

[BKM Lesson 4](#): “The Things Which I Saw While ... in the Spirit” 1 Nephi 12-14 (See L4 [Study Guide](#))

**Purpose:** To help us understand Nephi’s vision of the future and how the warnings and promises in it apply to us today. †1. Introduction

### 1. Nephi sees the future of his descendants and his brothers’ descendants.

• Read [1 Nephi 12](#). The “angel said ... Look, and behold thy seed, and also the seed of thy brethren.”

“As you [ponderize] this chapter, note how some symbols in the vision of the tree of life (the mist of darkness, the great and spacious building, and the river of filthy water) foreshadowed the downfall of Nephi’s seed.” (*Lesson Manual*)

• 1 Ne. 12:1-6. “And I looked and beheld the land of promise; and I beheld multitudes of people”.

How were these conditions similar to those preceding the Savior’s Second Coming? (See [JS—Matt. 1:27-37](#).)

• 1 Ne. 12:11-12. Three generations “their garments were white ... made white in the blood of the Lamb because ...”

• 4 Nephi 1:15. There “was no contention in the land, because of the love of God ... in the hearts of the people”.

• 1 Ne. 12:12-15. “I ... beheld the people of my seed gathered together ... against the seed of my brethren ... to battle.”

• 1 Nephi 12:19-20. “Because of the pride of my seed, and ... temptations”, the Lamanites overpowered the Nephites.

How can pride and temptations of the devil lead to destruction?

### 2. Nephi sees the formation of the great and abominable church, the colonization of the Americas, the Apostasy, and the Restoration of the gospel.

• Read [1 Nephi 13](#). The angel said, “Look! And I looked and beheld many nations and kingdoms.” [V3-4 Gentiles]

#### The Formation of the great and abominable church

• 1 Nephi 13:4-5. “I saw ... the formation of a great church... **most abominable above all other churches**”.

“The great and abominable church is a symbol of apostasy in all its forms. It is a representation of all false doctrine, false worship, and irreligious attitudes. It does not represent any specific church in the world today.” (*Lesson Manual*)

†2. Elder Bruce R. McConkie †3. Stephen E. Robinson

What are some of the characteristics of the “great and abominable church”? (See 1 Nephi 13:5-9.)

How can we avoid being deceived by the false philosophies of men?

#### The discovery and colonization of the Americas E2. William Bradford E3. John Robinson (See Enrichment)

• 1 Ne. 13:12-13. “And I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth”.

• 1 Ne. 13:14-19. “I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles ... did humble themselves before the Lord”. †4. Humbled Pilgrims

What role did these early explorers and settlers play in the restoration of the gospel? (See [D&C 101:77-80](#).)

#### The Apostasy and the loss of many plain and precious parts of the Bible †5. Robert J. Matthews

• 1 Ne. 13:20-23. “I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; and I beheld a book ... carried forth among them.”

• 1 Ne. 13:24-26. “They have taken away from the gospel ... many parts which are plain and most precious”.

• 1 Ne. 13:27-29. “Because of these things which are taken away ... an exceedingly great many do stumble”.

#### The coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel

• 1 Ne. 13:35-36. “I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write ... [and] these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb.”

• 1 Ne. 13:40-41. “These last records ... shall make known ... that the Lamb of God is ... the Savior of the world”.

How has the Book of Mormon helped you believe more in the Bible, or Christ, or to understand the Gospel?

### 3. Nephi sees the blessings promised to the faithful and the fall of the great and abominable church.

• Read [1 Nephi 14](#). “If the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day ... he shall manifest himself”.

• 1 Ne. 14:1-7. Discuss the blessings for faithfulness to the Lord, and the cursings for rejecting the Lord.

List ways we can soften our hearts to receive these blessings?

In what way are there only two forces in the world today? (See 1 Nephi 14:10 and [2 Nephi 10:16](#).)

E4. “Church of the Devil” B.H. Roberts (See BKM 4 Enrichment.pdf) E5. Church definition

• 1 Ne. 14:11-14. “I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness”.

How can we arm ourselves “with righteousness and with the power of God”?

