

September 16-22, 2024

3 Nephi 1–7

“LIFT UP YOUR HEAD AND BE OF GOOD CHEER”

Summary: *3 Nephi 1. Nephi, son of Helaman, departs out of the land, and his son Nephi keeps the records—Though signs and wonders abound, the wicked plan to slay the righteous—The night of Christ’s birth arrives—The sign is given and a new star arises—Lyings and deceivings increase, and the Gadianton robbers slaughter many. [Between A.D. 1 and 4]*

3 Nephi 2. Wickedness and abominations increase among the people—The Nephites and Lamanites unite to defend themselves against the Gadianton robbers—Converted Lamanites become white and are called Nephites. [Between A.D. 5 and 16]

3 Nephi 3. Giddianhi, the Gadianton leader, demands that Lachoneus and the Nephites surrender themselves and their lands—Lachoneus appoints Gidgiddoni as chief captain of the armies—The Nephites assemble in Zarahemla and Bountiful to defend themselves. [Between A.D. 16 and 18]

3 Nephi 4. The Nephite armies defeat the Gadianton robbers—Giddianhi is slain, and his successor, Zemnarihah, is hanged—The Nephites praise the Lord for their victories. [Between A.D. 19 and 22]

3 Nephi 5. The Nephites repent and forsake their sins—Mormon writes the history of his people and declares the everlasting word to them—Israel shall be gathered in from her long dispersion. [Between A.D. 1 and 26]

3 Nephi 6. The Nephites prosper—Pride, wealth, and class distinctions arise—The Church is rent with dissensions—Satan leads the people in open rebellion—Many prophets cry repentance and are slain—Their murderers conspire to take over the government. [Between A.D. 26 and 26]

3 Nephi 7. The chief judge is murdered, the government is overthrown, and the people divide into tribes—Jacob, an antichrist, becomes king of a league of tribes—Nephi preaches repentance and faith in Christ—Angels minister to him daily, and he raises his brother from the dead—Many repent and are baptized. [Between A.D. 26 and 30]

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What is a prophet’s responsibility?

All true prophets
testify of the Lord.

There are three prophets in this time frame of the Book of Mormon who prophesied about the Lord’s imminent coming. These three also seemed to “disappear,” or in other words, were not heard of again. Each one, as prophets, exercised the redemptive power that God had given them. This “disappearance” into obscurity refers to an Alma, Samuel the Lamanite and a Nephi. Alma and Nephi were Nephites with a light skin and

Samuel the Lamanite likely had a darker colored skin. “And when Alma had done this he departed out of the land of Zarahemla, as if to go into the land of Melek. And it came to pass that he was never heard of more; as to his death or burial we know not of.” (**Alma 45:18**) “And as they went forth to lay their hands on him, behold, he did cast himself down from the wall, and did flee out of their lands, yea, even unto his own country, and began to preach and to prophesy among his own people. And behold, he was never heard of more among the Nephites; . . .” (**Helaman 16:7-8**) “Then he

departed out of the land, and whither he went, no man knoweth; and his son Nephi did keep the records in his stead, yea, the record of this people.” (3 Nephi 1:3) “And Nephi, who was the father of Nephi, who had the charge of the records, did not return to the land of Zarahemla, and could nowhere be found in all the land.” (3 Nephi 2:9)

Who could be the “wise men?”

In the middle East, Christians have a tradition of three wise men or Magi that come from the East bearing gifts for a newborn King. Obviously, the scriptures give us an account of Herod the Great receiving visitors and requesting that they return with news of “King of The Jews” whereabouts. When they did not return, Herod ordered all the children killed in the Bethlehem area who were two-years old and under, (Matthew 2:1-16). Somehow, many nativity sets carved from olive wood have the wise men appearing at the birth even though the scriptures indicate a time frame of about two years later.

Additionally, the Christian tradition depicts the wise men as two light-skinned men accompanying another dark-skinned person. For the Middle Easterners, it has a pleasant symbolism about it in any case, dark skinned and light skinned - worshipping the Messiah of all mankind.

“Matthew’s account of ‘wise men from the east’ coming to Jerusalem and Bethlehem in search of the Christ Child is sometimes recited as a visit of three Magi. (Matt. 2.)

There is no historical basis for the prevailing legend that they were from the apostate Persian cult or that they were three in number. It is much more probable that they were devout men who knew of our Lord's coming advent, including the promise that a new star would arise, and that they came as prophets of any age would have done to worship their King. It is clear that they were in tune with the Lord and were receiving revelation from him, for they were ‘warned of God in a

dream that they should not return to Herod.’ (Matt. 2:12.)” (Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.462) “Our Lord’s birth into mortality was accompanied by the appearance of a new star in the heavens. One of Samuel the Lamanite’s Messianic prophecies foretold this heavenly sign (Hela. 14:5), and the Nephites knew of the promised birth because they saw the new star that arose according to Samuel’s word. (3 Ne. 1:21.)” (Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.765) “In contrast to the lowly shepherds and to the devout Simeon and Anna, who had become witnesses of our Lord, divine providence now provided witnesses from the great and mighty of the earth, witnesses who could bring gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, witnesses who could command audience with kings and who could boldly inquire: ‘Where is he that is born King of the Jews?’ So there came from unnamed eastern lands -- perhaps, Persia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, perhaps elsewhere -- an unspecified number of wise men. Whether they were two, three, or twenty in number is a matter of pure speculation.” (Bruce R. McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Vol.1, p.102 - p.103)

Whom do Jews hope for as a savior or liberator Messiah?

In Jewish custom, there prevails an expectation of “wise men” coming from obscurity before the coming of the Messiah. As touched on in previous lesson insights, many Jews anticipate a Joseph of latter-days as well as a David of latter-days. To the Jews, these individuals will appear out of obscurity with redemptive powers. One or the other will become either the Messiah or they will be forebearers of the Messiah in the last days. In Jewish theology that deals with death, judgement, and destiny the term Messiah often refers to a future Davidic king who will save the Jewish nation and be anointed with holy oil and rule the Jewish people during the Messianic Age. The Messiah is often referred to as a savior or

redeemer who would appear at the end of days to usher in the kingdom of God, the restoration of Israel, or whatever dispensation was considered to be the ultimate ideal state of the world. Messianism "denotes a movement, or a system of beliefs and ideas, centered on the expectation of the advent of a messiah." (see R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, (1987). "Messianism: Jewish Messianism" *Encyclopedia.com*. Retrieved 14 December 2023. From *The Encyclopedia of Religion* edited by Eliade Mircea New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987. Vol. 5, pp. 472-477) The Jewish tradition during and after Jesus' time indicates two redeemers, one a suffering and the second filling the traditional messianic role, namely a ben Yosef and a ben David.

How do I testify that I know the Messiah?

". . . as many as were converted did truly signify unto the people that they had been visited by the power and Spirit of God, which was in Jesus Christ, in whom they believed." (3 Nephi 7:21) "Therefore, there were ordained of Nephi, men unto this ministry, that all such as should come unto them should be baptized with water, and this as a witness and a testimony before God, and unto the people, that they had repented and received a remission of their sins." (3 Nephi 7:25)