurrection, the spirit and body will never again be separated, and the person will become immortal” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Resurrection”).

3 Nephi 29:1–4. Covenants with the Children of Israel

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote of the role the Book of Mormon plays in the fulfilling of God's covenant with respect to Israel:

“Mormon concluded his description of this majestic season [the visit of the Savior among the Nephites] . . . by testifying that when a record of [Jesus Christ's] visit would come to the Gentiles (in the form of the Book of Mormon), then all might know that the covenant and promises to Israel of the last days were ‘already beginning to be fulfilled.’ . . .

“God’s covenant will be kept with all of his covenant people. No one will be able to ‘turn the right hand of the Lord unto the left’ on this matter. And the call to the Gentiles, for which Christ’s visit to the Nephites published in the Book of Mormon is the ultimate latter-day declaration, is for them to claim the same covenant and promises” (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 308).

3 NEPHI 29:4–7

How did Mormon describe the behaviors of those who reject the Lord’s latter-day revelations? What will their punishment be?

3 Nephi 29:4–8. Do Not Spurn the Words of the Lord

- In 3 Nephi 29 the words *spurn* and *hiss* are used to warn Book of Mormon readers in the latter days to not treat lightly the Lord’s covenants with Israel. *Spurn* means “to reject with disdain” and *hiss* is “to express contempt or disapprobation by hissing” (*Noah Webster’s First Edition of an American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828* [1967]). The use of such terms suggests that in the time of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon there will be a pronounced lack of understanding, belief, and reverence for both the reality of the Second Coming and the work of the Lord in gathering Israel (especially the tribe of Judah).

3 Nephi 30:2. Turn from Your Wicked Doings


- At the conclusion of the Savior’s visit among the Nephites, Mormon returned to what was a major theme of the Lord’s instructions among the people—that in the last days the Gentiles will reject the teachings of the Lord and grow rapidly in wickedness to their

destruction (see 3 Nephi 16:10; 21:14–21). The writings in 3 Nephi seem to have had a profound effect upon Mormon. In his final testimony, Mormon revisited the Savior’s teachings and prophecies condemning the wicked and perverse and the pollutions and hypocrisies of the last days. In the last verses of 3 Nephi, Mormon offered the only antidote to these destructive conditions—come unto Jesus Christ and have faith in Him, repent of your sins, be baptized, and be filled with the Holy Ghost “that ye may be numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel” (3 Nephi 30:2).

Points to Ponder

- Why is it important for the Church of Jesus Christ to be called by the Savior’s name?
- How might you take the name of the Savior upon you more completely?
- In what ways are *translation* and *transfiguration* different? In what ways are they similar? How do *translation* and *transfiguration* differ from *resurrection*?
- Mormon identified some wicked ways. How are they manifest in the world today?

Suggested Assignments

- Make a list of some of the Savior’s characteristics you consider to be most important. Take a personal inventory of your own life with regard to these characteristics and formulate a plan to better fulfill His mandate to be “even as I am” (3 Nephi 27:27 .
- Read 3 Nephi 27:5 and the sacrament prayers (Moroni 4:3; 5:2). Identify the principles mentioned that will help you understand the meaning of taking Christ’s name upon you.