What will eventually happen to the great and abominable church? (See 1 Nephi 14:3-4, 15-17; and [22:23](#).)

Next Week L7: “I Know in Whom I Have Trusted”; See L7: [Class Member Study Guide](#).

Read the Institute Book of Mormon Student Manual at: [Book of Mormon Student Manual](#): Religion 121-122. † •

## **BKM 4 Quotes**

### **†1. BKM Student Manual, Chapter 4 Introduction:**

“Nephi applied the invitation to ask for the “things that [his] father had seen, and believing that the Lord was able to make them known” (1 Nephi 11:1). Nephi’s righteous desires were rewarded, for he not only recorded information that was similar to what we have recorded about Lehi’s vision, but he recorded a panoramic vision of this world to the end of time (see 1 Nephi 14:18–30). This vision was similar to the vision of John in the New Testament book of Revelation.” (*Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121-122, Chapter 4.*)

**†2. Elder Bruce R. McConkie:** “The titles church of the devil and great and abominable church are used to identify all churches or organizations of whatever name or nature—whether political, philosophical, educational, economic, social, fraternal, civic, or religious—which are designed to take men on a course that leads away from God and his laws and thus from salvation in the kingdom of God” (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 137–38).

**†3. Stephen E. Robinson:** “Actually, no single known historical church, denomination, or set of believers meets all the requirements for the great and abominable church: it must have formed among the Gentiles; it must have edited and controlled the distribution of the scriptures; it must have slain the Saints of God, including the Apostles and prophets; it must be in league with civil governments and use their police power to enforce its religious views; it must have dominion over all the earth; it must pursue great wealth and sexual immorality; and it must last until close to the end of the world. No single denomination or system of beliefs fits the entire description. Rather, the role of Babylon has been played by many different agencies, ideologies, and churches in many different times.” (“[Warring against the Saints of God](#),” *Ensign*, Jan. 1988, 38-39.)

**†4. Suffering Pilgrims:** The Pilgrims left England and Netherlands for religious and political freedom. They were persecuted for their beliefs in England, and for their being foreigners with different political views in the Netherlands. Their only hope was to begin a life in the Americas. Of the 102 voyagers on the Mayflower, only 52 survived through the first winter. But others came and they grew as a people. They “humbled themselves before the Lord; and the power of the Lord was with them” (1 Ne 13:16).

**†5. Robert J. Matthews:** “Apparently the original manuscripts of the Bible disappeared very early. This seems particularly true of the New Testament. Sir Frederic Kenyon, one of the greatest textual scholars of the early twentieth century, commented thus: ‘The originals of the several books have long ago disappeared. They must have perished in the very infancy of the Church; for no allusion is ever made to them by any Christian writer.’ Kenyon’s statement is particularly important to us because it means that for centuries there has not been an original Bible manuscript to guide the reader. Even in the early decades of the original Christian church, the original texts seem to have been absent. ...

“The angel [in 1 Nephi 13:21–29] makes it clear that he is not talking about subtle accidents of hand and eye, resulting in a few misplaced letters or words—the unplanned errors of copyists. He pointedly ascribes these changes to the planned editorial work of designing men [see 1 Nephi 13:27–28]. ...

“As we read the words of the angel, we discover that the world never has had a complete Bible, for it was massively—even cataclysmically—corrupted before it was distributed. Of course, in addition to the major willful corruption of the Bible in the early Christian era, the manuscripts have also continued to suffer the gradual and relatively mild changes, due to errors of hand and eye, that the scholars talk about. Thus there have been two processes at work: (1) a major, sudden, and deliberate editorial corruption of the text and (2) a gradual promulgation of variants that has occurred as a natural consequence of copying and translation” (Robert J. Matthews, *A Bible! A Bible!* [1990], 74–75).

## **Recommended Reading / Videos:**

1. [BKM 4 Enrichment.pdf](#) contains more quotes and links to articles, blogs, and talks.
2. [Book of Mormon Student Manual: Religion 121-122](#), Select the link for Chapter 4.
3. “[Are There Really Only Two Churches?](#)” KnowWhy #16, January 21, 2016.

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